



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

STUDY GUIDE

Faith Sexism and Justice

A Call to Action

Leader's Welcome

Welcome to the study guide for the ELCA social statement *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*. Adopted by the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, this document relies on the Gospel promise of abundance, justice, and new creation in Christ to name the ways the sins of patriarchy and sexism harm *all* people, particularly women and girls, whatever their age or racial or gender identity. Drawing on Lutheran theology, the social statement teaches that God's people are called to resist sexism and pursue gender justice for others and for themselves.

Faith, Sexism, and Justice is the culmination of a seven-year process across the ELCA. Led by a national task force and supported by synod-based volunteers, the process of the social statement was like a long conversation among ELCA members. The social statement is designed to help people hear God's promise of abundant life and call for justice, see the complex harm caused by sexism, and pursue gender justice through personal and collective actions.

"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

**—John 10:10b, cited in
Faith, Sexism, and Justice, p. 15**



Leader's Welcome

THE CONTENT OF THE *FAITH, SEXISM, AND JUSTICE: A CALL TO ACTION* STUDY GUIDE

The six sessions in this study guide follow the path laid out in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

Session One:

All Are Called to Lives of Justice and Abundance

In this session participants hear the Scriptures' promise that God intends all people to experience justice and abundance in their lives.

Session Two:

Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

In this session participants study sin from a Lutheran perspective and examine how the sins of patriarchy and sexism intertwine with other forms of oppression and injustice.

Session Three:

Language and Images for God Matter

In this session participants learn about the variety of images for God in the Scriptures and explore how inclusive and expansive language and images for God are consistent with Lutheran insights.

Session Four:

Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

In this session participants hear the Scriptures' affirmation of the diversity of all of God's creation and the New Testament's promise that the body of Christ is made up of members with a wide range of gifts, identities, and experiences.

Session Five:

Lutheran Insights Promote Gender Justice

In this session participants explore four Lutheran insights—theology of the cross, justification, Christian freedom, and neighbor justice—that empower ELCA members to resist sexism and work for gender justice.

Session Six:

God Calls Us to Action in Community

In this session participants connect neighbor justice to issues in their communities and discern how they might act in the public sphere for gender justice.

Though it is better to complete all six sessions in sequence, they can be completed in any order. If your community is engaging two sessions, starting with session one will introduce participants to the vision of the social statement.



Leader's Welcome

GUIDING HEALTHY CONVERSATIONS

As Lutheran Christians, we recognize that the Holy Spirit is present among us when we gather. We celebrate that God speaks to us through Word and Sacrament—through the Scriptures, the preached Word, baptism and holy communion, and through our words to one another. When we gather to study *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*, we trust that God is moving among us as we encounter new ideas and share our beliefs and hopes for justice for neighbors and ourselves.

As you encounter new information and see Lutheran teachings brought to bear on issues related to patriarchy and sexism, pay close attention to how you feel. You might feel curious, anxious, or empowered. Encourage participants to be patient and compassionate as you share your views with others. The study guide addresses complex issues that may affect people in a variety of ways. Several of the sessions refer to difficult topics, such as gender-based violence, homophobia, and racism, which many people have experienced and may reexperience as they use the study guide materials. While leading these sessions, please be attentive to participants' discomforts and needs.

Here are some tips for leading the sessions:

- Speak only for yourself and avoid language that sounds accusatory or lumps people together, such as “those people” or “anyone who believes ...”
- Rather than defend your opinion, listen carefully to others and ask questions that help them express what they're thinking, such as “What's your perspective on ...?” or “How do you understand this?”
- You can also ask people to clarify what they've said by using statements such as “What I heard you saying is ...” or “Is that correct, or what you intended to say?”
- You may ask participants to honor the session as confidential and not share what others said.

Being attentive to your own feelings and listening closely to others will deepen the conversation and create an honest environment where a diversity of voices can be heard.

You may encounter terms that are new to you. Explore the glossary at the end of the social statement for definitions of the terms. (The glossary begins on p. 75.)



Leader's Welcome

DETAILS FOR LEADERS REGARDING THE STUDY GUIDE

Handouts: A handout is included for each session and can be found at the end of each session. A PDF containing all six handouts is available [here](#).

In-person or Virtual Gatherings: The six sessions in the study guide were developed during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a way of making the study guide available remotely and for a wide variety of people, the activity section of each session can be offered in one of three ways. The session can be offered in person. Or you may use an online meeting platform for discussion only. Finally, you may use an online meeting platform that allows participants to post, view, and discuss their typed comments. If you offer the session virtually, it is a good idea to have an assistant manage the technology and the participants' posts so that you can focus on leading the activity or discussion. For tips on leading online sessions, see, for example, [Tips-for-Using-Zoom.pdf](#) (globallearningpartners.com).

Presenting the Digital Slides:

- To display the study guide slides, which are in PDF format, you will need to use a free PDF reader. Adobe Reader can be found at <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>.
- If you are using Windows 10, you can download a general PDF reader from the Windows store.
- With a PDF reader installed, download the study guide and double-click the file (in your "Downloads" folder) to open it.
- Then, display the slides so that one slide appears on the screen at a time. You may have to select full screen

mode or slide show from the "View" menu selection at the top left to configure this.

- The slides should then display so that either one mouse click or a tap of your space bar will advance to the next slide.

Reading Faith, Sexism, and Justice: Inspired by Martin Luther's Small Catechism and Large Catechism, the text was written in a dual format with a "short statement" and a "full statement." The full statement explains the content of the short statement with insights from Lutheran theology, the Scriptures, and current research to support the vision and content of the social statement.

Session Structure: The basic form of each study session should take about 45 minutes. The six sessions follow a similar structure and involve prayers, hearing from the social statement itself, watching and discussing a video, actively engaging the content of each session, and asking participants how they will live out the insights they have gained from the session. Each session also includes an optional Bible study and an optional conversation. The sessions can be extended to 60 or 90 minutes.

Spanish Resources: The social statement is [available](#) in Spanish (*Fe, sexismo y justicia: Un llamado a la acción*). A Spanish version of this study guide is expected on the ELCA website in the future. For the time being, if you are leading a session, please guide any Spanish-speaking participants to the Spanish version.

Videos for the Sessions: Each session has a video. The link for each video is in the individual session.

Citations and Sources: At the time of publication of this study guide in 2021, the URLs provided were live.



Session 2

Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

GETTING READY

In session one, participants explored *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action's* teaching that God's intention for abundance and justice includes gender justice. In this second session in the study guide, participants explore what *Faith, Sexism, and Justice* teaches about patriarchy and sexism and how they intersect with other forms of injustice. Participants also reflect on patriarchy as sin.

