



WHAT IS... RACE



DEFINITION:

WHAT IS 'RACE?' "Race is a social and political construct that creates and assigns people to different hierarchal racial groups and assigned racialized social identities," according to *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children & Ourselves* (Derman-Sparks, Edwards, and Goins, 2020).

Scientific and Christological consensus agree that the concept of race has no biological basis and that all humans are of one biological race. The minor physical differences among people have led to today's racial categories of people of African, Asian, European, Indigenous/Native, Latin American, Pacific Island/Native Hawaiian heritage.

Historically, however, the social and political idea of race—exacerbated by white Christianity and the notion of manifest destiny—became the center of systemic racism, which has justified European nations and the United States in killing, enslaving, exploiting, colonizing, and stealing land and resources from nonwhite people across the globe. This false concept of "superior" and "inferior" races continues today.



BIBLICAL/SPIRITUAL/THEOLOGICAL FRAMING OR REFERENCES:

BECAUSE WHITE SUPREMACY AND RACIST IDEALS CONTINUE to permeate our social, political, and economic systems, Black, Indigenous and People of Color, are still subjected to the notion that their ethnic and cultural practices and identities are "other." However, these groups are growing in self-determination and social power, and work with white allies to deconstruct racism. In this spirit, followers of Jesus Christ and the Christian church across the world work, praise, and worship in hundreds of different languages in myriad cultural contexts. Contemporary Christians assert—at least, in words—Galatians 3:26-29:

...in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourself in Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.



EXAMPLE(S):

EXAMPLES OF RACE INCLUDE:

An example of race to justify racial superiority is the historical treatment of Native/Indigenous people in the Americas by European explorers, beginning in the 15th century. These white voyagers to the Americas sought gold and other wealth-generating resources and land. Undergirded by the European Christian Church, these explorers dismissed the Native people they encountered as being less human than white people.

They further embraced the false church teaching that God had ordained Europeans' "dominion" over all other lands and people and used it to justify the destruction murder, colonization, financial and sexual exploitation of Indigenous people.

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REFLECTION:

QUESTION #1

What is your earliest memory of hearing a sermon or church-school lesson about race?



QUESTION #2

Which Bible verses inform your own understanding of race and how followers of Jesus should respond to personal and systemic racism?



QUESTION #3

What would members of your home church say to you if you testified in worship about confronting racism as an act of faith? If you wanted to marry a person of another racialized group?



QUESTION #4

Name and give thanks for three people in your life who have helped raise your awareness about the history of race and racism in your community, nation, and the world.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

FAITHFUL LENT: CONNECTING THE PRACTICES OF LENT & ANTIRACISM (FROM GCORR)

r2hub.org/library/lent-2022

MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RACE, FEATURING DR. DAVID ANDERSON HOOKER (FROM GCORR)

r2hub.org/library/meaningful-conversations-about-race-featuring-rev-dr-hooker

YOU ARE HERE: FIRST STEPS ON RACE AND RACISM FOR WHITE CHRISTIANS (FROM GCORR)

gcorr.teachable.com/p/youarehere