



Anti-Racism Charter

Parish study resource



“Jesus welcomed all those whom he met and as we follow Christ and grow our worshipping communities, it is imperative that we make it clear that everyone is equally valued and cherished.”

Bishop Christopher

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 4 |
| How to get the most from this resource | 6 |
| Session 1: In Christ and as Christ | 8 |
| Session 2: Rebuilding the city | 13 |
| Session 3: The trees that we have to climb | 18 |
| Session 4: Putting it all together and into action | 25 |

*With thanks to the following contributors of the
Bible study sessions:*

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Introduction from Bishop Christopher

I warmly commend these four Bible studies and it is good that people in our parishes (both clergy and lay) have been involved in drafting the materials and piloting them. This means that we can be confident that they are a useful addition to the range of Racial Justice materials that we offer to our parishes.



I very much hope that you will encourage people to use these studies in groups. In this way, people can be involved in beginning to think about how to take action to ensure that we are all working to bring about justice and equality. This might be in your parish, deanery or across the diocese, but wherever you are taking action, it is important that you seek equality for all.

Jesus welcomed all those whom he met and as we follow Christ and grow our worshipping communities, it is imperative that we make it clear that everyone is equally valued and cherished.

I am grateful to our Area Racial Justice Groups, who work so hard to keep issues of Racial Justice on the agenda of our parishes – and for the work of the diocesan staff as well. It is my hope and prayer that we can all work together to make it clear that all are equally valued and to ensure that the Church in this diocese reflects the rich diversity of the community of which it is a part.

I am so pleased that we are able to share together in this work – and assure you of my continued prayers and blessing,

Bishop Christopher

Why do we need an Anti-Racism Charter study resource?

We are all one in Christ (Galatians 3:28), created by God, made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Sadly, this is not the way society has developed and some people are treated differently because of their background. Being anti-racist is not the same as simply not being racist. It's not enough for us as Christians to simply not be racist; instead we are called to actively seek justice and equality for all people. At the heart of this work is the responsibility to actively counter, disrupt and oppose racial injustice wherever we find it in our churches, workplaces and communities. This isn't an easy task, and it demands that we look first to ourselves, to reflect deeply on our own views and assumptions and to explore our calling as disciples of Christ.



The Southwark Anti-Racism Charter (ARC) was approved by Diocesan Synod in March 2021, but we have a long way to go before the ethos of this essential piece of work becomes fully embedded in our lives and parishes. This study resource is designed to offer small groups a new way of engaging with some of the key principles of the Charter, in ways that can be applied to our daily walk of faith. It offers an opportunity to reflect together on scripture and story, to ask challenging questions of ourselves and one another and to pray for the transformation of our communities and our world.

Each of the four sessions has been contributed by a different person from our diocese, reflecting a diversity of experiences and perspectives. We're grateful to all those who have contributed to this resource and who have worked to shape it for parish use and we offer it as a gift to our parishes – please use it and share it, adapting it to suit the needs of your group.

We recognise that none of us is the finished article – that we each have our own blindnesses, flaws and failings – but, together and by the grace of God, we can come to a greater understanding of ourselves and one another.

Diversity is truly a gift from God to his world – and it is my prayer that this resource will be a blessing to you. Please don't allow yourselves to be restricted by what you find here, but rather use it as a place to begin your own exploration of these issues. May it make you hungry to learn and grow more!

Bishop Rosemarie

Lead Bishop for Social and Racial Justice



Mural of a member of the *Windrush Generation*, by pupils from St James Hatcham CE Primary School.

How to get the most from this resource

These four sessions are designed to help people think about how to embed the principles of the [Diocesan Anti-Racism Charter \(ARC\)](#) in their daily discipleship. The first three sessions concentrate on one of the principles of the ARC and the fourth asks people to consider what actions they might take as individuals to challenge racial injustice.

The sessions are designed to be used in small groups but can be adapted for individual study as well as other contexts. They can be run as you would any other bible study group, but we offer the following guidelines to help you:

- We recommend allowing an hour and a half for the sessions to give enough time for everyone to join in. However, if this is a new topic for your group, or if the group is large, it is likely the sessions may take longer to allow everyone enough time to reflect.