The full text of the social statement can be found here: in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#).

MANAGING THE TIME TOGETHER

The basic version of each session should take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

If your group has 60 or 90 minutes, you can use the extra 15 or 30 minutes to do one or two of the following.

You can:

- explore the passages from the Scriptures, or
- engage the In the Coming Week activity, or
- reflect on the Continuing the Conversation prompts.

If the session is offered during a regularly scheduled 45-minute education gathering but you want to meet for a longer time, pause at 45 or 60 minutes and give people the chance to quietly leave the session.

ESTIMATED TIMELINE FOR THE BASIC 45-MINUTE SESSION

Welcome, Opening Prayer, Session Objectives, and Context (5 minutes)

Optional: Encounter the Scriptures (10-15 minutes)

Sharing Stories Video: "Patriarchy and Sexism Create Injustice for Everyone" (10 minutes)

Discuss the Video (7 minutes)

Explore *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: Patriarchy and Sexism Create Injustice for Everyone* (4 minutes)

Engage Patriarchy and Sexism in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice* (11 minutes)

Live Out the Social Statement's Call to Action (6 minutes)

Optional: In the Coming Week (10 minutes)

Optional: Continuing the Conversation (10-15 minutes)

Closing Prayer (2 minutes)



Session 2

Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

OPTIONAL: SING TOGETHER

If you have 60 or 90 minutes, consider beginning and ending each session with a hymn. Try singing part of the hymn at the opening of the session and conclude with the rest of the hymn.

The hymns can be found in the following sources: *All Creation Sings (ACS)*, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW)*, *Libro de Liturgia y Cántico (LLC)*, and *This Far by Faith (TFF)*.

The following hymns resonate with the themes of session two:

- Before the Waters Nourished Earth, ACS 1049
- La mano de Dios, LLC 505/ The Right Hand of God, TFF 300/ELW 889
- Rise Up, O Saints of God!, ELW 669
- Spirit, Open My Heart, ACS 1043
- When Pain of the World Surrounds Us, ELW 704

DISCUSSION/ACTIVITY SECTION

This session has three different options for the section titled Engage Patriarchy and Sexism in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*. You can use the in-person, hands-on activity. Or you may use an online meeting platform that allows participants to submit and discuss their typed comments. Finally, you may use an online meeting platform for discussion only.

THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS ARE NEEDED FOR THE IN-PERSON SESSION:

- Bibles
- Access to hymns
- Print handouts for the participants, found at the end of this session. These include Bible references, quotes from *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*, and other necessary materials.
- All the session handouts are also in one document at https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/FSJ_Study_Guide_Session_ALL.pdf.
- Sharing Stories Video: The URL for the video is provided in the session.
- A pen or marker for each participant

If your group chooses to encounter the Scriptures, consider four different methods to read the Bible: devotional, historical, literary, and Lutheran theological. For more on this fourfold approach to the Scriptures, see https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Book_Of_Faith_4_Methods.pdf.



Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

LEADER'S PREPARATION AND MATERIALS

Read the welcome to the **entire** study guide.

Read this study guide session.

You may want to have a paper copy with you when you lead the session.

Read pp. 12-14, 18-20 (articles 3 and 4), and 25-38 in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

Preview the video. Professor William Rodriguez and Professor W. Bradley Wendel (co-chair) served on the task force for *Faith, Sexism, and Justice (FSJ)*. In this video, they discuss their experiences, perspectives, and feelings on intersectionality, patriarchy, and sexism.

If you know who the participants will be before the session meets, consider sending them a welcome email. You can encourage participants to read articles 9-15 on pp. 3-6 in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*. Participants may also skim pp. 25-38 in the social statement.

Finally, you could ask participants to view the short video "What Do Lutherans Say About ... Gender Justice," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWIEKGleQa0>.

Set up the space so that everyone can see the screen, and test the audio to be sure everyone can hear the Sharing Stories video.

Consider sending an email to participants a few days after the session to encourage them to complete one of the In the Coming Week activities.



Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

WELCOME AND CONTEXT (5 MINUTES)

The leader reads the following introduction to ELCA social statements.

ELCA social statements help us make sense of complex social and ethical concerns in our communities and the world, such as education and peace. These statements provide scriptural, theological, and contemporary insights about social issues. They govern the institutional witness of the ELCA and its teachings on social questions. ELCA social statements help communities and individuals think about, discuss together, and discern paths forward as we participate in God's work in the world. Many ELCA members are involved in creating social statements, and they are adopted by a two-thirds vote of an ELCA churchwide assembly.



Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

OPENING PRAYER

The leader reads the following prayer aloud.

Forgiving God, help us to release grief, fear, and anger and all the feelings that prevent us from knowing new things. Give us the courage to see the injustice in our own communities. Open our hearts, clear the distractions so that we may respond to the Spirit's call to be in just communities with one another. In the name of Jesus, the resurrection. Amen.



Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

SESSION OBJECTIVES

Someone reads aloud.

We will relate our own knowledge and experience to patriarchy and sexism and how they intersect with other forms of privilege and oppression.

We will explore what *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* teaches about patriarchy, sexism, and intersectionality.

We will name one action we will take to change or challenge the injustices caused by intersectional patriarchy and sexism.

(In the 60 or 90 minute session, we will encounter the connections between justice and sin in the Scriptures.)



Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

OUR CONTEXT FOR SESSION TWO

The leader reads aloud.

Martin Luther described sin as not trusting God with our whole hearts. When this happens, we not only do terrible things individually but also participate in systems that are sinful. In the earliest years of the ELCA, this church adopted the teaching that social systems can be sinful and hurt people (*The Church in Society*¹). Loving your neighbors sometimes means loving them by making sure systems and institutions are fair and just.

For example, in the U.S. economic system, employers on average pay women less than they pay men. Underpaying women does not just happen sometimes—it happens consistently and across many professions. Even though an individual employer might not consciously intend to pay a woman less, they often end up doing so because they are part of social and economic systems that encourage and allow wage inequity. This is systemic sin.

