

VIDEO ONE: Larry Jent/Native American/American Indian "IN THE BEGINNING"

Opening Prayer (Facilitator)

Introduction

Name, faith community affiliation, something people are often surprised to learn about you.

Discussion Questions (before video)

1. When you think of the sometimes challenging conversations about race, and more generally of living in a diverse community, country, and world, what Bible verses or theological concepts come to mind that shape the way you think about these topics? (e.g. Imago Dei, or love your neighbor as yourself).
2. What is your experience with conversations about race and racism? Have they been good? Bad? What factors contributed to their success or failure?

Scriptural Passage: Then God said, "Let us make humanity in our image to resemble us so that they may take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and all the crawling things on earth." God created humanity in God's own image, in the divine image God created them, male and female God created them. (Genesis 1:26-27, CEB)

Storytelling is a human trait that anchors us to each other or separates us from one another. In the beginning, children are born naked into the world. Family, culture, and society clothe us in the stories of a specific culture, nation, or ethnic group. Children grow and inhabit the stories of childhood. Over time the stories we tell ourselves become assumptions, beliefs, and ingrained habits. Shared stories affect how we engage with others and with whom we choose to engage or interact.

Humans have recited the story of creation in Genesis for thousands of years. It is a startling statement of family origin. Humans are divine and diverse image-bearers of God, our Creator.

Diversity is inherent in our creation story. God engineered diversity in everything that God created. "God saw everything he had made: it was supremely good." (Genesis 1:31, CEB)

Reflect on the scripture passages as you watch the video about the beginning of racism in the Old World and its roots in the New World of North America.

VIDEO

Discussion Questions

1. What emotions are you feeling right now (or did you feel as you watched the video)?
2. Why did you feel the way you did? What caused you to have that reaction?
3. What is our role as Christians in responding to this painful history and its legacy?

Discipleship in Action: The Power of Water in Creation and Baptism

Water is a powerful force in the Genesis creation story and nature. The water of a mother's womb protects a baby until a new life is born. Jesus begins his ministry after his baptism. "So John agreed to baptize Jesus. When Jesus was baptized, he immediately came up out of the water. Heaven was opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and resting on him. A voice from heaven said, "This is my Son whom I dearly love; I find happiness in him." (Matthew 3:3-16-17, CEB)

In the United Methodist Baptismal Covenant, members affirm individually and corporately that "we accept the freedom and power God gives you (us) to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves." (United Methodist Hymnal, p.34)

In her book Native: Identity, Belonging, and Rediscovering God, author Kaitlin B. Curtice asks:

What if our stories of baptism in the church were rooted in that same idea of new beginnings, of personhood, just like the new beginning after a flood, after everything is drenched and overcome? What might we learn from the water? What might we learn if we listen, if we wade in--unafraid, untethered, and uninhibited--ready to become the ones we were created to become? (Curtice, 2020c, pp. 11)

Time for Self-Reflection

Does your ministry practice affirm that God created humanity in the image of God?
Will you accept your power as a learner to question assumptions, beliefs, and habits?

Closing

Take time for comments, questions, and announcements. The facilitator or a participant offers a closing prayer.