Module 6: Oppose Racism!

**Reach Out! Connect! Share!**  
***Kentucky Council of Churches   
Campus Ministry Modules*Oppose Racism!**

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**Introduction**

The presence of racism in our communities makes us aware that not everyone is treated with the same respect. Not everyone in our community has the same access to compassionate justice. The Bible tells us that God’s “justice” implies “equality. God as exalted by justice and pleased with those who cease evil, learn good and seek justice by defending those who are oppressed and pleading for those who are deliberately and systematically excluded. Micah judged oppressors harshly because of his recognition of God’s steadfast love for all people equally. Wejoin Micah in calling to accountability those persons and groups whose actions cause oppression and affirm his vision of a merciful, compassionate God who leads us, through obedience, to justice and peace. Jesus calls his followers to love God with all our being and our neighbors as ourselves. We affirm his two great commandments and commit ourselves to work for justice by feeding those who are hungry, caring for those who are sick, and setting free those who are oppressed. (Taken from the Kentucky Council of Churches Policy Statement, “A Call for Justice.)

**Guiding Question**

How can we as Christians oppose racism and help create a society where God’s vision of equality is realized?

**Guiding Bible Passage**

Galatians 3:28 (NRSV)

28 There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

**Bible Passages**

**Foundational:** Gal. 3:28

**Love:** Matt. 22:36-40, Luke 10:27, Gal. 5:14; Lev. 19:17-18; Matt. 5:43f, Matt. 18:15; John 13:34-35; Romans 13: 9.

**Hate:** John 15:18; Matt. 7:1-29; 1 Cor. 13:4-7; 1 John 4:1-30; Proverbs 6:16-19, 8:13; Eph. 4:26.; Ps. 11:5.; Titus 3:2; Romans 2:1-29; Eph. 4:18.; Ps. 109:1-31; Prov. 16:7.

**Conflict Resolution:** Matt. 18:15-17; 2 Cor. 12:20, Prov. 16:20; 17:9. James 4:11a.Matt 5:44.

**Also:** Amos 5:24; Matt. 7:12; Matt. 22:39; Luke. 6:31; Gal. 2:11–14; Gal. 6:17; Acts 17:26; Rom. 12:3, 9–21; Acts 10:34-35; Eph. 2:11–16; Col. 3:1–17; 1 John 2:9-11; James 2:8-9**.**

**Worship Center**

For the worship center you will need a Bible, a candle, strips of cloth, pieces of wood.

Provide Bibles and a copy of Martin Luther King’s “Letter from Birmingham City Jail” for each participant.

Tape up large colorful pieces of poster board around the room or to the floor.

You will need scissors adhesive tape, white paper, colored paper, colored markers, crayons, pencils, and/or pens, sheet from Goodwill torn into strips. (Some strips will be used for the worship center, others for the activity in Bible Study 1. ) White poster board or stiff cardboard.

Lay the strips of cloth across the table making sure to leave uneven spaces in between them. Put a Bible on one edge of the table and a candle on the edge. Lay the pieces of wood on the table in the form of a cross.

**Opening Prayer**

Begin by praying the Lord’s Prayer asking the group to reflect on what, “Your kingdom come! Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” means for overcoming racism.

**Bible Study**

**1. Extreme Love**

**Opening Prayer**

Begin by praying the Lord’s Prayer asking the group to reflect on what, “Your kingdom come! Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” means for overcoming racism.

**Bible Study**

Read: Matthew 5:44; Amos 5:24; and Gal 6:17.

In his “Letter from Birmingham City Jail” Marin Luther King writes that we are called to be extremists in Love and that this extreme Love will lead us all to stand up against racism.

He quotes Matthew 5:44; Amos 5:24; and Gal 6:17.

Ask: Do you agree? How do these passages frame “Extreme Love”?

Read: Martin Luther King, “Letter from Birmingham City Jail.”

<http://okra.stanford.edu/transcription/document_images/undecided/630416-019.pdfhttps://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/documents/Letter_Birmingham_Jail.pdf>

Activity: Jesus, Martin Luther King, Gandhi, Bishop Romero practiced Extreme Love. Yet they were all seen as threats and murdered in one form or another. Ask the group to reflect on this reality. Give the group long pieces of white cloth (you can buy a sheet from Goodwill and tear it into strips). With magic markers have them design these strips so that some could be used as Jesus swaddling clothes while others for his burial winding sheet. Can one strip be used for both? What does this mean for the fruits of extreme love? Braid the strips together in two braids. Lay the braids one on top of the other to form a cross.

**Closing Prayer**

Gather together at the Worship Center. Ask the participants to reflect on how extreme love is often answered with violence. Ask them to voice a concern they have about violence and racism in their own community. Pray the Lord’s Prayer. Extinguish the candle. Leave the room quietly in the dark.

**2. No Greater Love**

**Opening Prayer**

Begin by praying the Lord’s Prayer asking the group to reflect on what, “Your kingdom come! Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” means for overcoming racism.

**Bible Study**

Ask the participants to get into groups and read John 15:13.

Ask the participants to brainstorm about people in their own lives who have shown the type of love that Jesus is talking about in this passage. Have them tell the stories of these people to their group mates.

