Family Conversation Guide

For use with middle and high school-aged students.

This guide is intended to be used during dinner once a week for six weeks. We encourage families to continue to bring up the topic throughout the week to keep it fresh in your minds.

After completing six weeks of conversation, we encourage you to share this resource with another family in your social network.
Most white people in the United States are not taught to think about themselves racially or draw attention to race. We know that race matters, but discussions about race are usually about someone else’s race, not our own. Often, people of color are forced to think about themselves racially because the world sees their race on a daily basis. People of color are, sometimes, more comfortable talking about race, because the topic often comes up through the course of daily life.

We tend to think that everyone experiences the world in the same way we do (objective experience). The reality is that we each experience the world differently, based on identity categories like race and gender (subjective experience). Those of us who are white have an experience that is shaped by our whiteness.

Reflection questions
1. When did you realize that you had a racial identity?
2. How has your race shaped your life?
3. How does it feel talking about race with people of your own race?
4. How does it feel to talk about race with the racial other?
2. Diverse Circles

We can open up our perspective by spending time with individuals and communities that are different than us. Many of the racial divides in this country have been increased because of social separation. While it is not always the intention of individuals, we tend to live, shop, and learn in environments that are racially homogenous (most people are of the same race).

This environment of sameness can support the false idea that everyone’s lives look more or less like our own. Coming into contact and building relationships with people from different social categories (like race, class, or gender) can help us begin to open our eyes to different life experiences.

Reflection questions

1. What is the most diverse space you’ve been in? The least diverse?
2. Think about where you spent your time:
   a. What race are your friends?
   b. What race are your family members?
   c. What race is your boss or teacher?
   d. What race are the people at your church?
   e. What race are your favorite music artists?
   f. What race are the characters in your favorite tv show?
   g. What races are represented in your favorite restaurant?
   h. What race are your coworkers or classmates?
   i. What race are your neighbors?
3. How might you change up your routine to spend more time in diverse spaces? (suggestions: restaurants, theater performances, visiting another church, visiting the closest city).
3. Our Story

We all have different experiences dealing with race, even within our own families! Our ideas about race come from many different sources. The movies we watch, the people we hang out with, and the stories we hear gently change the ways we think about race and racial difference. That is to say, the culture around us shapes how we understand race. We live within our culture like a fish lives in the water—we are surrounded by it, but unaware of it most of the time.

We cannot seek to understand the experiences of different racial identities until we first examine our own perspective. We can start to understand how we have been shaped by our culture and experiences by intentionally reflecting and sharing with others.

Reflection questions

1. What were you taught about race growing up? At home? At school?
2. When did you first encounter racial difference?
3. When have you noticed being treated differently because of your race (discrimination or privilege)?
4. Where do you most often interact with or see people of different races?
As we discussed in Week 1, it can be difficult for some of us to talk about race because we’re not used to it. It can also be scary to talk about race because we are afraid of offending someone. One reason why it’s hard for some to talk about race is because “racism” and “racist” are such loaded terms. We don’t want to seem racist, and we don’t want others to think we are calling them racists!

We hear the words “racism” and “racist” (or sexist) a lot, but these words are used to mean a lot of different things. We can avoid confusion with these terms if we can reframe our thinking and use the term prejudiced to talk about the behaviors or actions of individuals.

Individuals can be prejudiced towards one another or towards communities. Prejudices are false beliefs about someone (or a group) based on misunderstandings or stereotypes. Prejudices might be intentional, or we may be unaware that our beliefs are based on misunderstandings. We could have prejudices about people of different races, genders, sexuality, income, ability, education, among others. We all have prejudices because of our culture. It is our job to figure out our prejudices and find ways to combat them.

Reflection questions

1. What do you think of when you hear the word racist?
2. What are some examples of prejudice?
3. Can you think of a time when you acted with prejudice?
4. How can we change our prejudices?
We each have prejudices. We also each have privileges. Privileges are benefits that we receive or hardships that we avoid by just being ourselves. We are privileged to be Americans. We live in a country where we have running water, access modern technology, and the freedom to worship together.

