

Addressing Racism and Prejudice - We Are All Equal in God's Eyes

By Heather Vanderkin

Print the following definitions on chart paper:

- Racism: a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race
- Prejudice: (1) an adverse opinion formed without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge (2) an irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics
- Discrimination: the act, practice, or an instance of making or perceiving a difference categorically rather than individually

Watch the video clip from the episode of 20/20 on children's perceptions of different Races and ethnicities: <http://breakingprejudice.org/teaching/video-clips/racism-and-colorism/childrens-perceptions-of-different-races/ethnicities.html>

Open by having students read the definitions. Next have the students stand in the middle of the room. Designate one side of the room as the "Agree" side and the other side of the room the "Disagree" side. Then read the following statements and ask students to go to the appropriate side according to their personal opinions.

- People are more racist today than they were was 50 years ago
- Children are more racist than adults
- Racism is based on fear
- Christians aren't racist
- You can be a racist and still be a good person
- Some discrimination is justified
- If your family is racist, you will be racist

Take a few minutes to allow students to comment on any of the statements.

Let's go back to the first statement, "People are more racist today than they were was 50 years ago." Mention how many of them disagreed/agreed.

"I am going to read some quotations or actions made by famous celebrities in the past 15 years."

Read the quotations of famous people listed at the end of this lesson. You may choose to leave names out and only read the statements.

Again ALL of these statements or actions were made by famous people within the past 10-15 years. There is still a lot of racism and prejudice; it is just not legally acceptable anymore.

Allow students to reflect or comment.

Transitional Statement:

It is up to all people to fight against racism and prejudice. And just because you call yourself a Christian doesn't automatically mean you are not racist or prejudice. For example:

1. James Wickstrom, is a Christian minister and radio talk show host who often calls for the extermination of Jews in his sermons.^[1]
2. The Kingdom Identity Ministries is one of the largest suppliers of so-called Christian Identity materials, such as training books, pamphlets, and Bible study courses. Their mission, to preserve the white race, encourages white women to reproduce only within their race and encourages the superiority of the white male as interpreted from the Bible.^[2]
3. America's Promise Ministries is a congregation that relies strongly on the literal interpretation of the Bible. This church also insists that Jesus was white and believes that all greatness achieved in the United States is attributed to the work of the white race and none other. Several members of this congregation have committed violent acts of terrorism and murder, including abortion clinic bombings, bank robberies, and shootings.^[3]

This is completely the opposite of what Jesus taught us. When we encounter racism and prejudice, whether in the church or outside the church, we should confront it in love, not with judgment.

What are some ways we can accomplish this?

Allow time to for students to talk.

Many people have been raised to treat people differently according to their skin color, religious beliefs, sexual identity, etc, and that's all they know—those people should be gently shown the way of Jesus who made no distinctions regarding persons —everyone is equal in his sight!

Divide the youth into Small Groups to discuss the following questions:

- What causes racism/prejudice?
- What problems does racism/prejudice cause?
- How, if at all, have you been affected by racism/prejudice?

Bring students back together to watch The DNA Journey video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyaEQEmt5ls>

Read the following from the Bible:

Galatians 3: 28

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

What does this Bible verse say about racism/prejudice? *Everybody's equal in God's eyes; there's no difference between humans, no matter where they come from, and despite what they look like on the outside.*

An exercise taken from The Source for Youth Ministry:

I want you to close your eyes and use your imaginations. Let's say you are hungry and decide to go into a restaurant. After waiting to be seated for 30 minutes the manager walks up to you and says, "We don't serve your kind here!" You leave the restaurant in anger and decide to go home. On your way you stop in the park to get a drink from a fountain. Just as you start to drink, someone taps your shoulder sharply. "You can't drink from this fountain—that one over there is for your kind!" In frustration you walk down the street. People move in your way, forcing you to walk in the gutter. You get on your bus home, having to sit in the back so that people who aren't of your kind don't have to look at you. From the bus you see people like yourself being mistreated, even beaten, just because they are different . . .

This kind of racism/prejudice still happens throughout the world every day—and often a lot closer to home than we'd care to imagine.

While America does not have the oppressive laws for separate drinking fountains, schools, or public restrooms like it used to have, we did used to have them, and painful memories and attitudes sometimes die hard in people. There are still many people who hate each other simply because they are different. They have different skin colors, ethnic backgrounds, religious beliefs, style of dress, music preferences, marriage, financial, or social statuses.

