

A Storied Pilgrimage with Race

Leader's Guide



The Episcopal Diocese of El Camino Real
2021

Dear Leaders,

Thank you for engaging in this material and for being willing to lead a group through the stages of “A Storied Pilgrimage with Race.”

As the Design Team put this material together, we found that the best approach to our own questions, issues and experiences with racism was through the power of story. We quickly agreed to use video to garner personal stories, and most members of the team offered to take part in this storytelling. After all, if we were going to ask people to talk about hard things, we needed to be able to do the same.

In the Diocese of El Camino Real, we recognize that we are on a pilgrimage: what this means to us is that we are willing to be curious and explore, without having a planned end in sight. In terms of the topic of racism in our diocese, we know that our history is richly layered with peoples from many “tribes and languages and peoples and nations” as Eucharistic Prayer II says in Enriching our Worship. The complexity of our life together is as wondrous as it is challenging. We don’t know exactly where this journey will take each person who walks this pilgrimage; we believe that it is all about the journey.

“A Storied Pilgrimage with Race” is a twelve-stage pilgrimage, comprised of video interviews, readings, an area of action, and reflection. Our intent is to help each person, each group to engage in a variety of ways with the material—not as voyeurs or consumers, but as people who are willing to go deeper on the topic of race. This curriculum engages the head and the heart and may take some to a place that is vulnerable and possibly painful. As we walk this pilgrimage, we hope that each person’s story will emerge and that there will be room to hear it.

Finally, the Design Team for “A Storied Pilgrimage with Race” intends this as a holy offering. Our months of work on this has been joyful and challenging, sweet and bitter. We have laughed and cried, and we hope you will as well.

Again, thank you for leading your group of pilgrims.

The Rt. Rev. Lucinda Ashby
The Rev. Karen Cuffie
Mr. Timothy Gee
Mr. Elrond Lawrence
The Rev. Jani Wild
The Rev. Salying Wong
Mr. Brett Wormley

The Design Team extends its gratitude to all who participated in the story interviews, and to Mr. Elrond Lawrence for countless hours spent editing the interviews.

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Where to Find the Stages of the Pilgrimage

The twelve stages of “A Storied Pilgrimage with Race” can be found on the diocesan website (www.realepiscopal.org), under “Resources/Leadership Development.”

Each stage has its own thumbnail image, which leads to a video. Additional materials are posted in links or listed with each stage.

The stages may be done in the order of your choosing.

For questions, please contact any of the Design Team members.

Suggestions for Convening a Group

This pilgrimage may be done individually and as a group. However, we feel that working in a group is richer and invites honesty and deeper exploration.

To convene a group, either online or in-person (when permitted):

- Choose a group size that works best for sharing story. Often these would be groups of 10-15 people, although more can work if breakout rooms are used effectively.
- Be open to leading a group that may have people from your parish, from several parishes, friends, colleagues.
- Decide whether your group will meet weekly, semi-monthly, or monthly. We recommend allowing for time between gatherings so that people can engage the materials and process their own emotions and experiences.
- Advertise in your parish newsletter, during announcements or at coffee hour.
- Choose a time that works for all people. 75 to 90 minutes is enough time for one gathering. Start on time and end on time.
- Be sure that you have a moderator who can watch for raised hands and a facilitator (usually the leader) who move the discussion along.
- Surround each meeting with prayer.
- Establish Group Norms for your times together (see Page 5).
- Maintain a consistent day/hour for your meeting time so that people know when to expect it and can plan accordingly.
- Emphasize the importance of completing as much in-between time work as possible.
- Let the group know that you will keep a record so that they will meet the requirement for anti-racism training (required of clergy and lay leaders by TEC canons).

Sample Group Norms

We agree to:

Start on time and end on time.

Attend all sessions unless excused for illness or emergency.

Use RESPECT guidelines for our conversation.

Maintain confidentiality so that this can be a safe space.

Listen to hear, not to reply.

Do the agreed-upon work between stages.

Be open to what is surprising or unexpected.

Be sure that everyone has a chance to be heard.

Recognize that silence has an important place in our conversation.

Hold each other in prayer.

Forgive each other for missteps, clumsiness, being inarticulate.

Allow for disagreement in perception and experience.

Make room for grace, mercy and forgiveness.

(Often Group Norms are read at the beginning of each stage, after the opening prayer).

RESPECT Guidelines

(from the Kaleidoscope Institute)

R = take **RESPONSIBILITY** for what you say and feel without blaming others.

E = use **EMPATHETIC** listening.

S = be **SENSITIVE** to differences in communication styles.

P = **PONDER** what you hear and feel before you speak.

E = **EXAMINE** your own assumptions and perceptions.

C = keep **CONFIDENTIALITY**.

T = **TRUST** ambiguity because we are *not* here to debate who is right or wrong.

Communication is one of the most important elements in building a more inclusive community. People of different backgrounds bring with them different communication styles. Sometimes these differences can cause conflicts among members of a community—often in an unconscious way.