Privileges are connected to certain groups (identities), and privileges can be big or small. For example, white privilege allows a white person to easily find a bandage that approximately matches their skin tone. White privilege also means that white drivers are much less like to be pulled over by the police. Class privilege often looks like full carts at the grocery store without tallying totals in advance. Those with ability privilege are able to visit new locations without first checking ahead for accessibility.

Having privilege does not mean we did not work for what we have. It just means someone with a different identity would have to work a bit harder to get to the same place. We should not feel guilty or bad because we have privilege. We should instead think of our privileges as superpowers that we can use to support others and create a more just and loving world.

Reflection questions

1. How have you heard the term privilege used before?
2. What groups in the United States hold positions of privilege?
3. What are some small examples of privileges you have?
4. What are some big examples of privileges you have?
We've spent a lot of time talking about our relationship to race. We thought about why it is uncomfortable to talk about race, and looked at where we encounter difference. We told our stories about race, and shared our prejudices and privileges. All of this work is very important to help us to become more loving, understanding and connected individuals. This work helps us to grow as a family so that we can help bring the light of justice into the world.

However, it is not enough for us to only change our hearts. While we can work on our prejudices alone, we cannot address racism by ourselves. The word “racism” points to the structures and systems that have created and supported inequality in our world. Racism always involves politics, economics and culture.

Racism uses power to support inequality. We see racism when schools in white neighborhoods are better than schools in black neighborhoods. We see racism when black men are pulled over by the police more than white men. We see racism when public figures use their platform to support discrimination and increase prejudice.

We fight racism by helping others to learn more about race, by voting for candidates that support justice, by supporting diverse businesses and by pushing all of those around us to grow and change with us, even when it is hard.

Reflection questions

1. What is the difference between racism and prejudice?
2. What are examples of racism in the US? (Remember, to think about systems rather than only interpersonal incidents.)
3. What power do we have to combat racism?
4. Who can we share this conversation guide with?
5. What other -isms use power to support inequality?
Morning Devotional

For use with middle and high school-aged students.

This guide is intended to be used during mornings once a week for six weeks. We encourage families to continue to bring up the topic throughout the week to keep it fresh in your minds.

After completing six weeks of conversation, we encourage you to share this resource with another family in your social network.
1. Racial Stress

Bible Story


Reflection

Sometimes it is easy to only think about ourselves, but Jesus calls us to take care of our neighbors, even when it is hard. You see, the Samaritan man who helped in the end of the story was a different race than the Jewish man who was robbed. They were not supposed to talk or touch one another. In the not so distant past, people in the United States thought black and white people should not touch or talk to each other. This story tells us that everyone is our neighbor, no matter their race, how much money they have, what they believe, or how they dress and act.

We know that we should love and help our neighbor, but that is hard to do is we don’t think about the things that are getting in the way. Thinking and talking about race might be hard. But it also helps us to understand ourselves and prepare ourselves to be better neighbors. We need to talk about race even when it is uncomfortable. That is the only way to make our world a move loving, spirit-filled place.

Prayer

God, please be with us over the next six weeks while we talk about race. Help us to learn more about ourselves and the world that we live. Prepare us to be better neighbors, especially to those who are different. Open our hearts and minds so that we may understand your truth and share your love with those around us. Amen.
2. Diverse Circles

Bible Story

Jesus Talks to a Samaritan Woman: John 4: 1-13

Reflection

Jesus was known for hanging out with all of the “wrong” people. He spent time with the poor, the sick, the powerful, the corrupt. He had disciples who hated the Romans and disciples who used to work for the Romans. Jesus included everyone in his community.

This story gives us an example of Jesus ignoring the customs of the day. As a Jewish man, Jesus was not supposed to talk to the Samaritan woman at the well. She was from a different neighborhood and a different community than Jesus. But that didn’t stop Jesus from inviting her into relationship and sharing God’s love and promise with her.

We are called to follow Jesus’s example. We should spend our time with all sorts of different people. We are all neighbors and children of God. When we act like Jesus and meet people who are different from us, we learn more about the world and become closer to one another.

