



# *Amistad* to Boston

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Bringing the Historic Re-creation  
Freedom Schooner *Amistad* to Boston's Fan Pier  
At the John Joseph Moakley United States Courthouse  
October 14 - 26, 2003

*Handbook*  
*for*

***A Neighborhood Conversation on Race:  
"A Talk Worth Having"***

JULY 2003



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The *Handbook for a Neighborhood Conversation on Race: A Talk Worth Having*, aims to encourage a dialogue on race unity at the most basic level of society, our neighborhoods. The intent is to bring the discussion into living rooms and dens, and around kitchen tables. The handbook is also appropriate for discussions among youth in schools and youth groups, in religious and civic discussion groups, and other forums where small groups of people gather seeking meaningful dialogue.

This edition of the handbook was developed on behalf of the Amistad to Boston Host Committee as part of its community outreach to accompany the Amistad to Boston Visit, October 14-26, 2003. The purpose of the Amistad to Boston Visit is to inspire the residents of Massachusetts to recommit themselves to the values of courage, liberty, and equality for all people in our time, by retelling the story of the Amistad schooner, whose African captives rebelled and were imprisoned in 1839. American patriots, including John Quincy Adams, won the captives' freedom in the United States Supreme Court in 1841.

The mission of the Amistad to Boston Host Committee is to promote reconciliation and harmony among races, and to teach the historic lessons of perseverance, cooperation, leadership and justice embodied in the Amistad story. It is hoped that the Handbook for a Neighborhood Conversation on Race: A Talk Worth Having will be used to facilitate neighborhood discussions on "America's Most Challenging Issue", for years to come.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## Hosting a Neighborhood Conversation on Race Is a Heroic Deed

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Discussions about race and race prejudice have never been comfortable or easy. Such prejudice is, after all, a corrosive force that has bitten into the fiber and attacked the whole social structure of American society. Ridding ourselves and our communities of race prejudice and healing the wounds sustained from it require an effort of heroic proportions. Those who step forward to assist in this process by hosting neighborhood conversations on race are offering heroic deeds of service that benefit their neighborhoods, their communities, and ultimately humanity as a whole.

As you summon the courage to act, you are not alone. In the weeks and months to come, many others will step forward, collectively representing a potent force that will render a vital service to our communities. And, as you engage in this activity, you are taking part in what is essentially a project for social development. On another level, you are helping to prepare human hearts for the spiritual healing that can occur when such efforts are carried out with sincerity, love and faith.

An important viewpoint in all these conversations, and the one most able to impart a sense of hopefulness, is that race unity is the next step in America's development. This viewpoint casts a spiritual perspective on the issue: the recognition of the nobility of all human beings regardless of race. The driving force behind that viewpoint is a spiritual principle – the Oneness of the World of Humanity.

This principle is also expressed in the motto of the United States of America:

*E Pluribus Unum – Out of Many, One*

### *Overview*

*The Amistad to Boston Handbook for a Neighborhood Conversation on Race: A Talk Worth Having* offers you guidance and support as you host a series of dialogues on race in your home. In this handbook, the words “conversation” and “dialogue” are used alternately to denote the process that you and your neighbors will be engaged in during these sessions.

The role of a host is to help those invited feel welcome and encouraged to participate. While keeping the discussion focused, the host also helps create an atmosphere in which ideas and sentiments are exchanged respectfully and everyone has the chance to share and learn from one another.

This handbook provides suggestions for whom you might invite, samples of invitation letters, session agendas with case studies and viewpoints to stimulate discussion, detailed steps for conducting five to seven dialogue sessions, and sample questions that you can use to get the discussions started. A list of ground rules for all participants and a reference page that contrasts dialogue with debate help you set the stage for constructive conversation. Appendices provide a variety of background information: historical and scientific fact sheets, and a bibliography and resource list.

Forms and methods for evaluation by both participants and hosts are also included at the end of the handbook. Evaluations are useful at several levels:

- Content of the sessions
- Outcomes and new insights gained by participants and hosts
- General feedback for improving the handbook

## Hosting a Neighborhood Conversation on Race

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### ***What is a Neighborhood Conversation on Race?***

A Neighborhood Conversation on Race is a gathering of people who live in close proximity to each other, held for the purpose of discussing race prejudice and how it can be replaced with race unity. The goal of the dialogues is to bring about intimate discussions on race unity in living rooms and dens, and around kitchen tables throughout America.

### ***Why host a Neighborhood Conversation on Race?***

For meaningful change to take place, individuals and communities need to assert positive leadership. While some communities have been on the forefront of the struggle for race unity, much still remains to be done to achieve the standard of unity that we seek.

Individuals who arise to host a conversation on race in their neighborhoods can demonstrate a positive force for change that will be felt first in their own neighborhood, but whose effects will penetrate throughout America as hearts are changed one at a time.

### ***What is the role of host?***

The host's role is essential to the dialogue's success. In making every effort to create an atmosphere of openness and trust, the host also guides the discussion in a manner that helps participants gain understanding about the unity of the human family.

The host is a good listener, who is respectful and encourages all participants to share their experiences, knowledge and opinions. Although the host's role is not to "instruct," it is good to have some familiarity with the topic in order to bring forward views and ideas that may not come up automatically in the discussion. Because of the key role and many duties of the host, it might be helpful to have a co-host to assist with these responsibilities.

### ***Who can I invite and what might I say in my invitation?***

Writing an invitation to neighbors to attend a conversation on race is a significant task. You want your neighbors to respond and attend, and you want them to perceive the invitation as an act of caring on your part. You also want them to recognize the value of participation to their own well-being and that of their families, the broader community, and ultimately the country.

Keep the following suggestions in mind as you write your letter of invitation. While all are important, the first, especially, will help assure an effective outcome:

1. Pray for assistance before beginning to write the letter.
2. Think about the qualities of those neighbors you know, and appeal to what you understand to be their interest in the well-being of your community.
3. Keep the letter of invitation short, one page or less.
4. Include the date, time, address and your telephone number. Ask them to confirm that they are coming, if possible, but that this is not essential. Emphasize that they are welcome to come, even if at the last minute.
5. Suggest that they share the invitation with others. Some people may want to bring someone else along to increase their level of comfort initially.
6. Don't hesitate to invite people in the neighborhood that you do not know well. Since you do not know them, you cannot assume what their response will be. At the very least, they will know of your concern for race unity and America's future. Remember that the tone and the content of your letter can express a great deal in themselves.

7. Address neighbors respectfully and thank them for considering your invitation. Do not be overly familiar, even if you know them well. Respectfulness will help convey the sincerity of your efforts.

8. Try to send out at least 15 invitations. At best, you will have a full house; at least, you will likely have 3 or 4 guests.
9. If appropriate, include a reference about race unity as it relates to the growth and development of children.

## Sample Letters of Invitation

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The following sample letters feature many of the suggestions mentioned in the previous section. Feel free to adapt them as appropriate for your own use. Please keep a copy of your letter to include as part of the evaluation process on the handbook and your experiences.

Dear Neighbor:

As you may know, the Amistad Schooner is coming to Boston for a week in October of this year. While this visit has historical significance, one of the most important reasons for the schooner's visit is to promote reconciliation and harmony among races, while teaching the historical lessons symbolized by the Amistad story: perseverance, cooperation, leadership and justice.

As part of the Amistad to Boston Visit, members of the communities around Boston are being invited to participate in conversations on race. Our family is participating in these discussions, and would like to invite you to take part. This series of dialogues will address various aspects of race prejudice and focus especially on the spiritual requirements necessary to eradicate racism.

Our neighborhood is so diverse that we are a microcosm of the human race. We are all members of one human family and it helps when we work together to build bonds of friendship. We know there is much to discuss in order to bring about race unity in America. This neighborhood conversation is a ripple in the ocean, but the effect can make a difference. We hope that you can be part of the circle.

We look forward to seeing you at our first session on [day, date, time] along with other neighbors to discuss this issue, which is so vital to our nation's health. Please RSVP, if you can, though it is not essential if you are unsure of your schedule.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this invitation.

Sincerely,

Dear Neighbor:

As you are probably aware, our nation is trying to deal with the disunity and conflict among racial groups. As a part of this effort, the Amistad Schooner will be coming to Boston Harbor for a week in October. The purpose of the Amistad to Boston Visit is to inspire the residents of Massachusetts to recommit themselves to the values of courage, liberty and equality embodied in the Amistad story.

In addition, some individuals and groups are hosting town-wide and neighborhood conversations on race. Because we love this country, we have decided to hold a series of dialogues on race unity in our home. We invite you to join us on [day, date, time] for the first discussion, which we expect to last about an hour and a half. Please feel free to share this invitation with others. If you have questions, or would like to let us know that you are coming, our phone number is \_\_\_\_\_.

Establishing unity among the races is up to people like you and us. Thank you for your time, and we hope to see you soon.

With best wishes,

Dear Neighbor:

As you may know, the Amistad Schooner is coming to Boston for a week in October of this year. The aim of the schooner's visit is to promote reconciliation and harmony among races, while teaching the historical lessons of perseverance, cooperation, leadership and justice embodied in the Amistad story.

We recognize that even though we don't have much racial diversity in our town, our children are growing up in a global society and will need to be well educated on the subject of race. In this spirit, we invite you to join us and other neighbors in a series of conversations on race in our home. The first discussion will take place on [day, date, time]. This initial dialogue will begin by addressing our hopes and attitudes regarding America's most challenging issue – race prejudice – and to share together ways by which we can ensure that our children are not burdened with this issue. This will allow them to grow and develop with a true respect for all people around the globe, and assist in assuring domestic tranquility for America.

We hope to see you on [day, date, time] to meet with other neighbors to discuss bringing about the unity of the races. Please share this invitation with others, if you wish. If you'd like to let us know you're coming, we can be reached at \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you very much for considering our invitation.