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Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

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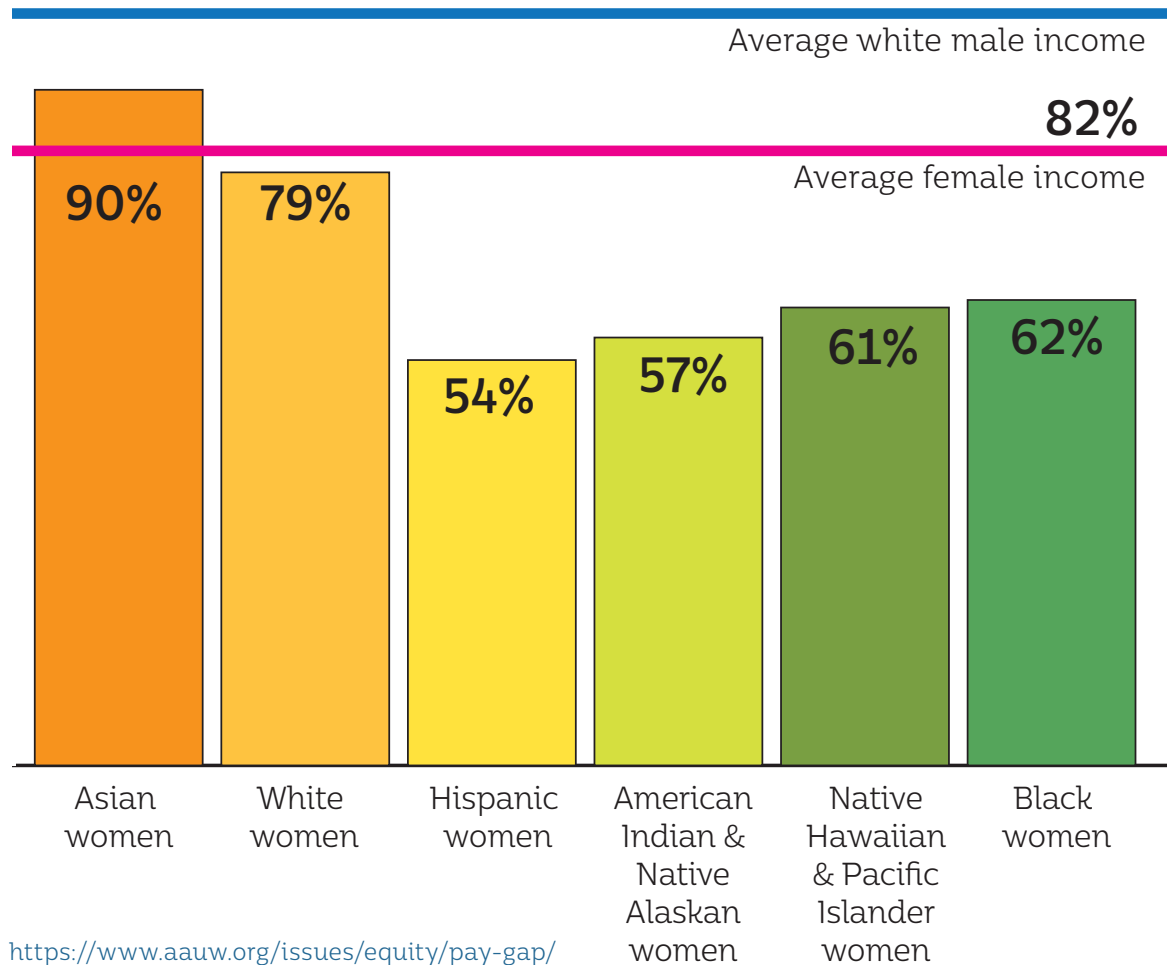
Faith, Sexism, and Justice calls us to address systemic sins—like wage inequity—that hurt not only neighbors but ourselves. ELCA Lutherans view this form of neighbor love as neighbor justice. Pursuing gender justice means teaching and acting in ways that support and value people without undervaluing one group and promoting another.



Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

Women's Earnings

as a percentage of the average white male income



Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

OPTIONAL: ENCOUNTER THE SCRIPTURES (10-15 MINUTES)

Someone reads aloud.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God pleads for justice and judges the people for not trusting God and for oppressing others. Read Isaiah 1:1-6; 12-17.

Spend one minute in silence, reflecting on these passages from the Scriptures.

Then choose two of the following questions and discuss them for 10 minutes. You may want to break people into groups of three or four to give everyone the chance to contribute.

- A** What demands or challenges do I hear in this passage?
- B** What is God up to in this Scripture reading?
- C** What do sin and justice sound or feel like in these passages?
- D** Share how this passage describes what kind of relationship God wants with people.

Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

SHARING STORIES VIDEO: "PATRIARCHY AND SEXISM CAUSE INJUSTICE FOR EVERYONE" (10 MINUTES)

The link to the video for this session is <https://vimeo.com/468337999/9c30faa6f4>.

DISCUSS THE VIDEO (7 MINUTES)

After viewing the video, discuss one of the following questions. You may want to break into groups of three or four to give everyone the chance to contribute.

- A** At what point in the video were you most engaged, and why?
- B** Name one or two ways your story connects with something the speakers shared. What is surprising or helpful about this connection?
- C** What was most helpful or surprising in hearing two men talk about patriarchy and sexism?



Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

EXPLORE *FAITH, SEXISM, AND JUSTICE: PATRIARCHY AND SEXISM CREATE INJUSTICE FOR EVERYONE (4 MINUTES)*

Someone reads aloud from *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

“Particular sinful actions (sins) are expressions of our human life in a state of sin. Individuals, families, communities, institutions, governments, and societies can all sin. Sin is not only individual; it is also collective or communal. Sinful humans create structures, organizations, and societies that perpetuate sin, sometimes unintentionally. This is called ‘structural sin.’” (*FSJ*, p. 19)

Someone else reads aloud from *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

“Patriarchy is a social system dominated by men, identified with men, and centered on men’s actions, voices, and authority. Patriarchy does not mean that males are bad and females are good, or that only males support this unfair system.” (*FSJ*, p. 31)

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Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

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“Sexism is the reinforcement of male privilege, which leads to discrimination.” (FSJ, p. 31)

Someone else reads aloud from *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

“Intersectionality refers to the ways in which various forms of discrimination and oppression, linked to aspects of a person’s identity, overlap. The concept of intersectionality helps to express the multiple discriminations many women face daily.” (FSJ, p. 25)

Spend one minute in silence to reflect on the words from the social statement.

“Although we have been called into the freedom of the Gospel, we remain sinners. Martin Luther described this as being ‘simultaneously saint and sinner.’”

