



Welcoming Diversity: An Inventory for Congregations

[This resource was adapted from the inventory created by Partners for a Racism-Free Community]

As our communities become more diverse, every congregation is faced with the challenge of how to reach out to people of different racial/ethnic backgrounds. An important step in meeting that challenge is to ask whether our congregations are truly welcoming to all people. While our initial answer may be “Yes, of course,” focused introspection might reveal hidden barriers that may hinder people of other racial/ethnic backgrounds from feeling at home in our congregations.

The following inventory originated in 2007 by a sub-committee of the Religious Sector of the GRACE Summit on Racism. Its aim is to aid congregations seeking to embrace and welcome the diversity of their communities. The Inventory focuses on six areas: Perceptions, Leadership, Worship, Visual, Educational, and Events. It is recommended that this Inventory be used in a workshop or by a small group, committee, or a team of interested persons.

To stimulate your discussion, using a 1-3 scale, read each statement and place your most appropriate response to the left in the space provided.

NA = not applicable, **DK** = don't know
1 = not at all true, **2** = sometimes true, **3** = true, most of the time

Perceptions: Does what we hold in our minds and hearts affect our actions?

1. _____	The leadership of our congregations values the healing of racism and an appreciate for racial/ethnic diversity.
2. _____	Our congregation provides opportunities for dialogue between our members and our leadership about these values.
3. _____	Our leaders comprehend and communicate the way in which ethnic, economic, social and political justice make visible the reign of God.
4. _____	Our congregation is receptive to preaching, teaching, and dialogue about the harm of racism and the value of diversity.
5. _____	Our congregation is open to the ideas that people from other racial/ethnic traditions bring about worship, education, community, and outreach.
6. _____	Our congregation is aware of our denomination's position on issues of racism, poverty, and violence because it is regularly and consistently presented to the congregation.

7. _____	Members who reflect our congregation's racial/ethnic diversity are being recruited and equipped for leadership.
8. _____	Our congregation addresses root causes of poverty, racism, and other forms of discrimination, while also relieving immediate needs through ministries of charity, compassion, and mercy.
9. a. _____	Past attitudes/actions of prejudice and discrimination have been addressed in our congregation forthrightly and healing is taking place around these issues.
b. _____	We have a process of reconciliation in place, when needed.
10. _____	Our congregation's leadership promotes anti-racism and diversity.
11. _____	The leadership of our congregation is conscious of diversity when selecting vendors for supplies and services.
12. a. _____	Our congregation has a team that works with the leadership to address issues of racism in our congregation and society.
b. _____	The team has developed a strategy for addressing racism within the congregation and community.
c. _____	The resources of our congregation support this team.
13. _____	People outside our congregation's primary racial group are consulted about how we might address unintentional racism and become more inclusive.
14. a. _____	We have a system of greeting in place so that all those who attend receive a warm welcome.
b. _____	Members of the "greeting team" are educated to be welcoming to a wide variety of people.
c. _____	The members of the "greeting team" are representative of the racial/ethnic make-up of our congregation.

Worship: Does our worship inspire us to greater understanding and appreciation for the diversity of God's people?

15. _____	Our liturgies and music incorporate a variety of racial/ethnic traditions.
16. _____	We invite speakers, dramatists, musicians, etc. who represent a variety of racial/ethnic traditions.
17. _____	Our preaching addresses the sin of racism and challenges the congregation to examine themselves in light of our sacred texts and religious vows.

18. _____	The Gospel message is expressed in ways relevant to diverse people.
19. _____	We give voice in worship to issues important to diverse people.
20. _____	As a congregation we welcome and befriend all visitors before, during and after worship.

Visual: Visuals are strong messages. What do we see around us?

21. _____	A wide variety of racial/ethnic people are represented in our windows, pictures, wall hangings, etc.
22. _____	The classrooms for young children are supplied with dolls, books, games, and other toys that represent a wide variety of racial/ethnic people.
23. _____	All classrooms and libraries have books, videos, etc. that represent a wide variety of racial/ethnic people.
24. _____	Our displays, brochures, and publicity pieces reflect diversity.
25. _____	The staff and leadership visually reflect a commitment to multicultural ministry.

Educational: What are we reading, studying, and promoting?

26. _____	We strive to teach and respect diversity.
27. a. _____	Our educational materials reflect a variety of racial/ethnic people (and language groups if appropriate to our congregation.)
b. _____	Racial/ethnic people are consulted when new curriculum or educational materials are developed.
28. a. _____	We regularly offer classes that give insight into different racial/ethnic people.
b. _____	We are sensitive to the differences in teaching and learning styles among people from a variety of cultures and traditions.
c. _____	Our faith is presented in terms of the history, tradition, and contribution of minority cultures as well as the dominant culture.
29. a. _____	We offer on-site racism and diversity sensitivity training.
b. _____	We promote off-site racism and diversity sensitivity training for members of our congregation.
c. _____	We offer our site for racism and diversity sensitivity training.

Events: Do we schedule events to broaden our experiences and perspectives?

30. _____	Our congregation invites other congregations representing different racial/ethnic groups to share in opportunities for outreach, recreation, and worship.
31. _____	Our congregation promotes times for members to visit or to participate in other racial/ethnic groups' work, play, or worship experiences.
32. _____	We hold activities to celebrate the diversity already among us and to become familiar with a variety of racial, ethnic, and cultural traditions.

This inventory is intended to help your congregation engage in conversation about racism in your own context. The outcome of this inventory should be used to design ongoing actions of healing that can serve as a guide for planning and annual evaluation.

For more information, please contact the Living Water Association, Ohio NorthEast at office@livingwaterone.org.

[This resource was adapted from the inventory created by Partners for a Racism-Free Community. Reproduction of these materials is encouraged for congregations and other non-profit organizations for educational purposes. For more information about Partners for a Racism-Free Community visit the West Michigan Center for Arts + Technology website at wmcat.org/fight-racism/.



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