

RACIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY

The Changing Face of Britain & Ireland

13 September 2009

Resources for young people

"Who do you say I am?"

Mark 8:29



Liturgical resource suitable for using with young people

Greeting and introduction

Leader:

The Cross is salvation for all peoples and so we begin 'In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'.

All: Amen

Leader:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Leader:

Welcome to this service for Racial Justice Sunday celebrating 'The Changing Face of Britain and Ireland'. We are becoming more and more familiar with reports on racism from

all over the world and we are well aware that the urgency is real. We must act together to eradicate this evil that threatens our world. We must meet the obstacles on the way and though the journey is risky, we must go forward.

The face of racism looks different today than it did in the past. Overt racism is easily condemned, but the sin of racism is often with us in more subtle forms. This morning/ (evening) we gather in the love of God and neighbour to pray for forgiveness and conversion as we open our hearts and minds in prayer.

Drama for 9 readers:**The Story of the Rainbow (An Indian Legend)**

Narrator: Once upon a time, all the best colours in the world started to quarrel; each claimed that she was the best, the most important, the most useful, the favourite.

Green: Clearly I am the most important. I am the sign of life and hope. I was chosen for grass, trees, leaves – without me all the animals would die. Look out over the countryside and you will see I am in the majority.

Blue: You only think about the earth, but think about the sky and the blue sea. It is water that is the basis of life and this is drawn up to the clouds from the blue sea. The sky gives space and peace. Without my peace you would all be nothing but busybodies.

Yellow: You are all so serious. I bring laughter and warmth into the world. The sun is yellow, the moon is yellow, the stars are yellow. Every time you look at a sunflower the whole world starts to smile. Without me there would be no fun.

Orange: I am the colour of health and strength. I carry all the most important vitamins. Think carrots and pumpkins and mangoes. I don't hang around all the time, but when I fill the sky at sunrise and sunset, my beauty is so striking that no one gives another thought to you.

Red: I'm the ruler of you all, blood, life's blood. I am the colour of danger and bravery.

I am the colour of love – the red rose and the poppy.

Purple: I am the colour of royalty and power. Kings and chiefs have always chosen me for I am a sign of authority and richness.

Indigo: Think of me. I am the colour of silence. You hardly notice me, but without me you would all become meaningless. I represent thought and reflection, twilight and deep water. You need me for balance and contrast, for prayer and inner peace.

Narrator: And so the colours went on boasting, each convinced that they were the best. Their quarrelling became louder and louder. Suddenly there was a startling flash of lightening; thunder rolled and boomed. Rain started to pour down relentlessly. The colours all crouched down in fear, drawing close to one another for comfort.

Rain: You foolish colours, fighting among yourselves, each trying to dominate the rest. Do you not know that God made you all? He loves you all. He wants you all. Join hands with one another and come with me. He will stretch you across the sky in a great bow of colour, as a reminder that he loves you all, that you can live together in peace
A promise that he is with you.....
A sign of hope for tomorrow.

Narrator: And so whenever God has used good rain to wash the world, He puts the rainbow in the sky and when we see it let us remember to appreciate one another.

PRAYERS

Leader: Let us pray in silence

Now we say together:

Good and gracious God, you invite us to recognise and reverence your divine image and likeness in our neighbour. Enable us to see the reality of racism and free us to challenge and uproot it from our society, our world and ourselves.

We make our prayer through Jesus, our brother and our Lord,
Amen

Bible Readings and Reflection

Reader 1: A reading from the Acts of Apostles Chapter 10:34 – God Speaks

At the end of the reading

Reader 1: This is the Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

Reader 1: We must always keep before us our Christian belief that God has no favourites and that before God all are welcome to his feast.

Suggested Response Song: All are welcome, by Marty Haugen

Reader 2: A reading from the Gospel according to Luke Chapter 18:18 -25

At the end of the reading

Reader 2: This is the Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

Suggested Hymn: *I the Lord of Sea and Sky* or any other Reflection and Symbolic Action

Reader 3: Let us remember a world where the rich build ever bigger barns and banks and millions live in shanty towns and slums.

