
Week 5 - Racism in Church

Flow of Session:

- Opening Prayer (3 to 5 minutes)
- Welcome (2 minutes)
- Reminder and recommit to the Group Covenant (2 minutes)
- Lectio Divina (10 minutes to do lectio)
- Biblical Reflection Video No. 5 – Psalm 147.13-21 (about 14 minutes)
- Moment of Silence
- Reactions to Biblical Reflection Video (5 minutes)
- France-Williams Video No 1 – ‘Journey’ (about 13 minutes)
- Small group discussion (5 minutes)
- France-Williams Video No 2 – ‘Institutional Racism’ (about 12 minutes)
- Small group discussion followed by plenary (10 minutes)
- Introduce ‘Personal Reflection Wrap Up Tool’ (5 minutes)
- Close and Prayer (2 minutes)

What you will need:

- A Candle (and matches)
- Bibles (or biblical verses printed to give participants) for Psalm 147.13-21
- The Collect for this week (the one from last Sunday)
- ‘The Prayer for Courage’ from the Corrymeela Community
- Biblical Reflection Video No. 5 – Psalm 147.13-21 (Download from website)
- France-Williams Video No 1 (Download from website)
- France-Williams Video No 2 (Download from website)
- Copies of the ‘Amazing Grace: Help to start thinking about personal reflections’ for the group (Download from website)
- Copies of the ‘Final Reflection Wrap Up Instructions’ for the group (Download from website)

Note: Of course, adapt or change whatever you feel is best for your context, tradition, or theology (or just to allow more time to discuss some of the content and not feel rushed). However, the planning team strongly encourages you to ensure that the biblical reflection is essential and that the videos are included so that the small group regularly hears from UKME / Global Majority Christians each week

The Session:

1. Opening Prayer

Please note: Feel free to use this short liturgy or open with extemporary prayer - or a combination of both. (Whatever works best for you and your tradition).

Light a candle in the centre of the group

Keep a moment of silence

Leader: Let us start by bringing our focus onto God and recognise God's presence among us. May the love and desire for justice of Jesus Christ be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

Leader: We put aside of stresses and preoccupations of the day, we acknowledge our hopes, fears, and anxieties as we start this session.

We ask you to be with us, Lord.
Help us to be open and vulnerable
to your presence and the learning you have for us today.
We pray in Jesus' name.

All: **Amen.**

Leader reads the collect for this week

Leader: We gather together our thoughts and prayers using the prayer that Jesus taught us:

All: **Our Father...**

All: All pray 'The Prayer for Courage' from the Corrymeela Community by Pádraig Ó Tuama to close.

2. Welcome

Review Principles of Learning Community:

- We're here to learn
- No experts
- Be challenged by the gospel
- Be challenged by the stories and experiences of others
- Will prioritise the voices of UKME / Global Majority Christians
- We acknowledge the leading of the Holy Spirit.

A reminder to:

- Be Present
- Be Open
- Be Truthful
- Be Gracious
- Be Kind

Explain the flow of this session (it would help to put on PowerPoint or White Board or A3 paper as well).

3. Reminder of the Group Covenant

- Review your group covenant
- Ask that everyone agrees to those principles again for this session by raising their hands.

4. Lectio Divina – Psalm 147.13-21

May we suggest people get into groups of 3 or 4 with those near them. Make sure everyone has a bible or a copy of the passage. There are many variations on how to do Lectio Divina. Here's a variation that we will use today:

Listening for God in the Word:

- i. One person reads aloud the passage of scripture. Listen for a word or short phrase that strikes you.
- ii. **Keep silence for a moment.** Then, another person reads the same piece of scripture aloud (preferably a different gender or age or accent with a different translation of the bible).
- iii. **Keep silence** for 2 minutes. Each person silently repeats the word or phrase that attracts them during that time.
- iv. Then, when given the cue to share, share aloud that one word or phrase that has attracted each person.

Please be sure to keep it a simple statement of one or a few words. **No elaboration.**

Then... How God speaks to ME and what I am invited to DO:

- i. Now, a Third reading of same passage by another person (again, preferably with a different gender or age or accent or translation of the bible).
- ii. **Keep silence** for 2 minutes. Each person reflects on: 'God invites me to do/be/become today/this week.'
- iii. When given the cue that the 2 minutes are up, share aloud the results of each person's reflection. **Something brief** like: 'I hear, I see, or God invites me to...'

Please note that anyone may "pass" at any time. If a person prefers to pray silently instead of sharing with the group, then simply state this aloud and conclude your silent prayer with Amen.

Watch

5. Biblical Reflection - Psalm 147.13-22

Watch Rosalyn Murphy's Biblical Reflection No. 5



6. A moment of silence

7. Reactions to Biblical Reflection Video

Opportunity to share observations or reflections in partners. If time, bring some of that back to the larger group.

Watch

8. Fr Azariah France-Williams Video No.1 - 'Journey'

We were very blessed to have Fr Azariah France-Williams, Priest, writer and podcaster based in Manchester, join us for the Amazing Grace sessions in both Coventry and Derby. Azariah is Pioneer priest at the Ascension Hulme, a member of the HeartEdge church network. He has been a priest with the Church of England for 10 years and he is a visiting scholar in Bible for Sarum College based in Salisbury. His first book 'Ghost Ship' was published in July 2020 and charts institutional racism and the Church of England. This extract is the first half of a live zoom session for the Diocese of Derby.



9. Small Group Discussion

In groups of 3 or 4, here are some questions to consider:

Questions to consider:

- What is your reaction to the videos you just watched?
- What are your initial reflections to the resources sent between sessions this week?
- What racial, cultural, and ethnic groups experience their voices, presence, and ideas as valued and welcome in your congregation today?

- Which groups have been welcome and shaped your church's story since its founding? Write those groups in the inner circle.

Watch

10. Fr Azariah France-Williams Video No.2- 'Institutional Racism'

This extract is the first half of a live zoom session for the Diocese of Derby.



11. Small Group Discussion

In groups of 3 or 4, here are some questions to consider:

Questions to consider:

- What is your reaction to videos you just watched?
- What racial, cultural, and ethnic groups are not present and/or not welcome in your congregation today, although they are in the same parish, town, area, or region?
- What groups have been unwelcome or on your church's margins in the past? What steps could be taken to include them?

12. Personal Reflection Wrap Up Tool

Hand out copies of the 'Personal Reflection Wrap Up Tool' and the 'Personal Reflection Wrap Up Tool Instructions'. Talk the group through the instructions so that everyone understands.

12. Explain what next week's focus will be: 'Final Reflections & What's Next?'

Remind the group to bring their copies of the 'Racial Diversity Audit' and their final reflections for next week.

As you did last week, let the group know that you will email them with further material in the next couple of days to consider during the week. We know people have varying degrees of time, so we will share everything from a book to read to short videos / articles and podcasts. This is not intended to be a book group or to require you to do hours of homework between each session. There is no guilt or pressure to engage with everything, but people are encouraged to engage with at least something (and all are invited to include this learning community in their prayers) before we meet again next week.

13. Prayer to Close

Say a short prayer to close, committing our actions to God, inviting the Holy Spirit to enable our continued learning with courage throughout the week.

14. Blow out the candle

Email tomorrow for next week's session:

Of course, thank them for joining you on this Amazing Grace Learning Community journey and please be sure to encourage the group to pray for each other throughout the week. Encourage them to spend time reflecting about their time in the course with the reflection tool - and to revisit the Racial Diversity Audit.

'Personal Reflection Wrap Up Tool'

'Personal Reflection Wrap Up Tool Instructions'