Yours truly,

***Second Invitation – Reminder Card***

<p>Dear Neighbor:</p> <p>Please join us for:</p> <p>A Neighborhood Conversation on Race [Day, Date, Time] At the [Your-Last-Name] Home XX Street, Your-Town, MA ZIP [phone #]</p> <p>Best wishes,</p> <p>[<i>your signature</i> ]</p>
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## Guiding Principles for the Dialogue Host

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True dialogue is characterized by free interaction in a constructive and trusting atmosphere. The importance of perceiving the needs and capacity of the participants cannot be overemphasized. As a facilitator, use wisdom in choosing which specific materials to share at the meetings. It is important to remember that you might not be able to cover every issue in a single session. Indeed, it might take several sessions to begin to address the topics of race prejudice and race unity in a meaningful way.

The following points may help you to provide the trusting and positive environment that can promote the success of these discussions.

- ***Conduct the dialogue in a spirit of genuine service.***

Sustained effort on the part of many to heal America's racial prejudice will undoubtedly bring us closer to our goal of race unity. Your participation as a host of a neighborhood conversation on race is a genuine act of service to others.

- ***Show sensitivity.***

The need to be sensitive to the feelings and opinions of others is a key to success in the dialogue sessions. When you show courtesy and kindness in your interactions and treat others with dignity and care, you provide a powerful role model for others in the group. The guiding principle for all is to seek the truth, rather than to insist upon one's own opinion or view.

- ***Demonstrate flexibility.***

In addition to being sensitive to the needs of others, it is important not to hold too strongly to a preconceived agenda for the conversation. Be ready and willing to move with the flow of the discussion, as long as it is constructive and positive.

- ***Don't claim perfection.***

To reach the ultimate standard of unity, we all still have work to do. At the same time, we have made significant achievements that are a cause for hope for the future, otherwise we would not be engaging in this type of conversation in the first place. Feeling humility in the face of this difficult task is to be expected, but you can also be confident that those who act upon the spiritual principle of the oneness of humanity can achieve dramatic results.

- ***Recognize the need for long-term commitment.***

The achievement of race unity is a long-term commitment – not only through dialogues, but in every aspect of our lives. Rather than becoming discouraged, if initial efforts do not quickly yield the hoped-for results, encourage participants to remain constant in our pursuit of this all-important goal. As we do so, it helps to recognize that we all have to work against the inherited tendencies, corrupt instincts, fluctuating fashions and false pretenses of the society in which we live.

- ***Practice patience and wisdom.***

The issue of race is a very difficult and emotional one for many people. This makes it all the more important to use the greatest possible understanding, tact and patience in conversations with others about it.

## How to Deal Effectively with Challenges

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Ideally, everyone attending the Neighborhood Conversation on Race will participate in a lively spirit of respect and cooperation. But, as with any group process, especially with a topic as challenging as race, difficulties may arise. Here are some possible scenarios and suggested ways to respond to them.

- **Participants are quiet, and don't contribute to the dialogue.**

Be sure not to put participants on the spot. Rather, draw them out with good eye contact and watch for non-verbal cues that they may wish to speak. For some, it may just take time for them to feel ready to share. Once they do, responding with interest to their comments is helpful, as is talking informally with them before or after the session.

- **Lack of focus, discussion wanders off topic.**

While it is important to allow the group to own the discussion and not be too rigid in sticking to an agenda, participants may become frustrated if only a few people are taking the discussion in an obscure direction. This is where it helps to be prepared with the background materials offered in this handbook to help refocus the discussion. However, if participants as a whole seem genuinely interested in a different topic, see where it can progress. Provide a bridge from the new topic using facts or information related to the main topic, where possible, if others do not make this connection for themselves.

- **Someone puts forth misinformation, or participants get hung up in a dispute about facts, but no one present knows the answer.**

Ask whether anyone is aware of conflicting information. If no one offers a correction, you can supply one. If no one knows the facts, the point can be set aside, if not essential. If it seems central to the discussion, participants can be encouraged to look it up and perhaps bring the information back with them to a future session. You can also remind the group that even experts often disagree and there may be no generally accepted answer.

- **Someone dominates the discussion.**

Invite input from others and remind participants that the group wants to be sure that everyone has a chance to share. If the individual persists or goes into lengthy discussion, it may be necessary to interrupt, especially if the focus is straying from the topic, and ask that the group hear first from those who haven't spoken before those who have spoken share again.

- **Lack of interest, no one or only a few people participate.**

This may occur, if someone dominates the discussion, or if too little time is given for response after questions are posed. People need time to think, reflect and get ready to speak up. It may help to pose a question and go around the room, so that everyone has a chance to respond, coming back to those who need more time. Sometimes, people are just tired or have had a hard day. Another reason for lack of enthusiasm may be that the group seems to be in agreement and isn't coming to grips with tensions inherent in the issue. In this case, try to bring other views into the discussion, especially if no one else has raised them.

- **Tension or open conflict, participants argue or get angry.**

Address tension directly. Remind participants that disagreement and conflict of ideas can lead to the discovery of truth. Explain that, for conflict to be productive, it must be focused on the issue. It is acceptable to challenge someone's ideas, but not acceptable to challenge them personally. You must interrupt personal attacks, name-calling or put-downs as soon as they occur. This is where establishing ground rules at the outset is important. These discourage inappropriate behaviors, while emphasizing room for and acceptance of all views. (If conflict arises, you can appeal to the group to help reinforce the ground rules.)

## Hosting the First Session

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To help establish an atmosphere that will lead to a productive conversation, give close consideration to the following suggestions.

### ***Making Preparations***

- Send out a letter of invitation that conveys warmth, sincerity and loving welcome.
- If sufficient time elapses between your invitation and the actual date of the first session, send a friendly reminder card with just the pertinent information.
- Pray for guidance and assistance before your guests arrive.
- Provide food and refreshments.
- Make sure that your home or meeting place is clean and the seating well-arranged.
- Be sure to greet everyone warmly.
- Be conversational – make time for “small talk” before the meeting begins, and encourage people to introduce themselves to each other.

### ***When It’s Time for the Conversation to Start***

#### **1. Offer introductions.**

Ask everyone to introduce themselves and give some background, including why they came to the meeting, what hopes they have for the outcome, and what apprehensions, if any, they may have. This stage is a critical one, not only as an ice-breaker, but as a means for you to gauge the sensitivities and attitudes of the participants. Even if all of those attending know each other well, there is bound to be a certain amount of awkwardness, given the topic. Careful observation during introductions can help you tailor the agenda and guide the discussion along a positive track. If anyone expresses anxiety or apprehension, show understanding and reaffirm

your intent to have a positive and meaningful discussion.

#### **2. Review the conversation’s purpose.**

Repeat the points in the letter of invitation that describe the purpose of the conversation. This helps to orient everyone to a common goal. If you did not invite participants during the introductions to share their motivation for coming and what they hope to gain from the sessions, ask them at this time.

#### **3. Set a time limit for the sessions.**

Early on in the first session, possibly right after introductions, state how long the session will last. It is suggested that the initial session be planned for about 90 minutes. Be sure to close within a set time limit. This helps you to keep the meeting on track and flowing in a constructive manner. You can plan the subsequent sessions based on your initial experience and the group’s interest.

#### **4. Review the Neighborhood Conversation on Race Ground Rules.**

Have sufficient copies of the attached Neighborhood Conversation on Race Ground Rules available at the beginning of the first meeting. Have one or more members of the group read them aloud. Invite participants to share any questions or comments they may have about the Ground Rules. Also, ask them to consent to possible additions to these rules, as necessary.

#### **5. Review the Dialogue vs. Debate Resource Sheet.**

Have sufficient copies of the Dialogue vs. Debate Resource Sheet available to pass out after the reading of the ground rules. This should also be read aloud. Invite comments or responses.

## **6. Explore people's personal connection to or interest in the issue.**

Ask group members to discuss why this issue is important to them. This can be especially useful, if the topic of discussion is a new one for group members. You might ask one of the following questions:

- “Why are you concerned about this issue?”
- “How have your experiences or concerns influenced your opinions about this issue?”

## **7. Cover a range of views.**

It is important that you as host and those attending encourage a wide range of viewpoints and have fair discussion on all of them without being judgmental. Hosts need to ask guests how their views are based on their own life experiences, reading and knowledge. Encourage the group not to be overly influenced by one particular personal experience or anecdote. Summarize the discussion occasionally or encourage review of the content, using wisdom as you express your own values.

## **8. Help make the gathering a true conversation.**

- When wondering whether to intervene, err on the side of non-intervention.
- Don't talk after each comment or answer every question; allow participants to respond directly to each other. The most effective leaders often say little, but are constantly thinking about how to move the group forward.
- Pose questions to help make the dialogue more productive.
- Don't be afraid of silence. It may take time for someone to answer a question.

- Try to involve everyone.
- Remember, a dialogue is not a debate. If participants forget this, invite the group to help re-establish the ground rules.

## **9. Reserve adequate time for closing the conversation.**

Wrap up by asking the group for last comments and thoughts, or invite participants to share discoveries they have made as a result of the discussion. If you will be meeting again, remind the participants of the date and thank everyone for their contributions.

### ***How to Use the Session Materials***

The materials on the following pages provide concepts and questions that can help guide the Neighborhood Conversation on Race over five or more sessions. Because the issue of race prejudice is complex, and building race unity is an ongoing process, it is recommended that, if possible, the group commit to holding a series of dialogue sessions over a span of time, covering these materials sequentially. The frequency of the sessions can be determined by the needs and schedules of the participants.

To help facilitate the discussions, you might want to make copies for each participant of the case studies and viewpoints presented in the sessions. You might also want to have copies of the fact sheets and bibliography available for participants who are interested in pursuing further reading or study.

Use the History and Science Fact Sheets in this handbook to supplement dialogue sessions and provide background information. In addition, you might want to use the fact sheets themselves as the basis for a full session.