- The 'reflections & discussions' points have been numbered for ease of navigation. However, please do not feel any pressure or compulsion to cover all the points listed.
- We recommend that you make the ARC document – essential background reading for facilitators – available to your group. Online link: bit.ly/406JQZY
- Everyone learns differently and so it's good to make sure that people have a way to engage that suits them. For example, it might be that someone would prefer to draw something to explain what they are thinking or feeling – so we suggest making resources available to enable this.
- The Bible verses printed in these studies come from the New Revised Standard Version, but please feel free to use whichever Bible version you are comfortable with or would most usually use in church. You might find it useful to explore different translations.
- We recommend that group leaders take some time to pray for the group and their discussions ahead of the meeting. You might find it helpful to consider the diversity of your specific group and/or the population that your parish serves in terms of their age, ethnicity, nationalities etc. Each session also begins and ends with prayer and it would be great if the group committed to pray for one another throughout the period of studying together.
- As a group, it could be helpful to discuss and agree on a few ground rules (e.g. giving your full attention to whoever is speaking, only sharing what you are comfortable with sharing, respectful disagreement, etc.)
- The issues which these sessions may raise might be difficult for some in the group, particularly if they are new to thinking about these matters. If people begin to get anxious or uncomfortable it may be necessary for the leader to sensitively intervene. It might also be that the whole group, or indeed the parish, might benefit from some help from outside with dealing with these matters. If so, please contact your Area Racial Justice Group and they will be able to put you in touch with someone who can help with this. You can find contact details for your Area Racial Justice Group online: bit.ly/3PiCkG3, or contact the Diocesan Racial Justice team at Racial.Justice@southwark.anglican.org or on 020 4537 8913 for advice and support.

Session 1: In Christ and as Christ

Aim

To consider the ARC through the exploration of Principle 1:

An explicit theological understanding that God's kingdom is multi-ethnic, and that it is through our baptismal covenant that we recognise and respect the dignity of every human being and our unity in Christ.

Opening prayer

Loving God,

help us to be those who welcome all in your name.

Give us your grace and your love

that we may be respectful

of all and work for unity with all.

We ask this in the name of Christ.

Amen.

Introductory activity

Opening our hearts and minds

In twos or threes, spend some time in silence thinking about the people in your circle of friends at work, in church and in your community. Are they a diverse group? If so, in what ways? What have you found unique in them – and why is that important to you?

After a few minutes, share your experiences with someone in the group whom you know less well. They can then introduce you and what you have said to the rest of the group.

Context setting

In his epistles, Paul writes about the ways Christian believers can live out their faith in Jesus Christ as individual Christians and as a Church.

Paul writes about the nature of the Church in a variety of ways. One beautiful expression is that the Church is the 'body of Christ' – with Christ as the head and each of us as members of his body. Each member looks different and has different functions, but all work together to make the presence of Christ evident.

Paul travels to different places and shares the good news. As he does so, he becomes very aware that the gospel is drawing people of different backgrounds and ethnicities together as disciples. They are coming together in communion with Jesus.

We can see, though, that Paul is quite concerned about the ways in which people emphasise each other's differences and distance themselves from one another in a variety of ways. This leads to a Church that is fractured and not really one body of Christ.

Accepting people of different ethnicities is the very foundation of the Church because in the gospels we see the amazing way Jesus accepts all people. Jew, Greek, Samaritan, Canaanite, and Roman are all welcomed to Jesus.

Let us take a close look at what Paul had to tell the Galatians. Ask group members to read this passage to themselves:

Galatians 3:23–29

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore, the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Reflection and discussion

Paul was writing to the churches in Galatia, where there were both Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians, to support the people who were being pressured by Jewish Christians to practice their faith in a particular way – bound by the law of Moses, as opposed to the freedom found in Jesus.

Now ask one member of the group to read the passage aloud. Then take a few moments to reflect on the text together.

- 1 Try to think what it might have been like to be one of the Gentile believers in Galatia. They would have gathered together and had Paul's letter read to them. Try to imagine you are there – what do you think you would have said if asked what it means to be one in Christ?
- 2 Paul also tells those to whom he is writing that in baptism they have been 'clothed with Christ'. What did that mean for the church in Galatia? For the Church today?
- 3 Now consider what the nature of the Church should be when believers can really be 'one in Christ Jesus'.

