



**Lutheran  
Social Service**  
of Minnesota

# LEADER'S GUIDE

And Who  
Is My  
Neighbor?



Dear Leader:

Thank you for your willingness to lead this courageous conversation.

We encourage you to read the entire discussion guide of *And Who is My Neighbor?* and this Leader's Guide, so you can see where the discussion will be taking you before you begin.

Be prepared that a conversation on race is never easy and will bring out feelings of anger, hurt, guilt, shame, and perhaps hopelessness. It will be most helpful if you can just be with and acknowledge those feelings instead of trying to dismiss or change them, and encourage others to do the same. Having a pastor or counselor present would be helpful.

The written discussion guide *And Who is My Neighbor?* is not copyright protected and can be freely copied for your use and for participants to read. The video materials are available via the Internet links in this Leader's Guide.

The instructions for "The Race" – an experiential group exercise in Chapter 4 – are available in this Leader's Guide only and should not be shared with the group in advance to insure a fresh experience for them. Please read through the instructions in this Leader's Guide for "The Race" as well as the response that follows by Pastor Louise Britts of Messiah Lutheran Church who conducted the exercise for two churches in the Minneapolis area before conducting the exercise with your group. "The Race" is copyright protected and is used here by permission of the author. It should not be reproduced in any way without her permission, except that you may print one copy in order to conduct "The Race" with your group.

You may choose to use the materials in this guide in any order you like, but one format we suggest is to start each session with one of the 5-7-minute Video Resources to get people thinking and end it with a 5-7-minute Personal Video Story to bring the discussion to a close and give the group something to think about as they leave.

Blessings on your conversations, and remember why we are doing this:

"But wanting to justify himself, he [the lawyer] asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'"  
After the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus asked him, "'Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.'

Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'" Luke 10:29-37

# Video Resources

**These videos are available for your group’s viewing only by linking to them on the Internet. We hope you, or someone in your group, has the capability to project them for your group from the links below:**

**Chapter 1** – Professor Eric Barreto’s address to the ELCA Lutheran Youth Gathering in Detroit, 2015 – 12:17 minutes

<https://binged.it/2cGhLnZ>

**Chapter 2** – A brief clip from the PBS Special “Race: The Power of an Illusion” – 6:10 minutes

<http://bit.ly/2bYrflu>

**Chapter 3** – Peggy McIntosh – “Unpacking the Invisible Backpack” – 6:02 minutes

<https://binged.it/2cdBb1b>

**Chapter 4** – This chapter features a stand-up exercise to conduct with your group and does not begin with a supplemental video. It does include a personal story video.

**Chapter 5** – “Talking About Race” – a conversation between LSS CEO, Jodi Harpstead, and Rev. Dr. Karen McKinney, Bethel University – 10:30 minutes

This can be found via the following secure website:

<https://lssmn.wistia.com/medias/yprh161jjs>

Email: [ChangingLives@lssmn.org](mailto:ChangingLives@lssmn.org)

Password: EquityStudy@LSS

# Video Stories

Because we have asked five people to tell their deeply personal stories on video, we have made them available for your group's viewing via the following secure website:

Email: [ChangingLives@lssmn.org](mailto:ChangingLives@lssmn.org)

Password: EquityStudy@LSS

**Chapter 1** – Yusuf Abdi, LSS Director of Refugee Resettlement  
<https://lssmn.wistia.com/medias/0sm6zzaoxv> – 8:26 minutes

**Chapter 2** – Duncan Gregory, LSS Bethany Crisis Shelter, Duluth  
<https://lssmn.wistia.com/medias/q5j4h59rgc> – 5:52 minutes

**Chapter 3** – Donna Bergstrom, Guardian Ad Litem, State of Minnesota, and LSS Center for Changing Lives Campaign Volunteer, Duluth  
<https://lssmn.wistia.com/medias/cj5m9e228q> – 6:27 minutes

