

# **A Four-Session Guide for White Caucus Small Groups**

*based on the process used by LREDA members at the annual Fall Conference*

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*Originally used with Unitarian Universalist Religious Educators in small groups while attending our annual professional conference, these four sessions are available for you to use in congregations and other settings. The original sessions did not include the check-in & follow-up at the beginning of sessions 2, 3, and 4, though these have been included to support small groups meeting weekly to monthly. These sessions were developed by Katharine Childs, Tracy Breneman, and the 2018 LREDA Fall Conference Planning Team, with deep gratitude to Christina Rivera for her Multicultural Centering visual.*

## **Purpose of Caucus Time**

- 1) Within a larger event (eg conference)
  - a) Scheduled time for racial caucusing, allowing people of colour to meet in POC-only space without conflicting with other programming
  - b) Space to address anything that might come up during a larger event that requires racial caucus discussion
  - c) Provide members of the white caucus with a structured set of discussions around race and racial justice to work through as a group through the conference time; every session will build on the previous work, please plan to attend each session
- 2) In small groups (eg congregations)
  - a) These sessions can also be used as guides to small group discussion, which may or may not run concurrently with a POC caucus space (please see the notes for time keeping)
  - b) Provide members of the white caucus with a structured set of discussions around race and racial justice to work through as a group; every session will build on the previous work, please plan to attend each session

## **Goals of Caucus Small Groups:**

- 1) Continue to grow in an anti-racist lens
- 2) Build relationships and trust
- 3) Support our ongoing learning, personally and in our leadership roles
- 4) To learn in community: we will all make mistakes, we each bring knowledge which is valuable, and there are no easy answers

## **Leader Guide For Each Session:**

- 1) Groups should be 6 to 10 people, including a facilitator
- 2) Please ask for volunteers at each session to read the opening words, closing words, and to be the time keeper\*
- 3) A first question in each session asks each of you to tell a story - please allow each member of the group to speak uninterrupted (or pass).
- 4) A second question (time permitting) allows for back and forth discussion - please be mindful that everyone has a chance to speak.
  - a) Talking about race can be very uncomfortable for white people, to the point that we'll do pretty much anything to avoid talking about it directly. During the discussion questions, your group may find itself straying from the central question. Please bring the conversation back to the topic at hand if necessary.

- b) Folks in your group will have different amounts of experience in anti-racism work and different levels of comfort talking about race. Discomfort may stem from a belief that it's impolite or divisive to acknowledge race, from feelings of guilt associated with our past actions or those of our family or ancestors, from fear that we'll say the wrong thing and be judged harshly or perpetuate harm, or from any of a host of other feelings and experiences. Please help your group to be mindful of these differences and to hold one another in love and support.
- 5) If you have questions or concerns during the caucusing process, please speak with \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Information for the time keeper*

The time keeper at each session will have a card which they can flip up when the speaker has 15 seconds remaining in the recommended time (but should not interrupt the speaker). The time keeper should alert the facilitator when the time for the first question is up, and also alert the facilitator at 5 minutes before the end of the session.

A time keeper is a good practice if you have limited time for each session (eg a busy conference). The original recommended speaking times per person are listed in each session, based on a group of 10, meeting for a short period of time - if you have more time or fewer people, in a small group setting (in a congregation, etc.) for which 1 ½ to 2 hours can be scheduled for each session, you may give people up to 5 minutes each, or a timekeeper may not be necessary.

For session 4: make sure to leave enough time (20 to 30 minutes at least) to answer Question 2 - but you may revisit the process of Question 1 as many times as time allows.

### **Materials Needed**

- Time keeper cards (make your own! 4 x 6 cards with "15 seconds" on one, and "5 minutes" on another)
- Printouts of the *Critiques of White Supremacy* (session 2, 3, 4) and *Multicultural Centering* (session 3, 4) visuals for your group - everyone should have a copy: if possible, bring extras!
- You may wish to print off the opening and closing readings separately for ease of reading aloud
- Encourage folks to take notes - perhaps provide a journal that they can use during and between sessions
- If folks are aided in concentrating and processing by fidget/hand-movement items or doodling, encourage them to bring these tools to the sessions (or provide fidget materials if you can!).

