
Week 4 - Black British History

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)

Biblical Reflection Video No. 4 - Philemon 1 (about 14 minutes)

Moment of Silence

Reactions to Biblical Reflection Video (5 minutes)

Reddie Video No 1 - 'Black British History' (about 12 minutes)

Small group discussion (5-10 minutes)

Reddie Video No 2 - 'We are here because you were there' (about 10 minutes)

Small group discussion followed by plenary (10-15 minutes)

Handout 'Concrete Suggestions - Reddie' (2 minutes)

Close and Prayer (2 minutes)

What you will need:

A Candle (and matches)

Bibles (or biblical verses printed to give participants) for Philemon 1

The Collect for this week (the one from last Sunday)

'The Prayer for Courage' from the Corrymeela Community

Biblical Reflection Video No.4 - Philemon 1 (Download from website)

Reddie Video No 1 - 'Black British History' (Download from website)

Reddie Video No 2 - 'We are here because you were there' (Download from website)

Copies of the 'Concrete Suggestions' 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

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- 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 - Philemon 1

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...'

Watch

5. Biblical Reflection - Philemon 1

Watch Rosalyn Murphy's Biblical Reflection No. 4
- Philemon 1



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.

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. Reddie Video No.1 - ‘Black British History’

We were very lucky to have Professor Anthony Reddie with us on the Amazing Grace course in Coventry and in Derby. The author of many books and articles, Professor Anthony G. Reddie is the Director of the Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture and a Fellow of Regent's Park College at the University of Oxford. He is also an Extraordinary Professor of Theological Ethics and a Research Fellow at the University of South Africa. This extract is the first half of a video he prepared for the Diocese of Coventry.



9. Small Group Discussion

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

Questions to consider:

- What is God highlighting to you so far?
- What is your reaction to the videos you just watched?
- What are your key reflections to the resources sent between sessions this week? What inspired / challenged you?

Watch

10. Reddie Video No. 2 - 'We are here because you were there'

Watch Professor Anthony Reddie Video No. 2. This extract is the second half of the video he prepared for the Diocese of Coventry.



11. Small Group Discussion

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

Questions to consider:

- What is God highlighting to you so far?
- What is your reaction to the videos you just watched?
- **'British History can be summarised in 3 C's: Colonialism, Commerce & Christianity.'** To what extent do you agree with this?
- How might today's perspectives challenge or inform the mission of the church today?

12. Handout 'Concrete Suggestions – Reddie'

Hand out copies. If time, discuss, if not, ask the group to read them during the week – and to apply the thinking to the Racial Diversity Audit.

13. Explain what next week's focus will be: 'Racism in the Church'

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. 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 always, 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:

Strongly recommend Azariah France-Williams's brilliant book, 'Ghost Ship: Institutional Racism and the Church of England'.

Other Online Resources:

There is a great Nomad podcast with Azariah:

<https://www.nomadpodcast.co.uk/azariah-france-williams-natalia-nana-black-aliens-and-white-allies-n235/>

Other Print Resources:

If you'd rather, check out this Church Times article at:

Azariah France-Williams: a C of E health warning (churchtimes.co.uk)

We have also attached a recent 2022 research report entitled '**If it Wasn't for God**'. It is a Report on the Wellbeing of Global Majority heritage Clergy in the Church of England.

Lastly, we've attached an important recent national church document, 'From Lament to Action,' published in 2021 from the Archbishops' National Anti-Racism Taskforce (if you haven't had a chance to look at it before). You can read about the task force here.

As we have reached the mid-point in our sessions, we are going to begin to shift focus a bit towards action and change (whilst retaining the need for personal reflection, of course). To that end, think a bit about the headlines produced by the Anti-Racism Task Force in the CofE and about which of these you might be drawn to. The five priority areas for change and implementation are as follows:

- Participation (including appointments)
- Education
- Training & Mentoring
- Young People
- Governance & Structures