**Chapter 4** – Jodi Harpstead, LSS CEO  
<https://lssmn.wistia.com/medias/k5188y3qm2> – 5:30 minutes

**Chapter 5** – Jessica Urbina, LSS Executive Administrator  
<https://lssmn.wistia.com/medias/7b1c62ionv> – 4:25 minutes

# The “Race” Exercise

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This exercise is designed to help learners understand that in a racist, sexist, classist society, we do not all start out as equals. The exercise makes explicit, that some are privileged and others are targeted and discriminated against in ways that hinder or deny there ever succeeding in our present society. Further, the exercise clarifies that it is a fallacy to think that the privilege and oppression existent in the system has no effect on them as individuals, all individuals are affected. In this instance, focused on race, the exercise seeks to dispel the myth that “they (people of color) could pull themselves up by their bootstraps if they worked hard enough.” This exercise is designed for a multicultural/multiracial group. If your group is homogeneous invite a few friends of color to join you for the exercise. If that is not possible, try to have someone in your group (who has close ties with a person of color) take on the role of a person of color and answer the questions as they would. The lessons of the exercise require some racial diversity.

## **OUTCOMES**

- Help learners understand that in a racist, sexist, classist society, we do not all start out as equals, the playing field is not equal.
- Make explicit, that some are privileged and others are targeted and discriminated against in ways that hinder or deny success.
- Dispel myths of Meritocracy and the American Dream.
- Understand how all are affected by the privilege and oppression existent in the system.
- Reflect on implications of these realities.

## **PROCEDURE**

\*Tell participants they are going to have a race, line everybody up behind the starting line. (Have plenty of space – about 15-20 feet - both in front of and behind the starting line)

\*Hold up some prizes - my ratio is 5 prizes to every 20 people: bags of M & M's, Snickers, Starburst, Cheese Crackers, \$1 dollar bills, \$5 dollar bills (some hard and some easy to share stuff) saying "these are for the winners" (obviously do not have enough for everybody-- just a few).

\*Now, before you start, demonstrate for them what one step looks like; demonstrate it forward and backward, also show them a tiny step and a large step.

\*Pretend to turn and walk toward the finish line but then turn back and say, "I want to ask you some questions first. If the statement is true for you take a step. If not true for you just stand still."

\*Now, ask them to answer these questions and move accordingly.

## **QUESTIONS**

### **Take one step forward:**

- If there were 50 or more books in your house when you were growing up.
- If there was a computer in your house.
- If you traveled to a foreign country.
- If both of your parents graduated from high school.
- If your parents had a savings account.
- If you saw adults reading in your home on a regular basis.
- If your family took vacations regularly other than to visit relatives.
- If your parents have a second home or summer home.
- If your family's recreation cost money, like skiing, sailing or horseback riding.
- If your family ever owned real silverware or china.
- If you had a car in high school.
- If you attended private school.
- If you attended camp in the summer.

- If your parents owned their home.
- If you had your own savings account as a child.
- If you have a trust fund or own stocks and bonds in your name.
- If you have ever traveled abroad for educational or recreational reasons.
- If you have ever dined in a fine restaurant without being concerned about the prices on the menu.
- If there were athletic teams available for most sports for your sex in your high school.
- If while you were growing up, the people in control of things were mostly the same sex as you.
- If the voice of authority that you heard in the media was the same sex as yours.
- If the people you associate with rescuing are the same sex as you.
- If the most influential people in your place of worship are the same sex as you.
- If the people who repaired things for you are the same sex as you.
- If the trusted professional's (lawyers, doctors, bankers, etc.) you have dealt with were the same sex as you.
- If when you ask to see the person in charge, you can be pretty sure to be facing a person of your sex.
- If the most famous important historical figures you studied, like rulers, presidents, inventors, revolutionaries and generals are the same sex as you.
- If your sex was fully represented in the curricular materials used in your elementary school.
- If your sex was fully represented in the curricular materials used in your church.
- If you are sure your voice will be heard in a group in which you are the only member of your sex.
- If the common stereotypes about your gender are positive or harmless.
- If you are never asked to speak for or represent all people of your sex.
- If you can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting your sex on trial.
- If you can dress provocatively without having people think negatively of your gender group.
- If you decide to stay home and be a full time parent it won't count against you because of your sex.