### **Further Learning**

**White Supremacy Teach-in** materials for use in congregational settings, including RE materials - [www.uuteachin.org/](http://www.uuteachin.org/)

**The Promise & The Practice** worship resources - [www.uua.org/worship/words/promise-and-practice](http://www.uua.org/worship/words/promise-and-practice)

**Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU)**, connecting and supporting Black UUs, including the BLUUBox subscription service for Black UUs and allies - [www.blacklivesuu.com](http://www.blacklivesuu.com)

**Teaching Tolerance** educational resources around justice, diversity, and inclusion - [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)

## First Session Guide

**Opening Words** - Chalice Lighting by Adrian L. H. Graham  
(from The Promise and the Practice worship materials)

We kindle a flame of power, illuminating the Holy in each of our faces.  
We recognize in the flame a passionate commitment to our shared faith.  
We are held and carried from day to day, week to week, in the shining of the light.  
This flame is mine, as well as yours.  
We are brought together on this day, called to growth, to expansion, within its glow.  
What does your heart know while beholding this holy fire?

### Session Plan -

- 1) Read over the Goals and Purposes with your group (have copies available if possible)
- 2) Remind your group to treat each other's hearts gently, and maintain a circle of confidentiality: you may bring what *you've* learned out into the world, but the stories of others stay in the circle
- 3) Go around the circle and share your name (and pronouns if desired) (if pertinent: one other piece of introductory information)

**Question 1:** Tell a story about your name: your first name, middle or last name, or a nickname

**Question 2:** (time permitting) How do you feel that your identity (of which your name is a part) has shaped how you interact with others and how they interact with you?

- 4) In closing: describe the 2nd session - you will be telling a story from your own experience about a time when you witnessed white supremacy culture in action (in your congregation or within UU community)

**Closing Words** - *Prayer for a Drop in the Bucket* by Amy Zucker Morgenstern

Blessed are the droplets, for they shall fill the bucket to overflowing.  
Blessed are they who know there is a bucket, for they shall be filled with hope.  
Blessed are they who can see beyond their lifetimes, for they shall walk in faith that their work will not be in vain.  
Blessed are we when we know we only appear so small because what we are creating is so big.  
Blessed are we who are part of one another.  
Blessed are we when we give new life and light to others, for we will live more richly ourselves.  
Blessed be.

*The original session length was 30 minutes, with 2 minutes per person to tell a story about their name*

## Second Session Guide

Print copies of the “Critique of White Supremacy Culture” visual; if possible, distribute them before the session as well

[Critique of White Supremacy Culture visual](#) (Kenneth Jones & Tema Okun, 2001)

**Opening Words** - Chalice Lighting by Rev. Leslie Takahashi  
(from *Voices from the Margins: An Anthology of Meditations*)

Walk the maze

Within your heart: guide your steps into its questioning curves.

This labyrinth is a puzzle leading you deeper into your own truths.

Listen in the twists and turns.

Listen in the openness within all searching.

Listen: a wisdom within you calls to a wisdom beyond you and in that dialogue lies peace.

### Session Plan -

- 1) Do a brief check-in/name reminder
- 2) (Time permitting) Ask people to name anything that’s stayed with them or grown in them since the last session (no back and forth discussion)

**Question 1:** With reference to the *Critique of White Supremacy Culture* sheet, tell a story about when you have seen one of the characteristics in action in your congregation or within UU community

**Question 2:** Many (or most!) of us have had the experience of hesitating to respond when seeing white supremacy culture in action. *Why* do we hesitate? What do you feel when you’ve hesitated or not responded to a situation like the ones described? How does it feel when you *do* respond?

- 3) In closing: describe the 3rd session - you will be reflecting on your own journey towards anti-racism, and decentering whiteness

**Closing Words** - Benediction by Rebekah Savage  
(from *The Promise and the Practice* worship materials)

Spirit of Life, Spirit of Love,

We have gathered under the banner of a shared faith.

We are born of a welcoming grace that extends and receives love;

we are touched by the ways we have fallen short of who we strive to be;

and we here we reborn — forged by a greater courage.

Let us move from this place,

Encouraged and refreshed for the journey ahead.

