

Reconciliation Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciple of Christ) has adopted a definition of racism that includes the addition of “the misuse of power” to racial prejudice. Prejudice alone does not perpetuate racism in the multiple ways it has become “baked in” to our culture.

❖ RACISM’S IRRESPONSIBLE USE OF POWER

Racism uses power irresponsibly in 3 ways. (List over, for, and from)

Power¹ – Racism’s power over people of color.

Power² – Racism’s power for the dominant (European/Anglo) culture.

Power³ – Racism’s power from everyone (misshapes/destroys our identities).

We can illustrate “over” and “for” with a little exercise called *Lollipop* (explained on the following pages).

THE LOLLIPOP RULES

OVERVIEW

This exercise gives participants an experience in treating and being treated in a discriminatory manner. The discrimination is based on the arbitrary detail of possession of a lollipop.

FORMAT

PARTICIPANTS: 10 per group for “Lollipop” discussion is ideal, ages 8 to adult. The follow-up discussion should be conducted with all participants.

TIME: 30-40 minutes

EQUIPMENT: One lollipop per person
One “The Lollipop Rules” worksheet for each participant

INSTRUCTIONS

For each group of ten participants, designate one half “A” and one half “B”. Participants in half “A” of each group will receive one lollipop. Participants in half “B” of each group will not receive anything. **Inform the workgroups that everyone will have the opportunity to play both roles.** Explain to the participants that they have a group project to work on.

While the group is working on the project they must keep several things in mind. There are two kinds of people in their group—those with lollipops and those without. Pass out “The Lollipop Rules” worksheet to the participants.

Have all the participants read the situation on the worksheet. Pretending they belong to the same club or organization, the participants have been given \$2,000 for an activity. They must come up with three recommendations for how to spend these funds. These recommendations will be presented to the entire organization.

Allow the discussion to continue for **five minutes**. After five minutes, take the lollipops from those in half “A” and give them to those in half “B”. Remind the participants of the behaviors associated with the lollipops. They should be switching roles. Participants should work for another five minutes on the same task of deciding how to spend the money.

<p>Five minutes of such treatment may seem brief, but the effect is quite powerful and it is strongly advised not to lengthen the time span of this portion of the exercise.</p>

After finishing the exercise, have all participants form a circle. **Please make certain at this time to distribute a lollipop to every participant.**

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- How did you feel when you had the lollipop?
- How did you feel when you were without a lollipop?
- Does this compare with anything you have experienced in your own life?
- What effect did the lollipop distribution have on the decision making process?
- Whose culture was honored?

THE LOLLIPOP RULES

DIRECTIONS

Every other person in your group has a lollipop. Those who have the lollipop will pass it to those without a lollipop halfway through the exercise.

Those **with** lollipops should:

- Be praised for their ideas
- Be listened to attentively
- Be placed above those without lollipops
- Be free to disagree with lollipop and non-lollipop holders

Those **without** lollipops should:

- Be spoken to slowly using simple words
- Be ignored, by politely smiling and nodding at them
- Have their statements repeated by others as though they were their own

SITUATION

All members of your group have a common task. Imagine you all belong to the same club or organization, and you have \$2,000 for an activity. You must come up with three recommendations for how to spend these funds. These recommendations will be presented to the entire organization.

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Racism's 3rd misuse of power we say is "from" because it takes from all of us and destroys who God meant for us to be.

Kneeling exercise "Who's Free"

- *Who's Free*

Directions: Have participants pair-up. Tell one of the people to get down on one knee. Have the other person lean over and put their hands on the kneeling person's shoulders. Instruct them that the kneeling person is to try to stand up and the standing person is to try to keep them down. Have them begin and watch for people who are too into the activity—we don't want anyone to get hurt! After a **few seconds** have everyone sit down again.

Purpose: 1) To demonstrate power relationship in society 2) To show that all people are affected by oppression, not only those traditionally perceived as the victims of discrimination.

Discussion: After the activity, guide the participants in a discussion of "Who's Free?" in the relationship just played out. Make sure there is a realization that both parties are tied down by the roles they must play and, therefore, no one is free. Also clarify the difference between being "hurt" and being "oppressed." Follow the group's lead in the discussion and act as moderator. This should be a fairly brief discussion, but an important one!

