
Week 3 - We need to talk about race

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. 3 - Psalm 33.1-22 (about 6 minutes)
- Moment of Silence
- Reactions to Biblical Reflection Video (5 minutes)
- 'Welcome and Unwelcome?' Exercise (15 minutes)
- 'Lived Experiences: Neil Masih' Video (about 7 minutes)
- Small group discussion followed by plenary (15 minutes)
- 'How do you view God?' Reflection PowerPoint (10 minutes)
- Questions about the Racial Diversity Audit (3 minutes)
- Close and Prayer (2 minutes)

What you will need:

- A Candle (and matches)
- Bibles (or biblical verses printed to give participants) for Psalm 33.1-22
- The Collect for this week (the one from last Sunday)
- 'The Prayer for Courage' from the Corrymeela Community
- Biblical Reflection Video No.3 - Psalm 33.1-22 (Download from website)
- 'Lived Experiences: Neil Masih' (Download from website)
- 'How do you view God?' Reflection PowerPoint (Download from website)
- 'A Franciscan Benediction' (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

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 33.1-22

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 Video - Psalm 33.1 - 22

Watch Rosalyn Murphy's Biblical Reflection No. 3 - Psalm 33.1 - 22 video.



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.

8. 'Welcome & Unwelcome' Exercise

- i. Ask the group to get into partners.
- ii. Pause for a moment and ask the group to think of a time when they felt really welcomed and valued in detail, about a time when they felt heard/seen and appreciated intrinsically for who they were. (If that has never happened for someone, ask them to imagine).
- iii. Now turn to your partner and share that story. Each person has 1 minute, and the leader will tell them when to switch.
- iv. When they are finished, ask them to pause again and consider a specific time and place they felt deeply unwelcome. A time when their presence, voice or ideas were not received or valued.

v. Now turn to your partner and share that story. Each person has 1 minute, and the leader will tell them when to switch.

vi. Lastly, as a group discuss what that felt like to listen to or to share about being unwelcome. What was the learning from that?

Watch

9. 'Lived Experiences: Neil Masih' video

At our first session we listened to the Revd Jacqueline Stober share her experiences. Today we will hear from an Asian British perspective - Mr Neil Masih, who is the Intercultural Mission Enabler for the Diocese of Coventry and a Church Warden at his local parish.



10. 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 is your reaction to the 'Welcome & Unwelcome' Exercise?
- What are your key reflections to the resources sent between sessions this week? What inspired / challenged you?
- What are your next steps? Commit to process, read books, explore resources

11. 'How do you view God?' Reflection PowerPoint

i. Use the short PowerPoint if you wish, hand out pdf copies of the slides if you wish, or just ask the group to close their eyes and sit quietly.

ii. Read the quotations on the second slide from 'What Colour is Your God?' by James and Lillian Breckenridge:

'Christianity has been constructed upon the framework of European values and traditions...

It has been Eurocentric in presenting the Christian faith in terms of the dominant culture, overlooking the traditions, history, and literary contributions of other cultures...

It is Eurocentric, for example, to picture Jesus as Caucasian.'

iii. Then ask the following two questions, giving 3 or 4 minutes of quiet contemplation time for each question:

- How do you view God?
- How has your view of God changed over your life?

iv. Close with 'A Franciscan Benediction'. Either read for them or hand out copies and read in unison as a group.

12. Questions about the Racial Diversity Audit (3 minutes)

- What is God highlighting to you so far?
- How might you use the Racial Diversity Audit in your context?
- What are the voices you are listening to?
- How diverse is your context (e.g. friendship group / leadership team / PCC / electoral role compared with the wider population of your parish/town/city?)
- What about the resources you use, the images you use and the stories you tell?

13. Explain what next week's focus will be: 'Black British History'

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.

14. Blow out the candle

15. 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.

Email tomorrow for next week's session:

As before, 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.

Book:

For our next meeting, we recommend the excellent book 'Black and British' by David Olusoga. Alternatively, another great book to consider might be 'Is God Colour Blind?' (updated in 2020) by next week's guest speaker, Anthony G Reddie.

Other Online Resources:

For those who want to dig deeper, below is a link to a longer podcast episode from the Nomad series. This includes some excellent poetry by a local Birmingham poet.

<https://www.nomadpodcast.co.uk/anthony-reddie-ravelle-sade-fairman-white-supremacy-and-black-suffering-n226/>

There is also a longer video about 'Racism and the Bible' from last week's speaker, Jen Jenkins, excerpted from a longer talk. You can download that at www.amazing-grace.co.uk.

We will be joined next week by Professor Anthony G. Reddie. You can find more information about him and his work here: <https://www.anthonyreddie.com/>