

How to Do a One-To-One about Race

Study Guide for a Year of Encounter

ENCOUNTER & RACE: How to Do a One-To-One about Race

We are all familiar with the value of the 1-1 to build relational power in our congregations and in our federation. We know that sitting down with each other for the sake of understanding each other's self-interest and then working on our shared interests is the way we build our voice, build our power and make change happen.

Sometimes we use our 1-1s allow us to learn more about one another across racial lines, and that can be helpful and insightful. Most of the time, however, we tend to avoid talking about race for fear that we will venture into waters that are difficult, provoke anger or guilt or leave us less connected and less willing to be allies.

What we are learning in working with congregations across the country is that there is a great hunger among our leaders and clergy to have the kind of conversations with one another that allows us space to explore race and authentically reach across race lines to build relationships of intention, honesty, and integrity.

The Race One-To-One gives us a format and a structure to enter into dialogue with one another about race that is predicated on listening to the pain of racial oppression and offering insights into where systemic racism has impacted our lives in ways that color our relationships, coalitions and alliances in our justice work.

THE RACE ONE-TO-ONE

1. Opening – Thank the person for being willing to talk to you and introduce yourself. Let them know you are interested in having a conversation with them about race for the sake of getting to know each other better and to gain a better understanding of how racism has impacted their lives and what you could do – together - about it.
2. Start with the question: Can I share a story about an incident about a time I was impacted by racism, racial bias or discrimination, one that makes it hard for me to work across race lines? Share what happened to you? Share who were the perpetrators in your story? Share how this incident makes it hard for you to work in a multi-race, multi-faith organization.
3. At the conclusion of your story ask them now to tell you their story of a time when they were impacted by racism, racial bias or discrimination, one that makes it hard for them to work in a multi-faith, multi-race organization? Encourage them to include the same details that you did.
4. Ask the following discussion question: "How do you think what happened to us is part of the larger story we get told (and tell ourselves) about race in our country?" "How will we get past it?"
5. Concluding question: "What do you need from me in order to support you in being fully present in working on racial justice together? Encourage them to now ask you the same question. (Do you want to know what I would need from you in order for me to be fully present in the work around race?)
6. As you can, and as it makes sense, make a commitment to one another that you will support each other, in the way you've asked, as allies in the racial justice work of the organization.

THINKING ABOUT OUR ENCOUNTER

- What did I learn about myself in telling my own story about race and having someone listen out to me?
- What did I learn as I listened to my partner?
- What do I feel inclined to say or do as a consequence of our work together today?
- How will I attend to my own healing?
- How will I help heal my community from the wounds of racism? Galatians 3:26-29

MEDITATION

Galatians 3:26-29

For through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendant, heirs according to the promise