Paul was responding to the discrimination that the Gentile Christians were experiencing. In many churches today discrimination is still present, including *racial discrimination**.

- 1 How does racial discrimination present itself in Church and society today?
- 2 What do racial discrimination and emphasising the differences between people do to the Church and to our society?
- 3 What can we do as a Church that is 'in Christ' and 'clothed with Christ' as individuals and as a body to address and reduce discrimination?



Racial discrimination:

Differential, unequal treatment of someone because of their race/ethnic group or personal characteristics associated with race/ethnicity.

Closing activity

Reflect on the first verse of the hymn 'In Christ there is no east or west' by William Arthur Dunkerley:

*In Christ there is no east or west,
in him no south or north,
but one great fellowship of love
throughout the whole wide earth.*

Try to come up with your own four lines that reflect what has emerged for you out of this Bible study.

Prayer

Almighty God, we thank you for creating each human being to be different, yet all in your image.

We bear your breath and we all share your world.

We give thanks that Christ has called us to be in him and with him.

Help us to be his presence as the Church, as symbol and sign of your kingdom, as a new world where all human beings are valued, welcomed and respected.

May your will be done in us.

Amen.

Holy Trinity with St Matthew,
Southwark – a bilingual
faith community.



Session 2: Rebuilding the city

Aim

To help us to think how we might be intentional in our strategic and practical actions to combat racism or racial inequality in accordance with Principle 2 of the ARC:*

An intentional focus in our theological studies, liturgy, teaching, prayer, word and work to take strategic and practical actions to combat racism and racial inequality.

Opening prayer

*Creator God,
we ask that you will open our minds and hearts,
to the guiding of the Holy Spirit,
as we seek to respond to this important call in our lives.
Amen.*

Introductory activity

Take a few minutes to think about the aim of this Bible study session. What thoughts come into your mind? Discuss them and share them with the person next to you.



Racial inequality:

Imbalances in the distribution of power, economics, resources and opportunities for people from different racial/ethnic backgrounds.

Nehemiah 5:1–13

Now there was a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish kin. For there were those who said, 'With our sons and our daughters, we are many; we must get grain, so that we may eat and stay alive.' There were also those who said, 'We are having to pledge our fields, our vineyards, and our houses in order to get grain during the famine.' And there were those who said, 'We are having to borrow money on our fields and vineyards to pay the king's tax. Now our flesh is the same as that of our kindred; our children are the same as their children; and yet we are forcing our sons and daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have been ravished; we are powerless, and our fields and vineyards now belong to others.'

I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these complaints. After thinking it over, I brought charges against the nobles and the officials; I said to them, 'You are all taking interest from your own people.' And I called a great assembly to deal with them, and said to them, 'As far as we were able, we have bought back our Jewish kindred who had been sold to other nations; but now you are selling your own kin, who must then be bought back by us!' They were silent, and could not find a word to say. So I said, 'The thing that you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God, to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies? Moreover, I and my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let us stop this taking of interest. Restore to them, this very day, their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the interest on money, grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them.' Then they said, 'We will restore everything and demand nothing more from them. We will do as you say.' And I called the priests, and made them take an oath to do as they had promised. I also shook out the fold of my garment and said, 'So may God shake out everyone from house and from property who does not perform this promise. Thus may they be shaken out and emptied.' And all the assembly said, 'Amen', and praised the LORD. And the people did as they had promised.

Context setting

The book of Nehemiah is set in the period after the end of the Jewish Exile – around 445 BC. Although by then the Temple had been rebuilt in Jerusalem and some of the exiled Jews had returned, all was not well. The city walls were in ruins and its people were in distress. When Nehemiah, a Jew and a senior official to the Persian king, heard reports of this, he asked permission of the king to travel to Jerusalem to rebuild the city. The king agreed to his request and made him governor of the province.