Guidelines for communication are like the traffic rules that one has to understand and observe before getting a license to drive a car. We are required to pass a test proving that we know and will follow the rules in order to lessen the possibility of traffic accidents. With interpersonal communication, we do not require people to pass a test but we do need to remind people about how to interact respectfully. Conditioned by our society, we may react to others who are different with negative attitudes, put-downs, judgments and dismissal. If we are to express the essence of God's inclusiveness, we need to agree to behave differently when we are attempting to build a more inclusive community. The Respectful Communication Guidelines provide a foundation to uphold the well-being of the community.

An Overview of the Stages

The overarching goal of this curriculum is to help each individual to explore their own past and current experiences with racism by viewing story and connecting another’s story with their own.

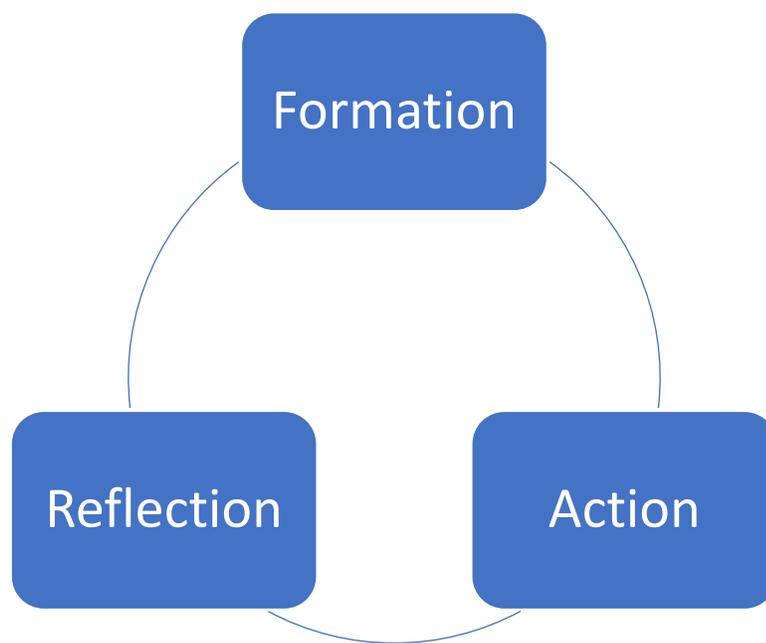
To do this, the design team has developed twelve storied video interviews with people of the Diocese of El Camino Real. All those interviewed were asked similar questions.

To accompany each video, the team researched materials related to topics presented by the story that was told. The team chose some formation materials—readings—from an exhaustive list.

For homework and individual exploration, the team recommended action items that invite a physical connection with the story.

And finally, the team recognized the importance of having each person have time to process the material entirely on their own through various types of engagements with spirituality and the arts.

The curriculum for each stage is built on a basic cycle of:



This basic approach (FAR) allows for pilgrims to engage minds, hearts, and hands in order to have a closer experience with the stories.

Formation: Video story

Reading:

books

articles

links

Action: An act related to the video

Visit a particular site

Visit a museum

Participate in an activity—a protest, a march, a gathering

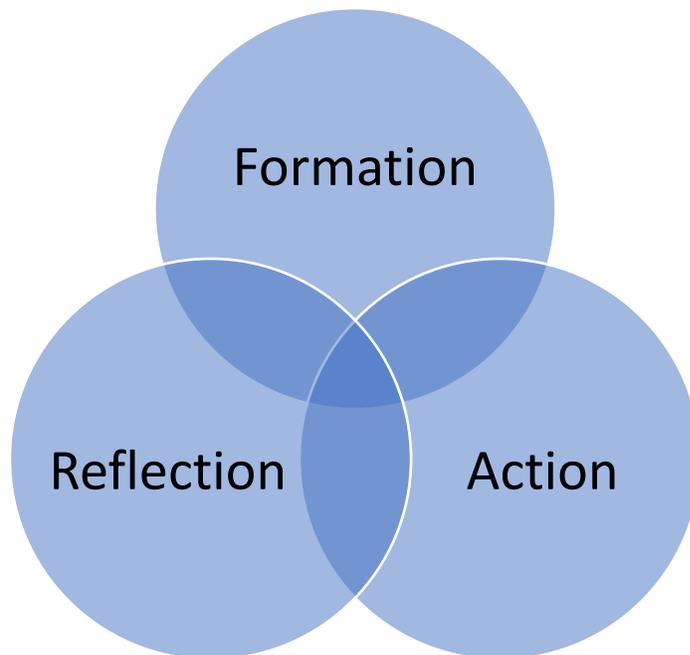
Reflection: Time to go deeper

An artistic endeavor—poem, song, painting

Silence

Journaling

The Video Interview is the “meat” of the curriculum, so be sure that part of the curriculum takes prominence in your planning. You will want to view the video yourself before showing it in the group.



The integration of all three parts of the process invites personal engagement and opportunity for growth and reconciliation.

A Sample Group Meeting

5 minutes: Welcome and Opening Prayer (rotate leadership through members of the group)

15 minutes: Check-in: debrief any left-over thoughts or reflections from the prior stage

15-25 minutes: Play the video

20 minutes: Discuss the question at the end of the video. Invite connections with past stages when appropriate

10 minutes: Review the materials for the homework: Readings, Actions, Reflections

5 minutes: Closing Prayer (rotate the leadership throughout the group)

Note: if your group is very good at discussion, consider having them view the video before coming to the group meeting.

