

COLOR US LOVE

AN INTERFAITH GUIDE TO REPARATIONS



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Color Us Love: An Interfaith Guide to Reparations

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Invocation

"To the One who demands justice: Inspire us to become *rodfei tzedek* (road-fay seh-dek), pursuers of justice, in our lives and our communities. May we... make way for a world... where the bills owed those who have been colonized, enslaved, and dispossessed are finally paid in full."

– **Rabbi Brant Rosen**, *Prayer for Reparation and Restoration*

Introduction

This resource guide examines faith-based underpinnings for reparations. It is a group project of three congregations that participated in the Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies' Spring 2023 Congregational Leaders Fellowship. The three participating congregations and their representatives are:

- **Hinenu Baltimore** (Mark Gunnery, Maranda Kosten): A joyful and radically inclusive Jewish community formed in 2017 in Baltimore.
- **Cathedral of the Incarnation** (Mark Bomster, Rev. Shancia Jarrett, Theresa Thomas): An Episcopal Christian community in Baltimore committed to social justice, reconciliation, community outreach, and engagement.
- **St. Matthew United Methodist Church** (Rev. Kay Albury, Michael Hancock, Al Harris): A community church in Turner Station transforming lives through serving others and connecting people to Christ.

Statement of Purpose

We come together as a diverse group of faith communities to offer resources for those seeking to repair damage from the racial injustice in which our society—and many of our own congregations—have been complicit. We focus specifically on the issue of reparations for slavery and its unique and continuing impact on African Americans. At the same time, we acknowledge the evils inflicted over the years on Indigenous, racial minority, immigrant, and other populations whose needs have yet to be addressed.

Our goal in this resource guide is to provide common ground for discussing reparations, a highly emotional and contentious issue. We aim to show how our Abrahamic faith traditions require action to recognize and redress the harm stemming from this shameful legacy. In doing so, we are informed by our scriptures, prayers, teachings, ritual observances, and other manifestations of our beliefs.

In addition, we identify specific steps taken by our congregations and denominations, including their declarations regarding reparations, financial commitments, social service activities, and support for those affected by historical injustice. We continue to look for ways to promote healing through public witness of this work and by building bridges in our communities to help sustain it.

Section 1: The Idea and Act of Reparations

What is Meant by the Term “Reparations”?

The United Nations Human Rights Office defines reparations as *“measures to redress violations of human rights by providing material and symbolic benefits to victims or their families as well as affected communities.”* It states that reparations must include *“restitution,” “rehabilitation,” and “the cessation of continuing violations.”*

The National African-American Reparations Commission, established in 2015 to focus on reparations in the context of America’s history of slavery and discrimination, defines reparations as *“a process of repairing, healing, and restoring a people injured because of their group identity and in violation of their fundamental human rights by governments or corporations.”* It refers to slavery as *“America’s original crime ... a crime unpunished and a debt unpaid,”* and to reparations as a means of *“repaying that debt.”*

Resolution H.R. 40, pending in the U.S. Congress to establish a commission on reparations for the institution of slavery, refers to the *“de jure and de facto racial and economic discrimination against African Americans and the impact of these forces on living African Americans.”*

In this resource guide, we are not recommending or endorsing any specific model for reparations, recognizing that reparations may take many forms and that such decisions must be left to the prayerful consideration of the communities and societies involved.

Why Focus on Reparations for Slavery?

Since the aftermath of America's Civil War and the emancipation of the nation's enslaved Black population, the concept of reparations for those of the African Diaspora has remained controversial and politically polarizing. This despite the inarguable evidence of slavery's devastating physical, spiritual, cultural, and economic damage to enslaved people and the centuries-long history of violence and discrimination that ensued for their descendants.

Reparations are due for slavery's legacy of evils, from bondage, lynching, and the destruction of Black communities to racist and discriminatory practices in hiring, housing, education, and criminal and environmental justice that affect African Americans to this day. Yet reparations are all too often framed through the lens of financial compensation rather than as a matter of collective societal responsibility, making it even more difficult to forge consensus on the issue.

Some opponents contend that if African Americans receive reparations, it will open the door to reparations for those of all ethnicities who have experienced discrimination throughout U.S. history. Some also disclaim the current generation's responsibility for acts committed in the past or by those whose ancestors were more recent immigrants to the United States, suggesting that reparations are more an exercise in blame than justice.