(FSJ, p. 20)

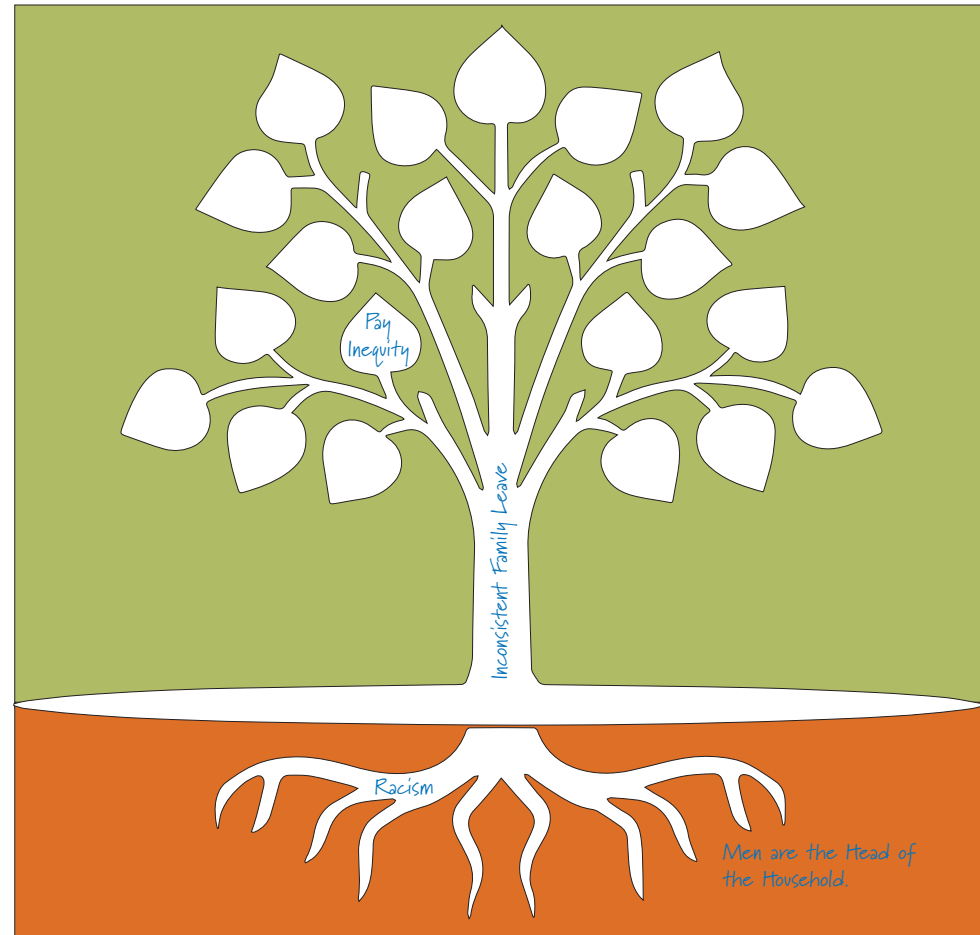


Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

ENGAGE PATRIARCHY AND SEXISM IN *FAITH, SEXISM, AND JUSTICE* (10 MINUTES)

For this activity, learn about this tree graphic as a metaphor.

This image of a tree is a metaphor for how a patriarchal social system works.² It is a visual illustration to show how sin is not only individual but also systemic.



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Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

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The tree leaves represent the problems we see and experience. Each leaf stands for an example of something that prevents abundant life due to sex and gender discrimination. The example is “pay inequity.”

The tree roots represent beliefs and ideas in a patriarchal social system.

An example of a belief that reinforces pay inequity is “Men are the head of the household.” This is a belief held by many Christians and others.

The tree roots also represent intersecting forms of privilege and

oppression. For example, racism intersects with sexism. The average salary package for ELCA rostered ministers who are women of color is only 83% of the average salary package for ELCA rostered ministers who are white men.³

The tree trunk represents laws, policies, and practices that reinforce

patriarchy and sexism. For example, across the ELCA there are inconsistent family leave practices for rostered ministers and other employees.



Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

In-person Activity

If meeting in-person, distribute the handouts. Participants read the following description and write responses on the tree graphic on the handout.

Take four minutes to add examples of your own to each area on the handout.

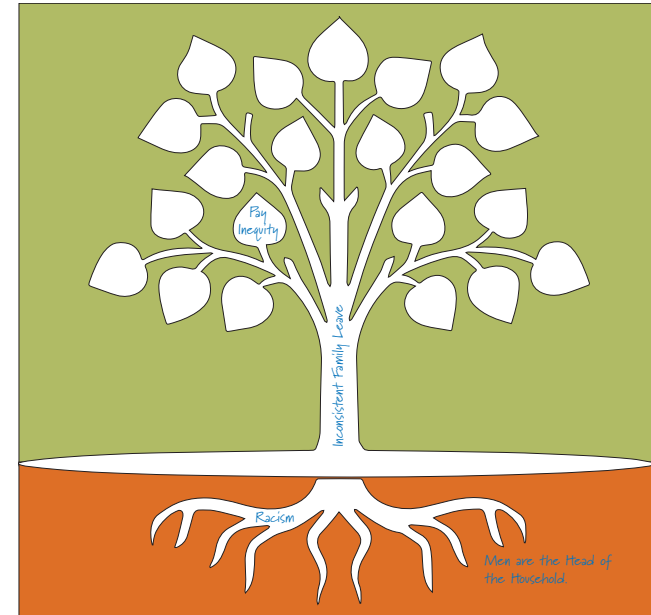
A **leaf** is something that prevents abundant life for women and girls.

A **root** is a belief or idea in a patriarchal social system.

Another **root** is a form of privilege or oppression that intersects with sexism.

The **trunk** is a law, policy, or practice that prevents abundant life because of assumptions about biological sex or gender.

Then share your four examples with a neighbor. If you have time, share the connections you see.



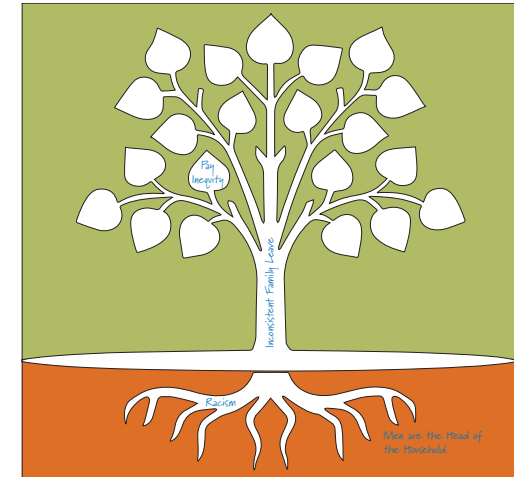
Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

Virtual Activity

The leader should moderate the discussion to ensure that everyone gets the chance to contribute. Participants can be put in small groups of three or four.

Using a shared electronic document or online meeting platform, ask each participant to post their answers to the following prompts. You may use a chat function, or a shared document, or a platform to have participants post their responses.

Look at the tree image. Take about three minutes to post a word or phrase for each of the following:



A **leaf** is something that prevents abundant life for women and girls.