On arriving, Nehemiah found not only that the walls of the city were in ruins but that the nobles and officials of his own people were exploiting their own kin. He successfully rebuilt the walls of the city in 52 days (amid much opposition from those who wished to thwart his plans). He also brought an end to the oppression and exploitation that was blighting the people of the city's lives.

Read the passage (left) from Nehemiah together. Ask someone if they would be willing to read it aloud. Then give people 2–3 minutes to read through the passage again and think about it.

Reflection and discussion

- 1 Oppression comes about through any imbalance in the distribution of power, whether along racial, social, religious or other lines. Within your group, take turns putting yourselves in the position of the oppressed people of Jerusalem, and in the position of the exploitative nobles and officials. How does either situation feel? What, if anything, do you think you would do about it, to address the root causes of injustice for those who are oppressed?
- 2 How would you describe Nehemiah's response to the oppression of the people of Jerusalem? Do you think he was intentional in what he did? If so, why?
- 3 What parallels can you see between the people of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's time and the situation of many global majority heritage* (GMH) people in our country today?



Global majority heritage (GMH):

A collective term that refers to those who are black, African, Asian, brown, dual-heritage, or have been racialised as ethnic minority. Globally, these groups currently represent approximately 80% of the world population.

- 4 How can we be intentional in combatting racial inequality in our words and practical actions?
- 5 In what ways can we raise awareness of racial discrimination in our churches?

Closing activity

Think about your responses to questions 4 and 5 and come up with two practical actions you are going to take as a result of this Bible study:

Write them down and share them with the person next to you. Will you commit to these actions?

Prayer

Loving God,

you created us all to be equal.

Help us to walk together to bring justice, equality and peace to our community, to our church and to places where people are oppressed and unfairly treated.

We ask this in Jesus name,

Amen.

Lament, a contemporary icon, by Jheni Arboine.



Session 3: The trees that we have to climb

Aim

Through Bible study and prayer to consider how to remove the barriers to representation and participation of all people in every level of the organisation in accordance with principle 3 of the ARC:

A clear strategy for increasing and sustaining diversity in our governance structures at diocesan and parish level, so as to ensure representation and participation of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds at all levels of our organisation.

Opening prayer

Loving Lord,

thank you that you give gifts to all.

*Open our eyes that we may recognise and affirm
gifts in each other.*

*Help us to notice any barriers that are preventing our brothers
and sisters from diverse backgrounds and cultures
from taking up leadership roles and participating in the
building of your Kingdom in our diocese.*

Amen.

Introductory activity

This session explores the story of Zacchaeus. The activity is designed to help members of the group to reflect on barriers that get in the way of people experiencing Jesus fully. These barriers can be both visible – like ethnicity – and invisible, like some disabilities.

Think back on your journey to this group meeting today. Were there any barriers to your arrival, or to your participation as a member of the group? How did it make you feel if there were? How did you feel if everything went smoothly?

Think about your church and various church activities; is there anything that could make it difficult for someone to participate? These could be physical, or things that can't be seen (e.g. language, culture, social). Share your thoughts with the group.

Context setting

So often, the story of Zacchaeus is read in a comical way. Attention is focused on his height. But Luke was not making fun of Zacchaeus, rather his height is highlighted in the passage to identify something that was a barrier. People might face many different barriers (e.g. ethnicity, disability, language etc). Zacchaeus had to make a special effort to put himself in the picture to be able to see Jesus. Jesus acknowledged Zacchaeus' position and the barriers he faced. When we think about barriers in the context of institutional racism, we acknowledge that the structures of society need to change to address the root cause of injustice.

To begin with, let's think about Zacchaeus and Jesus in this story. Read this passage from Luke together. Ask someone if they would be willing to read it aloud, then give members of the group 2–3 minutes to read through the passage again and reflect on it.

Christ Centred Outward Focused, part of a triptych artwork by Revd Cécile Schynder.