On the other hand, supporters of reparations cite precedents including material restitution—or promises of restitution—to groups such as Native American tribes and nations, Japanese-Americans imprisoned during World War II, and victims of race-based official and mob violence in American communities. They frame reparations as a justice and human rights issue and assert that a society that ignores or covers the sins of its past is prone to repeating its sinful actions.

Despite these deep divisions, there remains much to discuss and understand about reparations, including the faith-based arguments that support them, the intent and moral integrity that underlies the concept, and how the reparations process can be used to make us whole as a society.

Section 2: Reparations in Practice

In grappling with these issues, it is important to recognize that reparations are not merely a theoretical exercise. Examples from U.S. history and from around the world demonstrate that societies can, in fact, summon the moral courage and resources to address the damage done by genocide, civil strife, and the racial and ethnic discrimination for which they are collectively responsible.

Historical Examples

- **German reparations for the Holocaust:** A U.S. State Department report issued in 2018 under the Justice for Uncompensated Survivors Today (JUST) Act states that Germany's concrete actions "range from compensating former owners and heirs for assets wrongfully seized during the Holocaust to making substantial financial contributions to victims' funds and survivors' pensions. From 1945 to 2018, the German government paid approximately \$86.8 billion in restitution and compensation to Holocaust victims and their heirs."
- **U.S. reparations for World War II internment of those of Japanese ancestry:** Beginning in 1942, the U.S. government detained and interned more than 120,000 Japanese-American citizens and resident aliens in more than 70 camps around the country in response to racist fear and suspicion about their loyalty to the U.S. at a time of war. Decades of soul-searching and civil rights activism led to the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. The law calls the arrests and detentions "a grave injustice ... motivated by racial prejudice, wartime hysteria, and a failure of political leadership ... for which appropriate compensation has not been made," and states that "the Congress apologizes on behalf of the Nation." It established a fund providing \$20,000 "to each eligible individual of Japanese ancestry and \$12,000 to each eligible individual of Aleut Island ancestry in compensation for that injustice." According to the New York Times, a total of \$1.6 billion was paid to more than 80,000 people under this law.
- **Special Field Order No. 15 ("40 Acres & a Mule"):** In an effort to address the crisis of displaced, formerly enslaved people in Georgia and South Carolina at the end of the Civil War, Gen. William T. Sherman in January 1865 issued an order

authorizing 400,000 acres of land to be set aside “for the settlement of the Negroes now made free by the acts of war and the proclamation of the President of the United States” and allowing that land to be licensed to them in plots of no more than 40 acres. He later stated that Army mules could be leased to families settling on those lands. However, even this limited effort fell far short of what was promised, dying in the change of administration after President Abraham Lincoln’s assassination. Civil War scholar Eric Foner writes that “only about 2,000 South Carolina and Georgia freedmen actually received the land they had been promised” and that the aftermath of Special Order 15 “kindled a deep sense of betrayal among freedmen throughout the South.”

- **Native American Land Rights:** American society has yet to reckon fully with the genocidal treatment of the Indigenous population in the era of colonization and Westward expansion, including the expulsion of American Indians from their lands and forced relocation. The tortured history of legislation and litigation involving Native American land rights dates back to the Dawes Act in 1887, which allotted reservation land individually to American Indians on specific reservations in a process with longstanding economic and cultural ramifications. In the 20th century alone, settlements totaling millions of dollars each have been made with Native American tribes, including the Pueblo, Shoshone, Navajo-Hopi, Pawnee, Klamath, Sioux (S.D.), Seminole, Ottawa (Mich,) and Chippewa, among others. The federal government’s \$3.4 billion settlement in 2012 of a class-action lawsuit by 17 American Indian tribes over the government’s failure to live up to more than a century of promises is a recent example of how the nation continues to wrestle with this troubled aspect of its legacy.
- **State, Local, Institutional Reparations:** A comprehensive database compiled by researchers at the University of Massachusetts catalogs dozens of resolutions, apologies, acknowledgments of responsibility, and promises of restitution for acts of racial and ethnic discrimination and violence in the course of the nation’s history. In addition to federal settlements, these efforts involve state or local governments, colleges and universities, religious institutions, and private businesses. Among them are prominent examples stemming from the Greenwood, Okla. (1921) and Rosewood, Fla. (1923) destruction of Black communities; a state eugenics program in North Carolina; the Chicago Police

Department's history of violence and torture; and the lasting impact of school segregation in Prince Edward County, Va. However, in many instances these efforts have stalled or fallen short due to lack of commitment, political or legal opposition, and other factors.

