

# WHITE PRIVILEGE: let's talk

## Participant Preparation

### FOR SECOND GATHERING

### *Readings*

Before the next gathering, please read part two of the curriculum. We will read part one at a later time. As you read, you will notice there are reflection questions and discussion topics in the text. You are welcome to review these and journal responses to all of these, but please note that you are not required to do so. Our work in gathering two will focus on particular questions and topics. Please read on for more details.

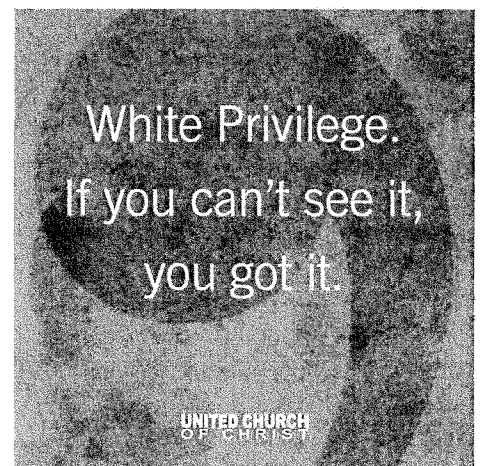
Whiteness as the Norm: Five Loci of Insights on the Binary of Light/Dark and Black/White

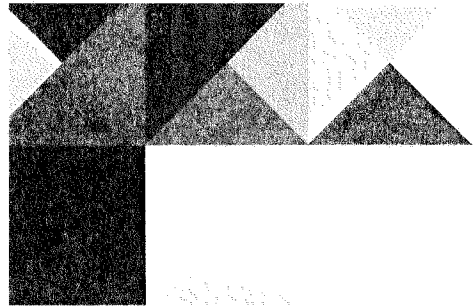
- Chapter 1: Whiteness as the Norm: Reflections on How This is Evidenced and Experienced in America
- Chapter 2: Binary: Lightness and Darkness
- Chapter 3: Iconography: The Investment of Whiteness in Narrating History
- Chapter 4: The White Jesus
- Chapter 5: Lightness and Darkness as Experienced in the Genealogy and Liturgy of the Church

### *Reflecting on Readings*

After reading through the chapters above, give yourself some quiet time to reflect on the following questions. You may choose to reflect in silent thought, process through dialogue with someone else, or use your journal as a way of recording your thoughts.

- What's a working definition of white privilege?
- What's your reaction to the graphic to the lower right?
- Revisit Traci Blackmon's statements and gauge your gut reaction as you read them.
  - If you grew up with an expectation that images on TV, in books, and at movie theaters would share your racial identity, you have white privilege.
  - If you have NEVER felt the burden of "representing your race," you have white privilege.
  - If you have NEVER been presumed as intellectually inferior or incapable solely because of the color of your skin, you have white privilege.
  - If you can presume that history courses offered in your school will provide a narrative about people who look like you, you have white privilege.
  - If this country has NEVER debated the monetary value of all the people who look like you, you have white privilege.
  - If there have NEVER been laws passed to prevent your full participation in democracy, you have white privilege.
  - If you have NEVER been categorized based solely on the color of your skin, you have white privilege.
- If you are white, how is white privilege evidenced in your lived experience? If you are a person of color, how has white privilege impacted your lived experience?





# WHITE PRIVILEGE: let's talk

## Participant Preparation

### FOR SECOND GATHERING

### *Journaling Your Story*

In between gatherings, you are asked to spend time reflecting and recording stories from your own autobiography, paying particular attention to the way race has impacted your life's story.

Write the story of the first time you learned about your race. What did you experience? How did you feel?

Write a second story, of a time later in your life, when you were taught about values or descriptions attached to your race. Who was there? Were you taught in words or actions; directly or indirectly? What values or descriptions were attached your own racial identity? What values or descriptions were you taught about people of a different race? Was white seen as the norm to which others were compared?

**Note:** These weekly writings are in preparation for the activity in gathering five. At that time, you will be combining what you've written each week and adding to the stories to form a more complete autobiography.

### *Engage and Explore*

Engage the reflection questions and discussion topics at the conclusion of part two, chapter one, and do the suggested activities:

Over the next week, try and take notice of whiteness around you. Where and when do you see whiteness? If you are white, try to say to yourself, even in some of the more routine aspects of your life, "This happened to me because I am white." Be open to discussing insights about what you noticed or experienced as you go through this exercise. For example, if in church ask yourself "Is that a hymn sung only in white churches?"; when in grocery stores ask yourself "Are these food products here because they meet the needs of white people?"; when walking down the street watch how people react to you and ask yourself "Would that have gone differently if I were not white?" Play with these questions, and look for opportunities to recognize how whiteness establishes itself every day in very routine ways as the norm. Note that many of the suggestions listed here assume that you are a white person learning about white privilege. If you are person of color, take note of where whiteness impacts and manifests in the routine aspects of your life. Whatever your racial identity, consider discussing insights about what you noticed or experienced as you go through this exercise with a friend or with the group when you reconvene.

Expanding this exercise (optional, but worthwhile). Venture into the children's toy store nearest your home. What are the race of the dolls and figurines you find? Go in search of a band-aid that would be disguisable on brown or black skin as "flesh" colored or as "clear" band-aids are on white skin. Check out the selection of hair care products and the intended customers. What do you observe? Where are the products located? Is there a difference in the quantity of products available?