Luke 19: 1–10

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.” But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.” Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Reflection and discussion

Our reflection and discussion for this session comes in two parts:

Part 1 – Putting ourselves in Zacchaeus' shoes

- 1 Try to imagine what Zacchaeus might have felt like when Jesus called to him. Can you think of and share a time when you felt Jesus was calling to you? Try to describe how that made you feel. If you have not experienced feeling called in that way how does it make you feel to hear other people's stories? How might they be able to help you to explore your call more?
- 2 Zacchaeus felt excluded for various reasons and characteristics, not only due to his height, but also because of how people felt about what he did for a living. Are there situations that you imagine within your church where people might feel excluded as a result of their ethnicity, nationality, age, or other characteristics?
- 3 Think of any other barriers which might make people feel excluded. Are there times when you feel like this in your local church community or in the wider Church? Try to describe the barriers that you or others might feel to belonging. If not you, have you noticed others who seem to be on the outside? What might the community do to help to change this?

Part 2 – Bringing it closer to today

Think back to the Bible passage. In it, it is possible to read about **recognition, affirmation** and the **removal of barriers**. These are common issues that are faced by many in the body of Christ today, especially if they are from GMH backgrounds. Many serve, work and enjoy fellowship in ways that are not often appreciated or understood.

These are some of the reasons why our leadership and governance structures are not as diverse as they should be. Perhaps we are not creating opportunities that enable others to see themselves in the picture? Perhaps we should consider actively seeking out those who are feeling hidden and whose skills are not recognised. Rather than putting the responsibility on individuals to 'put themselves in the picture', what can be done as a parish and Church to include them and minimise the barriers to their participation?

It often seems to be the case in our communities that we overlook the gifts and skills of those from different cultural backgrounds and this can make them feel undervalued. As a result of the expectations we have, people from different cultures may feel they have to work harder to be seen, to fit into existing structures, to feel understood. Older people from certain cultural backgrounds are considered community elders and yet they may feel overlooked and their wisdom is not recognised because they speak in different ways to other community leaders.

- 1 Can you think of a skill that you have that no one else knows about? It may be that you may speak many languages (many asylum seekers and migrants can speak multiple languages but this is disregarded as they stumble in English), or can cook for large numbers of people, or can lead singing?

In the group, share the 'hidden skills' that you have. Celebrate the skills that are in the group and discuss how you can ensure that in your community people's gifts and skills are recognised, celebrated and used.

2 Zacchaeus had to climb a tree to overcome the difficulty that he had in seeing Jesus. What barriers are there to those from GMH backgrounds when they put themselves forward for leadership roles? What might your group be able to do to help to break down these barriers and ensure our churches and church leadership represent the diversity of our communities? Will you commit yourselves to doing this?

Closing activity

Spend a few minutes considering what you might do as an individual to ensure that you notice any barriers that are preventing those from other backgrounds and cultures taking leadership roles in your parish or community. Share your thoughts together. During the week try to notice barriers that people encounter that you have not previously noted. Share them together when you next meet.

Prayer

*God of justice,
who rejoices in your creation and the beauty of our diversity,
give us a passion to live well, with respect for all,
with delight in difference, with commitment to inclusion,
and with hope for our future in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

Award-winning musician, Still Shadey,
at the national *Windrush 75* anniversary
service, Southwark Cathedral.



Session 4: Putting it all together and into action

Aim

To consider the learnings from Scripture in the previous three sessions and how we can best put these learnings into action to bring about change in all aspects of church in our diocese:

- We commit to being anti-racist in our churches, parishes and deaneries.
- We commit to educating ourselves about diversity and difference, power and unconscious bias.
- We commit to intentionally increasing GMH lay and ordained leaders across all aspects of church in our diocese.

Opening prayer

Loving God, help us to commit ourselves to working for justice and equality for all.

Give us your grace that we may love and care for those in our Church and our community and give us the will to act together that your kingdom may come and your will be done.

Guide us today as we plan and work together.

In Jesus name,

Amen.

Introductory activity

Take a few moments in silence to think back over the last three sessions. Think particularly about any other barriers you have identified during the week. Share them together. Then review all that you have done together: what has most caused you to stop and think? What have you learned from the passages of Scripture that you have reflected on? Are there things in your life that you want to ask for God's help to change as a result of what you have learned from these studies? Share your reflections in the group.