Examples From Our Own Communities

- **Episcopal Diocese of Maryland Reparations Resolution:** In 2019, the 235th Episcopal Diocesan Convention approved Resolution 2019-06 committing the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland to “actions toward racial reconciliation in our local context, specifically regarding descendants of formerly enslaved Africans, as well as the legacy that impacts Black and brown persons” and “to continue fostering reparations and other acts of racial reconciliation in the context of the diocese and its communities.”

Numerous congregations among the more than 100 Episcopal parishes in Maryland have responded with participation in anti-racist and reparations-oriented initiatives of their own. Among them is Memorial Episcopal Church in Baltimore’s Upton/Druid Hill neighborhood, which in 2021 established a reparations fund committing the church to contributions of \$100,000 per year over five years to programs focused on housing inequality, education reform, climate justice, and civic engagement.

- **Episcopal Diocese of Maryland’s \$1 million reparations seed fund:** In 2020, the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland passed Resolution 2020-06, creating a \$1 million seed fund for reparations. The Diocese stated the fund would be used “to infuse money into programs that are building up Black communities and helping to repair the breach caused by systemic racism in Maryland and in the United States.” The first cycle of grants in 2022 went to six organizations receiving a total of \$175,000. The most recent cycle of grants, announced in May 2023, went to five organizations receiving a total of \$230,000. Grants fund programs focusing on education, health care and elder care, affordable housing, environmental degradation, job creation, and micro-economic investment.

- **Union for Reform Judaism Resolution:** In 2019, the Union adopted a resolution calling for a federal commission “to study and develop proposals for reparations to redress the historic and continuing effects of slavery and subsequent systemic racial, societal, and economic discrimination against Black Americans.” It went on to “urge our congregations and their members to take active steps to redress the destructive effects of historic and ongoing systemic racism, including through education and conversations within our congregations and communities.”
- **Reconstructing Judaism Resolution:** In 2022, the central organization of the Reconstructionist movement called “for all Reconstructionist movement congregations and affiliated groups to engage in deep reflection on the ways in which we have participated in or benefitted from racial injustices in our communities and to answer the call of Torah to pursue justice and practice *teshuvah* [repentance] by taking concrete steps to repair the harm.” It resolved to support efforts “to redress the many harms, particularly the persistent racial wealth gap, caused by disparate access to opportunities and resources,” and to support “institutional, local, and federal legislation and policies that specifically address the need for reparations,” including H.R. 40 now pending in the U.S. Congress.”

Section 3: Scripture Supporting the Concept of Reparations

Few would deny the damage done by slavery and the continued social, emotional, and economic impact on the African American community from centuries of racial discrimination. But summoning the will to repair that damage requires sacrifice and self-examination. In taking these steps, we can draw support from the teachings of our faith traditions that explicitly remind us that we are called to rectify the harm from evil acts in ways that are meaningful and concrete.

In the spirit of interfaith dialog that sparked this project, we share passages from Jewish, Christian, and Islamic scripture and inspired commentary that buttress the case for reparations as a moral and spiritual imperative.

From the Torah and Hebrew Bible

- **Numbers 5: 6-7:** “If a man or woman commits a fault against his fellow man and wrongs him, thus breaking faith with the Lord, he shall confess the wrong he has done, restore his ill-gotten goods, and in addition give one-fifth of their value to the one he has wronged.”
- **Deuteronomy 15: 12-15:** “If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you, he shall serve you six years; and in the seventh year you send him free from you. And when you send him free from you, do not send him empty. Provide for him liberally from your flock, and from your threshing floor, and from your winepress; from that which your God has blessed you, give to him. And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this thing today.”
- **Genesis 15:13-14:** “And [God] said to Abram, “Know well that your offspring shall be strangers in a land not theirs, and they shall be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years; but I will execute judgment on the nation they shall serve, and in the end, they shall go free with great wealth.”