**Take one step back:**

- If you are from a single parent female headed household,
- If you are from a single parent female headed household and money is always a problem.
- If you had to have a job in high school to help support your family.
- If a family member ever had to sell or pawn something to pay for necessities.
- If you were ever told you couldn't do something because of your sex
- If English is a second language for you.
- If you were taught strategies like holding your keys in your fist, or checking the back seat before you enter the car, to help keep you safe.
- If you are afraid or were taught to be afraid of being out at night by yourself.
- If you fear being raped.
- If you grew up living in rented apartments.
- If you or a family member has shopped with food stamps or received governmental subsidy food.
- If you routinely got sent to the principal's office.
- If what you said has ever been discounted or minimized because of your sex.
- If your parent/s live from paycheck to paycheck.
- If your parents ever delayed paying monthly bills due to lack of funds.
- If you received a scholarship to attend a summer camp.
- If family decisions are made solely of the basis of money or lack of money.
- If you were ever passed over because of your sex.
- If you qualified for free or reduced fee lunch.
- If when you worry about sexism you're seen as self-interested or self-serving.
- If you attended college completely dependent on financial aid.
- If one or both of your parents were teens when you were born.
- If your bad mood or crabby attitude has ever been attributed to monthly cycles.
- If a parent was partially or fully illiterate.
- If any family member was or is on welfare.
- If when you go for medical help your problems were minimized or dismissed because of your sex.
- If you've ever been in foster care.



- If you are adopted.
- If you were paid at a lower rate because of your sex.
- If you have or had a work study job in college
- If police sirens are a daily occurrence in your neighborhood.
- If you've ever considered taking someone of the opposite gender along to assure you won't be cheated in your purchase.
- If abandoned houses are within a half a mile of where you lived when you grew up.
- If you frequently heard/hear the sound of bullets flying in your neighborhood.
- If you've ever felt like you couldn't express your emotions because of your sex.

**Take one step forward:**

- If you have a relative or friend who holds a position of power in the community or company.
- If you can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to your race.
- If you talk with your mouth full, people don't put it down to your color.
- If you can swear, fart, dress in second hand clothes and not answer letters without people attributing these choices to the bad morals, poverty and illiteracy of your race.
- If you can be late for a meeting without having the lateness reflect on your race.
- If most of the images you saw in school books looked like you.
- If your teachers/school administrators looked like you.
- If the images you saw in church looked like you.
- If you can shop at almost any supermarket and easily find the staple food of your culture on the shelves.
- If you can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that you will not be followed or harassed.
- If you can make reservations and not wonder if people of your color are welcomed and well treated there.
- If you can easily buy greeting cards birthday cards and postcards with people who look like you on them.

- If you are pretty sure you can buy a house anywhere you want and be welcomed by your neighbors.
- If you can avoid spending time with people whom you were trained to mistrust.
- If the police stop you, and you know your race won't count against you.
- If you ask to see the person in charge you can be pretty sure to be facing a person of your color.
- If the most famous important historical figures you studied, like rulers, presidents, inventors, revolutionaries and generals are the same color as you.
- If the common stereotypes about your race are positive or harmless
- If you can turn on the television or open the front page of the paper and see people of your race widely represented.
- If when you are told about our national heritage or about civilization, you are shown that people of your color made it what it is.
- If you can be sure that your children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
- If you can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of your race represented.
- If you can go into a hairdresser's or barber shop and easily find someone who can cut your kind of hair.
- Whether you use checks, credit cards or cash, you can count on your skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
- If you can go home from most meetings of organizations you belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than feeling isolated, out of place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared.
- If you can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having coworkers on the job suspect that you got it because of race.
- If you can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of your race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places you have chosen.
- If I wish, I can arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
- I do not have to educate my children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection.
- I can be pretty sure that my children's teachers and employers will tolerate them if they fit school and workplace norms; my chief worries about them do not concern others' attitudes toward their race.

