

AN EXPLANATION

Why Anti-Racism? – In 10 Minutes (or less)

FROM WOMEN OF THE ELCA'S HOUR ONE

HELPFUL HISTORY

This adaptation can be turned into a quick rationale for getting unit and cluster women interested.

PREPARATION

You may want to think about forgetting the script for this one: Memorize the best of it and rely on a couple of notes.

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INTRODUCTION

Why are Women of the ELCA and the ELCA doing anti-racism education? Why have we committed ourselves to anti-racism? Racism is not easy to discuss. We make it easier, though, by providing a safe place to listen and agreeing not to judge one another.

TWO OPERATING ASSUMPTIONS

We have **two operating assumptions** in our anti-racism education. **First**, in the U.S., we were all born into a racist society without any of us giving our permission or consent. What this means is that in this country, racism is an inherited feature of our society and systems. The work to understand how racism works and how we can combat and dismantle the workings of racism requires strong partnerships. The gospel provides just such energy for commitment.

Our **second** operating assumption is that anti-racism reaches beyond developing sensitivities to the results of racism by going deeper into an analysis and dismantling of racism as it exists in our society. In other words, anti-racism education is not so much a sharing of wounds and experiences as it is a sharing of information that leads to analysis, which in turn leads to the development of strategies.

These two operating assumptions undergird Women of the ELCA's anti-racism education and organizing.

THE GOSPEL CALLS US TO ANTI-RACISM

Women of the ELCA believes that the gospel calls us to be anti-racists. We believe that the love of God revealed to us through Christ's death, burial, and resurrection made us one family of humanity. Racism divides God's people and is, therefore, an assault on the gospel of Jesus Christ and the family of God. (While racism is not the

only “ism” that divides us, racism is the only “ism” you will hear us address in our presentation. This is not to discount the effects of other “isms;” rather, we present only anti-racism to maintain a critical focus.)

Optional biblical presentation: (It is possible to omit this section if doing this presentation, for example, over coffee with a decision maker.) Many biblical texts apply to the faith that calls us to oppose the division and injustice of racism. Let us listen to a portion of the word as written in John 17:10-23 and Ephesians 2:11-22.

WHY ANTI-RACISM?

We are learning to be anti-racist because racism flies in the face of our Lord’s prayer that we would be united. We want to be anti-racists because racism is a wall of hostility between God’s people that denies the salvation of Christ.

As children of God we combat evil, and that includes racism. We choose to believe God’s word, so our lives can show that God’s word is true even.

Now is a good time to set aside time for a longer presentation...