

MLK Equity Challenge

Equity and reflection en route to creating a better community (based upon the original 21-day Racial Equity Bootcamp created by Dr. Eddie Moore, Jr) "It's simple: For 21 days, you do an action to further your connection to power, privilege, and leadership." –Dr. Eddie Moore, Jr. and Debby Irving

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Equity Challenge Guidelines

For 21 days, challenge yourself to read, watch, and learn from each day's tasks further your understanding of power, privilege, oppression, and equity.

Use the tracking chart provided to stay on course. Attend all scheduled zoom calls (Sundays at 9am beginning on January 24) for more activities and debrief opportunities. Zoom link will be emailed separately.

This plan includes suggestions for readings, podcasts, videos, observations, and ways to form and deepen community connections. Understanding white privilege is a powerful lens into the complexities of doing social justice work, so we've focused our resources on that specific issue. Make a commitment to continue the conversation.

Got questions? Email Rev. Gina or Laura Cooper.

Day 1: King and The White Moderate

In April 1963, King was jailed in Birmingham, Alabama, after he defied a state court's injunction and led a march of black protesters without a permit, urging an Easter boycott of white-owned stores. A statement published in *The Birmingham News*, written by eight moderate white clergymen, criticized the march and other demonstrations.

This prompted King to write a lengthy response, begun in the margins of the newspaper. He smuggled it out with the help of his lawyer, and the nearly 7,000 words were transcribed. The eloquent call for "constructive, nonviolent tension" to force an end to unjust laws became a landmark document of the civil-rights movement. The letter was printed in part or in full by several publications, including the *New York Post*, *Liberation* magazine, *The New Leader*, and *The Christian Century*.

Reflection: How do Dr. King's words ring true today?

Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'Letter From Birmingham Jail'

"We will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham and all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom."

Editor's Note: Read *The Atlantic's* special coverage of Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy. Images above: King is ready for a mug shot (left) in Montgomery, Alabama, after his 1956 arrest while protesting the segregation of the city's buses.

THE ATLANTIC



Day 2: Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story?

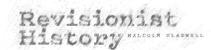
True power lies in storytelling. The story we know of Brown vs. Board of Education is often that the poor Black children, subject to inferior schools, were finally allowed to integrate and gain access to white schools.

Who are the stars of that story, and who has been left out?

Revisionist History Season 2 Episode 3

Brown v Board of Education might be the most well-known Supreme Court decision, a major victory in the fight for civil rights. But in Topeka, the city where the case began, the ruling has left a bittersweet legacy. RH hears from the Browns, the family behind the story.

REVISIONIST HISTORY



Day 3: Hidden in Plain Sight

There's a joke that goes something like this: "An older fish remarks to two baby goldfish, 'How do you like the water?' One turns to the other and says, 'What's water?'"

Racism and oppression are open wounds not everyone in this country wishes to address, yet there are reminders of it everywhere. Waking up to the racism that lies right underneath

our noses is like fish recognizing the water; it has been here the whole time, we have been steeped in it, and we have become a part of it. What do we do with that knowledge?

Hidden in Plain Sight: The Ghosts of Segregation

The World Through a Lens Vestiges of racism and oppression, from bricked-over segregated entrances to the forgotten sites of racial violence, still permeate much of America's built environment. The Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala.



NYTIMES

Harvard historian examines how textbooks taught white supremacy

Historian Donald Yacovone, an associate at the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research and a 2013 winner of the W.E.B. Du Bois medal, was researching a book on the legacy of the antislavery movement when he came across some old history school textbooks that stopped him cold - and led him to write a different book.



HARVARD GAZETTE

Day 4: Silence and Sedition

"But here is the theological question: Will Trump's sedition and attempted coup be met with silence from faith leaders, especially white Christian leaders whose constituencies voted in their majority for Trump?"

Reflection: How does this impact me personally? What is at stake for me, for the country?

Sedition and Silence

What has been happening since the outcome of the November presidential election has been historic: continuous acts of sedition aimed at overturning the results of an American election by the current president of the United States. Our nation's first president, George Washington, decided not to become a new king, but voluntarily turned his office over to a new president.