Show Video on All That We Share: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iD8tjhVO1Tc>

Think to yourself about someone you didn't like at first, but then you became friends. Why did your attitude change? Invite students to share.

What sorts of steps can you take this week to make sure that your attitudes or words are not racist or prejudiced?

How can you confront racism/prejudice when you see it?

Invite students to share.

Jesus loves and accepts all of us for who we are, no matter our race, skin color, our sexual identity, height, weight, or what we have done. He took ALL of our sin upon himself and died in our place. In God's eyes, all are equal.

Close in Prayer

[1] TheHumanist.com, 5 Dangerous "Christian Hate" Groups

[2] TheHumanist.com, 5 Dangerous "Christian Hate" Groups

[3] TheHumanist.com, 5 Dangerous "Christian Hate" Groups

Quotes:

Kelly Osbourne "If you kick every Latino out of this country, then who is going to be cleaning your toilet, Donald Trump?"

E! Fashion Police host **Giuliana Rancic** publicly apologized for her "accidental" racist comments about singer/actress Zendaya during an Oscars red carpet recap. Rancic made an insensitive comment about Zendaya's dreadlocks, saying that she thought Zendaya **probably smelled like patchouli oil**. Fellow host Kelly Osbourne added, "**or weed.**"

"If I kill you, I'll be part of the KKK, and there'll be one less lonely n-----," **Justin Bieber**, who turned his song "One Less Lonely Girl" into a parody video with racial slur and made a crack about being in the KKK.

No one can forget **Mel Gibson** telling a policeman during his 2006 DUI arrest that "**Jews are responsible for all the wars in the world.**" In 2010, several voicemails were released of the hot-headed actor and filmmaker going postal on his ex-wife Oksana Grigorieva. In one of his rants, Gibson wished that his ex-got **raped by a pack of "n" words** and in another, he **referred to Mexicans as "wetbacks."**

Floyd Mayweather Jr. The boxer disrespected Filipinos after racially attacking opponent Manny Pacquiao on ESPN. In 2012, Mayweather went after basketball star Jeremy Lin with a Tweet that said, "Jeremy Lin **is a good player, but all the hype is because he's Asian.**"

Alec Baldwin referred to Kanye West and Jay-Z's "**N*ggas in Paris,**" which set off a firestorm of backlash against the "30 Rock" star.

Paris Hilton in 2011 was quoted as saying, "**I can't stand black guys. I would never touch one. It's gross.**"

Rihanna The singer posted a racist photo that **referred to Chris Brown's Vietnamese girlfriend, Karrueche Tran, as "rice cakes."**

Jay-Z Back in 2010, the hip-hop superstar allegedly **banned "white people" into the VIP section at his Brit Awards after-party in London.**

Miley Cyrus apologized for participating in a controversial group photo by **pulling at the corner of her eyes to make them slanted**, commonly associated with mocking Asians.

Asher Roth, the Caucasian rapper Tweeted in 2009 that he was **"hanging out with nappy headed hoes."**

A photograph taken in 2004 of **Sandra Bullock's ex-husband Jesse James** showed him **doing a Nazi salute while wearing a Nazi hat.**

Kreayshawn, the Caucasian female rapper, denied posting Tweets in 2012 that said, **"Sometimes I wish slavery was still goin' on" and "I don't need black fans anyway. Y'all don't buy albums."** Kreayshawn said her Twitter was hacked and sent out the half-hearted (and still offensive) apology the following morning, **"I am sorry, I LOVE FRIED CHICKEN!"**

Ricky Rubio, the Minnesota Timberwolves player, Tweeted a photo of his teammate Kevin Love along with the caption: "Ok, he doesn't look like a Mexican anymore but I think he looks even worst...."

The trailer for the **Universal Pictures movie the Dilemma**, directed by **Ron Howard**, featured Vince Vaughn's character, an advertising executive telling auto company executives, **"Electric cars are gay. I mean, not homosexual, but my-parents-are-chaperoning-the-dance gay."**

Sources:

Ranker.com 33 Celebrities Who Have Been Caught Being Racist

Hollywoodreporter.com, *10 Controversial Gay Gaffes That Shook Hollywood*