*The original session length was 45 minutes, with 3 minutes per person to tell a story about white supremacy culture*

### Third Session Guide

*Print copies of the Multicultural Centering visual; if possible, distribute them before the session as well*

[Multicultural Centering visual](#)

from Christina Rivera, presented as part of the 2017 Fall Conference Summary speech

**Opening Words** - Chalice Lighting by Rebekah Savage  
(from The Promise and the Practice worship materials)

We light our flaming chalice as a beloved people  
united in love  
and thirsting for restorative justice.

May it melt away the tethers that uphold whiteness in our midst.  
May it spark in us a spirit of humility.  
May it ignite in us radical love that transforms our energy into purposeful action.

This a chalice of audacious hope.  
This chalice shines a light on our shared past,  
signaling our intention to listen deeply, reflect wisely,  
and move boldly toward our highest ideals.

Session Plan -

- 1) Do a brief check-in/name reminder
- 2) (Time permitting) Ask people to name anything that's stayed with them or grown in them since the last session (no back and forth discussion)

**Question 1:** As individuals and as Unitarian Universalists, we each have a story of our own journey towards anti-racism and decentering whiteness. Where are you, today, within the arc of your story? Are you just setting out, or do you feel you've been moving down this path for a long time now? Where do you think your arc is leading you?

**Question 2:** With reference to the *Multicultural Centering* visual, what might the work of decentering whiteness look like in your congregation or UU community?

- 3) In closing: describe the 4th session - we will bring conversations from the first three sessions together and explore shifting scenarios to decenter whiteness

**Closing Words** - *The Purpose of This Community is to Help Its People Grow* by Erik Walker Wikstrom  
(adapted)

If you are who you were,  
and if the person next to you is who they were,  
if none of us has changed  
since the moment we began—  
we have failed.

The purpose of our community—

is to help its people grow.

We do this through encounters with the unknown—in ourselves,  
in one another,  
in "The Other"—whoever that might be for us,  
however hard that might be—  
because these encounters have many gifts to offer.  
So may you go forth from here  
not who you were,  
but who you could be.

So may we all.

*The original session length was 1 hour and 15 minutes, with 4 minutes per person to tell their anti-racism story*

## Fourth (Closing) Session Guide - Changing the Narrative

*This session does not feature a storytelling question, instead the group will discuss and work collaboratively throughout this session*

### Opening Words - *Afraid of the Dark* - a Chalice Lighting By Andrew Pakula

In sightless night, terrors draw near  
Nameless fears of talon and tooth  
Hopelessness yawns before us—an abyss  
Alone and unknown in the gloom, longing for the dawn

O sacred flame blaze forth—wisdom brought to life

Guide us—  
With the light of hope  
The warmth of love  
The beacon of purpose and meaning

Because we are all afraid of the dark  
Let there be light

### Session Plan -

- 1) Do a brief check-in/name reminder
- 2) (Time permitting) Ask people to name anything that's stayed with them or grown in them since the last session (no back and forth discussion)

**Question 1:** Think back to session 2, and the stories that were shared of times that we witnessed white supremacy culture in action. In this closing session, your group will revisit one of the stories shared and imagine how the story could be shifted to decenter whiteness in the scenario

- a) As a group, decide which story you'd like to revisit
  - b) Ask the original story teller to briefly retell the story; the rest of the group should try to imagine being present in the story - as a central player or as an observer in the scenario
  - c) As a group, discuss the scenario, and, with reference to the *Multicultural Centering* resource, imagine how it might have ended differently if whiteness had been decentered. You do not need to agree on a single outcome - try to imagine many ways that we could respond to seeing white supremacy culture in action
  - d) If you have time remaining, please revisit a second (or third) scenario
- 3) **Closing Question:** The conversations your caucus group has shared may have you thinking about ways you can continue building your anti-racism lens and allowing that lens to shape your work.
    - a) What do you hope the next chapter of your anti-racism story will be?
    - b) What might you need to make that hope a reality?

**Closing Words** - Benediction by Kimberly Quinn Johnson

*with reference to "Poem for South African Women," by June Jordan, presented at the U.N. on Aug 9, 1978*

(from the Promise and the Practice worship materials)

We are the ones we have been waiting for.

We are not perfect, but we are perfectly fitted for this day.

We are not without fault,

but we can be honest to face our past as we chart a new future.

We are the ones we have been waiting for.

May we be bold and courageous to chart that new future

May we have faith in a future that is not known

We are the ones we have been waiting for.

*The original session length was 1 hour, with 40 minutes for the group to answer Question 1*