A **root** is a belief or idea in a patriarchal social system.

Another **root** is a form of privilege or oppression that intersects with sexism.

The **trunk** is a law, policy, or practice that prevents abundant life because of assumptions about biological sex or gender.

Discuss what you posted (leaf, root, or trunk).



Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

Virtual Discussion Questions

The leader should moderate the discussion to ensure that everyone gets the chance to contribute.

Look at the tree image. Take three minutes to write down one example of each of the following:

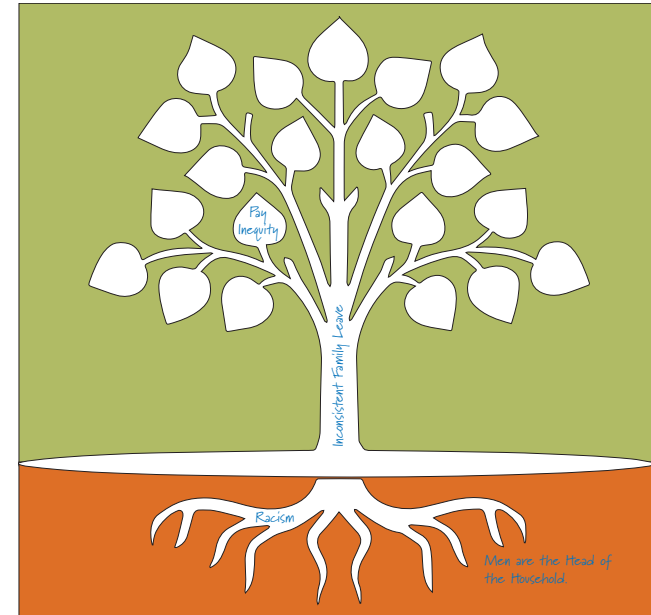
A **leaf** is something that prevents abundant life for women and girls.

A **root** is a belief or idea in a patriarchal social system.

Another **root** is a form of privilege or oppression that intersects with sexism.

The **trunk** is a law, policy, or practice that prevents abundant life because of assumptions about biological sex or gender.

Discuss what you wrote (leaf, root, or trunk).



Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

LIVE OUT THE SOCIAL STATEMENT'S CALL TO ACTION (6 MINUTES)

During the Session

Choose one of the following activities to work on in pairs.

- A** Keeping in mind the activity or discussion you just had about the way patriarchy is an interconnected social system, write down on the handout or a piece of paper one specific thing you can do this week in your home, family, workplace, or school, with friends or in your congregation, to stop the forces that prevent abundant life. Share this with a neighbor.

- B** With a neighbor, brainstorm all the ministries of your congregation that serve people. Identify which ones serve women, girls, or people who are gender non-conforming directly or indirectly. If none of your congregation's ministries serve women, girls, or people who are gender non-conforming, share why you think that is.



Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

OPTIONAL: IN THE COMING WEEK (10 MINUTES)

Take a few minutes to read the optional activities below. Next, select one of these activities that you will pursue. Then reach out to another participant and agree to check in later in the week to discuss what you did to foster abundance and gender justice.

- A** Take a photo of the illustration you filled out or the notes you made; then share it with someone who did not attend today's session. Add a caption about how you see individual and systemic sins working together. Add a caption about how you see race, age, or ability intersecting in your illustration.
- B** Spend five minutes each day looking at the news headlines and reflect on how women, girls, and gender non-conforming persons from a variety of economic means, abilities, races, and ethnicities, and/or gender identities and sexualities are represented. Write down one thing you notice each day. With others or alone, reflect on what you notice.

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Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

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- C** Read Implementing Resolution #7 (*FSJ*, pp. 81-82), which urges congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to address their own inequities in compensation and the roots of this problem. Consider what your congregation, synod, organization, or workplace should do to provide equitable compensation.
- D** Read Implementing Resolution #16 (*FSJ*, p. 83), which calls all parts of the ELCA to integrate anti-sexism education and practices into their work, for the good of the whole church. Write down for yourself or talk with someone about where you would like to see this happen and what difference you want it to make.
- E** Become part of the World Council of Churches' "Thursdays in Black" campaign⁴ and read Implementing Resolution #3 (*FSJ*, p. 81), which encourages congregations to take action to end gender-based violence.
- F** Investigate the resources in the Explore section at the end of this session.



Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

OPTIONAL: CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION (10-15 MINUTES)

Discuss two of the prompts below.

- A** What fills me with hope or delights me in this session about patriarchy and sexism?
- B** What challenges me or confuses me in this session about patriarchy and sexism?
- C** In your community and congregation, who are the neighbors who need to hear that patriarchy and sexism are sinful? What have these neighbors said they need?
- D** Where do you see God at work as the ELCA declares patriarchy and sexism are sinful and pursues gender justice for neighbor and self?
- E** Discuss your reflections about the activity on patriarchy as a systemic sin in the Engage *Faith, Sexism, and Justice* section.

Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

CLOSING PRAYER (2 MINUTES)

God of Wisdom, thank you for the gift of learning. Give us the courage to better understand our own actions, beliefs, and assumptions. When we are stuck, move us with the power of your Holy Spirit to love and to serve neighbors through gender justice. Day by day, set our hearts and minds to new ways of thinking and being. Amen.



End Notes

URLs were accessed between June and December 2021.

Session One:

All Are Called to Lives of Justice and Abundance

1. “Gender-based Violence” (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2015), 18, https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Gender_Based_Violence_SM.pdf.
2. “Missed Opportunities: LGBTQ Youth Homelessness in America,” Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, April 2018, <https://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/VoYC-LGBTQ-Brief-Chapin-Hall-2018.pdf>.
3. “Racial and Ethnic Disparities Continue in Pregnancy-Related Deaths,” Center for Disease Control, September 5, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2019/p0905-racial-ethnic-disparities-pregnancy-deaths.html>.

Session Two:

Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

1. *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, (1991), <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Church-in-Society>.
2. Johnson, Allan G., “The Tree as Metaphor,” *The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014), <https://www.agjohnson.us/essays/tree>.
3. “45th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women: Executive Summary—Clergy Questionnaire Report 2015” (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2015), https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/45th_Anniversary_of_the_Ordination_Women_Ordained_Full_Report.pdf.
4. “Thursdays in Black,” World Council of Churches, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/get-involved/thursdays-in-black>.

