



WHITE PRIVILEGE: let's talk

Participant Preparation

FOR FIFTH GATHERING

Readings

Before the next gathering, please read part one 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 five will focus on sharing your autobiography through the lens of race. Please read on for more details.

The Spiritual Autobiography Told Through the Lens of Race

- Chapter 1: John Paddock
- Chapter 2: John Dorhauer
- Chapter 3: Da Vita D. McCallister
- Chapter 4: Traci Blackmon
- Chapter 5: Stephen G. Ray, Jr.

Reflecting on Readings

After reading through the chapters above, give yourself some quiet time to reflect on their 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.

Journaling Your Story

Before the next gathering, spend time writing the stories of your own autobiography, paying particular attention to the way race has impacted your life's story. The authors call this a spiritual autobiography. This is different from a religious autobiography. A spiritual autobiography is meant to engage both the events and the emotional, spiritual impact of them.

As you write, use the stories you have written in your journal as a starting place, then add others. You may find yourself re-writing stories as you compile them or adding additional insights. If you are feeling unsure about how to go about writing your stories, revisit John Dorhauer's writing for inspiration on why this is an important practice and how to approach this process.

Questions you might consider while writing:

- How did you first come to learn about and recognize the difference between races?
- Who told you what it means to be white; what it means to be black; what it means to be Hispanic; what it means to be Native American?
- What value was attached to whiteness or blackness, to light skin or dark skin, to speaking a language other than English or having religious traditions other than your own? What do you remember feeling in those moments when words or actions expressed what others in your household or community thought or felt about racial identity?
- What did you see and experience in the world around you that affected how you relate to people of other races?
- Where and when have you been aware of your race? Think about where you were raised, your neighborhood and schooling, friends and acquaintances, spiritual community and work, family stories and traditions.



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- 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?
- If the majority of the characters from any of the time periods were white, what if anything did you learn about persons of color during that time? If the majority of the characters from any of the time were persons of color, what did you learn about white people during that time?
- Ponder how you think about yourself. Consider the ways in which white privilege, power, and racism have touched and influenced your story.
- What race and/or ethnicity were the images of people and the Divine in your church, religious, or spiritual settings (stained glass windows, photos, or icons, etc.)? If they were white, were you ever exposed to an image of another race? How did you feel when you saw the image of another race?

Give yourself adequate time to write. Some participants have found it helpful to write during a few different sittings. Remember that you are not carving the stories in stone. They will always be a work in progress as understanding, knowledge, and awareness grow.