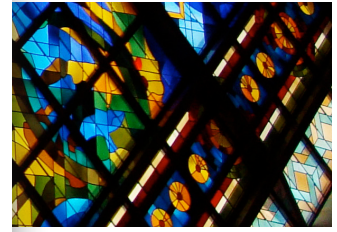




# 40 DAYS OF ENGAGEMENT on *Anti-Racism*



DAY 12

## Belonging vs Liberation

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### Learning

Because I so often notice that conversations about anti-racism use words such as *inclusion* and *belonging*, I want to uplift the untapped potential that comes from a form of allyship that radically questions ideas about belonging.

I want us to commit to asking questions such as:

- Who has the power to include (and therefore exclude others)?
- Does a desire for “inclusion” address questions of justice, reparations, changes in behaviour, and institutional changes?

I believe that what our Christian faith calls us to is a form of allying ourselves with the most marginalized and oppressed; to follow Jesus who didn’t just “work with” those society had forgotten but lived with them, ate with them, took risks, and made sacrifices.

We arrive at this place when we realize that our job is not to simply “help” those who are in need,

but to be willing to encounter someone and bear faithful witness to their story. This enables us to become a part of this “inside out” world Jesus talks about, where we can realize that those who do not have much access to the powers of this world, in fact, hold the most amazing power—which is the invitation to a liberated world.

Our collective liberation is dependent on us being able to simultaneously hold the fact that some of us have privileges and powers that need to be questioned, and that these forms of power over others is not the same as the power of the Spirit that lives in each of us, that calls us to a world transformed.

When it comes to allyship, I like to imagine myself as allying myself with the Spirit, with God’s call to be part of creating the beloved community on Earth, here and now. It is our Christian responsibility to ally ourselves with the Spirit who draws us all

We realize then that allyship is not about us helping some “poor unfortunate person” that we are pitying, but in reality, our capacity to be the unified body of Christ calls on us to be humble enough to see how someone who is facing oppression blesses us when they teach us.

into liberation. Indigenous peoples and people of colour deserve to be liberated from racism; White people have the task of liberating themselves from White supremacy; and we all have to journey together in imagining this new world where none of us are held captive by a system that creates hierarchies based on the colour of our skin.



## Faith Reflection

Holy One,

Who is Wholly Love,

you who receive our cries for justice and is always calling us to turn towards you, as I seek to heal from racism, help me be aware of the ways in which I may be tempted to find quick solutions or easy answers rather than the fullness of your call from the margins.

When filled with worry about what it means to let go of what was, remind me that we find the greatest security when we love one another.

Inspire me to think creatively and radically; to remember:

that there are so many possibilities for my own healing and transformation,  
that there are endless opportunities to journey towards our collective liberation.

We pray this in the name of Jesus, the one you sent to show us the kin-dom on Earth is created from the margins.

Amen.



## Children's Activity

There are many different options that can be used in a discussion about inclusion and belonging. I would suggest choosing imagery that best matches the experience of the child you are connecting with. Here are some example questions.

### Guiding Questions

1. When we go to the park and play soccer, how is the field set up?
2. Things like nets help us to be able to play together. How would you feel about playing soccer if the nets were different sizes? If you didn't trust the referee? If the field had lots of holes you could trip on?

3. Even if things didn't seem fair, what if everyone else playing said: But we want you to play with us! It's okay, you're allowed to play!

### Guiding Thought

When we hear people say something isn't fair or that they are worried something doesn't feel safe for them, it is important that we listen. Sometimes we might have to stop playing the game we are playing. We might have to make big changes like finding a new referee or moving to a different field.

What's most important is that you listen and are ready to make changes. This is what many of us

are trying to do when it comes to racism—we know that if we want to solve the problems we have to be willing to make big changes, not just try to include people in ways that don't feel good.



## Group Commitment

The call to think critically about inclusion as a model for working towards anti-racism can be challenging even for those who feel quite dedicated and passionate about racial justice. There are many institutions and spaces that are White dominant—including our workplaces, organizations we support, and/or our churches. We must be willing to ask ourselves if the work we are doing is creating systemic change.

Here are some questions to carry with you as you continue to engage in anti-racism work:

- Does the work being done in this space help everyone find liberation from White supremacy?
- When and how are the words *inclusion* and *belonging* being used in this space? Who is using these words?
- In what ways might a focus on inclusion as a key priority of anti-racism limit the willingness to look at work that can be done/needs to be done?
- How might belonging or liberation move anti-racism work forward in a different kind of way? How might you commit to the anti-racism work of liberation in your own community?



## Advocacy

Here are three ways you can continue to engage in this topic in your everyday life.

1. Consider the church, organization, and/or communities you are invested in. Do these organizations center the perspectives of Black, Indigenous, and people of colour? Who holds power in these organizations (who is on staff, who are the board members)? Challenge these organizations to be accountable for their leadership decisions.

2. Get out of your comfort zone. The reason why inclusion-based models of anti-racism work can be harmful is because it is easy for them to continue to center the experiences of White people. What are ways you can start showing up to places that are owned and/or led by people of colour?
3. Advocate for the creation of spaces for Black, Indigenous, and people of colour only. It is not uncommon for anti-racist

spaces to still be a challenging space for Indigenous and racialized people for navigate. Ensuring that there are spaces for Black, Indigenous, and people of colour to gather creates more opportunities for healing and community building to take place. Instead of prioritizing the notion that everyone must feel ‘included’ in a space, the priority can be ensuring the needs of Indigenous and racialized people are being met.

## Resources

One place to reference the characteristics of White supremacist culture can be found at [White Supremacy Culture](#).



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