## Neighborhood Conversation on Race Ground Rules

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- A. All participants are invited to express their own ideas and thoughts on the topic.
  - B. The host's role is to keep the discussion focused and moving.
  - C. It is important that everyone's views be heard. Each person is asked to listen carefully, without interrupting, as others share their views. Those who tend to speak often are asked to make efforts to ensure that every person has an opportunity to speak.
  - D. If a comment or view is troubling to a member of the group, even if the speaker clearly intended no offense, listeners are invited to express how that view made them feel.
  - E. Disagreements may arise, but they should in no way be personalized. Personal attacks of any kind are never helpful and are not acceptable. Let's make every effort to hear each other respectfully and to work together in a search for truth. Challenge and question ideas, rather than the individuals who present them. It helps if we are willing to examine our own beliefs in light of what others say.
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## A Comparison of Dialogue and Debate

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Dialogue	Debate
Dialogue is collaborative: two or more sides work together toward common understanding.	Debate is oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.
In dialogue, finding common ground is the goal.	In debate, winning is the goal.
In dialogue, one listens to the other's side(s) in order to understand, find meaning and find agreement.	In debate, one listens to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.
Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.	Debate affirms a participant's own point of view.
Dialogue reveals assumptions for reevaluation.	Debate defends assumptions as truth.
Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position.	Debate causes critique of the other position.
Dialogue opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions.	Debate defends one's own positions as the best solution and excludes other solutions.
Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.	Debate creates a closed-minded attitude: a refusal to consider the other side and a resistance to change.
In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that the other people's reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.	In debate, one submits one's own best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.
Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.	Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.
In dialogue, one searches for basic agreements.	In debate, one searches for glaring differences.
In dialogue, one searches for strengths in the other positions.	In debate, one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position.
Dialogue involves a real concern for the other person and seeks to not alienate or offend.	Debate involves a countering of the other position without focusing on feelings or relationship and often belittles or depreciates the other person.
Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.	Debate assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it.
Dialogue remains open-ended.	Debate implies a conclusion.

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Adapted from a paper prepared by Shelley Berman, which was based on discussions of the Dialogue Group of the Boston Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR). Other members include Lucile Burt, Dick Mayo-Smith, Lally Stowell, and Gene Thompson.

## Session One

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### *Part I: Housekeeping*

The first session begins with a number of “housekeeping” items that are important to the overall success of the conversation. The housekeeping aspect of Session One should take about 15 to 25 minutes. Address the issues in steps 1-9 outlined in the section, *Hosting the First Session*, starting on page 14.

### *Part II: Race Relations and Racism: Experiences, Perceptions and Beliefs*

The purpose of this session is to share some personal experiences, stories and perspectives about race relations, and to think about how race affects us on a day-to-day basis. It’s not always easy to talk about race relations. A commitment to the process – open, thoughtful, focused discussion – can help us make progress. By listening to one another’s stories, we can gain insights into our own beliefs and those of others, and come to new understandings of the issues we face.

#### **Beginning the Discussion**

1. Talk for a few minutes about your racial, ethnic or cultural background.
2. Relate a story or give an example to illustrate how your background or experiences have contributed to your attitudes about race relations.
3. Have you experienced racism personally? Have you seen it in practice? How has it affected you or people you know?
4. In what ways do your attitudes toward persons of other racial or ethnic groups differ from those of your parents?
5. You probably have heard expressions of prejudice from family members, friends, co-workers or neighbors. How did you think they learned their prejudice? How do you feel when you hear these expressions? How do you react?
6. How often do you have contact with people of other races or ethnic groups? Under what circumstances – at work, at social events, in stores, in other places?
7. Do you have friends of other races? If not, why? If so, how did you get to know them?
8. How do you help your children deal with racism? How do you help them understand race relations?

#### **Looking at the Cases**

Read over the list of cases on the next page. Choose a few to discuss. The following questions may be useful for your discussion:

- What is your first response to each of these cases?
- What, if anything, do you think the people described in each case should do?
- What, if anything, do you think organizations – such as businesses, congregations and civic groups – should do?
- What, if anything, do you think the government should do?
- What, if anything, would you do, if you were the person involved? If you were looking on?
- Tell a story about something that happened to you or a member of your family. Why is it important to you? Is it an example of a common experience, or not?

#### **Evaluation of the Session**

Save about 5 minutes at the end of the session for participants to informally evaluate the session and provide any feedback that might help facilitate the next session.

## *Session One Cases*

### **Case 1**

A Latina woman does not get a job as a receptionist because she speaks English with an accent.

### **Case 2**

A white man who wants to be on the police force is not hired, while several minority applicants with equal scores on the qualifying test are hired.

### **Case 3**

A black couple tells their children to be extra careful at the shopping mall. The parents remind the children to stay together, and they also advise the children to keep receipts for everything they buy.

### **Case 4**

A recent newspaper article made public charges of discrimination that were raised against a local bank. An investigation of mortgage loan approvals revealed that rejection rates were higher for blacks and for biracial families, despite solid credit histories.

### **Case 5**

An environmental survey of a small city shows that poor minority neighborhoods have much higher levels of the kinds of pollution that cause health problems and birth defects.

### **Case 6**

An African American woman who works at a mostly white corporation notes that some of her white co-workers are more likely to find fault with her when she wears braids in her hair and dresses in African fashions.

### **Case 7**

A group of African American college students starts a new fraternity on campus. They hold parties and other events, and invite only other African Americans.

### **Case 8**

A Hispanic man who works as a middle manager in a company is fired, because his boss says he doesn't produce results. He claims the color of his skin was an important factor in this decision. He says he has always felt that he was being treated differently by his co-workers, but he has been afraid to speak out until now.

### **Case 9**

An Asian American woman has cosmetic surgery on her eyes so that they'll have a more "Anglo" look, feeling that she'll be more attractive this way.

### **Case 10**

A state university decides that it will no longer take a student's race into consideration when making admission decisions. The next year, the number of nonwhite students entering the school drops sharply.

### **Case 11**

You and your date are walking to your car after seeing a late movie. You see a group of young black men coming toward you. They are wearing baggy clothes and talking loudly. Fearing a confrontation, you cross the street.

### **Case 12**

After a terrorist incident is featured in the news a man who is from the Middle East feels that people are suspicious of him.

### **Case 13**

A Mexican American family tries to rent an apartment in a part of town that is mostly white. When they arrive to see the place, the landlord tells them he rented the apartment that morning. The family has doubts.

### **Case 14**

A white couple is looking for a house. Their real estate agent steers them toward houses in white neighborhoods, never showing them houses available in other sections of town.

## Session Two

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### *Dealing with Race: What is the Nature of the Problem?*

Many of us share a desire to improve race relations and to end racial inequality. But, when we are asked to describe the kinds of problems our society is facing with race, our answers vary a lot. We sometimes disagree about the nature of our racial problems, what caused them, and how serious they are. It makes sense, then, to talk about what we are facing before we talk about solutions.

This session presents a range of viewpoints to help participants have an open conversation that explores different understandings of our racial problems. Each view is written in the voice of someone who supports that position. The viewpoints are not presented as truths; rather, they are provided as a starting point for this discussion. Other viewpoints are likely to emerge as the dialogue unfolds. As you sift through the views, remember to give a fair hearing to the ideas that arise.

#### **Note to the host:**

As you think about how to use the time available, remember that the viewpoints are the heart of this discussion. To structure a two-hour discussion, you might spend 20 to 30 minutes discussing the questions under Beginning the Discussion, 60 to 80 minutes discussing the viewpoints, and 20 to 30 minutes on the wrap-up questions. To help participants talk more about our perceptions of progress, this session also offers another set of questions at the end under For Further Discussion: How far have we really come? Some groups may decide to hold an extra session to address these questions.

#### **Beginning the Discussion**

1. Think back to what you learned in school about the history of race relations in this country. What made an impression on you? What do you think kids today should learn about the history of race relations?

2. As a group, use brainstorming to come up with some definitions for the following list of words: race, racism, institutional racism and reverse discrimination. As you define these words, be sure to give examples where you can.

#### **Looking at the Viewpoints**

3. Which one of the viewpoints comes closest to your own? Why? What other views would you add?
4. Imagine that you are in a conversation with a person who holds views that you oppose. What stories or personal experiences would you share to let that person know why you look at the issue the way you do?
5. Take a viewpoint that you disagree with, and try to make an argument in favor of it. What experiences, beliefs and values might lead a reasonable person to support the views that are different from your own?

#### **Note to the host:**

Before your group discusses the views, you may want to ask for volunteers to read each view aloud, or ask participants to read the views to themselves. As you go over the views, suggest that participants keep questions like these in mind:

- What might be important to someone who holds this view?
- What are the pros and cons of this view?

## ***Session Two Views: What is the nature of the problem?***

### **View 1:**

#### **History is at the root of the problem.**

According to this view certain groups of people were treated unjustly in the past, and the effects of that history are still with us today. For example, Native Americans and African Americans have never had a fair chance to get ahead. When Europeans arrived on this continent, they banished Native Americans from their lands. As a result, many Native Americans live in extreme poverty today. Think about how much our treatment of African Americans still affects us. Over a period of more than 300 years more than 250 years of slave labor, and 100 years of Jim Crow segregation, blacks suffered horrible abuses. Because of this history, the group as a whole is lagging behind. Today, it may be possible for some African Americans to get ahead, but it is unrealistic to expect everyone to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. Though people today are not directly responsible for what happened in the past, our history remains a source of pain, injury and conflict.

### **View 2:**

#### **The real problem is institutional racism.**

According to this view racism is firmly established in the institutions of our society. Power continues to be used in a way that favors whites and works against people of color. This happens in our businesses, agencies, government, the media, schools, the criminal justice system and more. This kind of institutional racism can be direct and intentional. For example, much of our housing was deliberately segregated on the basis of race. But institutional racism can also be indirect, unplanned and hidden, which makes it even harder to deal with. For example, when a supermarket closes a branch in a poor urban neighborhood where many people of color live, they no longer have access to basic, essential services. While there are laws against racial discrimination, there are no laws against closing a store. In all kinds of ways, American institutions continue to limit opportunities for people of color and treat them as second-class citizens. It has been this way for so long that white people don't even know how much the system favors them.