- **Exodus 3:19-22:** "... I will stretch out My hand and smite Egypt with various wonders which I will work upon them; after that he shall let you go. And I will dispose the Egyptians favorably toward this people, so that when you go, you will not go away empty-handed. Each woman shall ask of her neighbor and the lodger in her house objects of silver and gold and clothing, and you shall put these on your sons and daughters, thus stripping the Egyptians."
- **Ezra 1: 1-4 (Return of the Jews from exile in Persia):** "The Lord inspired King Cyrus of Persia to issue this proclamation: ... 'Let everyone who has survived, in whatever place they have dwelt, be assisted by the people of that place with silver, gold, goods, and cattle, together with free-will offerings for the House of God in Jerusalem.' "

From the New Testament

- **Luke 19: 8 (The repentance and salvation of Zacchaeus, the tax collector):** "... Zacchaeus said to the Lord, 'Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over.'" Jesus expressed his love and approval by declaring, "Today salvation has come to this house."
- **James 2: 14-17–** "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? ... If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and no food for the day, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,' but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So the faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead."
- **2 Corinthians 13: 11–** "Finally, brothers, rejoice. Mend your ways, encourage each other, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you."

From the Quran and the Hadith

Surah 42:40: "The reward of the evil is the evil thereof, but whosoever forgives and makes amends, his reward is upon Allah."

Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:10 "The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy."

The Hadith: "Whoever has wronged his brother, should ask for his pardon (before his death), as (in the Hereafter) there will be neither a Dinar nor a Dirham [means of payment]. (He should secure pardon in this life) before some of his good deeds are taken and paid to his brother, or, if he has done no good deeds, some of the bad deeds of his brother are taken to be loaded on him (in the Hereafter)." [Sahih al-Bukhari collection]

The Hadith: "The doors of the Garden are opened on Monday and Thursday, and then every servant [of Allah] ... is forgiven, except for the man who has enmity between him and his brother. [About them] it is said: 'Delay these two until they are reconciled; delay these two until they are reconciled.'" [Sahih Muslim collection]

Section 4: Statements and Commentary in Support of Reparations

In light of such scriptural injunctions, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic leaders have shared their understanding of how the tenets of faith and a recognition of historic wrongdoing combine to buttress the case for reparations in whatever appropriate form it takes.

Reparations and Judaism

- “We must love and support each other, and for that love and support to have any meaning, it must be material as well as spiritual.” – **Jews United for Racial and Economic Justice ceremony in recognition of Juneteenth.**
- “Most American Jews came to this country years after the abolition of slavery, but we have thrived under a national economic system that was built on stolen land and stolen labor, a foundational wrong that has yet to be rectified. As survivors of generational trauma and beneficiaries of reparations [from Germany, to Israel] granted after the Holocaust, Jews have a special obligation to help advance this conversation.” – **Rabbi Sharon Brous, IKAR Jewish Congregation, Los Angeles**
- “In the Talmud (Bekhorot 5b), Rabbi Hanina reports that Rabbi Eli’ezer taught that every single Israelite left Egypt with ‘ninety Libyan donkeys laden with Egypt’s silver and gold,’ and that this, in fact, is why we are commanded forevermore to redeem every- firstborn donkey in offering to God (Exodus 13:13), who enabled our ancestors to receive this start-up wealth.” – **Rabbi Aryeh Bernstein (*The Torah Case for Reparations*)**
- “In the Talmud (Gittin 55a), there is a dispute between Rabbis: What ought we do if a house, maybe even a beautiful palace, is built on the foundation of *marish hagazul*—a stolen beam? Shammai argues: ‘We must tear down the house to retrieve the beam and return it to its rightful owner. You can’t build something beautiful on a lie.’ But Hillel has a different take. ‘What sense does it make to demolish the palace? Let the thief pay for the beam, considering its full value as

the foundation of a beautiful home.’ Both Rabbis insist that something must be done to rectify the injury. That is the only way for justice to be served.” – **Rabbi Sharon Brous (Sermon, Rosh Hashana II, 5578)**

Reparations and Christianity

The word “reparations” and the dominant understanding of reparations as a form of compensation does not explicitly emerge in the New Testament scriptures during the emergence of Christianity in the first century. According to Christian biblical scholars, the closest Greek reference to the idea of reparations is the term “apozimiosis,” which refers to compensation for damages.

