**CENTERING GOD, DECENTERING WHITENESS OUTLINE**

Structure: 8 sessions

4 modules – 2 sessions each

1st session – exposition and reflection

2nd session – moving from reaction to response to re-envisioning

Objectives: - Re-centering God, decentering whiteness.

* Examine behaviors and systems which perpetuate Whiteness.
* Engage with the course material through a cycle of reflection, reaction, response, re-envisioning and ritual.

Guiding principles: - Sankofa: Akan term meaning “Go back and get it” or reaching back to move forward.

* Ubuntu: “I am, because you are.” My humanity is bound up in yours.
* “Those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it.” Winston Churchill

Methodology: Using Bible study, personal anecdotes, articles, videos, book excerpts and the Course Booklet we will unmask White Privilege and show how it perpetuates systemic and personal racist policies and behaviors which are anti-Gospel. Participants will be guided through the course using a cycle of reflection, reaction, response, and re-envisioning.

Reflection: Internalize the material learned through reading, viewing and Bible study. Re-learn history, politics, and religion to unmask racist teachings and policies which benefit(ed) people of European descent. Keep a journal to chart the progress of your reflections throughout the course.

Reaction: React to the material presented, noticing emotions, and thought patterns. Write in your journal. How does the material contradict or reinforce your relationship with God and humankind?

Response: Form public and private responses to the course material based upon your reflection and responses. Share responses in the sessions.

Re-envisioning: Based on the above steps, re-envision Dr. King’s “Beloved Community.” What does it mean to you today? Re-envision to discern what changes need to happen in policies and structures in your church and society, and in your personal behavior to promote the “Beloved Community.” Engage in activism and advocacy which push for these changes based upon the process of reflection, reaction, response, and re-envisioning.

Ritual: To acknowledge spiritual growth, the processes of dismantling of your whiteness and the building of an antiracist persona, celebrate together through ritual. This ritual is not a one-time event like a certification or graduation. It should be repeated each time you complete this cycle or recognize growth.

Repeat the cycle: After Re-envisioning and advocacy, repeat the cycle to refine and focus your antiracist persona and your activism.

Course materials: Needed for the course are the Course Booklet, your Bible (NRSV), a journal, and good internet access.

**REFLECTION** (Gatherings 1 & 2)

Gathering 1: “In a beginning. . .”

Humanity’s common origin

Genesis 1-2 (Creation stories)

Acts 17: 24-28 (one blood, God first, at center)

How is God’s Word received by different cultures? The Bible as a text in cultures

Acts 2:1-8 Pentecost (each hears in their own language)

Jesus restores God’s intention for the unity of humankind.

Ephesians 2: 14-16 “in himself one new humanity in place of two”

Gathering 2: “The Freedom of God” (and the urge to control or co-opt God)

**Freedom of God:**

Exodus 33:12-23 (YHWH: “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious. . . but you cannot see

my face”) Moses attempts to tie YHWH to his/her promises. YHWH responds.

**God placed on call:**

God has “office hours”. Brueggemann, *Prophetic Imagination*, p.37:

1 Kings 8:12-13 Solomon dedicates the Temple in Jerusalem. Solomon locates God in the capitol

of his empire.

**People’s church, vs. Ruler’s church** (from “Becoming an Antiracist Church”, by Joseph

Barndt)

**God and boundaries:**

Isaiah 45: 9-12 (MSG)

Job 38

Psalm 139:1-18

**Is God on “our side?”**

Genesis 32: Jacob wrestling with Angel/God as allegory for humankind’s desire to control God

[Lincoln 2nd inaugural](https://www.nps.gov/linc/learn/historyculture/lincoln-second-inaugural.htm), esp. 3rd paragraph “Both read the same Bible.”

Discuss White Jesus. There was no such thing as race in the Bible. Race was constructed by Europeans beginning in the 15th century. Race is a social construct.

What does Jesus/God look like to you?

Share restorative images of Jesus/God

**REACTION** (Gatherings 3 & 4)

Gathering 3: The Construction of Whiteness

Genesis 1:26-31 “have dominion and subdue” vs. MSG “be responsible”

Oxford Annotated Bible, p.3 for Genesis 1:28 and 29-30

To whom does the earth belong: Psalm 24:1-6 “The earth is the Lord’s.”

2 Samuel 24:24

(David builds altar on Jebusite threshing floor. The Jebusites were a people conquered by the

Israelites. David’s altar on Jebusite land becomes the location for Solomon’s Temple. What land is your church on? Who was there before settlers?)