Session Three:

Language and Images for God Matter

1. Luther, Martin, “Against Latomus, 1521,” LW 32:196.



End Notes

Session Four:

Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

1. Hess, Cynthia, et al., "Providing Unpaid Household and Care Work in the United States: Uncovering Inequality," Institute for Women's Policy Research, <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/IWPR-Providing-Unpaid-Household-and-Care-Work-in-the-United-States-Uncovering-Inequality.pdf>.
2. Sears, Brad, and Christy Mallory, "Documented Evidence of Employment Discrimination and Its Effects on LGBT People," UCLA School of Law Williams Institute, July 2011, <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/employ-discrim-effect-lgbt-people/>.
3. "Discrimination Prevents LGBTQ People From Accessing Health Care," Center for American Progress, Jan. 18, 2018, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/news/2018/01/18/445130/discrimination-prevents-lgbtq-people-accessing-health-care/>.
4. ELCA Office of the Secretary, August 2015.
5. "Suicide and Violence Prevention," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/msmhealth/suicide-violence-prevention.htm>.

Session Five:

Lutheran Insights Promote Gender Justice

1. Parish, Anja, "Gender-based Violence Against Women: Both Cause for Migration and Risk Along the Journey," Migration Policy Institute, Sept. 7, 2017, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/gender-based-violence-against-women-both-cause-migration-and-risk-along-journey>.
2. Wallace, Beverly R., "Silent Voices, Still ... but Faith ... Lifting Up the Voices of the Daughters of Hagar in 'Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action,'" *Currents in Theology and Mission*, April 2020, <http://currentsjournal.org/index.php/currents/article/view/235/260>.

Session Six:

God Calls Us to Action in Community

1. "Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Pregnancy-Related Deaths—United States, 2007-2016," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Sept. 6, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6835a3.htm>.



Glossary from Faith, Sexism, and Justice

Androcentric: Male-centered, focused on men.

Binary (Gender Binary): The concept that there are only two genders, man or woman, which are inherently distinct and “opposite.”

Complementary/Complementarity: The belief that God gave men and women inherently different roles and purposes that complement each other to mutual benefit. Men’s roles have often related to leadership and decision-making; women’s roles have included obeying males and caring for others. These roles are informed by the structural dynamic of dominance (male) and submission (female). The imbalance of power in the relationship contributes to male privilege.

Domestic violence: See entry for “Gender-based violence.”

Equality: The idea that people have the same rights and should receive the same resources. Equality can refer to the equal worth of all people or to people having equal experiences of their rights and their potential in life.

Equity: Fair treatment of people according to their needs.

The principle of equity takes into account that people exist on inherently uneven playing fields due to poverty, sexism, racism, etc. Because of these different contexts, individuals or groups may require different resources and support to ensure that they have the same rights and abilities to make choices as others do (such as having a choice of quality doctors, careers, neighborhoods, etc.).

The goal of equity is to ensure each person receives what each person needs to flourish and is not disadvantaged.

Ex. A simple example of equality in public restrooms would be having changing tables in all restrooms, because male caregivers may also need a space to change diapers. A simple example of equity in public restrooms would be putting more stalls in women’s restrooms in order to serve the specific needs women have.

Expansive language: Language (or imagery) referring to God that is not limited to humanity or human categories: water, a rock, a hiding place, a mighty fortress, etc. See “inclusive language.”

Gender: Identities, roles, behaviors, and attributes that cultures, societies, and individuals shape, most often linked to femininity and masculinity. The most common gender identities are woman/girl and man/boy, but other identities exist. For more, see “gender non-conforming.”

Gender identity: How a person understands one’s own gender; one’s internal sense of one’s gender.

Gender justice: Gender justice is expressed through equality and balanced power relations for people of all genders to live into their individual callings. Gender justice is sought by eliminating power imbalances among people at individual and societal levels, as well as eliminating discrimination against women and people who do not adhere to stereotypes associated with men and women.



Glossary from Faith, Sexism, and Justice

Gender non-conforming, Non-binary, Genderqueer:

Words that people who do not identify as “men” or “women” use to describe their gender (not sexuality). Their gender identity and/or biological characteristics may not completely fit with the dominant and expected ways of acting as, or being, a man or woman or a boy or girl. Each term might be used differently by different people, as an umbrella term or as a specific label for their gender identity. This document uses all three terms in an effort to be inclusive. (Terminology will change over time. Readers are referred to contemporary communities for up-to-date language.) For more, see “gender,” “intersex,” “transgender,” and “queer.”

Gender-based violence: Physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, or other personal harm inflicted on someone for gender-based reasons, including but not limited to intimate-partner violence and domestic violence. This can include such things as catcalling women or bullying boys who are not perceived as “man enough.” Perpetrators commit gender-based violence to assert power over someone.

Genderqueer: See “Gender non-conforming, Non-binary, Genderqueer.”

Hierarchy: A system in which groups are ranked and certain groups have power over other groups. Sometimes this power over others leads to more value being assigned to the group or individuals with dominance.

Human trafficking: Coercion, abduction, and/or imprisonment of people for forced labor, often of a sexual nature. This problem is pervasive around the world, including in the U.S. Also known as modern-day slavery.

Inclusive language: Language that includes all genders when referring to humanity or God, for instance, using humans or humankind to talk about humanity, rather than man or mankind. See “expansive language.”

Intersecting, intersectionality: Humans have multiple aspects to their identities, including gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, social class, etc. These aspects of human identities are tied to systemic privilege and oppression; gender is tied to sexism, ethnicity is tied to racism, etc. Intersectionality describes the ways different forms of discrimination and systemic oppression affect each other and shape the lives of individuals and communities in distinct ways. All human identities and all forms of privilege and oppression are made up of many intersections.

Ex. A woman of African descent may have a Ph.D. and make a healthy salary, but she will still suffer from racism and sexism. However, she would experience that racism and sexism differently from how a man of African descent, a white woman, or an impoverished person might experience them. The injustices she faces, therefore, may have solutions different from those for other people.



Glossary from Faith, Sexism, and Justice

Intersex: As described by the Intersex Society of North America, a term for a variety of conditions people are born with: physical characteristics, anatomy, and/or genes that vary from standards set by doctors' expectations for being "female" or "male." The term refers to the fact of biological variation among humans. Some people identify as intersex, rather than using the term solely to refer to a condition; others may also identify as gender non-conforming or a similar term.

Justice: Generally, justice refers to an underlying sense of fairness, right treatment, and reciprocity. This statement emphasizes the aspects of justice that include fair and equal treatment under the law, ending oppression based on power differences, and, as emphasized in the Bible, a right relationship with God and within community.

Neighbor justice: A term proposed in this social statement that is rooted in the biblical directive to "love your neighbor as yourself." This term expresses the idea that faith is active in love and love necessarily calls for justice in relationships and in the structures of society. Neighbor justice is meeting neighbors' needs across the globe and in our local communities.