SOJOURNERS

Day 5: Racism is Taught in the Stories we Learn

The power is in the stories. Who gets to tell them, and what those stories reveal -- at the root of all of these decisions is where the power lives.

This article talks about what who decides what we learn, and how we learn it, and what constitutes a "true American" according to the history books.

Bonus Lesson: The Other America

To close out the week after Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, consider his speech "The Other America." Which America do you live in, and what can you do to bring these two worlds closer together?

"Somewhere we must come to see that human progress never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability, it comes through the tireless efforts and the persistent work of dedicated individuals who are willing to be co-workers with God and without this hard work time itself becomes an ally of the primitive forces of social stagnation. And so we must always help time and realize that the time is always right to do right. "



www.gphistorical.org

"The Other America"

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. - Grosse Pointe High School - March 14, 1968

Dr. Meserve, Bishop Emrich, my dear friend Congressman Conyers, ladies and gentlemen.

I need not pause to say how very delighted I am to be here tonight and to have the great privilege of discussing with you some of the vital issues confronting our nation and confronting the world. It is always a very rich and rewarding experience when I can take a brief break from the day-to-day demands of our struggle for freedom and human dignity and discuss the issues involved in that struggle with concerned people of good will all over our nation and all over the world, and I certainly want to express my deep personal appreciation to you for inviting me to occupy this significant platform.

I want to discuss the race problem tonight and I want to discuss it very honestly. I still believe that freedom is the bonus you receive for telling the truth. Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. And I do not see how we will ever solve the turbulent problem of race confronting our nation until there is an honest confrontation with it and a willing search for the truth and a willingness to admit the truth when we discover it. And so I want to use as a title for my lecture tonight, "The Other America." And I use this title because there are literally two Americas. Every city in our country has this kind of dualism, this schizophrenia, split at so

[mlk-gp-speech.pdf](#)

PDF document

WWW.GPHISTORICAL.ORG

Moving on to Week 2

Reflect in your journals: What did I already know? What did I not know? What are some ideas I have about what I just learned?

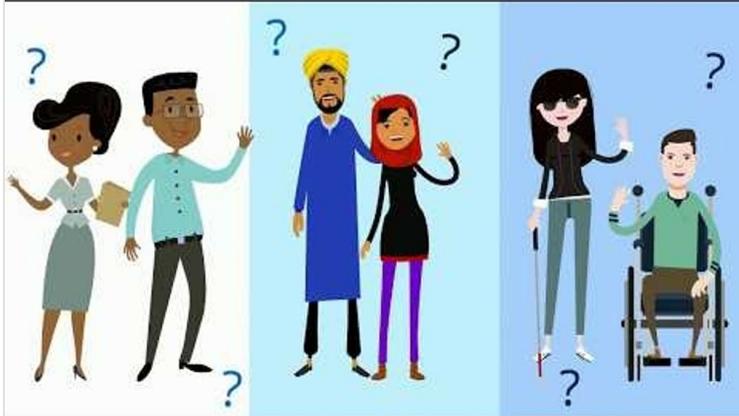
Day 6: Affinity Bias

Day 8: Get Uncomfortable

Grab a piece of paper and something to write with. Watch the video, and complete the exercise.

If yes, that's not unusual. We like being around people who make us comfortable. But how often do we engage with others who are different, and who, perhaps, make us uncomfortable?

We are influenced most by the people who are most like us. This is affinity bias: we gravitate to others who are similar to us in beliefs, attitudes, and yes, even unconsciously, skin color. How might this show up in our everyday lives? How can we break this pattern?



Affinity Bias Exercise

by Dan Ryan

YOUTUBE

Day 7: Colorblindness is Counterproductive

"It is no longer socially acceptable in many quarters to identify oneself as racist. Instead, many Americans purport not to see color. However, their colorblindness comes at a cost. By claiming that they do not see race, they also can avert their eyes from the ways in which well-meaning people engage in practices that reproduce neighborhood and school segregation, rely on "soft skills" in ways that disadvantage racial minorities in the job market, and hoard opportunities in ways that reserve access to better jobs for white peers."