(Pause)

Reader 4: Let us remember a world where many eat and drink to excess and millions more simply long for clean water.

(Pause)

Reader 5: Let us remember a world where many join health clubs and millions long for basic health care.

(Pause)

Reader 6: Let us remember a world where many are stressed out with work and millions feel their labour is in vain or unwanted.

(Pause)

Reader 7: Let us remember a world where many are materially poor and yet spiritually rich, and millions are materially rich and yet spiritually poor.

(Pause)



Profession of Faith to Combat Racism

All:

We believe in one God who created the world, who will unite all things in Christ.

We believe in God the Son, who became human, died and rose again to reconcile all creation to God, to break down every barrier of race, culture or class and to unite all people into one body.

We believe in God the Spirit, who gives the Church power to love and serve people and to strive for justice and peace.

In the name of God:

We pledge to affirm the value of diversity.

We pledge to promote understanding, inclusion and mutual respect and build community with all ethnicities and cultures.

We pledge to work for justice and peace in our homes, in our school and in our community.

Amen

Leader: May Almighty God bless and protect us, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Reader: Recognise and love Jesus Christ in each person you meet. Serve him by committing yourself to work for true justice wherever your life takes you. Follow always the way that leads to respect, honesty and truth. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God

Adapted from Liturgy prepared for Racial Justice Week – St Joseph's Roman Catholic High School, Newport, South Wales, November 2007

Activity

Young People's Discussion

Young People... a conversation/story

** Setting...The young people in this church youth group were participating in their monthly youth meeting on a Sunday afternoon which includes a meal. Their ages range from 13 to 18 years and they attend a range of schools across 3 London boroughs. The backgrounds of these young people are West, East and South African; Afghan; Jamaican and English. On this particular occasion, February 22nd 2009, they were role playing and discussing various situations about sexism and racism. Out of this activity arose the following conversation:*

R (14 years).... "In my school there are so many gangs: a white gang, a black gang, an Asian gang called 'Asian Virus', an E17 gang and a gang where every member has to wear the latest model of trainer. Each gang bullies and intimidates others who are not like them. I just ignore them as far as I can".

S (17 years).... "In my area the gangs are not related to ethnicity or nationality so much but are to do with your post code or territory. These different gangs can have the same

ethnic groups as each other and often include a variety of ethnic groups but it is nearly always the black guys who get killed or who do the killing".

K (15 years).... "When my friend and I were walking home from school last week we watched a gang member from my school standing outside the Halifax, texting on his mobile phone. We knew what was going on. He was messaging his friend further down the high road to alert them to the fact that another group of boys were walking down that way and egging on his friends to set upon these kids".

E (15 years).... "I am friendly with a fellow Zimbabwean who has recently come to my school. I would like to get to know him better especially as he comes from my country but he seems to have attached himself loosely to one of the gangs, so I am afraid to be seen talking to him. If you are seen associating with certain gangs it could land you in trouble. I am so pleased to belong to a church youth group like this where you can talk freely without having to look over your shoulder all the time. I feel safe here and there are also adults here that I know I could talk to if I got into any problems".

Possible Activity.....

Young people could read this out in parts as a conversation and could respond to the following questions:

- a. In school or college situations what are the problems that can be experienced by
 - members of gangs?
 - all the other young people?
 Discuss feelings and fears.
- b. Discuss whether the gang members know and value who they are.
- c. Discuss whether the gang members know and value who the 'others' are.
- d. Gang culture has always been present in different ways in our society. Which factors relating to gang culture do you think are the same today and which factors are different?
- e. Has the 'changing face of Britain and Ireland' – that is, changes relating to which people have recently come to live here - affected gang culture and if so, how?
- f. Discuss your own experiences of young people in gangs.
- g. What is the role of the church in responding to this reality of gang culture?