### **View 3:**

#### **The problem is that many people of color lack economic opportunity.**

According to this view our real problems with race often come down to unequal money, jobs and opportunities. Economic inequality makes our problems with race even worse. Some minorities have made economic progress, but there is still a long way to go. For example, people of color who are in the middle class still face barriers to advancement. And too many people of color live in poverty. Poor people in the cities, especially blacks and Latinos, live in an economic wasteland. They lack hope, good role models, good schools and good jobs. The collapse of the low-wage economy has wrecked neighborhood businesses and reduced the number of jobs for poor people who have few marketable skills. These people suffer the most from changes in our nation's economy, including the loss of manufacturing jobs. Without opportunities to get ahead, poor people in the cities are more likely to face other problems like drugs and violence, gangs, and teen pregnancy. It is too easy to think of race relations as a matter of getting along better. People who are born poor, and who are not white, just don't have the same chances to make a good life for themselves.

### **View 4:**

#### **The problem is that too many people of color are not taking advantage of the opportunities available to them.**

According to this view internalized racism keeps many minorities from moving forward. Many people of color feel defeated by their race before they even try to succeed as individuals. Lacking confidence, some minorities expect too little of themselves, that is, their ambitions are often modest compared to their abilities. Because of the self-doubt that racism has helped to create, others engage in certain kinds of behavior that get in the way of their success. For example, drug use and irresponsible sexual behavior make it very unlikely that some people will succeed in school or at work. Still others seem to have just given up because they see themselves as victims. In the worst cases, people of color try to use race to get special treatment, or they point to the country's history of race relations as a way of avoiding responsibility for their own actions. As long as people of color feel helpless or second-rate they won't have the confidence to seize opportunities to get ahead. For that reason, our country will continue to have problems that fall along racial lines.

### **View 5:**

#### **Separation and prejudice are still our major problems.**

According to this view many of our problems exist because people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds live separately. We may see each other at work, but our lives are still separate. We live in different parts of town, send our kids to different schools, attend different churches and socialize at different places. Because we do not really know each other, there is a knowledge gap, which is filled by images in the media. We cannot trust the media to show us what people are really like. Instead, what we usually see on television and in films are stereotypes: for example, the intelligent Asian student, the rough Latino gang member, the African American single mother on welfare or the empty-headed white. This only creates more prejudice. To make things even worse, we lack opportunities for people from different racial backgrounds to get to know each other. We also lack ways for diverse groups of people to work together on common problems. As long as we are strangers to each other, and don't see each other as part of the same community, our problems will continue.

### **View 6:**

#### **The problem is our lack of strong leadership.**

According to this view we lack leaders with real vision who can motivate and unify the many people who long for racial equality. Instead of uniting us, many of today's leaders tend to pull people of different racial and ethnic groups apart. Race continues to be a divisive issue because the loudest outcry about racism usually comes from public figures who talk about race just to stir up their audiences. Many white people are turned off by minority leaders who see racism in everything. Some powerful whites make racist remarks, which sicken people of color and make many whites feel ashamed. The bitterness on both sides threatens and alienates people who care about race issues. In the early days of the civil rights movement leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. brought people of different races together. Today, very few leaders are working to inspire those of us who are willing to work for equality and justice.

### **View 7:**

#### **The problem arises from blind imitation of the past and a lack of understanding of the oneness of the human race.**

According to this view race prejudice, America's most fundamental social problem, arises from unquestioned beliefs and attitudes rooted in centuries of inaccurate and incomplete

information. From its inception, the United States embraced a contradictory set of values – proclaiming devotion to equality and justice, while also enshrining slavery within the Constitution. The resulting legacy of racism has produced an unconscious and inherent sense of superiority among whites and suspicion among people of color that has made the divide between the two especially difficult to bridge. Like a silent disease that devastates society, racism affects everyone, whether they are aware of it or not. Much like the human body, our nation, as a whole, feels the consequences when any one part of it suffers. Unbiased investigation into truth, however, unfailingly reveals the oneness of the human race, a principle of life that all of the sciences confirm. The oneness of humanity is both a material fact and a spiritual principle that defines the ultimate goal of life on this planet.

### **Wrap-up Questions**

1. What is the nature of the problem with race in our community?
2. Over the years what events have had the biggest impact on racial and ethnic relations in your neighborhood? in the community as a whole?

### **In preparation for the next session, think about these questions:**

- What can we do to make progress in our community?
- When it comes to strategies to improve race relations and to eliminate racism, what sorts of proposals do you know about?
- Try to identify a broad range of possibilities. What are the pros and cons of the various approaches?

### **Evaluation of the Session**

Save about 5 minutes at the end of the session for participants to informally evaluate the session and provide any feedback that might help facilitate the next session.

**For Further Discussion:  
How far have we really come?**

The following series of questions is designed to help you consider each other's ideas about the progress we have made on race:

1. As a group examine this question: Over your lifetime, where have we seen progress in race relations? Make a list of signs of improvement.
2. Take some time to review your list. Consider the reasons behind the progress you point out; make a list of your ideas about why you think we have been able to make progress in these areas. Is individual action or personal commitment the reason? Have government actions or policies played a role? Have private institutions been important? What else may be at work?
3. Next, put together a list of signs that suggest we have not come as far as we might in improving race relations.
4. Review your list together and reflect on the reasons behind the lack of progress. Why haven't race relations progressed, or why have they stalled? Is individual responsibility the reason? Have government actions or policies played a role? Have private institutions been important? What else may be at work? Again, make a list of your ideas.
5. Compare the two lists. What picture of race relations comes into view?
6. What do we most need to work on in the country? In our community?
7. What signs would you need to see to be convinced that we are making real progress on race relations?

## Session Three

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### *Dealing with Race: What is the Nature of the Problem?*

Race is something we all deal with. Yet there is little consensus on what we should do about the racial problems we face. The goal of this session is to think and talk about possible directions for change.

The heart of this session is a range of viewpoints on how our society might address and make progress on race relations. The views invite you to consider a variety of approaches. Each is written in the voice of someone who supports that position. They are not presented as truths; rather, they are provided as a starting place for this discussion. Other perspectives are likely to emerge as the dialogue unfolds. As you sift through the views the most important thing is to give a fair hearing to the ideas that arise.

#### **Looking at the Viewpoints**

1. Does one of the viewpoints, or some combination of views, come closest to your own? Why? What life experiences or values inform your perspective?
2. What view(s) are most distant from your own? What experiences, beliefs and values might lead a reasonable person to support the views that are different from your own?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective?
4. What other viewpoints would you add to this discussion? What, if any, perspectives are missing?

#### **Note to the host:**

Before your group discusses the views, you may want to ask for volunteers to take turns reading each view aloud, or ask participants to read the views to themselves. As you go over the views, suggest that participants keep questions like these in mind:

- What might be important to someone who holds this view?
- What are the pros and cons of this view?

### ***Session Three Views: What should we do to make progress on race relations?***

#### **View 1:**

##### **We must fight prejudice and build interracial understanding.**

According to this view we must work to improve racial understanding, end prejudice and build solid relationships among people of different races. We need to be aware of the ways that race affects our lives. Whites should think about the kinds of discrimination minorities still face on a daily basis. Whites also need to recognize the many privileges they have just because they are white. For example, whites usually are not afraid that police will treat them unfairly just because of their skin color. People of color also have to play an active role in building bridges between the races. It's important for them to stay open-minded when white people reach out personally, in the workplace or in the community. All of us must speak out against prejudice or racism whenever we hear it or see it in action in our daily lives, among our friends, at work, or in public settings. Together we can end prejudice by looking hard at our ideas about race, by building relationships across racial lines and by refusing to tolerate racist behavior.

#### **View 2:**

##### **We need to work together on common projects.**

According to this view people of all different racial and ethnic groups need to work as a team to improve the community. While we should not underestimate our differences, we should not make too much of them either. If we work side by side on issues that matter to all of us, we can move beyond stereotypes and really learn to appreciate each other. A shared project – a park clean-up, for example – reminds us of the things we have in common. They show us that we can come together to make good things happen, and they remind us how much we need each other. Through neighborhood watch programs and community policing, we can help to reduce crime, get rid of drugs, and make families and business owners feel safer. Our ability to connect with each other, to build bridges across

color lines, is basic to solving the problems we share. When we work on issues of mutual concern, we are doing the kind of multiracial work this country needs.

#### **View 3:**

##### **We need to address institutional racism.**

According to this view we must confront the racism in our institutions, and promote fairness and equality. First, we need to identify and expose the racial bias that exists in many organizations. We should start training programs for people of all ages to make them more aware of racism and ready to resist it. But we have to change more than attitudes. We also have to find ways to change the policies and power structures in our society. We can try harder to hire and promote people of color so that they can share the power to make important decisions. And old-fashioned management styles should give way to newer approaches, which work better for diverse populations. Lastly, because racism helps to maintain the power and wealth of a few rich white people at the top, we should make our economic system work more fairly. If we want to destroy racism, we must look very carefully at our institutions, and make the needed changes at all levels.

#### **View 4:**

##### **We must overcome our doubts, stop thinking of ourselves as victims, and take responsibility for our own lives.**

According to this view we need to admit how internalized racism still affects us all, and we need to get past it. The best way to undo the effects of racism is through individual accomplishments. We will make real progress on race-related issues only when people of all races accept responsibility for their own lives and really strive to fulfill their potential. In the end we can promote racial equality by holding everyone to the same high standards in school, at work, everywhere. Only then will people of color feel truly confident in their abilities. We must think about what each person can do to solve our most pressing problems, such as crime and vandalism, babies being born out of wedlock, low academic achievement, drugs, and guns. We also need to talk about right and wrong. We should turn to our families and our faiths for moral guidance and positive examples.

Solutions to our race problems will be found in the way we lead our lives and the kinds of choices we make.

**View 5:**

**People of color need to find strength in their own values and traditions.**

According to this view people of color make the greatest strides when we band together and pool our resources. In the past, institutions rooted in our unique traditions have nurtured and empowered us. For example, the black church has been a great resource and inspiration for many African American leaders. In the future, we should strive to build cultural, political, social and economic institutions that appreciate and emphasize the richness of our own cultures. Decades of working, picketing and praying for improved race relations have taught us that trying to educate racist people is not the best use of our energy. We should put our energy and talents to work where they are needed and valued, and where they benefit our own people. We may need to set up our own schools and businesses, and develop a new power base, so we don't have to fight racism wherever we turn. This may mean having very little contact with whites. When we focus on our own communities we will draw strength from each other in a way that validates our heritages.