Read the Atlantic article linked below. What windows and mirrors do you see?

If You Don't See Race, How Can You See Racial Inequality?

Many sociologists argue that ideologies claiming not to see race risk ignoring discrimination. How many times have you heard someone say that they "don't see color," "are colorblind," or "don't have a racist bone in their body?" Maybe you've even said this yourself.



THE ATLANTIC

To break your affinity bias, you need to stretch yourself outside your comfort zone. Welcome discomfort, as it is where learning occurs. Today, check out Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man. Emmanuel Acho speaks some uncomfortable truths that perhaps you didn't know you didn't know.



Day 9: Faith, Race, and Reconciliation

In this episode, Jen is joined by fellow podcaster, Will Smith of Let's Talk. Will is a Youth Pastor who holds a degree in Pastoral Care and Counseling, and in this episode, he talks about growing up in the church, his frustration with the racial reconciliation movement, and how people can better approach race, faith, and unity.

Speaking of Racism: Faith, Race, and the Reconciliation Movement with Will Smith on Apple Podcasts

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APPLE PODCASTS



Day 10: America: This isn't who we are ... or is it?

No doubt you've heard that phrase many times since Jan. 6. "This isn't who we are, America." But, what if it is, and always has been who we are? What then?

Check out these articles from NPR and [The Atlantic](#) to discuss our

perceptions of today's America: what it is, what it isn't, and to whom.

The Lies We Tell Ourselves About Race

There is a lie some Americans tell themselves when America is on its worst behavior: "This isn't America!" or "This isn't who we are!" or "We're better than this!" You heard versions of this lie again this past week after armed insurrectionists stormed the U.S.



NPR.ORG

How White People Got Made - The Message - Medium

"When the first Africans arrived in Virginia in 1619, there were no 'white' people there; nor, according to the colonial records, would there be for another sixty years."- Theodore W. Allen "There's nothing that a white man with a penny hates more than a nigger with a nickel!"

MEDIUM



Bonus Lesson: Performative Allyship. What is it, and how do I not do it?

Dr. Bettina Love, professor and DEI practitioner extraordinaire, lays down some truths about how white people think they are being strong allies, when in reality, they might just be performing. How can you make sure you're doing more than performance?

How to Make Anti-Racism More Than a Performance (Opinion)

Since the world watched Minneapolis resident George Floyd die at the hands of a police officer named Derek Chauvin and learned police in Louisville, Ky., shot and killed Breonna Taylor in her own home, an outpouring of attention has focused on anti-racism and equity.



EDUCATION WEEK

Day 11: How Whiteness Got Made

"When the first Africans arrived in Virginia in 1619, there were no 'white' people there; nor, according to the colonial records, would there be for another sixty years." – Theodore W. Allen

Whiteness is a social construct; when and how did it become so powerful? Reflect in your journal areas of your life in which whiteness is the default, and where this may reveal privilege where others lack it.

"The invented category of white people is still the largest case of this colonial strategy in the world. Whiteness was not always invented in opposition to chattel slavery, even in America. As the newly invented whites pushed West, they were reinvented in opposition to the existence of other people inconveniently on the land the newcomers believed God had ordained to them as their destiny. "

Day 12: Why White People Need to Organize

For many, it sounds contradictory: "Isn't it racist if just white people to get together? Isn't that segregation?" The following are our reasons for organizing as a white anti-racist community:

People of color shouldn't always have to be the ones to educate white people about racism and oppression. We are taking responsibility for learning about racism, our own white privilege, and how to challenge it as white people.

--[AWARE-LA](#)



White Bred

The Alliance of White Anti-Racists Everywhere – Los Angeles (AWARE-LA) is an all-volunteer alliance of white anti-racist people organizing to challenge racism and work for racial justice in transformative alliance with people of color. www.awarela.org

VIMEO

Day 13: Repair and Reconciliation

"If reconciliation is God's work, what is ours? Surely gratitude and praise and worship of the God who makes a way to reestablish a relationship with us. But what does this grace make possible, not only between God and us, but between one another?"