- I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.
- I can be pretty sure that an argument with a colleague of another race is more likely to jeopardize her chances for advancement than to jeopardize mine.
- I am not made acutely aware that my shape, bearing, or body odor will be taken as a reflection on my race.
- If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.
- I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.
- If I have low credibility as a leader, I can be sure that my race is not the problem.

**Take one step back:**

- If your everyday speech is a black dialect or reservation dialect.
- If you speak with an accent.
- If you had a family member or close friend in prison.
- If a parent was often unemployed (not by choice).
- If you were ever passed over because of your race.
- Step back once if you are yellow, twice if brown, three times if black or red.
- If when you worry about racism you're seen as self-interested or self-serving.
- If you are ever expected to speak for or represent all people of your race.
- If you were ever refused service because of your color.
- If you were paid at a lower rate because of your color.
- If you've ever been stopped by the police for no real reason.
- If you've been told you have a learning disability.

\*Once the questions are answered, ask participants to notice where people are, who is up front, and who is in back. Mark their spot with tape if they need to move to see.

\*Take your position at the Finish line and start the race (ready, set, Go!).

\*Have them grab the goodies as they cross the finish line.

\*Observe reactions.

\*Process, Process, Process.

### **Some Suggested Reflection Questions:**

- Start with feelings, ask each person to share strongest feelings (It is fine if people express the same feeling; more than one feeling is allowed; everyone must share) Facilitators keep the focus on feelings here, we will talk about their thoughts and observations later. Solicit feeling words!
- Ask if they want to ask someone to explain their feeling? Facilitators you are not asking them to explain their own feelings, no time for that, if someone said something that needs explanation, now is the time.
- What did you observe? What happened?
- Did some people not run? Why? What do you think about them not running?
- What is said in society about those who don't run? What labels are given them?

### **Discuss:**

- What did you notice about the questions?
- Who experienced class privilege? Name some class privileges you heard.
- Who experienced gender privilege? Name some gender privileges you heard.
- Name some ways women are targeted or discrimination against. (Steps back)
- Who experienced race privilege? Name some race privileges you heard.
- Name some ways people of color are targeted or discriminated against.
- When do these privileges or discriminations happen? Discuss
- What did you notice about how people stepped?
- How did people's stepping in groups demonstrate the systemic nature of racism?
- Which of the statements did you find most meaningful or eye opening?
- Did any of the statements hurt? Why?
- How does this exercise challenge the concept of Meritocracy or the American Dream?
- How has privilege or discrimination affected you, your family and your community in terms of opportunity and access?
- What happened to the prizes? Who won? What did you do with your prize? Why?
- Is this what typically happens in society? Why do people share/give?

- What is the difference between charity and justice?

### **Tips for Facilitators:**

Your understanding of systemic racism is necessary to facilitate this exercise, if you do not have that understanding consider co-facilitation or asking someone else to lead this exercise. If the debrief is not done well more harm (racial confusion, mistrust, reinforcing stereotypes, etc.) than good can come from the exercise.

You speak less, get them to talk more. Thoughtful questions lead learners to their own discoveries.

I intentionally buy things that can be easily shared (M&M's, Starburst, Chips) and things that are difficult to share (Snickers, dollar bills, etc.) as prizes to see how people will respond. Shared things are usually shared and individual things usually disappear. I use this as a metaphor for how some give and to discuss what motivates giving and the difference between charity and justice.

If you have less than 40 minutes, do not do this exercise, it takes time to debrief. If you only have 50 minutes cut down the number of questions asked (cut from the class/gender sections first) This exercise can be done using only the questions from the race section.

Frequently people of color feel targeted/outed/betrayed by the questions, be prepared to deal with their feelings.