**View 6:**

**Whites and people of color must understand that no real change will come about without close association, fellowship and genuine friendship among diverse people.**

According to this view progress toward unity has been painfully slow and marked with repeated setbacks, in large part, because there are few opportunities for people of color and whites to cultivate genuine friendship. Because racism runs deep in American society, it cannot be overcome without conscious, persistent and sustained effort. Close association and the mutual regard it can produce are among the best means to banish prejudice. Rather than expect that unity will be established only after other problems have been solved, it is important to

understand that social development itself depends on good feeling and unity among all people. Such an attitude needs to be grounded in moral truth that all acknowledge and accept, which will breathe life into their common effort to live in harmony. People of color and whites share a responsibility to build a society in which the rights of all are respected and guaranteed. Indeed, when this is accomplished, it will not only prove beneficial for America's progress, but will be a significant step toward establishing peace in the world.

**Wrap-up Questions**

1. As you listened to others discuss what has shaped their views, what new insights and ideas did you gain?
2. What common concerns emerged in this discussion?
3. Which of the ideas raised here seem most promising? Why?
4. How do you think we can use the institutions in our communities (or in our country) to make progress on race relations? What can our families do? religious groups? our schools? our businesses? the media? the government?

**In preparation for the next session, think about these questions:**

- When it comes to race, what direction should our public policies take?
- What goals and values should shape our policies?
- What are the positive advantages and benefits of diversity?

**Evaluation of the Session**

Save about 5 minutes at the end of the session for participants to informally evaluate the session and provide any feedback that might help facilitate the next session.

## Session Four

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### *What kinds of public policies will help us deal with race relations?*

No one believes that the government alone has the answer to the race question. Still, almost every conversation about race relations comes around to public policies and their impact on us. Because policies affect race relations in our communities and our country, it is important to have a voice in determining their direction.

The purpose of this session is to begin a productive conversation on the general direction our public policies should take. What kinds of public policies will help us deal with race relations? This session presents a range of possible answers. The goal is not for participants to become experts in one particular policy area, such as affirmative action, or to agree on an answer. Instead, the goal is to examine the various views and learn from each other's ideas. Ultimately, this discussion will lay the groundwork for future actions we take and for our interactions with public officials at all levels.

#### **Looking at the Viewpoints**

1. Does one of the viewpoints, or some combination of views, come closest to your own? Why? What life experiences or values inform your perspective?
2. What view(s) are most distant from your own? What experiences, beliefs and values might lead a reasonable person to support the views that are different from your own?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective?
4. What other kinds of policies would help us to reduce racism and improve race relations? What, if any, perspectives are missing?
5. What proposals would you like to see policy-makers concentrate on? Why?

#### **Note to the host:**

Before your group discusses the views, you may want to ask for volunteers to read each view aloud, or ask participants to read the views to themselves. As you go over the views, suggest that participants keep questions like these in mind:

- What might be important to someone who holds this view?
- What are the pros and cons of this view?
- What kinds of public policies will help us deal with race relations?

***Session Four Views: What kinds of public policies will help us deal with race relations?***

**View 1:**

**Government should limit its efforts to enforcing laws against discrimination.**

According to this view the government's only obligation is to make sure that individuals of all races have a fair chance to compete for jobs, promotions, and admission to schools. It should not mandate preferences based on race because that is a form of discrimination. Even when preferential treatment is motivated by good intentions, it goes against our principles of fair play. Policies like affirmative action, which strive for equal results rather than equal opportunity, have gone too far. But there is an important role for government: enforcing the existing laws against racial discrimination. We already have good anti-discrimination laws that apply to housing, schools, jobs and bank lending. These laws need to be better enforced. We should improve the government agencies that deal with discrimination, so that they can investigate complaints quickly and efficiently. By making sure the rules of the game are truly the same for everyone, regardless of race, the government will do a great deal to promote racial equality.

**View 2:**

**We still need public policies that take race into account.**

According to this view race still needs to be a deciding factor in our public policies. First, we need to make racial equality a primary goal of public policies in all areas: education, jobs, housing, health care, transportation and more. Second, we need policies that take race into account for hiring, school admissions, housing and government contracts. By leveling the playing field, these policies help us deal with our long history of oppression and with current-day discrimination. Affirmative action, for instance, is moving us in the right direction. It has enabled minorities and women to make big gains. It has encouraged people to try harder to find qualified minorities, and it has provided opportunities for talented people to work to reach their potential. But 30 years of that policy

is just a beginning; white men have been given preference in education, employment and property ownership for hundreds of years. Until our country becomes a place where race doesn't affect a person's chances for success, we will need to take race into account in our public policies.

**View 3:**

**We need public policies that will jump-start our urban economies.**

According to this view we need public policies that create more opportunities for people who are truly disadvantaged. In the middle and upper classes there are many opportunities for people of all races to get ahead. But many minorities are trapped in poor urban communities where economic opportunities are scarce. Because of this, our policies need to move beyond affirmative action, which usually helps people who are already in a good position to make it on their own. Today, government should find creative ways to jump-start the inner city economy and create job markets that would employ the people who live there. We should reduce red tape and offer big tax breaks to people who are willing to invest in poor neighborhoods. State and city governments should make it easier to start and run small businesses. If there are ways for people to provide for themselves, the government won't have to play that role. And, with better job prospects, young people will not be drawn to illegal markets such as the drug trade. We are striving for communities built on the spirit of individual achievement where race is not a determining factor. To get there, we need policies that make hard work pay off in every community.

**View 4:**

**We should make reparations to African Americans for slavery.**

According to this view our government has never acknowledged how wrong it was to legalize and condone slavery for so many years. We cannot put a Band-Aid on the deep wounds that are the source of today's racial inequality. In fact, an apology for slavery should be just a beginning. Slavery and its effects must be acknowledged and paid for. This could take the form of payments to descendants of slaves, such

as free college education for several generations. We have done this sort of thing before. For example, the U.S. government apologized to Japanese Americans who were interned in camps during World War II, and paid reparations to them and their families. Making amends for past injustices is also important to other racial and ethnic groups, including Native Americans. Until we make amends to African Americans, we cannot make real progress in race relations. We can only make progress if we pay our debts.

**View 5:**

**We should review our policies for the racist assumptions they contain and take that racism out.**

According to this view we should carefully examine our public policies, since many of them contain racist assumptions that we don't even notice. We must look at all kinds of policies, not just the ones that are specifically about race. Policies related to criminal justice, transportation, the environment and education all need changes. In the criminal justice system, for example, people of color do not receive equal protection under the law. Blacks and Hispanics receive much tougher sentencing than whites, for the same crimes. In addition, race is often a main reason that police become suspicious of someone; it is still legal to stop a person based on the color of his/her skin, because that person fits the profile of someone who would violate the law. And there is racial bias in how the death penalty is applied; we are, for instance, much more likely to execute people if their victims are white than if their victims are black. As for environmental policies, toxic sites are more likely to be located in areas where many people of color live. We should start an education campaign to let people know that these sorts of biases exist. Our biggest task will be to create fair, non-racist policies that we can all support.

**View 6:**

**We need policies that address social and economic inequality.**

According to this view we need to deal with economic insecurity, if we want to reduce racism. When people of any race are worried about keeping a good job, they are more likely to resent or scapegoat people from other racial groups. Across the board Americans worry about unemployment, job security, rising medical and housing costs, the quality of public education and more. Our public policies need to address the serious economic gaps in our society, and help people understand and cope with a global economy. We should invest in public education, build affordable housing, provide universal access to good health care and child care, as well as access to pre-school and after-school programs. Public works projects would be a great way to provide good jobs to low-skilled workers. We should also set up job training programs, based on need. These kinds of programs would benefit all of us, but they would especially help poor minorities. By making investments in all people, we will be able to make racial progress over the long haul.

**View 7:**

**The most useful policies will be those that help break down the invisible barriers that keep whites and people of color apart.**

According to this view the solution to racial prejudice ultimately rests on the common recognition of the oneness of humankind, and education is key in this process. While governmental and institutional support is essential, it is a change of heart and perspective in individual lives that will go farthest toward establishing true unity in America. In order to succeed, all people require a sense of dignity derived from a genuine regard by others for their stature as human beings. No economic or political plan can take the place of this essential human need, nor can businesses, schools or even governments provide it in isolation from the supportive attitude of society as a whole. In this regard, education is the shortest route out of prejudice. A national program of education that emphasizes the values of acceptance, appreciation for differences, and respect for all people would be an important step toward the elimination of racism. It should include a

historical perspective of the progress of whites and people of color. This would be enhanced by policies that actively support and provide opportunities for diverse Americans to get to know one another.

### Wrap-up Questions

1. What new insights or ideas have you gained from this discussion that might help you in the future? What areas of common concern have emerged during this conversation?
2. What other policy areas are important when it comes to race issues?
3. Which themes or concerns raised in this discussion also apply to local policy issues?
4. What direction should our local policies take? What key values should shape these policies?

### In preparation for the next session, think about these questions:

- What kinds of concrete steps can you take in your everyday life by yourself and with others to improve race relations in your community?
- What do you think is most needed in this community?

### For Further Discussion: Our values and our policies

Many people, even if they disagree about specific policy proposals, use the same terms to talk about the goals of our policies. The items in the box are expressed using some of those terms. Is this the list you would make? What would you add?

### How would you answer the following questions?

1. If you were going to shape a public policy, where would you start? What would your goals be? Why?
2. What do the items in the box mean to you? What values do you want race policies to promote?

3. What personal experiences, values or information shape your ideas?
4. How attainable are your goals today? What stands in the way of reaching these goals?
5. What sorts of current or past policies for workplaces, schools or governmental agencies do you know of that do a good job of supporting the values that are important to you?
6. When our values conflict, which ones should take priority? How would you set priorities for what we should do?
7. What areas of common ground seem evident in your group? What sorts of guidelines would you recommend to policy-makers?

### Our race policies should ...

- Strive for fairness.
- Promote equal opportunity.
- Lead to the full inclusion of persons of color.
- Create a more compassionate society.
- Inspire responsibility.
- Promote diversity.
- Protect our freedom.
- Make up for past injuries.
- Promote core American values.
- Ensure equal justice for all.

### Evaluation of the Session

Save about 5 minutes at the end of the session for participants to informally evaluate the session and provide any feedback that might help facilitate the next session.

## Session Five

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### *Moving from Words to Action*

The next step, which is most crucial and is the focus of this final session, is moving from words to action.

1. As facilitator of the Neighborhood Conversation on Race read or ask the group the following question:

*How can we move from words to action to promote race unity in our individual lives and in our community?*

2. Next ask the group to recall what you covered in the previous sessions. With the help of the participants, summarize the key points and themes that emerged in the earlier sessions. Post the main points on a flip chart or chalkboard for all to see, or ask a recorder to keep careful notes.
3. Then start a brainstorming session using questions 1-3 in the section “*Looking at the Action Ideas and Examples*” below. Ask participants to think of action steps on three levels: steps that could be taken by individuals, small groups and institutions. Ask the group to generate ideas for each category, and record them word for word on paper. Don’t stop to evaluate or judge the ideas at this point; the goal of brainstorming is simply to generate ideas.
4. When you are done you will have three lists. Revisit the lists one at a time. Help participants hone in on a few favorites. The bullet points in question 1 below can help to focus the discussion.

### **Looking at the Action Ideas and Examples**

For the following questions think of action steps on three levels – that is, actions that you can take as individuals, in small groups and in institutions:

1. What two or three ideas seem most practical and useful?

- What would it take to turn these ideas into reality?
  - What resources are already in place that could help us move ahead?
  - What else do we need to find out? What other groups should we link up with?
2. The struggle to improve race relations has a long history in this country. How has change come about? That is, what strategies and actions were most helpful in the past? What kinds of efforts are needed? Why?
  3. What current efforts in our community are helping people and institutions to work on race? Share stories or projects you know about. Are those efforts working? Why or why not? How can we join or build on the effective efforts that are already underway? What else can we do?

Finally, have the group decide if there are group actions that some or all of them would like to take as a group and, if so, decide on a time and place to pursue the idea(s). Also ask the participants to enter their action in the “Outcomes” section of the evaluation form in the back of the handbook.

Remember that all decisions to act are voluntary. People are likely to choose a wide variety of paths – from education and personal growth to strategic collective action. The important thing is to give participants a chance to reach out, in their own way, and to realize that they are an integral part of resolving issues of race in society.

### **Note to the host:**

In this session participants fulfill the process of deliberation. Your job is to help them find ways to connect their discussions with specific action strategies. **Refer the participants to the Ideas for Individual and Group Action on page 33 as a resource for their brainstorming.**

***Evaluation to End the Neighborhood Conversation on Race***

Save about 20 minutes at the end of the final session for participants to talk about what their participation in the Neighborhood Conversation on Race has meant to them. It is important for participants to have a chance to look back to assess how they've been affected by the dialogue, and to hear how the program has influenced other participants.

You are encouraged to use the evaluation forms at the back of this handbook to help participants record and evaluate their participation in these conversations. This information will also help in revising future editions of this handbook.

Please make copies of the evaluation form found at the back of the Handbook for each participant.

Mail the evaluations to:

**Neighborhood Conversation on Race  
NCCJ  
38 Chauncey Street, Suite 812  
Boston, Ma. 02111**

## Ideas for Individual and Group Actions

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### **Build interracial relationships.**

- Become a METCO Host Parent (METCO is a voluntary bussing program that brings students from Boston to suburban towns to school).
- Volunteer to serve at centers that offer support to new immigrants such as the Tahireh Peace Institute for Women and Children (617-695-3500, Ext 4), One With One, PO Box 3540, Brighton, Ma. 02135 [OnewtihOne@aol.com](mailto:OnewtihOne@aol.com) (617-254-1691).
- Regularly visit or join a church community whose cultural background is different from your own.
- Patronize businesses that are owned by minorities.
- Buy and display the work of minority artist in your home.
- Subscribe to minority-oriented publications to gain a perspective on issues and concerns in the minority communities
- Organize/participate in Race Unity Day ([www.raceunityday.org](http://www.raceunityday.org))
- Suggest to your employer that Conversations on Race, Mosaic Partnerships or other activities be started at your workplace. (Contact: [Pevueinc@aol.com](mailto:Pevueinc@aol.com))
- Encourage your children to develop friendships with children from other backgrounds.
- Be a mentor to young people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds.
- Patronize businesses that have diverse staff.
- Welcome new neighbors, and seek opportunities to meet newcomers in the

community. Reach out, especially if they are from a different background than yours.

- Attend an event in support of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

### **Learn more about race and race relations.**

- Take a class on race or on the history of race relations in the United States. Check out reading and video resources in your library and watch television programs such as those found on the History Channel and public television.
- Attend concerts, plays and museum exhibits that relate to the themes of race relations.
- Listen to and share stories about personal and family histories that are related to the history of race relations in our country.
- Seek out information about race relations in your community and in the country. Check the facts. What do you know about the racial makeup of your community? Do your perceptions match the facts?

### **Pay attention to politics in your community. Take leadership on race relations.**

- Approach local officials and encourage them to annually issue a proclamation for Race Unity Day.
- Speak up when people take positions that work against racial understanding and communication.
- Find out about your representatives in government. Are your representatives responsible leaders on race issues?
- Vote, and encourage others to vote. As elections near volunteer to work on voter registration drives or work to get out the vote.

## Historical Fact Sheet

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In developing Neighborhood Conversations on Race, the adage, “knowing where we come from helps us get where we’re going,” certainly applies. The following timetable lists some historic events that have influenced our collective national thinking about race.

<b>1502</b>	Portugal delivered first African slaves to Western Hemisphere.	<b>1782-1783</b>	20,000 black troops, four times the number in the American army, left with the British after the Revolutionary War seeking freedom in England, Jamaica and Nova Scotia – the first stirrings of the underground railroad.
<b>1526</b>	First successful slave revolt in North America. Imported black slaves liberated themselves from their Spanish owners in the territory that was to become South Carolina, and they fled to live among the native people.	<b>1804</b>	Ohio passed the first of a succession of Northern Black Laws. The constitutions of Illinois, Indiana and Oregon barred black settlers.
<b>1641</b>	Massachusetts was the first colony to legalize slavery.	<b>1808</b>	U.S. Congress prohibits the importation of slaves; the importation continued illegally, however.
<b>1643</b>	New England Confederation laid the foundation for future fugitive slave laws by requiring the return of runaway slaves to their owners.	<b>1821</b>	Liberia was founded by the American Colonization Society to remove African Americans from the United States. Its capital, Monrovia, was named for President James Monroe.
<b>1700s</b>	The international slave trade was the most profitable enterprise in the world during the 18th century. England, France, Holland, Portugal and Spain were the financial and industrial centers of the world, all directly responsible for the African slave trade and slave labor in the Americas.	<b>1825-1860</b>	The Underground Railroad coordinated an escape system of hundreds of safe “stations” to help escaping slaves reach Canada and Mexico.
<b>1773-1779</b>	African slaves in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Connecticut petition for their freedom and for an end to slavery.	<b>1829</b>	Georgia prohibited the education of slaves and free blacks; other southern states enacted similar laws, including laws to prohibit the sale or gift of books or pamphlets to blacks.
<b>1776</b>	The Declaration of Independence was signed – half of the signers were slave owners, including Thomas Jefferson. George Washington and Patrick Henry (“Give me liberty or give me death”) were among those founding fathers who did not free their slaves.	<b>1839</b>	Amistad became one of the most renown slave mutinies. Based on their religious convictions, abolitionists organized the necessary material and legal assistance to win their freedom.
<b>1777</b>	Vermont was the first state to abolish slavery.		

- 1859** Abolitionist John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry. First major armed uprising against slavery by a white American.
- 1860-1895** One out of four cowboys were black during the western expansion.
- 1861-1865** The Civil War was fought between the Northern and Southern United States.
- 1865** The 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution ended slavery.
- 1865** President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth while attending a play in Washington, D.C.
- 1866** The African American Ninth and Tenth Cavalry Regiments, called the Buffalo Soldiers, were organized from the remnants of African American units who served in the Civil War. Commanded by white officers, their service on the Great Plains for over 20 years was invaluable and largely unrecognized in the taming and settlement of the West.
- 1867** The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) was founded at a meeting at the Maxwell House Hotel in Nashville by a group of Southern businessmen, formerly Confederate officers, clergymen and other prominent citizens. Nathan Bedford Forrest, a former slave trader and Confederate Commander was elected as its first president.
- 1867-1877** During the period known as Reconstruction, the federal government sent army troops into the South to protect the rights of newly freed African Americans after the Civil War. The Freedman's Bureau, considered the first welfare agency, provided food, shelter, and medical assistance, and established schools for newly freed slaves.
- 1877** Rutherford B. Hayes became president. Due to a dispute over electoral votes in the 1876 election, a political deal was struck in which Democrats agreed to vote in favor of Hayes as president, if he would agree to remove federal troops from the South and allow home rule. The removal of the federal troops ended the protection of African Americans in the South, essentially ended Reconstruction, and opened the door for the proliferation of Jim Crow laws.
- 1896** Plessy v. Ferguson legalized the doctrine of "separate but equal," marking the beginning of Jim Crow laws and the acceptance of overt racist behavior by allowing white superiority to be institutionalized throughout the United States.
- 1909** The NAACP was formed, an interracial organization dedicated to challenging Jim Crow laws and practices. The Legal Defense team was led by Thurgood Marshall throughout the 1930s and 1950s, including the landmark case of Brown v. Board of Education.
- 1919** Called "The Red Summer," there were twenty-six race riots in this year with many deaths and injuries, and some black communities destroyed by white mobs. Seventy-six blacks were reported lynched this year (the number had varied between 36 and 161 lynchings per year since 1882).
- 1939** First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt resigned from Daughters of the American Revolution in protest of that organization's refusal to allow world renowned African American opera soprano, Marian Anderson, to sing in Constitution Hall. Ms. Anderson was subsequently invited to sing at the Lincoln Memorial.

