

# Why Are We Here, and Personal Experience With Race

We open the series with some materials and exercises to help frame the journey ahead. We hope to motivate and sustain your commitment to this work and place you in the good company of white voices who are turning toward racial suffering with wisdom, compassion and the resolve to co-create its end.

## Before your meeting

Please read these before your meeting:

- [Introduction to Understanding Whiteness](#) [pdf]
- [Communications Guidelines for Multicultural Interactions](#) [pdf]
- [Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression, and Multiculturalism in My Ministry](#) by Abbey Tennis [pdf]
- [Not Somewhere Else But Here](#) by Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker [pdf]
- [Who Invented White People](#) by Gregory Jay [pdf]
- [Ways of Being White](#) by Gary Howard [pdf]

Other Resources:

[Waking up White](#), by Debbie Irving [book]

## Facilitation

Your group should choose a facilitator for this meeting. The facilitator role will rotate each meeting.

The facilitator's role is to guide the group through the proposed agenda. The facilitator is not expected to have any special knowledge about the topic, and responds to each question as a participant. The facilitator's role incorporates three jobs:

1. Make sure all voices are heard. We suggest "going around" to have each person speak during most sections of the agenda, rather than open discussion.
2. Keep time and keep the group moving through the agenda.
3. Ensure that a date and facilitator is set for the next meeting

## Proposed Agenda

- Sit (5 minutes) - A quiet meditation or contemplation
- Discuss Communication Guidelines that will support your group, drawing on EBMC's Communication Guidelines where useful (20 minutes)
  - Select someone to take notes during this section
  - Start with a go around where each person shares 1 or 2 guidelines that feel important to their participation in the group
  - Open to discussion to refine any guidelines
  - Confirm that all members can abide by the group's guidelines, or at least be open to practicing with them
- Mindful Sharing (60 minutes)
  - Instruction: Mindful sharing involves each participant sharing from personal

experience. There is no discussion or cross-talk during this time period, only personal sharing.

- Each person in the group can share 2-4 minutes on each question (gauge the time depending on the number of people in your group)
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- **Discussion Questions**

1. What motivates you to be a part of this process?

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2. What concerns, fears, or other feelings arise as this conversation opens?

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3. What potential do you see for your role — as a spiritual leader, teacher, or community member?

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4. When did you first recognize yourself as having a racial identity?

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5. What has supported your growing awareness about your racial identity?

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6. What feelings arise in response to the idea of privilege?

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- Sit (5 minutes)

- Group Reflection (10 minutes)

- Instruction: Group Reflection is like Mindful Sharing in that there is no discussion or cross-talk, however the focus is on what kind of experience the participants had during the meeting rather than on the content covered.
- Each person in the group can share 2-3 minutes about what it was like to participate in the group (gauge time based on number of people in the group)
- PROMPT: What was it like to engage in Mindful Sharing today? How has this been for

you so far?

- Plan the next meeting (15 minutes)
  - How did your technology or meeting logistics work? Any changes you would like to try for the next meeting?
  - When will you meet?
  - Who will facilitate?
- If there's time left, finish with a closing sit (5 minutes)