Often the white males who "won" the money offer to give it back to the facilitator after the exercise and debrief is over. This is most often generated by feelings of guilt and a sense of "I didn't fairly earn it." I never take it back. I question them and try to get them to think/voice why they want to return it. I challenge them to keep it and frame it. I challenge them to live in the reality of their privilege. To let it be a constant reminder of the white privilege they experience and motivate them to take action for justice.

People often say the exercise is rigged, the questions are stacked to show what they show. I do not disagree with them. I say absolutely the questions are chosen to reveal privilege and discrimination. Questions about age, sexual preference, or ability could be used to reveal the same kinds of phenomena about ageism, homophobia, and ableism. It does not make the questions or what they reveal any less true.

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### **Acknowledgements**

*I wish to acknowledge Caroline Gould, of Camp Miniwanka for her version of “The Race” which I observed in 1988 and greatly adapted.*

*I wish to acknowledge Karen Warren of Hampshire College and the Association for Experiential Education, who brainstormed questions on class with me in 1993.*

# Response

**Rev. Louise Britts, Messiah Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, MN**

## Running the Race

About 30 people showed up on a Sunday afternoon to run “The Race”. The advertising said it was a session to bust the myth that anyone can “pull themselves up by their bootstraps”. This popular saying by successful people in the dominant culture implies that with hard work and ambition anyone, by their own power, can fulfill the “American Dream” of economic self-sufficiency. This popular saying also implies that each person starts out in life at the same starting point. “The Race” is designed to raise awareness of factors that are hidden in the structures of our society. These structures become barriers to all people being on equal footing.

I began “The Race” by first gathering the runners in a small conference room and reading to them the instructions that were written. I demonstrated for them what one step forward or backward would look like to increase consistency within participants’ steps. I then led everyone to a large room with a tape on the floor indicating the starting line and one indicating the finish line with prizes on the finish line. It was not long before the once crowded starting line was now dotted with people in the front of the line and people falling well behind the starting line. At the end, the white males in the room started to take very tiny steps as it became apparent they were far ahead of most in the room. Most of the prizes were won by the white males in the group and the one Asian–American male in the group.

After “The Race” we went into the small conference room to process people’s feelings. One white male said he vacillated between anger and guilt. Anger at the barriers that hold people back and guilt because for the first time he saw himself as part of the problem and that disturbed him. He had always seen himself as progressive. It shocked him that he was so unaware of how the structures of our society are designed for his success. Another woman, who was answering questions as an African American woman she knows, lamented that at one point

she was standing outside the door of the large room. She was not even in the room of the race. She expressed being filled with profound sadness and feeling powerless and hopeless. Most white females talked about their awareness of the glass ceiling that usually prevents them from upper level career moves. They were aware that by being female, they found themselves moving backwards instead of forward though most white female participants were by social standards successful white women today. One white man challenged the language of privilege and insisted that he was fortunate or blessed. I challenged him on the use of the word blessed because if he is blessed does that mean that people who don't have the resources available to them have done something to fall outside God's blessing. One African American woman talked about being angry. She shared that you spend so much time trying to get ahead and it just seems that the system works against you. One African American female, who actually won a prize said: "You have to read between the lines in order to get ahead." Later a white woman confronted her stating to me that she cheated. The African American woman replied "I did not cheat. I read between the lines. Sometimes you have to give yourself an advantage to be successful, to survive." As the discussion progressed, participants talked about institutions that embody the barriers that constrict persons because of their sex, race or class. These are the institutions that become pointers to the status quo of society.