These articles explore the ways in which reparations have been identified as a solution, and the arguments in support of and against this form of reconciliation. Reflect on your own stance; if this article brings up strong feelings, ask yourself what is at the root of those feelings? What are they telling you?

Repair and Reconciliation.pdf

by Gina Finocchiaro

GOOGLE DRIVE



How did white people justify racism for so long in this country? In this podcast, Heather McGhee, the co-chair of [Color of Change](#), the country's largest online racial justice organization, talks with Rev. Jim Wallis about the legacy of racism in the United States and the lies that allow America's original sin to be perpetuated to this day.

Day 14: The Racial Dance

"We can try to cut down the bush as many times as we want, but if we don't address the root, the problems will continue to impact us." --Rodney Sadler

No matter how anti-racist your own behaviors and attitudes, there are still systems of oppression in play all around us.

What role does the church play in dismantling systems of oppression? In reconciliation and reparation?

The Racial Dance.pdf

by Gina Finocchiaro

GOOGLE DRIVE



"There were reasons that good, upstanding, moral white people gave themselves and their children for why segregation made sense," continues McGhee. "It was about crime. It was about poverty. It was about God's will. It was about the natural order of things. And when you focus on what the possible justifications could have been, as opposed to just saying, 'old people in the past were evil,' then you might start to recognize some of those same justifications for the status quo today."

What are some stories you were told that justified the status quo?

Why Racism Still Makes Sense to White People

How did white people justify racism for so long in this country? Heather McGhee, the co-chair of Color of Change, the country's largest online racial justice organization, talks with Rev. Jim Wallis about the legacy of racism in the United States and the lies that allow America's original sin to be perpetuated to this day.



SOJOURNERS

Day 15: A Conversation About Faith and Justice

In this video, Dr. Khyati Joshi, author of [White Christian Privilege](#), talks with Senator Cory Booker about understanding the American myth of religious freedom, the role Christianity has played in white supremacy, and the ways in which we can move toward justice.



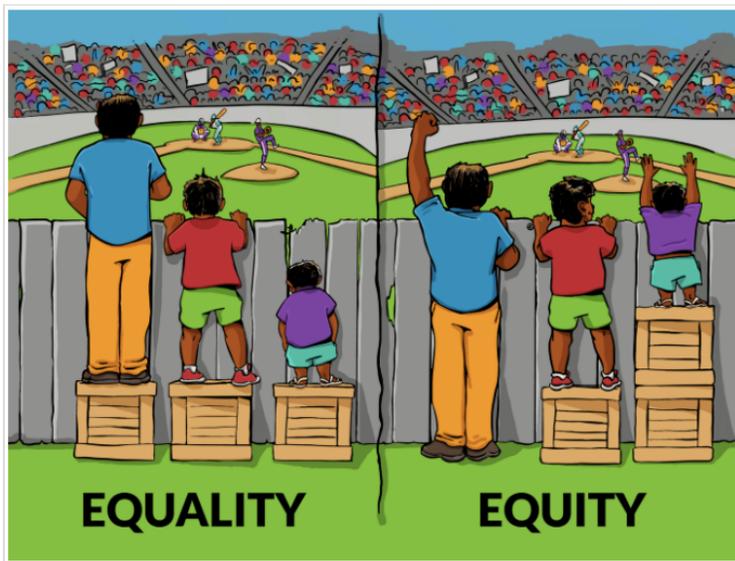
A Conversation About Faith and Justice with Dr. Khyati Joshi and Senator Cory Booker

FACEBOOK WATCH

Day 16: Equity vs. Equality

What's the difference between equity and equality?

And how is this photo an example of white supremacy at work? Read the [article](#) to learn more.



Bonus Lesson: Why Racism Still Makes Sense to White People

Day 17: The Model Minority Myth

Bonus Lesson: Black History is Our History

Black History **is** American History. Push yourself to learn more about the history of our country by centering Black stories and filling in learning gaps.

Pick 5 videos (10 minutes total) from this collection and journal about them. What did you learn? What are some DKDKs?

(something you didn't know you didn't know?)

How can you be an accomplice in dismantling oppressive structures?