- 1948 President Truman's Executive Order No. 9981 required the "equal treatment and opportunity" for black men and women in the armed forces. Two years earlier, the NAACP had deplored the "blow-torch killing and eye-gouging" of Negro veterans freshly returned from a war to end torture and racial extermination, saying that American Negroes were disillusioned after "all the flamboyant promises of post-war democracy and decency."
- 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education in Kansas* overturned the "separate but equal" doctrine. After this courtroom victory, ongoing nonviolent struggles rapidly gained momentum. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. brought the black church into the movement and into the streets to begin the modern civil rights movement.
- 1955 Emmett Till, a black teenager, was brutally murdered in Mississippi for allegedly whistling at a white woman. This further stimulated organized protest by African Americans against widespread oppression and abuse of blacks. Till's swollen, mutilated body was displayed in an open casket funeral by his mother.
- 1961 The 23rd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution granted residents (predominantly black) of the District of Columbia the right to vote in presidential elections.
- 1965 On February 21, Malcolm X was assassinated at 3:10 P.M., just after he had begun to address an OAAU rally at the Audubon Ballroom. Malcolm was pronounced DOA at Vanderbilt Clinic, Columbia Presbyterian Hospital.
- 1964 A civil rights team of an African American, a Jew, and a white Christian – Chaney, Schwerner and Goodman – were murdered by white racists and buried in an earthen dam in Mississippi.
- 1964 The 24th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, followed by the Voting Rights Act of 1965, removed "qualifications" that prohibited blacks from voting in some states.
- 1965 President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, which authorized the President to send federal examiners into the South to register voters. The Act prevented literacy tests and other forms of unanswerable questions formerly used by Southern registrars to prevent African Americans from voting.
- 1965 President Lyndon Johnson signed Executive Order 11246, which required federal contractors "to take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed without regard to their race, creed or national origin."
- 1968 On April 3, Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his last speech, "I've Been to the Mountaintop." On April 4, he was shot and killed at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, TN.
- 1968 The Kerner Report was released by a federal government commission, which investigated the urban riots that had recently occurred in Harlem, Watts, Chicago, Newark and Detroit. The report warned that the United States was "moving toward two societies, one black one white... separate and unequal."
- 1978 The U.S. Supreme Court handed down its decision in the case of the University of California at Davis Regents vs. Allan Bakke. Bakke, who was white, sued the medical school on grounds that he was denied admission, because the school had a quota system for minority applicants. The Court ruling struck down

- quotas in college admissions, while allowing that race could be one of several factors taken into consideration in screening college applicants.
- 1990** Nelson Mandela was released from Robben Island Prison after serving 27 years of a life sentence. He went on to become President of South Africa in 1994.
- 1990** According to the 1990 Census, Mississippi (35.56) and Louisiana (30.79) had the largest black populations among twelve states with more than 15%. The District of Columbia had 65.84% black. Montana (.30) and Idaho (.33) had the smallest black populations among ten states, with less than 1%.
- 1991** Black motorist Rodney King was viciously beaten by police. The incident was captured on home video and broadcast nationally.
- 1992** White police who conducted the Rodney King beating were acquitted. This set off rebellion, protest, and riots by African Americans and Hispanics in Los Angeles, CA. During the upheaval a white truck driver was savagely beaten by a group of African Americans, but he was rescued by several other neighborhood African Americans.
- 1997** President Bill Clinton issued a call for a national dialogue on race.
- 1998** Ordinary citizens began organizing neighborhood conversations on race unity. Town-wide dialogues had been initiated some three years prior.
- 2000** U.S. Congress passed a joint resolution establishing the "Day of Honor," recognizing the achievements of minorities in the military during World War II.
- 2003** The U.S. Supreme Court handed down its decision in the University of Michigan Affirmative Action Case. While barring mechanical formulas that include race, the court nevertheless endorsed the concept of affirmative action in college admissions.

## Scientific Fact Sheet

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America is obsessed with the notion of the existence of separate “races” and confused by its implications. Thanks to spectacular advances in many branches of science, such as molecular biology, genetics, anthropology and physiology, most scientists regard the Oneness of Humanity as a scientific reality and they offer convincing proofs for the basis of this principle.

Changing our thinking about “race” requires a revolution in thought as profound and unsettling as anything science has ever demanded. The following information serves as an impetus for a major paradigm shift in how we internalize and promote the truth of the Oneness of Humanity.

### 1. What is *race*?

The origin of the word *race* is unclear. Some trace it to the Latin *radix*, meaning “root” or “stock,” and some others trace it to the Italian *razza*, which means “breed” or “lineage.” It is used to designate any aggregate of people that can be identified as a group. According to this usage, persons who have a common ancestry or who share common beliefs or values, or any social or cultural traits, are considered a “race.”

By its definition, the word *race* is divisive. The term attempts to classify subspecies of human beings according to:

- physical characteristics such as skin color, hair texture, shape of eyes,
- psychological and behavioral traits that are made to associate with these superficial characteristics, and
- superior or inferior status is attributed to these traits.

### 2. When was mention of *races* as separate biological groups first made?

Human beings have always come in a variety of hues and statures. The ancient Egyptians, Vikings and Chinese, while fighting and conquering in every corner of the globe, never thought that the people they encountered were biologically different. For most of recorded history, the idea of “race” did not exist. This idea entered the social and scientific consciousness during the Age of Exploration and the “discovery of the New World.” Before Europeans took to the seas there was no mention of race.

The habit of sorting the world’s people into distinct groups was first introduced by Swedish taxonomist Carolus Linnaeus, who in 1758 declared that the human species was divided into four basic groups. Later, German anatomist and naturalist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach added an additional category and then redefined all five groups based on geography and appearance, with his category, the “Caucasians,” at the top of the hierarchy of worth (based oddly enough upon perceived beauty), and the “Negroid” at the bottom. These doctrines of racial superiority were then used to justify the expansion and colonization of Africa, Asia and the Americas. The Europeans further developed racist thought in order to establish and maintain slavery, especially in the Americas. German Nazis took modern racism to the extreme in the mid-twentieth century with the Jewish Holocaust.

*“[The] roots and growth of [a ranked hierarchy of races] lie in nothing more “real” than the conquest, dispossession, enforced transportation and economic exploitation of human beings over five centuries that racial categorization and racist social ordering have served to expedite and justify. As part of [this] legacy ... millions of people today continue to accept inherited racial categories as fixed in nature.”*

(from *Race*, by Roger Sanjek, professor of anthropology, Queens College)

*“Prior to the sixteenth century, the world was not race-conscious and there was no incentive for it to become so. The ancient world was a small world ... and physical differences ... were not very marked. ... Even when the existence of such physical differences was recognized, they had no*

*immediate social connotations. ... It was only with the discovery of the New World and the sea routes to Asia that race assumed a social significance. Even the Crusades failed to make Europe race-conscious. ... Europeans have not been content merely to accept their present social and political dominance as an established fact. Almost from the very first, they have attempted to rationalize ... and prove to themselves that their subjugation of other racial groups was natural and inevitable."*

(from *The Study of Man*,  
by Ralph Linton, anthropologist)

### 3. Do scientists now consider race a fact?

Almost all branches of science officially stopped dividing people into races in the mid-1930s. Every day since, scientists have been trying to undo racism that has been perpetuated using five-centuries-old outdated scientific methods and doctrines. For example, in 1952, anthropologist Ashley Montagu called race "man's most dangerous myth."

The genetic markers that supposedly divide the human species into races represent only a minute fraction of our total genetic endowment. No matter how one tries to divide humanity, many do not fit into any one category, because extensive migration and intermixing of people has occurred, causing genetic material to pass between widely separated human populations.

*"Race has no basic biological reality."*

(Jonathan Marks, biologist, Yale University)

*"Misconceptions about race have led to forms of racism that have caused much social, psychological and physical harm. These misconceptions have their origin in various papers and books that depend heavily on old and outmoded biological concepts of race."*

(Leonard Lieberman, anthropologist,  
Central Michigan University)

*"... differentiating species into biologically defined 'races' has proven meaningless and unscientific as a way of explaining variation, whether in intelligence or other traits."*

(Statement of the American  
Anthropological Association)

*"Vast new data in human biology, prehistory and paleontology ... have completely revamped the traditional notions [of race]."*

(Solomon Katz, anthropologist,  
University of Pennsylvania)

*"Race' is a social construct derived mainly from perceptions conditioned by events of recorded history, and it has no basic biological reality."*

(C. Loring Brace, biological anthropologist,  
University of Michigan)

*"We the researchers are taking action to correct a legacy of misconception about the biology of race in which earlier generations of researchers provided the raw material for serious claims of racial superiority. They liked to concoct a biological basis for mistreating people."*

(John Ladd, anthropologist, Brown University)

*"Racism can be viewed solely as a social problem, although at times it has been used by politicians as a purportedly 'scientific' tool. It is an emotional phenomenon best explained in terms of collective psychology. Racial conflict results from long-suppressed resentments and hostilities. The racist responds to social stereotypes, not to known scientific facts."*

(from an anthropology textbook  
by William A. Haviland)

*"The concept of race, masking the overwhelming genetic similarity of all peoples and the mosaic patterns of variation that do not correspond to racial divisions, is not only socially dysfunctional but is biologically indefensible as well."*

(from *Evolutionary Biology*,  
by D. J. Futuyma)

#### 4. Does science agree with the principles of the Oneness of the Human Race and Unity in Diversity?

*"We are one species, one people. Every individual on this earth is a member of Homo sapiens, and the geographical variations we see among peoples are simply biological nuances on the basic theme. The often very deep differences between cultures should not be seen as divisions between people. Instead, cultures should be appreciated for what they really are: the ultimate declaration of belonging to the human species."*  
(Richard Leakey, renowned paleontologist)

Dr. Luigi Luca Cavalli-Sforza, a Stanford Medical School scholar and one of the world's leading geneticists, has compiled a definitive atlas (*History and Geography of Human Genes*) of the genetic profiles of over 1,800 population groups around the world. This work is the most comprehensive survey ever compiled of how humans vary hereditarily. In another one of his books, he states:

*"The difference between races are ... very limited. ... [T]he genes that react to climate are those that influence external features. ... It is because they are external that [they] strike us so forcibly, and we automatically assume that differences of similar magnitude exist below the surface. ... This is simply not so: the remainder of our genetic make-up hardly differs at all."*  
[Emphasis his.]