Prayer

God, help me to be like Jesus. Make me brave so that I can go to new places and meet new people. Help me to see those who are different as friends. Help me to be open and kind. Push me out of my comfort zone so that I can grow and learn to love others better. Amen.
3. Our Story

Bible Story

In the World, Not Of the World: Romans 12:1-3

Reflection

Romans 12:2 tells us not to conform to the patterns of this world. Paul is telling us not to let the ways of the world squish us into a mold the way we can squish playdough into a cookie cutter. We are reminded to stand tall and live for God.

If we want to live for God, we have to pay attention to those things that try to push us into acting in unloving ways. In order to do this, we cannot assume we are always right. We have to look at ourselves honestly to see where we need to grow and learn.

We can discover the ways the world squishes us into the boxes that allow for inequality when we talk more about what we see, hear, and learn about ourselves and those of different races.

Prayer

God, please help me be strong against the forces that try to push me into boxes. Help me to look at my actions and thoughts honestly. Show me where I need to grow. Help me to listen to others, and change when I am wrong. Help me to see others not the way the world sees them, but the way you see them. Amen.
4. Prejudice

Bible Story
The Golden Rule: James 2:1-8

Reflection
You’ve probably heard the phrase, “don’t judge a book by its cover.” That means, we can’t tell how good the book is going to be based on the picture on the front. People are the same way. We don’t really know anything about somebody until we talk to them and get to know them.

Sometimes we assume things about people. We look at their skin color, where they live, how they dress, or how they talk and guess what they are like. The wrong stories we end up with are called prejudice (ideas that assume things about people who are different from us). God tells us that outwards appearance is not important, and that we are not to act according to prejudice. God loves people for who they are, and so should we.

We are called to treat everyone with love and respect. That means we have to stop our brains from making up stories about people who look different than us. In order to love our neighbor as ourselves, we have to stop ourselves from making judgements about people before we get to know them.

Prayer
God, help me see where I have learned a wrong story about people who are different. Help me to learn more about prejudice so that I can see everyone as a beloved child of God. Please remove my desire to judge others and replace it with a heart for listening and understanding. Amen.
5. Privilege

Scripture

From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who
has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Reflection

This verse comes at the end of a really confusing parable, but the message is clear. Those of us
who are blessed with more have a responsibility to those with less. This is true about money,
power, and accesses (the ability to get what you want).

In the United States, some of us are treating better or have more opportunities because of our
skin color, where we live, or how much money our parents make. This isn’t fair, but it’s also
not our fault. The world is broken and doesn’t treat people equally yet.

Those of us with privilege shouldn’t feel bad about having privilege. We should
instead see our privileges as opportunities. Privileges are like super powers that we can use to
change things and help other people.

Prayer

God, I want to take on the responsibility of caring for others. Help me to see my privilege and
to learn how to use it to lift up people who have more things in their way. Use me to make the
lives of other’s better. Amen.
6. Power

Scripture

For a Time Such as This: Esther 4:12-17

Reflection

The book of Esther is about a Jewish woman who married the king and went on to save her people. Esther’s husband wanted to get rid of the Jewish people. Esther’s Uncle Mordecai found out and asked Esther to speak to the king. Esther knew that she could be put to death for addressing the king without an invitation. Esther knew that she had to take a rise and use her power to save her people.

We all have some kind of power. We have talents, gifts, and relationships. We can use these things just for ourselves, or we can use them to help others. God calls us to use what we have to help those who need it. Each one of us is called to help the world. It is up to us to keep listening to God to find out where we’re being called to act.

Prayer

God, please help me use my power to other people. Show me how I can help people from where I already am with what I already have. Help our family to continue to grow and pursue justice as we deepen our relationship with you. Amen.
**Family Trip Suggestions**

Make your own Journey 4 Justice. Keep the conversation going! Every family trip is an occasion for learning. Visit the locations listed below on your next road trip or virtual vacation to learn more about civil rights history in our region!

(*Social-Distancing Friendly)

**Griot Museum of Black History, St. Louis, MO**
The Griot uses life-size wax figures, other art, artifacts, and memorabilia to interpret the stories of African Americans with a regional connection who have contributed to our country’s development.

2505 St. Louis Ave., St. Louis, MO 63106
https://www.thegriotmuseum.com/

**Old Court House, St. Louis, MO**
Site of the first two trials of the pivotal Dred Scott case and is also where Virginia Minor fought for women's right to vote. Houses four exhibit galleries providing a rich history of early St. Louis.

11 N. Fourth St., St. Louis, MO 63102
https://www.nps.gov/jeff/planyourvisit/index.htm

*Dividing Lines: A History of Segregation in Kansas City, Kansas City, MO*
Journey through the history of segregation in the Kansas City metro, primarily through its real estate. The tour is designed so that you can safely drive through the city at your own pace while hearing stories about each area you travel through.

Driving tour starts at: 7500 Mission Rd., Prairie Village, KS 66208

*African-American Heritage Trail, Columbia, MO*
A 2-mile walking trail in Columbia that takes visitors to dozens of historical markers, each representing a different person or place important to Columbia’s black community.

*Arkansas Civil Rights Heritage Trail Audio Tour, Little Rock AR
The Arkansas Civil Rights Heritage Trail is an ever-growing collection of sites in Little Rock that were significant to the Civil Rights Movement.

300 West Markham Street, Little Rock, AR

*Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site, Little Rock, AR
In the fall of 1957, when students were returning to the all-white Little Rock Central High School, nine new African-American faces were to be among them. A crowd of more than 1,000 angry white protestors met students on their first day. On September 25, the federal troops escorted the Little Rock Nine to class and then remained on guard through the year.

2120 W. Daisy L. Gatson Bates Dr., Little Rock, AR 72202
https://www.nps.gov/chsc/planyourvisit/hours.htm

National Civil Rights Museum, Memphis, TN
The National Civil Rights Museum is a complex of museums and historic buildings in Memphis, Tennessee; its exhibits trace the history of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States from the 17th century to the present. The museum is built around the former Lorraine Motel which was the site of the assassination of civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr.

450 Mulberry St., Memphis, TN 38103
https://www.civilrightsmuseum.org/

*Virtual tour:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=69&v=UWDHj99rGeA&feature=emb_logo

Brown vs Board of Education National Historic Site, Topeka, KS
Monroe Elementary School, now the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, was one of the four segregated schools for African Americans in Topeka, Kansas. The school is an ideal place to remember this landmark decision and to learn about African American struggles for equality.

1515 SE Monroe Street, Topeka, KS 66612
https://www.nps.gov/articles/brownvboard.htm
*Civil Rights Trail Virtual Tour
View our gallery for a virtual tour of the sites and settings that contributed to our nation’s civil rights narrative. Scroll through snapshots from across the country and gain inspiration and ideas for creating your own transformative journey.

https://civilrightstrail.com/gallery/

*PBS, The Civil Rights Movement: Virtual Learning
This virtual learning journey transports students to a critical period of time in United States history. Brimming with comprehensive, cross-curricular content, including 14 videos, primary source images and documents, compelling photo galleries, interactive maps, artwork, music, and more, this virtual collection invites students into an engaging exploration of some of the most significant events of the Civil Rights Movement.

https://ninenet.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/b243b601-a18f-432c-84ff-1d0ca77e8020/the-civil-rights-movement-virtual-learning-journey/

*PBS, National Center for Civil and Human Rights
Located in Atlanta, Georgia, the National Center for Civil and Human Rights aims to empower its visitors to protect every human’s rights.

https://ninenet.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/d68171ab-7de3-4eda-b36f-084f00c7af87/the-national-center-for-civil-and-human-rights/
Journey 4 Justice Media Guide

It can be hard to diversify our communities. Some of us might live in all-white areas. Some of us may be extremely anxious about talking to new people. Some of us might not be ready to regularly interact with the other yet.