Non-binary: See "Gender non-conforming, Non-binary, Genderqueer."

Objectification: Thinking of or portraying people as objects, erasing their humanity, emotions, and rights.

Ex. Catcalling, advertisements that use sexualized images to sell merchandise, and stories in which female characters exist only as props for male characters.

Patriarchy: A social system that enables men to have more power than, and power over, women and people who do not conform to socially accepted gender roles. A patriarchal social system is dominated by men, identified with men, and centered on men's actions, voices, and authority. In various ways, this kind of social system operates to control women, girls, and people who do not fit society's predominant ideas of maleness and masculinity.

Privilege: This term refers to the relationships between groups of people in society, to the social advantage or special treatment of a group or persons in a group. This advantage is unearned and results from how a group's identity is perceived as "normal" or "better." Privilege is lived out on an individual and societal scale. Privilege is not something a person deliberately opts into or out of, nor is it experienced by everyone in the same ways.

Ex. A man benefits from male privilege when his opinion is subconsciously valued more highly in a meeting, when he is paid more for equal work, or when he walks down a street without harassment or fear of sexual assault. White people benefit from white privilege when they can shop without being followed or monitored by staff who think they may shoplift, or when the majority of heroes in textbooks and movies look like them. For a white male, the combination of white privilege and male privilege can work together. A white man may have fewer risk factors for some stress-related illnesses such as Type 2 diabetes, while his complaints of pain are more likely to be taken seriously by his doctor. For more, see "intersectionality."



Glossary from Faith, Sexism, and Justice

Queer: Umbrella term regarding sex, gender, and sexual orientation, often used by individuals who identify as somehow “other” from society’s sexual, romantic, or gender norms.

Although historically used in a derogatory manner, the term has since been reclaimed as a positive label by some members within that community.

Rape culture: An environment in which the objectification of and assault on human bodies, particularly in a sexual way, is normalized and tolerated. Rape culture primarily harms women and girls. Blaming rape victims for their assaults and maintaining a biased justice system are both parts of rape culture and how it is propagated.

Reproductive health care: Health services related to the reproductive system at all stages of life for all genders, including the menstrual cycle, fertility, and cancer.

Sex (biological): A scientific label assigned at birth that describes an individual’s reproductive organs and whether they have XX chromosomes (female) or XY chromosomes (male). People whose biology varies from standards set by doctors’ expectations of being “female” or “male” are typically called “intersex.” Biological sex characteristics and traits of people who are said to be female or male are also variable.

Sexism: Refers to what supports male privilege and reinforces prejudice and discrimination against women and girls due to their gender and against people who do not conform to socially accepted gender roles. Human actions and speech can be sexist, as can institutions, policies, and practices.

Sexuality: A complex individual and social concept. Individually, sexuality includes the romantic and/or sexual feelings and desires that a person experiences. People’s sexuality is also influenced by the social and cultural forces in which they find themselves.

Toxic masculinity: Refers to forms of masculinity that emphasize aggression, power, and control and sometimes violent or unhealthy sexuality. It deemphasizes weakness, caring, and vulnerability. Masculinity itself is not harmful; however, it is described as toxic when these forms of masculinity cultivate harm to self, others, and society. Toxic masculinity limits the humanity and compassion of men.

Transgender: Describes a person whose gender is different from the sex assigned or identified at birth. Some transgender individuals identify as men or as women; others don’t identify with one of those words. Some people use this term to describe their identity; for others it serves as an umbrella term. Over time its meaning may change as language evolves. See “gender non-conforming.”



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Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

EXPLORE FAITH, SEXISM, AND JUSTICE: A CALL TO ACTION

“Particular sinful actions (sins) are expressions of our human life in a state of sin. Individuals, families, communities, institutions, governments, and societies can all sin. Sin is not only individual; it is also collective or communal. Sinful humans create structures, organizations, and societies that perpetuate sin, sometimes unintentionally. This is called ‘structural sin.’” (FSJ, p. 19)

“Patriarchy is a social system dominated by men, identified with men, and centered on men’s actions, voices, and authority. Patriarchy does not mean that males are bad and females are good, or that only males support this unfair system.” (FSJ, p. 31)

“Sexism is the reinforcement of male privilege, which leads to discrimination.” (FSJ, p. 31)

“Intersectionality refers to the ways in which various forms of discrimination and oppression, linked to aspects of a person’s identity, overlap. The concept of intersectionality helps to express the multiple discriminations many women face daily.” (FSJ, p. 25)

Participants are encouraged to read pp. 25-38 in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

ENCOUNTER THE SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 1:1-6; 12-17: Through the prophet Isaiah, God pleads for justice and judges the people for not trusting God and for oppressing others.

RESOURCES

Documents and history for *Faith Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* can be found at <https://www.elca.org/womenandjustice>.

Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action can be found at https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Faith_Sexism_Justice_Social_Statement_Adopted.pdf.

Fe, sexismo y justicia: Un llamado a la acción can be found at https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Fe_sexismo_y_justicia.pdf.

The study guide for *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* can be found at <https://www.elca.org/fsjstudyguide>.

The video for session two, “Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone,” can be found at <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8989135/video/468337999>.

