



Resources for Schools

PHASE: SECONDARY

Does our behaviour really matter? – Racial injustice





KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

In response to the death of George Floyd and the events that followed in America the Archbishops of Canterbury and York said in a joint statement in June 2020

“Systemic racism continues to cause incalculable harm across the world. Our hearts weep for the suffering caused – for those who have lost their lives, those who have experienced persecution, those who live in fear. Let us be clear: racism is an affront to God. It is born out of ignorance and must be eradicated. We all bear responsibility and must play our part to eliminate this scourge on humanity.”

Christians believe that we are all uniquely made in the image of God and that all of us are equal before God and so should be treated with equity, fairness and justice. Jesus told his followers ‘Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.’

John 13 verses 34-35: Therefore

We stand with people everywhere who experience racism and speak out against this injustice.

Together we have the power to be the change we want to see in the world.

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to injustice everywhere”.

Martin Luther King JR

BIBLE PASSAGE OF THE WEEK:



The parable of the good Samaritan

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' In reply Jesus said: 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put

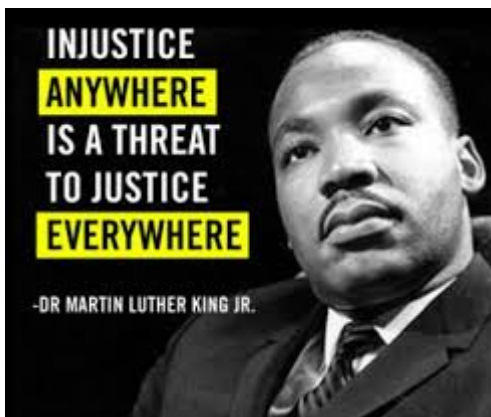
the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. "Look after him," he said, "and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have."

'Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?'

Gathering

Listen to this song from the film Glory about Martin Luther King

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUZOKvYcx_o



Spend a minute reflecting on this quote.

- What do you think it meant when Martin Luther King said it?
- How is it still relevant today?
- How could it apply in your life?

For Christians God says:

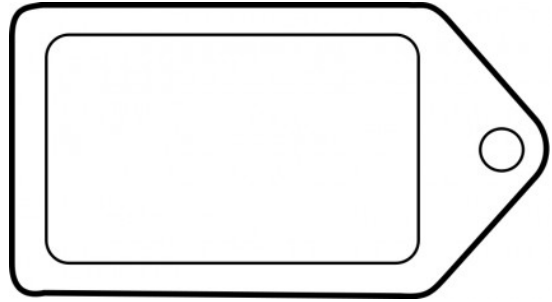
He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

—Micah 6:8

Engagement

The danger of the single story

Print out or project some photos of a selection of images of different people — a gay-pride marcher, a goth teen, a woman with missing teeth, a Muslim, — and ask the students to quickly jot down impressions on some parcel labels.



Reflect/think about why you wrote down what you did?

Think about how we judge others based on one impression or thing we have read or heard or seen on social media. This has been called the danger of the single story by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. We learn one thing about a culture or group of people and judge them by that single thing.

- What single story would people know about you? What would your label say?
- Would it be your social class or the football team you support or the type of music you like? Would it be your faith or race or gender?
- How might others judge you?

In the Bible reading, Jesus tells the story of Good Samaritan who doesn't judge the man who has been attacked by the single story that he is a Jew but sees him instead as a man in need of assistance.

American Pastor the Rev Andre Sims wrote this about the Good Samaritan parable in October 2020.

This summer, in the days following the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd, friends of all races checked in on me to see how I was handling the grief, anger, and stress. They mourned with me as I mourned. They were good Samaritans caring for my immediate needs.

My wounds and those of people of colour are not as obvious as the man in the parable, but their invisibility doesn't make them any less life-threatening. My wounds cause stress and can lead to all sorts of long-term health issues. The world says that we can figure out ways to lay down that stress for a period of time so we're able to pick it up again later.

God uses His followers in His plan. He's using my brothers and sisters in the dominant culture to come alongside me and shoulder some of that burden until we can lay it down forever at the foot of the cross. He used my friends who marched alongside me. They were like the Good Samaritan getting the wounded man to the inn.