*"Since all human beings are of one species and since all populations tend to merge when they exist in contact, group differentiation will be based on cultural behavior and not on genetic differences."*  
(from *The Biology of Race*, by James King)

*"We must remember that what unifies us outweighs what makes us different. Skin color and body shape, language and culture, are all that differentiate the peoples scattered across the earth. This variety, which testifies to our ability to accept change, adapt to new environments and evolve new lifestyles, is the best guarantee of a*

*future for the human race. ... This diversity, like the changing face of the sea or sky, is minute compared with the infinite legacy we human beings possess in common."*

(from *The Great Human Diasporas*,  
by Francesco Cavalli-Sforza)

*"All members of the species Homo sapiens are related by common ancestral roots. ... [T]he biological oneness of the human species does not mean genetic uniformity. Genetic variation among members of the same species is a healthy and necessary condition of life. Adaptation, evolution and survival depend on these variations."*

(Shidan Lotfi, molecular and cellular biologist)

#### 5. According to current scientific findings, what is the origin of modern man?

*"Most scientists have come to accept the evolutionary theory based on DNA evidence: that modern humans originated in Africa about 270,000 years ago. Researchers at Yale, Harvard, and the University of Chicago have traced the genetic roots of the human family ... to the existence of an 'African Eve.'"*

(*Journal of Science*, October 1996)

*"Among the peoples of various continents, Africans have been shown to be by far the most heterogeneous group. It is reasonable to expect that the oldest population will display the greatest diversity."*

(from *The Great Human Diasporas*,  
by Luca Luigi Cavalli-Sforza)

*"All humans appear to have had a 'black' [African] ancestry, no matter how 'white' some may be today."*

(from an anthropology text  
by William A. Haviland)

#### 6. How does science explain human variation, that is, differences such as skin color or height?

Anthropologists attribute our superficial physical traits or phenotypes to adaptation to different

environments, such as temperature, humidity, proximity to the equator, wind and many other factors. This is what is referred to as *natural selection*. For example, Northern Europeans have developed long, narrow noses to warm extremely cold, damp air to their body temperature; whereas the larger, long noses of Middle Easterners and Northern Africans have evolved from moistening the dry air before it reaches their lungs. Eskimos generally have more rounded and squat bodies as an adaptation to cold climates, so they can retain body heat, and the Tutsi of Rwanda are the tallest of human species because they inhabit regions of intense, arid heat and consequently need to dissipate heat more effectively.

Human skin owes its color to the presence of melanin, whose primary function is to protect the upper layers of the skin from such hazards as radiation, infections and skin cancers. The particular color of a person's skin represents a tradeoff between the hazards of too much vs. too little solar radiation; for example, skin cancer on the one hand, and rickets and osteomalacia on the other. The genes of our primitive ancestors were programmed to produce dark skin. The group of Africans who later migrated north into Europe, by a flip of the genetic dice, developed a variant gene that gave them slightly lighter skin. The trend continued for generation after generation, eventually producing other fair-skinned people, such as the Swedes.

Little evidence exists that visible differences have practical advantages. These differences have arisen simply because we are a restless, adventurous, hopeful, migratory species whose intelligence and quest for survival have allowed us to survive in almost every corner of the globe.

*"Skin color genes are turned off and on very quickly in evolution. People can go from black to white, or white to black, in 10,000 years."*  
(Jonathan Moore, Chairman of the Department of Anthropology, University of Florida)

### **7. Does blood have anything to do with our color?**

No. The four blood types (A, B, AB and O) are universal and found in all human populations. An Irishman with Type A blood can receive and give blood to a Ugandan of the same blood type. Blood has nothing to do with the transmission of hereditary material. Therefore, it makes no sense to describe a person's ancestry in terms of blood; for example, saying that someone has one-fourth Indian "blood" has no meaning based on fact.

### **8. Do certain population groups possess superior intelligence?**

No. Intelligence Quotient (IQ) Tests meant to measure inherited mental capacity are so seriously limited that comparing average IQs for various "racial" groups is an erroneous practice and is being discounted as an unreliable indication of a person's ability to learn. Evidence for the intellectual superiority of different population groups (the Bell Curve study) is based on inadequate and culturally biased measures of intelligence, as well as a failure to account for the fact that the children in question grew up in different environments. The few studies performed in which children of different ethnic backgrounds grew up in similar environments revealed *no* differences in their level of intelligence.

*"The attempt to measure 'racial' differences in intelligence is impossible and, therefore, worthless."*

(Jerry Hirsch, behavioral geneticist,  
Washington University)

**9. The Oneness of Humankind is a scientifically established fact and a spiritual reality; science can no longer be used to justify racism.**

*"The oneness of humanity is a spiritual truth abundantly confirmed by science."  
(from *The Vision of Race Unity*, National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States)*

*"Make thine own self the measure of the others, and so abstain from causing hurt to them."  
Buddhism*

*"Do not to others what ye do not wish done to yourself; and wish for others, too, what ye desire and long for, for yourself."  
Hinduism*

*"None of you truly believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself."  
Islam*

*"Love thy neighbor as thyself."  
Judaism*

*"And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."  
Christianity*

*"...choose thou for thy neighbor that which thou choosest for thyself."  
Baha'i Faith*

*"Seek the realities underlying the oneness of the world of humanity and discover the source of fellowship and agreement which will unite mankind in the heavenly bond of love."  
Baha'i Faith*

*"For God has made from one blood all the people of the earth." (Acts 17.26)  
Christianity*

Researched and compiled by Dr. Hoda Hosseini, e-mail: [shh@interpoint.net](mailto:shh@interpoint.net).

## Bibliography on Racism and Race Relations in America

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*Editor's note:* This bibliography offers a sampling of available works on the topic of race in the United States. This list was selected primarily from recent works to reflect aspects of the current national dialogue. In addition, many of these sources were very helpful to us as we developed this handbook.

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### Videos

#### "The Power of Race Unity"

30 minute program. Individuals are profiled who are engaged in promoting race unity in their lives. A 13-year-old middle school student in South Carolina, a college professor at Michigan State University and a country and western singer discuss how they seek to bridge the racial divide in their lives. \$10 includes shipping and handling. Race Unity Desk c/o PEVUE, Inc., 365 Boston Post Rd. #300, Sudbury, MA 01776.

#### "Hear Ye! Hear Ye! In Pursuit of a United America"

90 Minute, 3 part program. Panelists discuss the following topics: "Superiority and Suspicion: Walls that Divide Us"; "The Role of Education in Eliminating Race Prejudice"; "Visioning Race Unity"; "America in the Year 2020."

Panel includes: Elizabeth Bagdon, Attorney, Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education; Jessica Henderson Daniel, Ph.D., Psychologist, Children's Hospital and Judge Baker Children's Clinic; Rev. Ray A. Hammond, M.D., Chairman of Ten Point Coalition of Boston and Co-Pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church; Robert C. Henderson, Ed.D., Secretary-General, National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is of the United States; Peggy Macintosh, Ph.D., Co-Director, National SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity); Orlando Paterson, Ph.D., Sociologist, Harvard University; Leonard P. Zakim, Executive Director, New England Regional Office of the Anti-Defamation League. The video comes with a study guide for each of the three topics. \$10 includes shipping and handling.

Race Unity Desk c/o PEVUE, Inc., 365 Boston Post Rd. #300, Sudbury, MA 01776.

## Evaluation Form

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### *General*

Circle the comment which most closely describes your experience in the Neighborhood Conversation on Race.

1. Had you thought about conversing about race with anyone outside your family and close friends prior to being invited to this Neighborhood Conversation on Race? yes no
2. Number from 1 to 5, with 1 being the highest priority, the topics you think are the greatest importance to America's future.  
War Unemployment Race Relations Immigration  
Environment
3. Check all comments that most closely describe your experience at the Neighborhood Conversation on Race: It was not what I expected but I enjoyed it. It was not what expected and I did not gain from it. I learned from the experience.  
It has given me greater insight to issues of race. I am glad I attended. It has motivated me want to be more active in promoting race unity. I would likely attend similar events if invited.
4. After attending the Neighborhood Conversation on Race are you less likely or more likely to increase your activity related to issues of race and equity?  
less likely more likely don't know
5. How many sessions did you attend? One Two Three Four Five

### *Session Content*

1. What did you like best about the content of the sessions?
2. What would you suggest to improve the session content?

### *Outcomes for Participants and Hosts*

1. What actions or activities have these sessions inspired you to initiate personally?
2. What actions or activities have these sessions inspired you to initiate with others in your group?
3. How has participation in these sessions changed your views and ideas?

(continued on other side)

4. Did your group decide to take collective action? If yes, please briefly describe your plans.
5. Would you recommend to a relative or friend to attend a Neighborhood Conversation on Race if one were offered in her/his neighborhood? Circle One
- |                        |                                |                               |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1                      | 2                              | 3                             |
| Would not<br>recommend | would consider<br>recommending | would definitely<br>recommend |

***Feedback on the Handbook***

1. What did you like best about this handbook?
2. What suggestions do you have to improve the handbook?

***Your Comments***

Please add any further comments that you feel would be helpful feedback to others who will either host or participate in future conversations on race.

(Optional)  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail the evaluations to:**  
**Neighborhood Conversation on Race**  
**NCCJ**  
**38 Chauncey Street, Suite 812**  
**Boston, Ma. 02111**