This conversation led to a discussion about the "Black lives matter" movement and rage against police. One African American woman stated that she dreams that her son, who is graduating from High School and on his way to college, will live a long life. She stated she lives in fear that he has a target on his back because he is a black male. Another African American woman lamented "when did the police become our enemy?" She stated that when she was young she was taught to respect the police. She said, "We were taught that the police were there to protect us. Now I walk in fear." As the demeanor in the group turned despairing, we talked about the crisis of community. In years past people knew their neighbors. The Minneapolis police officers lived in Minneapolis and people knew them as neighbors and went to school with their children. Today we live in silos, texting on phones and playing games with virtual characters. Just as people were beginning to drown in their powerlessness, one white male talked about the structures of the government being elected by "we the people" and that our taxes pay their salaries. In essence, they theoretically work for "we the people". This stimulated a fresh discussion about advocacy and strategies that can change



systems. We ended our session together with a short video called “The Unequal Opportunity Race”. This helped to raise awareness of the barriers faced by people of color, women and people experiencing poverty. It also highlighted the wealth of advantages that are available to white males just because the systems that are in place in our society today are built for them to succeed. Most people I talked to in the days after “The Race” said it had given them food for thought. Some people said that it had made them angry. My question is always, what are you going to do about that anger. Anger can be a positive thing if it fuels energy to make positive change in the community. We close our time together with prayer.

Suggestions for doing this in a congregation:

- 1) Have a room large enough to have “The Race”.
- 2) If you have a large number of people, I would recommend having training for facilitators. Then break into small groups with the facilitators. The facilitators could then watch who wins the race and give out prizes. After the small groups, you could return to a large group to share findings.
- 3) Have a follow-up meeting for those who might want to map out an action plan for change.
- 4) Raising awareness is important but sometimes you have people ready to help change systems and become agents for change. These are the people who move systems beyond charity to justice. The last question in “The Race” is to have people define charity vs. justice. In our race, participants defined charity as a hand out and justice as helping people do things for themselves. I personally think justice is also about deconstructing the systems that bind us to the racism, sexism and classism of our social structure and letting the Kingdom of God reign.

**Rev. Dr. Karen McKinney**

Associate Professor of Biblical and Theological Studies, Community Liaison for the Office of Diversity, Bethel University, Saint Paul, Minnesota



A native Minnesotan, raised in Minneapolis, she is the recipient of a Bush Fellowship Award (1993), and Faculty of Excellence Award, Bethel University (2007).

Her education includes a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Minnesota (English Literature), a Master of Divinity from Fuller Theological Seminary, a Master of Science in Experiential Education from Mankato State

University, and a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of St. Thomas. Most recently she has a chapter, “Learning Through Simulations” in the book *Teaching the Next Generations: A Comprehensive Guide to Teaching Christian Formation*, to be released in October 2016. She has been a youth pastor, youth leadership-training specialist, youth chaplain, training consultant and adult trainer. McKinney consults extensively in the area of anti-racism and diversity.

McKinney serves as associate minister at Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church in Minneapolis. Missions are a special area of interest. McKinney has served in a mission capacity in Mexico, Ecuador, Kenya, and Israel. She has taken teams of youth on mission trips to Haiti, Mexico, Belize and Jamaica, and taken classes to Greece and Turkey. She has a heart for social justice especially the areas of race, poverty, and gender issues.

**Rev. Louise Britts**

Pastor, Messiah Lutheran Church, Minneapolis,  
Minnesota

Hospice Chaplain, Presbyterian Homes, Minneapolis,  
Minnesota

Louise Britts currently serves as a Pastor at Messiah Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota and a Hospice Chaplain at Presbyterian Homes in the Twin Cities. Previously, she was a Pastor at River of Life Lutheran Church in North Minneapolis. For eight years, she also served as a Hospice Chaplain for HealthPartners in the Twin Cities.



Prior to being ordained in 2002, Britts worked for Honeywell in physical plant security and then computer security. Earlier in her career, she volunteered in Zimbabwe for the Truth and Reconciliation Act with the Catholic Commission on Peace and Justice and also served as a volunteer in community development in India.

Britts received her Bachelor of Arts degree with majors in Mathematics and Psychology and minors in World Religions and Computer Science from Augsburg College in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She received her Master of Divinity degree from the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, Illinois and also earned a Master of Arts degree in Pastoral Care from St. Paul Seminary at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota.