



# WHITE PRIVILEGE: let's talk

## Participant Preparation

### FOR THIRD GATHERING

### *Readings*

Before the next gathering, please read the first three chapters of part three of the curriculum. 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 three will focus on particular questions and topics. Please read on for more details.

#### The Cash Value of Whiteness or Whiteness as a Tax-Exempt Status

- Chapter 1: Whiteness as a Tax-Exempt Status
- Chapter 2: How Education Advantages Whites
- Chapter 3: How Housing Practices Advantage Whites

### *Reflecting on Readings*

After reading through the chapters above, give yourself some quiet time to reflect on these 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 does it mean to say that whiteness has cash value? What does it mean to say that whiteness is a tax exempt status?
- Education is an economic tool. How does or doesn't your own education translate into economic power? How would a different quality of education have affected your life?
- How is your education a product of where you lived and the neighborhood you grew up in? If you had grown up in a different neighborhood, where houses were much less expensive or much more expensive, how do you imagine your experience in the classroom and in the general public sphere would have been different?

### *Journaling Your Story*

In between sessions, 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 a story about an experience you had growing up in the neighborhood or school growing up with attention to how race influenced your experience. What race are the majority of the people in your stories during your early childhood, elementary school, middle/junior high school, and high school years? Were their presumptions made about white people's or people of color's ability in the classroom? Was there segregation, either by force or by situation, in your classrooms or neighborhoods? What impact did that have on you?

**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*

The readings reference and provide links to several different academic and sociological studies. Choose one or more of these studies to read thoroughly.



# WHITE PRIVILEGE: let's talk third gathering

THE CASH VALUE OF WHITENESS OR WHITENESSS AS  
A TAX-EXEMPT STATUS

## prepare

### What's behind all this?

In this gathering participants explore how economic systems, educational systems, and housing practices in the United States are set up in ways that generally advantage white people and disadvantage people of color. This gathering is the first of two gatherings looking specifically at the institutionalization and perpetuation of white privilege.

Remember this curriculum is an effort to enable people to “see with new eyes” how privilege works. Its goal is to illuminate how white people in America, in a myriad of ways, receive privileged consideration simply because they are white. By seeing privilege and exposing how it works, the hope is that participants, and the communities of which they are a part, will have more sophisticated understanding and more impactful commitments to reducing the impact of white privilege.

### Participants' Perspectives

For some white participants, this will be the first time they are hearing that there are certain advantages awarded to them because of the color of their skin. Reactions will vary. Some may be defensive saying that they did not ask for the privileges. Some may say that they don't want the privileges. It will be helpful to remind participants that white privilege is not something that white people ask for or enjoy on purpose, nor does having white privilege make them a bad person. There is no reason to feel ashamed. Rather, this is an opportunity to see the realities that are unfolding around us everyday and to expose them for what they are so that it's clear what systems need to be addressed. Discussing white privilege is for the purpose of exposing the systems and institutions that have created advantages and disadvantages, not to demonize anyone.

Some participants may work hard to deny that advantages exist for white people, debate the trustworthiness of the studies, or try to explain the data through a lens other than race. These are distancing behaviors, meaning that the participant is trying to distance themselves from the topic because it is hard to deal with or makes them uncomfortable. Their tone of voice might sound like indignation or anger, but what they might actually be feeling is much different. Wonder aloud about why they are questioning the data. Ask them to suspend suspicion for a time

### *Materials needed for this gathering*

- Copy of group covenant
- Journals
- Equipment to stream or play video from the internet

### *Where is this going?*

Participants will investigate how financial, educational, and housing systems in the United States work for the economic benefit of white people relative to people of color generally and Black people more specifically.

### *Consider this...*

“The legal battle against segregation is won, but the community battle goes on.”

-Dorothy Day