Mark Charles Ted Talk [Three Words Ted Talk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HOktqY5wY4A&list=PLIP6VNnsfk0qPxvUe3Lg4lbtJaTOraK-W&index=73)

Eradicating Racist Myths in Scripture

Gathering 4: Whiteness as Property

Exodus story: Exodus 1-15

Black/Latinx, White and [Indigenous perspectives](https://www.rmselca.org/sites/rmselca.org/files/media/canaanites_cowboys_and_indians.pdf) on the Exodus Story

Brueggemann: Relinquishing White Supremacy, Tenacious Solidarity

Cheryl Harris: [Whiteness as Property](https://sph.umd.edu/sites/default/files/files/Harris_Whiteness%20as%20Property_106HarvLRev-1.pdf)

Breakout session: Reflecting on and internalizing the Exodus story from different cultural

perspectives and the responsibility of “Chosenness”.

**RESPONSE** (Gatherings 5 & 6)

Gathering 5: Developing Anti-racist habits

Decentering Whiteness: Philippians 2:3-8

[Microaggressions are like mosquito bites](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDd3bzA7450&list=PLIP6VNnsfk0qPxvUe3Lg4lbtJaTOraK-W&index=22&t=28s)

[White Fragility](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwIx3KQer54&list=PLIP6VNnsfk0qPxvUe3Lg4lbtJaTOraK-W&index=39&t=2s) – Robin DiAngelo

[White Supremacy Culture](https://cpt.org/sites/default/files/2019-04/Undoing%20Racism%20-%20White%20Supremacy%20Culture.pdf) list

[Having difficult conversations](https://youtu.be/202Tn7vxhEc)

[Calling in, not calling out](http://www.racialequityvtnea.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Interrupting-Bias_-Calling-Out-vs.-Calling-In-REVISED-Aug-2018-1.pdf)

[How to respond when you’ve been called out](https://youtu.be/C8xJXKYL8pU)

[Detour Spotting](https://culturalbridgestojustice.org/detour-spotting/)

Breakout session: Role playing: Using the White Privilege [Test](https://www.theantiracisteducator.com/post/the-anti-racist-educator-white-privilege-test), imagine yourself in the listed

scenarios as BIPOC. How would things be different for you?

Assignment: Using the concept of Sankofa, go back and research your ancestry. When did your

people become white? Hint: unless you are of Anglo-Saxon origin, your people were not white

when they arrived in the United States if they arrived before WWII.

Gathering 6: Challenging Systemic Racism

Ephesians 6:12 (Our struggle is not against enemies of flesh and blood. . . “) Puts emphasis on

challenging structures and policies instead of demonizing people.

Reading the Bible from the Margins: John 9:1-41 and Oxford notes (Healing of blind man on Sabbath) What can those in power learn from the marginalized?

Whiteness as Property manifested in systems and policies

1. Politics and Voting Rights – [Rigged: The Voter Suppression Playbook](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xn7MXFGl9Hs)
2. Racial Disparities in [Health Care](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5QdRwflM9I&list=PLIP6VNnsfk0qPxvUe3Lg4lbtJaTOraK-W&index=29)
3. Housing – Race the Power of an Illusion, Episode 3 – [The House We Live In](https://vimeo.com/265756935)
4. Education – [Understanding Racism in American Education](https://youtu.be/RhrD44mspyM)
5. Criminal Justice – [Michelle Alexander: The New Jim Crow](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=om2hx6Xm2JE)

Participants choose an area from the above and report on their research in the session.

**RE-ENVISIONING** (Gatherings 7 & 8)

**Gathering 7: Developing an Antiracist Action Plan**

“The prophet engages in futuring fantasy. The prophet does not ask if the vision can be implemented, for questions of implementation are of no consequence until the vision can be imagined. The *imagination* must come before the *implementation*.”

Walter Brueggemann, The Prophetic Imagination, p.40.

**Visioning**

Having a clear vision for what you want to accomplish or what you want a better world to look like will help you implement your plan. The Bible passages, instructions and resources below will help you construct an Antiracist Action Plan.

Matthew 25: 34-40

James 1:22-25

Finding Movement Partners – list of movements to join – see resource list.

**Gathering 8: Developing a Personal Rule**

Participants should be prepared to share their Antiracist Rule of Life with the rest of the group. Remember the Antiracist Rule of Life consists of two parts:

* An Antiracist Action Plan
* An Antiracist Personal Rule

The development of your Antiracist Personal Rule is meant to provide a structure for your future growth in the work of Centering God, Decentering Whiteness once the sessions are done. Since we are enculturated in a society built on White Supremacy, racist assumptions and implicit racial bias will always be available to us unless we consciously work against them.

* Through engaging in Reflection and Reaction, you may notice you’re already in the process of developing new habits which can constitute important parts of your Rule.
* Use the journaling you’ve done in this course as another path towards constructing your Rule.
* Praying the daily prayers provided for each Gathering and composing your own for the future is another way forward.
* Using the educational resources referenced in this course and finding others for your continuing education will help with constructing your Rule.
* Notice how the complete cycle of the 4 R’s informs your prayer and education.
* Learn by doing. Action as prayer. Pray with your feet!