Activity: Make posters of everyday heroes. On half sheets of 9 x 11 bond paper ask each participant to write a story about someone in their lives who has exhibited the type of love that Jesus is talking about in John 15:13. Scallop the edges of the pages. Paste these pages on small sheets of white poster board. Ask the participants to draw the action that they are describing around the edges of the poster board. Place these stories and drawings on the Worship Center.

**Closing Prayer**

Gather together at the Worship Center. Ask the participants to reflect on how great love is often shown by ordinary people. Ask them to voice a concern they have about how love has begun to overcome racism in their own community. Pray the Lord’s Prayer. Extinguish the candle. Leave the room quietly in the dark.

**3. God Loves All People Equally**

**Opening Prayer**

Begin by praying the Lord’s Prayer asking the group to reflect on what, “Your kingdom come! Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” means for overcoming racism.

**Bible Study**

Read Matthew 28:19 and 1 John 4:21. Does God love all people?

Do we love all people equally?

Brainstorm about what a world would look like if we loved all people equally. What would not exist in the world as we know it? Martin Luther King “dreamed” of a world in which people would be judged “not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” Is this a dream we should dream today?

Listen to or watch Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech.

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihaveadream.htm>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I47Y6VHc3Ms>

Activity: Ask the students to use vibrant crayons colors to draw their emotional reactions to the speech. Different colors can represent despair, hope, anticipation, elation, exhaustion, discouragement, etc. When they are finished ask them to discuss their drawings with the group.

**Closing Prayer**

Gather together at the Worship Center. Ask the participants to reflect on how our emotions color our perceptions. Ask them to voice a concern they have about the progress or lack of progress that has been made to combat racism in their own community. Pray the Lord’s Prayer.

**4. We Are All Equal in God’s Eyes**

**Opening Prayer**

Begin by praying the Lord’s Prayer asking the group to reflect on what, “Your kingdom come! Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” means for overcoming racism.

**Bible Study**

Read Acts 10:34, Romans 10:12 and Romans 15:7.

Ask: If God accepts us all equally does this mean that we should treat everyone with the same love that God treats us? How have you seen people being treated with disrespect?

Read Galatians 3:26-28.

Ask: Do you know what it is like for someone not to give you a chance, at school, at a job, at sports just because of the color of your skin or your ethnic origin?

Act: Give the group a bag of creative props like black and white garbage bags, a shoe, a glove, a coat, a sweaters etc. Ask the participants to write and act out a play about “not being given a chance” and “redemption” using these unusual props.

**Closing Prayer**

Gather together at the Worship Center. Ask the participants to reflect on how opportunity taken for granted by some is denied to others. Ask them to voice a concern they have about unequal opportunity in their own community. Pray the Lord’s Prayer. Extinguish the candle. Leave the room while it is still dark.

**5. Standing Up for Each Other Frees Us All.**

**Opening Prayer**

Begin by praying the Lord’s Prayer asking the group to reflect on what, “Your kingdom come! Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” means for overcoming racism.

**Bible Study**

Read Ephesians 2:14, 16. Does being one in Christ Jesus bring people together or tear them apart? How does empowering each of us, empower all of us? How are we freed to love more perfectly if all of us are equally free?

How are we all one body of Christ? How are we all part of Christ’s cross?

Have the participants go to the worship center and select a piece of “the cross. Have them write their names on the piece of wood.

Activity: Glue the pieces of the cross together to form a “resurrected body.”

**Closing Prayer**

As you gather around the worship table to end with prayer ask the participants to reflect out loud, how they are part of the Body of Christ and the Cross of Christ. Pray the Lord’s Prayer.

**Mission and Outreach with Community and Global Partners**

Contact the Black Lives Matter movement organizers and Standing Up for Racial Justice organizers in your community (Facebook) to discover how to join community members to combat racism. Many colleges also have initiatives to combat racism. Join your fellow college students to combat racism on campus.

**Resources**

**Bible Study**

Aaron Cho and Amy Jackson. “Racism: How Should Christians Respond.”

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/biblestudies/r/racism-how-should-christians-respond.html>

Documents

Martin Luther King, “Letter from Birmingham City Jail.”

<http://okra.stanford.edu/transcription/document_images/undecided/630416-019.pdfhttps://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/documents/Letter_Birmingham_Jail.pdf>

WCC*: “*Racism Today: Rationale for Ecumenical Commitment*”.* 06 December 2008.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/unity-mission-evangelism-and-spirituality/just-and-inclusive-communities/racism/racism-today-rationale-for-ecumenical-commitment>

Statement by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Durban, South Africa, 26 August - 7 September 2001.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/international-affairs/statement-presented-to-the-media-by-archbishop-desmond-tutu-on-behalf-of-the-ecumenical-caucusDocuments>

TED Talks

Bryan Stevenson: “We Need to Talk about an Injustice”

<https://www.ted.com/talks/bryan_stevenson_we_need_to_talk_about_an_injustice>

Vernā Myers: How to Overcome Our Biases? Walk Boldly Toward Them.

<https://www.ted.com/talks/verna_myers_how_to_overcome_our_biases_walk_boldly_toward_them?language=en>