

Welcoming Diversity: An Inventory for Congregations

As our communities become more diverse, every congregation is faced with the challenge of how to reach out to people of different racial/ethnic backgrounds. We believe an important step in meeting that challenge is to ask whether our congregation is truly welcoming to all people. While our initial answer may be "Yes, of course," focused introspection might reveal hidden barriers that may hinder people of other racial/ethnic backgrounds from feeling at home in our congregation.

A sub-committee of the Religion Sector of the GRACE Summit on Racism created this Inventory in 2007 to aid congregations seeking to embrace and welcome the diversity of its community. The Inventory focuses on six areas: Perceptions, Leadership, Worship, Visual, Educational, and Events. The sub-committee recommends that this Inventory be used by a committee or a team of interested persons.

To stimulate your discussion, using a 1-3 scale, read each statement and place your most appropriate response to the left in the space provided.

NA = not applicable, **DK** = don't know

1 = not at all true, 2 = sometimes true, 3 = true, most of the time

PERCEPTIONS, ATTITUDES, VALUES – WHAT WE HOLD IN OUR MINDS AND HEARTS AFFECT OUR ACTIONS.

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| 1. ___ | The healing of racism and an appreciation for racial/ethnic diversity are values of the leadership of our congregation. |
| 2. ___ | Opportunities for dialogue are provided about these values between our congregation and our leadership. |
| 3. ___ | Our leaders comprehend and communicate the way in which ethnic, economic, social and political justice makes visible the reign of God. |
| 4. ___ | Our congregation is receptive to preaching, teaching, and dialogue about the harm of racism and the value of diversity. |
| 5. ___ | Our congregation is open to the ideas that people from other racial/ethnic traditions bring about worship, education, community, and outreach. |
| 6. ___ | Our congregation is aware of our denomination's position on issues of racism, poverty, and violence because the positions are consistently held before the people. |
| 7. ___ | Members who reflect our congregations' racial/ethnic diversity are being recruited and equipped for leadership. |
| 8. ___ | Our congregation addresses root causes of poverty, racism, and other forms of discrimination, while also relieving immediate needs through ministries of charity, compassion, and mercy. |
| 9. | |
| a. ___ | Past attitudes/actions of prejudice and discrimination have been addressed in our congregation forthrightly and healing is taking place around these issues. |
| b. ___ | We have a process of reconciliation in place, when needed. |

LEADERSHIP/ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE – Leaders and structure set a congregation's course.

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| 10. ___ | Our congregation's leadership promotes anti-racism and diversity. |
| 11. ___ | The Leadership is conscious of diversity when selecting vendors for supplies and services |
| 12. a. ___ | Our congregation has a team that works with the leadership to address issues of racism in our congregation and society. |
| b. ___ | The team has developed a strategy for addressing racism within the congregation and community. |
| c. ___ | The resources of our congregation support this team. |
| 13. ___ | People outside our congregation's primary racial group are consulted about how we might address unintentional racism and become more inclusive. |
| 14. a. ___ | We have a system of greeting in place so that all those who attend receive a warm welcome. |
| b. ___ | Members of the "greeting team" are educated to be welcoming to a wide variety of people. |
| c. ___ | The members of the "greeting team" are representative of the racial/ethnic make-up of our congregation. |

WORSHIP – Does our worship inspire us to greater understanding and appreciation for the diversity of God's people?

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| 15 ___ | Our liturgies and music incorporate a variety of racial/ethnic traditions. |
| 16 ___ | We invite speakers, dramatists, musicians, etc. who represent a variety of racial/ethnic traditions. |
| 17 ___ | Our preaching addresses the sin of racism and challenges the congregation to examine themselves in light of Scriptures and religious vows. |
| 18 ___ | The Gospel message is expressed in ways relevant to diverse people. |
| 19 ___ | We give voice in worship to issues important to diverse people. |
| 20 ___ | As a congregation we welcome and befriend all visitors before, during and after worship. |

VISUAL – Visuals are strong messages. What do we see around us?

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| 21 ___ | A wide variety of racial/ethnic people are represented in our windows, pictures, wall hangings, etc. |
| 22 ___ | The classrooms for young children are supplied with dolls, books, games, and other toys that represent a wide variety of racial/ethnic people. |
| 23 ___ | All classrooms and libraries have books, videos, etc. that represent a wide variety of racial/ethnic people. |
| 24 ___ | Our displays, brochures, and publicity pieces reflect diversity. |
| 25 ___ | The staff and leadership visually reflect a commitment to multicultural ministry. |

EDUCATIONAL – What are we reading, studying, and promoting?

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| 26. ___ | We strive to teach a respect for diversity. |
| 27a. ___ | Our educational materials reflect a variety of racial/ethnic people (and language groups if appropriate to our congregation.) |
| b. ___ | Racial/ethnic people are consulted when new curriculum or educational materials are developed. |
| 28a. ___ | We regularly offer classes that give insight into different racial/ethnic people. |
| b. ___ | We are sensitive to the differences in teaching and learning styles among people from a variety of cultures and traditions. |
| c. ___ | Our faith is presented in terms of the history, tradition, and contribution of minority cultures as well as the dominant culture. |
| 29a. ___ | We offer on-site racism and diversity sensitivity training. |
| b. ___ | We promote off-site racism and diversity sensitivity training for members of our congregation. |
| c. ___ | We offer our site for racism and diversity sensitivity training. |

EVENTS – Do we schedule events to broaden our experiences and perspectives?

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| 30 ___ | Our congregation invites other congregations representing different racial/ethnic groups to share in opportunities for outreach, recreation, and worship. |
| 31 ___ | Our congregation promotes times for members to visit or to participate in other racial/ethnic groups' work, play or worship experiences. |
| 32 ___ | We hold activities to celebrate the diversity already among us and to become familiar with a variety of racial, ethnic, and cultural traditions. |

Thank you for your efforts with this Inventory. Racism is a serious and often subtle problem in our country and in our congregations and must be addressed. This Inventory is intended to help a congregation engage in conversation about its own reality of racism. Then, from that discussion, the congregation can design ongoing healing actions that will serve as a guide for planning and annual evaluation.

If you would like more information, please contact the Partners for a Racism-Free Community

The Welcoming Diversity Inventory for Congregations material is available under Resources at www.prfc-gr.org and is to be used as a resource and awareness tool. Reproduction of these materials is encouraged for congregations and other non-profit organizations for educational purposes. Please acknowledge:

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