We stand with people everywhere who experience racism and speak out against this injustice.

Response

This is an uncomfortable subject for Christians who have too often not spoken out about systemic racism, who have too often been part of the system that is racist.

In these two songs two Christian music artists tackle the subject of racism

Beacon Light: 'Colour Blind' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXnXQVtZ6MA>

Mandisa ft Toby Mac and Kirk Franklin <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UEzCQBwQkdA> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVKuA1s5I3o>

- Which of these songs do you think is most powerful?
- Which of these do you think are more effective?

'We confess and lament that we have stayed silent for too long and not spoken out publicly against this hate and violence. We confess and lament that we have not stood up publicly for our oppressed and marginalized Black sisters and brothers.'

This is a quote from an American Christian website (Proverbs 31 Ministries). Carefully read or listen to these words...to what extent do you agree with these words?

Together we have the power to be the change we want to see in the world.

Sending

Reflect on the words of this prayer as we finish. It is taken from an American website in response to the Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020.

Good and gracious God, Who loves and delights in all people, we stand in awe before You, knowing that the spark of life within each person on earth is the spark of your divine life.

Differences among cultures and races are multicolored manifestations of Your Light.

May our hearts and minds be open to celebrate similarities and differences among our sisters and brothers.

Give us strength and courage to speak out against injustice, and to work for the transformation of unjust systems that keep some in bondage: that we may more fully live out your kingdom here on earth; through Jesus Christ your son, who came to set us free. Amen

(From prayers published on the website of the Social justice resource center

<https://socialjusticeresourcecenter.org/prayers/racism>)

Listen to the song 'Better days' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urR76r2VypA>

How can you help make 'Better Days'?

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)

EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

How might the single stories that you have heard influence the way you treat people?

Watch this video. From the start to 6.04

https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en#t-392562

In this Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie talks about her experience as a student in America.

Think about the books you read, the history you learnt and the stories you read on social media. How often do you rely on single stories for your attitudes?



This image has become a regular feature of premier league football matches this season. Is this important? Should it continue when crowds return? What are the risks?

Note to teachers: when a small number of fans did return to football matches at the end of 2020 a small section of fans at one match did boo the players for taking this stand.

<https://www.skysports.com/football/news/11735/12152113/millwall-fans-boo-as-players-take-a-knee-in-support-of-fight-against-racial-injustice>

ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

In the parable of the Good Samaritan when they get to the inn the Samaritan pays for man's ongoing care. There is cost in being a Good Samaritan, it is not easy.

- What are the attitudes you have toward others that might need to change?
- Whose stories do we need to hear more about?
- Whose stories are missing or unheard?

PRAYERS that can help us REFLECT:

Use the Examen prayer to reflect on finding a direction and the stamina to stay on track:

It has 5 steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

1. GIVE THANKS ... for the diversity of God's creation, for each and every person made in God's image and all the gifts and talents we all have
2. ASK FOR HELP ... when you feel like you don't know what to do or what to say when you see injustice and racism.
3. REFLECT ... on when and how you jump to conclusions or judge people without knowing their full story
4. SAY SORRY ... for the times when you have not spoken up or have gone along with others prejudices through ignorance or your own deliberate choice
5. DECIDE ... what you need to do to learn more and to stand with those that experience injustice and to speak out.

CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:

Discussion starters for groups:

Nai'm's story

In the parable of the Good Samaritan at first people that could have helped didn't and passed by on the others side. *'A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.'*

Watch the news clip embed in this article.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-50331687>

- Was this the schools fault?
- What more could the school do?

- What could your school do?
- What more could you do?

Racism is not just about the actions of individuals; it is embedded in our systems. We need to be thinking about how we can ensure the system protects and provides justice. If we don't, we are like those that walk by on the others side.

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP – OUR APPROACH

INVITATIONAL

Everyone is welcome to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

INCLUSIVE

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is 'what Christians believe', saying things like:

'I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?'

'The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that ...'

Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.

INSPIRING

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?