Context setting

As Christians, we are called to be beacons of love, compassion, and justice in our world. Our faith compels us to address racial injustice and discrimination actively. In this call to action, we are guided by the teachings found in the Bible. The passages we will look at today serve as a reminder of our invitation to build a Church that welcomes diversity, acknowledges and values the distinctive qualities of each person, and strives intentionally towards achieving racial justice and harmony.

Bible passages

Read these passages (right) from Scripture. Ask if different people in the group would be prepared to read each separate passage. Have a moment's pause between each passage so that people can reflect on what they have heard.

Reflection and discussion

- 1 Think about the passages and what they tell us about how church communities should be. Talk together about how you think your local church community measures up to the Biblical standards. From what you know of it, how do the churches, parishes and deaneries of the diocese measure up?
- 2 Look back over the three principles that we have been thinking about, and consider how these principles might feature practically in your parish (e.g. through your Mission Action Plan or otherwise).
- 3 Consider the 12 points contained in the ARC's Action Plan (on page 5 of the [Diocesan Anti-Racism Charter](#)). What specific points of action might relate to you individually or as a parish?

Thinking about the three principles and the Biblical passages we have read today, what actions might you be able to take as individuals – and as a group – to bring about a more just and equal Church here in the Diocese of Southwark.

Revelation 5:9–10 reminds us that Christ's sacrifice has redeemed people from every tribe and language. Through prayer we can discover the strength and guidance needed to confront and overcome racial injustices, ultimately working towards creating a more equitable and impartial society.

They sing a new song: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation; you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God, and they will reign on earth.'

Revelation 5: 9–10

For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, so that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.

Ephesians 2:14–16

Each of us must please our neighbour for the good purpose of building up the neighbour. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, 'The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.' For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

Romans 15:2–7

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:28

Ephesians 2:14–16 speaks of Christ as the one who breaks down dividing walls and reconciles us to God and one another. To build a foundation of support, we can engage in multi-ethnic conversations, actively seeking to learn from each other's diverse experiences, traditions, and perspectives.

We can achieve this goal by organising events, workshops, and discussions that encourage mutual respect, understanding and cultural appreciation.

In Romans 15:7 we are called to welcome one another as Christ has welcomed us. Parish churches should be places where everyone feels valued, respected, and included. Let us strive to break down barriers and cultivate an atmosphere of acceptance, ensuring that no one feels like an outsider or experiences discrimination within our community.

Galatians 3:28 teaches us that in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female; all are one. As a Christ-centred community, we must acknowledge that unconscious biases exist within us all, which can inadvertently perpetuate racial injustices. Let us speak to our biases through training, approaching the process with humility and a willingness to change. In doing so, we can create a 'brave space' to discuss race openly, without fear of judgment.

Taking action

Try to think about other things that you might be able to do individually and as a group to help to ensure that your parish and the diocese work to challenge racism in all its forms.

Think about how you can work together to ensure that the Diocese of Southwark is fully able to celebrate and recognise the gifts and skills of all God's people.

Are there ways in which you, as a group or individually, can help to ensure that all God's people are represented in the structures and hierarchy of the Church?

Spend some time in the group thinking about the actions that you might take together. Be specific. Write down your aim. Which are individual actions you can take, and which are actions at the parish or deanery level?

Think about how you can share your proposed actions with others in the church to see if they will join you in working for change and equality.

How can you commit yourselves to doing this?

A final thought

By being open and accepting of this Racial Justice Call to Action, we can restate our commitment to embody the values of Christ. By coming together as people from diverse backgrounds to integrate these actions through prayer and resourcefulness, we can build a community that reflects God's unconditional love and acceptance for everyone. As a people united by our beliefs, we have the grace to significantly and permanently contribute to achieving racial healing and reconciliation in our communities.

Closing prayer

*Loving God,
You call us to be in relationship with one another.
You promise to dwell wherever two or three are
gathered in our communities.
We are many different people, we come from many
different places and have many different cultures.
Open our hearts, that we may be bold in finding the riches
of inclusion and the treasures of diversity among us.
Amen.*

© St Christopher, Walworth.
Madonna and Child.



“It’s not enough for us as Christians to simply not be racist; instead we are called to actively seek justice and equality for all people.”

Bishop Rosemarie



The Diocese of
Southwark

Christ
Centred
—
Outward
Focused