However, the omission of the term reparations does not undercut the moral and theological positions for reparations in our interpretation of New Testament scriptures and Christian teachings. Nor is it in conflict with Christianity’s call for transitional justice and restitution to victims of injustice.

For example, the Episcopal “Book of Common Prayer,” in laying out the role of ministry for lay persons, identifies a ministerial duty “to carry on Christ’s work of reconciliation in the world.” Reconciliation is considered an essential goal of reparations. Bishops of the church also are called “to act in Christ’s name for the reconciliation of the world.”

Religious scholar John Dominic Crossan made the connection between Christian teachings and reparations explicit in his book *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*.

“When one person injures or takes advantage of another, healing the breach in their relationship often requires not only setting the situation right, but acknowledging guilt and apologizing. . . . Justice and humility require white, non-Hispanic people to accept and acknowledge that people in their group have benefited from the oppression of other groups for hundreds of years and continue to do so. Expending resources to correct present disparities is not charity, it is returning to others money that was taken from them. Acknowledging that will be a critical part of healing the breach.”

Reparations and Islam

(Note: The following teachings and understandings regarding reparations and Islam were provided through the cooperation of ICJS Fellows from the Islamic Society of Baltimore in consultation with their Imam.)

The Quran emphasizes that Allah is the ultimate source of forgiveness and mercy. It teaches that sincere repentance and seeking forgiveness from Allah can lead to redemption and the expiation of sins.— “Say, 'O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.'” (Quran 39:53)

However, it is important to note that forgiveness from Allah does not absolve individuals from their responsibility to seek forgiveness from those they have wronged. This includes apologizing, admitting one's mistakes, and actively working toward making amends. The Quran emphasizes the importance of reconciling with others and maintaining good relations. (See above citations in Section 3.)The relationship between Divine and human forgiveness is made explicit in the Hadith, the record of the words, actions, and ascent of the Prophet Muhammad.

The Hadith also encourages seeking reconciliation and resolving conflicts with others. It emphasizes the importance of establishing good relations and resolving disputes to attain redemption. Seeking forgiveness includes expressing remorse and asking for forgiveness directly from the individuals or the affected group. Sincere repentance includes resolving not to repeat the wrongful act and striving to make positive changes in behavior.

If the wrongdoing resulted in material harm or damage, the Hadith encourages individuals to make restitution or compensate the affected party. This may involve restoring what was taken or damaged or providing compensation as a form of reparation. In addition, by performing good deeds, individuals can demonstrate their remorse and commitment to positive change. The Hadith highlights the significance of acts of charity in expiating sins and earning the pleasure of God.

Section 5: Prayerful Steps Toward Reparations

The ultimate goal of reparations is not an intellectual understanding of the harms done by slavery and their continued impact but action that helps repair that damage and restores the community spiritually and morally. Prior to selecting or choosing the concrete form that reparations would take, each community must go through an exercise of self-awareness, or what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. referred to as “self-purification” in his teachings on the steps toward nonviolent social protest.

Self-purification allows congregations to mature in their spirituality and become aware of their needs and those of others. These needs are not always apparent, and it takes intentionality of time and prayer to reveal the yearnings of a community and to develop the relationships needed to recognize them. Without an interactive and mindful approach, one can easily overlook the underlying causes of a situation and take action that contradicts or fails to respect the needs of those afflicted.

Rabbi Andrea Goldstein of Shaare Emmet in St. Louis puts this eloquently in “A Prayer for our Community,” which reads in part: “May all of us come to acknowledge the racism that is pervasive in our region and our nation. ... May we commit to sitting down with one another in honest dialogue, opening our hearts in compassion to one another, bearing witness to the pain and fear of one another, even if ... and especially if ... ‘the other’ looks and seems so different from ourselves.”

This section offers an interactive and mindful approach toward reparations by inviting participants to perform activities of holy listening and observation through prayer and meditation. Congregations can perform these seven stages within a seven-day or seven-week period, depending on the number of participants, scale of impact, and availability of time needed to complete the process.

Day/Week 1

Theme: Courage – It takes courage to learn about the injustices in American society, for both the oppressed and oppressor. Courage is essential to learn what it means to witness the truth despite how uncomfortable it may become. Courage is also needed to empathize with others and to engage in complex conversations concerning the impact of economic and social injustices.

Activity: For Stage 1, read Jan Richardson’s poem “Blessing of Courage,” (with its reminder that courage “comes to the heart that is open ... that does not turn away”) while alternating voices for each section. After a group reading, each participant can be invited to read “Blessing of Courage Independently and engage in a 15- to 25-minute period of silent meditation on one’s own, which can be conducted at home, in a park, cafe, safe community space, or elsewhere.

Blessing of Courage

I cannot say
where it lives,
only that it comes
to the heart
that is open,
to the heart
that asks,
to the heart
that does not turn away.

It can take practice,
days of tugging at
what keeps us bound,
seasons of pushing against
what keeps our dreaming
small.

When it arrives,
it might surprise you

by how quiet it is,
how it moves
with such grace
for possessing
such power.

But you will know it
by the strength
that rises from within you
to meet it,
by the release
of the knot
in the center of
your chest
that suddenly lets go.

You will recognize it
by how still
your fear becomes
as it loosens its grip,
perhaps never quite
leaving you,
but calmly turning
into joy
as you enter the life
that is finally
your own.

—Jan Richardson
from *The Cure for Sorrow*

Suggested prompts for reflection:

- Do you have any fears about reparations? If so, what are they?
- Who is God calling you to be courageous in this work?
- What word or phrase stood out to you?

- What did you notice about the Blessing of Courage?
- Who are some courageous figures in your life?
- Who and what are examples of courage within your faith or personal life?

Optional reflection: Find an image within a distressed community that resonates with courage.

Day/Week 2

Theme: Listening – Listen to the voices and narratives of oppressed people or those who continue to be victims of historical oppression. Listen with your ears, heart, and mind. Listening allows our body to be nourished through the immersion of sound: hearing the rhythm of the earth and its people. Listening is also an opportunity to let others know that we care and are attentive to their words or, better yet, the manifestations of their hearts.

Activity: For centuries, African Americans have used music to express the sorrows of their hearts and forced migration to the Americas and their struggles for equality and equity. For example, spend a few minutes listening to The Golden Gospel Singers' rendition of "[Oh, Freedom.](#)" For the first stream, listen to this video with your eyes and ears. For a second streaming, close your eyes and listen.

Suggested prompts for reflection:

- What did you notice when you listened with your eyes open versus closed?
- How are the cries and protests of African Americans in the 1960s still prevalent in our society today?
- What are some songs which remind you of freedom? What about those songs inspires you?

Day/Week 3

Theme: Witness – Find ways of learning about and being present in economically distressed communities and with populations/victims of injustice, such as attending a religious service or community event. Remember, you are a witness, not a person of power or authority.

Activity: Observe with your eyes and ears. If this poses a problem due to fear or anxiety, contact a religious leader before your visitation and share your interest in learning about their sanctuary and/or community. If site visits are impossible, consider resources such as lectures and interviews, including “The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America” by Richard Rothstein and “Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City” by Antero Pietila.

Suggested prompts for reflection:

- Based on what you have witnessed from your experience or from watching these videos, what are some contemporary examples of racial injustices?

Day/Week 4

Theme: Contemplation- Embrace the fact that truth has the power to make us feel uncomfortable and vulnerable, but is also an invitation for positive renewal and transformation. Truth also promotes a nonjudgement space and invites us into a place of holy reckoning (prophetic voice).

Activity: It's time to pause! Give yourself a chance to process what you have heard, experienced, and observed. Through contemplation, we are able to sit with our thoughts. Participants should refrain from researching and engaging social and racial disparities during their contemplative period. Think about yourself, what you learned, and how it may or may manifest in your life. Find an image from your faith that invites you to meditate or contemplate. Sit with this image or object for 30 minutes to an hour. Contemplation for some can be silence, whereas others engage with their creativity through art or writing.

Suggested prompts for reflection:

- Based on steps 1 through 4, what themes of injustice were prevalent in your mind?
- How has what you've learned so far affected your understanding and attitude toward these economic and social conditions of racial discrimination against African Americans?

Day/Week 5

Theme: Self Awareness – The work of reparations does not seek to shame or blame individuals for the circumstances of oppression and discrimination. Instead, it aims to present the truths of injustices, encourage society to reconcile them, and invest in an equitable future. The pausing of contemplation allows us to understand our own consciousness of these truths and to be more reflective about our awareness of the self and others. With self-awareness, we can also discern factors of self-interest and the common good.

Activity: If you live in a predominantly white community, take a walk or drive in your neighborhood. Notice the traffic devices, roads, homes, stores, restaurants, civic centers, landscapes, and parks. Next, take a walk or drive in a predominately African American neighborhood while observing the same landmarks. Invite a friend or family member for an additional set of eyes.

Suggested prompts for reflection:

- Is my neighborhood racially homogenous, or is it diverse?
- Why do I live in my community?
- Are my actions or ignorance towards the economic disparities of African Americans discriminatory?
- Do I have a role in the economic disparities of African Americans, and if so, what is or could that role be?
- Does my faith have any rituals or practices that invite believers to reflect on their actions or to prepare themselves for a change?

Day/Week 6

Theme: Living Faith – Stages 1 through 5 have offered the opportunity to courageously and intentionally reflect on your self-awareness as it relates to the struggles of the African American community. Based on these experiences and with humility, share what you have learned about injustice and how it has informed your faith with your worshiping community.

Activity: Discuss your findings and experiences with friends or your congregation. You can host a light gathering with refreshments, which sets a tone of comfort. You can also prepare a slideshow to enrich your discussion with photos, music, poetry, etc., that you encountered during this practice. Through coordinating and sharing encounters, one is able to process and articulate the complex dynamics of what they experienced.

Reflection: This stage does not offer suggested prompts for reflection. Participants are invited to use this time to prepare their discussion with friends or their congregations. Be as creative or simple as you desire. As you share your experience, be mindful that others may have questions, and the goal of this activity is to promote discussion rather than arguments or to further intensify racial anxieties.

Day/Week 7

Theme: Dwelling With Others – Continue your discussions, especially with those inspired to learn more about injustices endured by African Americans. Also, invite others to participate in this spiritual practice of self-awareness and reparations for African Americans and reflections. This could include gathering people in your congregation for a committee of action or reaching out to other organizations in the community to work on bringing prayerful justice to our city, state, country, and world.

Prayers: "A Prayer for Reparation and Restoration," Rabbi Brant Rosen; "A Prayer for Our Community," Rabbi Andrea Goldstein, Congregation Shaare Emeth, St. Louis, Mo.

Suggested prompts for reflection:

- Does shame over not doing enough to abolish racial injustice keep me from doing anything at all, or less than I could be doing?
- How can I be a leader for reparations in my congregation or community?
- What are three concrete steps that I can take to share what I have learned about injustices with my family, congregation, and the larger community?
- What are my faith and civic leaders doing about this injustice? How can I support their efforts?
- Who in my life can I reach out to begin to partner on bringing about reparations?

Resources and Continued Reading

Models for Action:

- "Reparations Plan," National African American Reparations Commission
<https://reparationscomm.org/reparations-plan/>
- "The Process Toward Reparations: A Template," Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts
https://www.diomass.org/sites/diomass/files/attachments/Reparations%20Toolkit_%20Process%20Toward%20Reparations%20Template_2021_11.pdf

Articles and Prayers

- "Harvard, National Council of Churches, Reform Jews seeking reparations blueprint," Religion News
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- *From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the 21st Century*, by William A. Darity Jr., A. Kirsten Mullen. University of North Carolina Press, 2022.
- *Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City*, by Antero Pietila. Ivan R. Dee, 2010.
- *Should America Pay? Slavery and the Raging Debate on Reparations*, edited by Raymond Winbush, PhD. HarperCollins, 2010.
- *The Black Reparations Project*, edited by William A. Darity, Jr., A. Kirsten Mullen, & Lucas Hubbard. University of California Press, 2023
- *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, by Richard Rothstein. Liveright, 2017.
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Song

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Color Us Love is an interfaith guide with readings, resources, prayers, and a framework for congregations to discuss, reflect, and take action on reparations for slavery.

It features sources from Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions about addressing historical injustices and turning intentions into action.



Color Us Love is a group project of three congregations participating in the Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies' Spring 2023 Congregational Leaders Fellowship. The three congregations are:

Cathedral of the Incarnation
Hinenu Baltimore
St. Matthew United Methodist Church

color.us.love@gmail.com

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