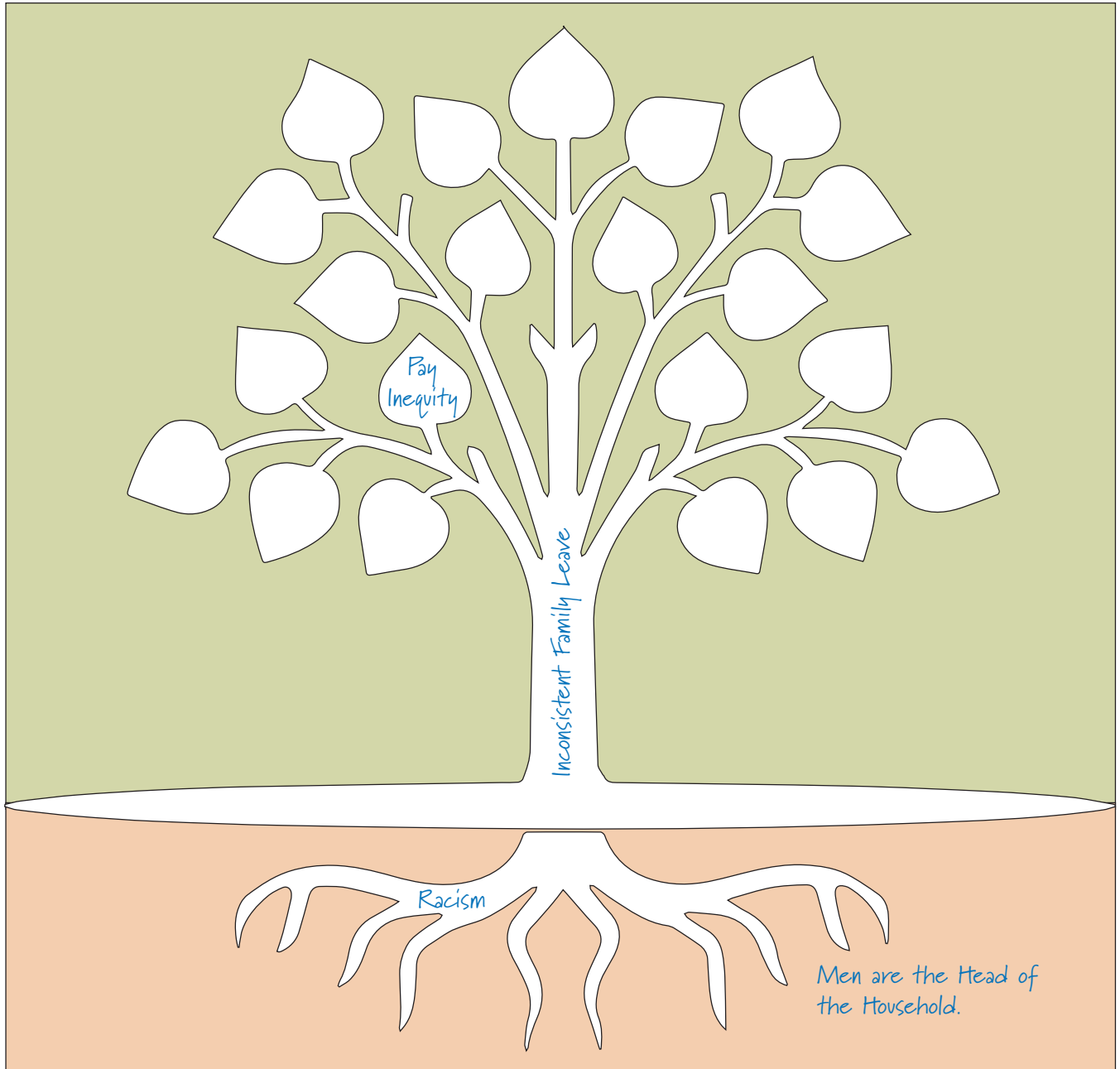


Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

ACTIVITY

A metaphor for how patriarchy as a social system works

This image of a tree is a metaphor for how a patriarchal social system works.* It is a visual illustration to show how sin is not only individual but also systemic.



* The Tree as Metaphor – Allan G. Johnson, agjohnson.us



Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

If You Want to Know More About Patriarchy, Sexism, and Gender Justice,

EXPLORE ...

... **experiences of women in the ELCA**, collected in “Our Voices, Our Stories” on the ELCA Justice for Women site. Go to <https://www.elca.org/justiceforwomen> and click on “Resources.” For more on ELCA rostered ministers, watch the video “Seriously?” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTcaAkG86QQ&t=4s>.

... **the ELCA’s understanding of structural sin**, see the 1991 social statement *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* at <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Church-in-Society>.

... **patriarchy and sexism**, read *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*, pp. 25-38; see pp. 33-34 for the effects on men and boys.

... **addressing gender-based violence**, read the ELCA social message “Gender-based Violence” and foundational documentation and use the study guide, found at <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Messages/Gender-Violence>.

... **the perspectives of women of color related to patriarchy and intersectionality**, read “One Perspective on ‘Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action’ as a Beacon of Gospel Hope for the ELCA” by Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld, published in *Currents in Theology and Mission* (April 2020), <https://www.currentsjournal.org/index.php/currents/article/view/237/258>.

... **congregational youth group engagement with patriarchy, sexism, and intersectionality**, read the article “Identifying the Intersections: Youth Ministry and the ELCA’s Social Statement ‘Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action’” by Nicholas Tangen, published in *Currents in Theology and Mission* (April 2020), <https://www.currentsjournal.org/index.php/currents/article/view/233/262>.

... **intersectional analysis and Lutheran theology**, read the article “Luther/an(d) Feminist Intersectional Theology” by Caryn D. Riswold, published in *Religions* (January 2020), <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/11/2/54>.

... **the intersection of racism, sexism, and colonialism**. Read the article “The Doctrine of Christian Discovery: Lutherans and the Language of Empire” by Tink Tinker, published in *Journal of Lutheran Ethics* (March 2017), <https://learn.elca.org/jle/the-doctrine-of-christian-discovery-lutherans-and-the-language-of-empire/>. Also see the ELCA’s repudiation of the doctrine of discovery, <http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/RepudiationDoctrineOfDiscoverySPR2016.pdf>.

... **the intersections of white supremacy, sexism, and homophobia**, read Lenny Duncan’s book *Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the U.S.* (2019).

... **reading the Bible with an analysis of patriarchy in mind**, see: “Of Many Generations: Mary, Elizabeth, and Lydia,” Women of the ELCA 2014 summer Bible study by Diane Jacobson, <https://www.gathermagazine.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/OfManyGenerations.pdf>.



Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

IN THE COMING WEEK

- A** Take a photo of the illustration you filled out or the notes you made; then share it with someone who did not attend today's session. Add a caption about how you see individual and systemic sins working together. Add a caption about how you see race, age, or ability intersecting in your illustration.
- B** Spend 5 minutes each day looking at the news headlines and reflect on how women, girls, and gender non-conforming persons from a variety of economic means, abilities, races and ethnicities, and/or gender identities and sexualities are represented. Write down one thing you notice each day. With others or alone, reflect on what you notice.
- C** Read Implementing Resolution #7 (*FSJ*, pp. 81-82), which urges congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to address their own inequities in compensation and the roots of this problem. Consider what your congregation, synod, organization, or workplace should do to provide equitable compensation.
- D** Read Implementing Resolution #16 (*FSJ*, p. 83), which calls all parts of the ELCA to integrate anti-sexism education and practices into their work, for the good of the whole church. Write down for yourself or talk with someone about where you would like to see this happen and what difference you want it to make.
- E** Become part of the World Council of Churches' "Thursdays in Black" campaign (<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/get-involved/thursdays-in-black> and <https://www.elca.org/thursdaysinblack>) and read Implementing Resolution #3 (*FSJ*, p. 81), which encourages congregations to take action to end gender-based violence.
- F** Investigate the resources in the Explore section at the end of this session.