❖ CONCLUSION

We see the first irresponsible use of power in cultural racism when the dominant culture (white European Americans) imposes its way of life onto other cultures—when it destroys, distorts, discounts and discredits other cultures.

The 2nd irresponsible use of power in cultural racism can be seen in the way the dominant culture takes parts of other cultures without any accountability to that culture and claims that part of another's culture as it's own—i.e. hip hop, dream catchers.

The 3rd irresponsible use of power in cultural racism hurts us all. We lose the richness of diverse cultures, taking away the identity not only of the cultures the dominant society assimilates, accommodates, or displaces, but also the identity of that dominant society. We all cease to be what God has created us to be—the whole family of God.

MANY CULTURES, ONE WORLD
DOC PROGRAM CONTENT

SESSION TWO—DISMANTLING CULTURAL RACISM

❖ TRANSITION

As your experience this morning has shown, we are connected to many cultures. We have the option of creating bridges or barriers between these cultures. One of your sessions talked about empathy—being able to identify with and understand another individual’s viewpoint—another’s culture. To build bridges I think you have to do more than understand another culture; you have to value the diversity of other cultures.

❖ SELF-EVALUATION

Let’s take a few minutes to do a self-evaluation by completing the following worksheet:

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Do you value diversity? Read the following questions and answer them as honestly as possible. Take time to think about each question before you answer it. No one will see your answers but you. This is to help you see the ways in which you build bridges or build barriers in your life

	YES	NO
1. Am I comfortable around people who are different from me?	_____	_____
2. Do I treat everyone with respect and dignity?	_____	_____
3. Do I have friends of different racial and ethnic backgrounds	_____	_____
4. Do I treat people as individuals rather than as group members?	_____	_____
5. Do I ever tell racial or ethnic jokes?	_____	_____
6. Do I ever use labels for people that might offend them?	_____	_____
7. Do I judge people based on their skin color or accent?	_____	_____
8. Do I try to learn about people who are different from me?	_____	_____
9. Do I like people and accept them as they are?	_____	_____
10. Do I try to understand other peoples' ideas or behavior when they are different from my own?	_____	_____
11. Am I aware of my own prejudices and do I try to control them?	_____	_____
12. Do I get to know people before I decide whether or not I like them?	_____	_____
13. Do I treat others, as I would like for them to treat me?	_____	_____
14. Do I try to include people who are different from me in my activities?	_____	_____
15. Do I speak out against prejudice or discrimination when I see it?	_____	_____

Choose one of the above situations in which you would like to change your behavior and write about what you would like to do.

We invite you to take this worksheet with you and refer to it periodically.

❖ **DISMANTLING CULTURAL RACISM**

How can we confront cultural racism and build bridges to truly become the family of God? Let's do some role playing to help us find ways.

Confronting Issues of Cultural Racism—Role Play

Divide the group into pairs. Give them one of the following scenarios. Give them a few minutes to prepare the role-play, especially the ending.

1. You recently hear a joke that you thought was hilarious about another culture and decide to share it with your friend. You don't hesitate to tell it, even in the presence of that other culture, because, after all it's only a joke.
2. A group from another ethnic group uses the same church building as you do. You and your friend attend a youth group meeting at the church following the other group's fellowship dinner. Your friend says she can't stand the smell of their cooking.
3. Your blond, straight-haired, blue-eyed friend wants to find someone to do her hair in cornrows.
4. You overhear the comment, "Oh, I know about and try out other cultures every time I go to the mall food court. I eat a little bit of Mexican, some Chinese and some soul food."

After the groups role-play ask them to list the creative ways they thought of to build bridges between cultures.

What are other things you can do as individuals or as a church to confront the cultural racism we find in our churches?

How will you share all you have experienced today with the congregations in your Region when you return home?

❖ **CONCLUSION**

God calls us to the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). Let's follow that call by doing these things on the list and encouraging our church to intentionally build bridges between cultures by seeking to understand one another and by valuing the diversity among us.