We can continue to expand our perspectives from the comfort of our homes through intentional engagement with media like television and movies. Shows and films made by people of color share life experiences that differ from dominant cultural norms. Below you will find a list of media suggestions to expand your exposure and continue the conversation. Please check ratings for shows before determining if appropriate for your students.

Family-based Sitcoms
Blackish, Grownish, Jane the Virgin, Fresh Off The Boat, One Day at a Time

Adult Comedy
Insecure, Dear White People, The Chi, Shameless, Kim’s Convenience, Masters of None, Rumi

Adult Drama
Pose, Atlanta, When They See Us, The Farewell

Things to think on:
1. Did the character’s race come into play in a major plot point? How so?
2. Would the story have played out differently if the characters were another race? How so?
3. What did the characters experience in this episode that you have not experienced? How is race related to this?
4. How are the people of color in this show similar or different to characters of color on predominantly white shows?
5. What can this episode teach me about the "racial other"?
6. What has this episode changed in my understanding, perspective, or actions?
Other Media

Books
The New Jim Crow, Michelle Alexander
Waking Up White, Debbie Irving
The Third Reconstruction, Rev Dr William J Barbar II
White Fragility, Robin DiAngelo
Children of the Land, Marcelo Hernandez Castillo

Documentaries
Race: The Power of an Illusion, PBS
13th, Netflix
Asian Americans, PBS

Podcast
We Live Here, St. Louis Public Radio
Difficult Vocabulary
(High School/Adult)

Step 1: We Have Privilege

Privilege: advantage or benefits that individuals and/or groups of individuals enjoy because of their membership in a dominant identity group (e.g., white privilege, male privilege, class privilege) (Privilege is often invisible to those who benefit from it.)

We all have identities that grant us privileges. We live in the United States- there are privileges that go along with that (we have access to public services like schools and roads. We have more economic power and access to healthcare than those who live in the developing world). We’re also Christian in a predominantly Christian nation- there are privileges that go along with that too (Schools and offices close for some of our religious holidays, people do not assume we are terrorists because of our faith).

Privilege can be hard to understand because it is often invisible to those who have it. Privilege protects us from some kinds of disadvantage and/or struggle, so privilege is ultimately a lack of these experiences. If we spend all of our time with people who share a lot of the same privileges as us, we might not understand the difference in experience and perspectives that others may have.

If I haven’t been exposed to these unjust practices myself, I might not know they even exists. My privilege makes it invisible.

Other forms of privilege include: Class privilege, ability, access to education, gender privilege, age privilege, and many more!
All of us, regardless of identity relate to systems of oppression on three levels. Our engagement with oppressive systems occurs on all three levels, and addressing injustice requires us to build solutions and create change on all three levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>Bias (usually unconscious or unintentional)</th>
<th>Ex: I automatically assume an older person does not know how to use a computer.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Personal in my mind</td>
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<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>Prejudice (how we decide to act)</td>
<td>Ex: I don’t like going to restaurants in those neighborhoods.</td>
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<td>Interpersonal</td>
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<td>Between me and another</td>
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<tr>
<td>Systemic</td>
<td>-isms (racism, sexism, classism etc)</td>
<td>Ex: A company favors an applicant with a white sounding name over an equally qualified applicant with an African name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional/Structural</td>
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<td>Involves Power</td>
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Step 3: So Sometimes We Misstep

Microaggression: a statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as a racial or ethnic minority.

Microaggressions are situations in which our INTENT behind our words differs greatly from the IMPACT these words have on others around us.

Common examples include:

- Where are you really from?
  - Sounds like: you don’t belong here.
  - Erases someone’s identity.

- You speak so well for a _______ person.
  - Sounds like: I didn’t expect too much from you.
  - Erases a group’s potential and achievements.

- We’re going into the city to help those kids.
  - Sounds like: the kids we are working with are different from our own kids.
  - Erases empathy and humanity.

How can I stop Microaggressions?

1. Be aware of your assumptions
2. Understand the difference between intent and impact
3. Watch your language-make it a practice
4. Regularly expose yourself to diverse perspectives and experiences.