

What do baby dolls have to do with the Charter for Racial Justice?

¹³ People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵ Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." ¹⁶ And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them. - Mark 10:13-16

The little children of the world are hindered by our racism. Like Jesus says, "Do not hinder them!" Doll Tests studies of children 3, 4, and 5 years old, and younger, show the scars of racism. In fact, the findings from the first of these studies done by Drs. Kenneth and Mamie Clark in 1950-1951 were a persuasive contribution to the Brown vs the Board of Education Supreme Court case decision ending the segregation of public schools.

The following is a video telling about the Doll Tests:

<https://youtu.be/a7sX1cn5aO4?si=LsnW7nPAgjE2wbgk> Landmark Cases: Brown v Board Doll Test C-SPAN 2+ minutes

From the Doll Tests, the Clarks concluded that "prejudice, discrimination, and segregation created a feeling of inferiority among African-American children and damaged their self-esteem.

The Charter for Racial Justice from the Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church, and written years ago by members of the United Women in Faith, has eight statements beginning "Because we believe..." each affirming the struggle for equality. And, the Charter lists eight specific actions to be taken by the church. Number five states "we will" ... raise local churches' awareness of the need for equality and justice for all, and ...

create opportunities to work for these things across racial lines.”

Highlighting the findings of the Doll Tests and offering an opportunity to work to eliminate this type of unconscious prejudice in young children absolutely addresses the #5 call to action in the Charter. Yes, multicultural dolls can be used to realize the intent of the Charter, to act out our Christian commitment.

The Florida Conference Charter for Racial Justice (CRJ) Committee of UWFaith challenges each unit here in the State of Florida to demonstrate their commitment to eliminating racism from the fabric of our society. As women we have all played with dolls; we have all nurtured little children; and we all have a God-given love for **all** the little children of the world. Every one of us! These common denominators are a solid-gold foundation on which to build a better future. And so, the CRJ Committee hopes all units will consider the Baby Doll Challenge.

The CRJ Committee asks that units of United Women in Faith make doll clothes for a multicultural doll. After these dolls and their outfits been laid at the altars and their recipients prayed for, these love gifts will be presented to either one of our UWFaith Mission Institutions, Cornerstone Family Services in Tampa, or Wesley House Family Services in Key West, or to a child development center designated by your local UWFaith members.

Over a twelve-month period, specifically January to December 2024, the Florida Conference Leadership Team will lead the units in this project ordering dolls in bulk. We request you contribute \$5 per doll but we will provide funding for dolls if units are unable to resource the project. Bring the dolls to be blessed on the altar at the Conference Annual Meeting. Unit members will be the crafty and creative souls to sew, knit, or crochet clothes for the dolls. Others may choose to purchase children’s books that feature people of color. Units will publicize their heart-warming gifts with a picture and briefly tell how this gesture is a tool needed to build a world free from division and prejudice. Share your story on social media or in a local newspaper. Will you and your unit accept the challenge?

In closing, let's stand, join hands, and sing a song we all know well, but with a new twist. The song is "Jesus Loves the Little Children of the World," but rather than putting children in four unrealistic silos: red, yellow, black and white, we will describe skin colors as a spectrum, "All the shades from dark to light."

Jesus loves the little children all the children of the world.

All the shades from dark to light,

They are precious in his sight.

Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Pray with me: Creator God who chose to diversify the people of the world, providing difference and variety, making each of us unique in our own way, yet forming us all in your image, we thank you. Give us the wisdom to appreciate your gifts and the power to teach others to do the same. Let us nurture the young and give them the opportunity to reach their full potential. Let us be keenly aware of insidious and pernicious racism that robs the world of equity and equality. Help us to screw up our courage and confront prejudice whenever and wherever we can. In the name of Jesus who loved all the little children, Amen

Bonus video: <https://youtu.be/yTYL7NK8j5Y?si=tYNtBiYhk87V2slH> Jane Elliotts Brown Eye/Blue Eye 4.+ minutes