



JOURNEY IN... YEAR TWO ON BEING HUMAN SCIENCE

This lesson's Big Ideas:

- Part of being human is having a racial identity. When we say 'race' we mean many things, including skin color, hair and eye color and place of origin.
- While race is biologically an illusion, it has become 'real' as a social construct, and so forms a great part of our individual and shared human identity.
- Prejudice has its base in categorical thinking. Assumptions that we make about individuals based on a category into which we think they fit are often false and sometimes hurtful.
- Racism is a result of systematic combinations of racial prejudice and power.
- Unitarian-Universalism's first principle is that *all people have inherent worth and dignity*. Therefore, we commit ourselves to the struggle against hurtful prejudices in ourselves and racism in our world.

TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time

Prejudices, it is well known, are most difficult to eradicate from the heart whose soil has never been loosened or fertilized by education; they grow there, firm as weeds among rocks.

- Charlotte Brontë

I look forward confidently to the day when all who work for a living will be one with no thought to their separateness as Negroes, Jews, Italians or any other distinctions. This will be the day when we bring into full realization the American dream ~ a dream yet unfulfilled. A dream of equality of opportunity, of privilege and property widely distributed; a dream of a land where men will not take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few; a dream of a land where men will not argue that the color of a man's skin determines the content of his character; a dream of a nation where all our gifts and resources are held not for ourselves alone, but as instruments of service for the rest of humanity; the dream of a country where every man will respect the dignity and worth of the human personality.

- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr

This is what we are about: We plant seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects beyond our capabilities. We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.

- Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero

Lesson Materials

- YouTube video open and queued at start (after ads) in a browser tab (All the Colors We Are being read)
- This lesson open, displaying page 5 and ready to move to the next pages as the second activity progresses

YOUR FIELD EXPERIENCES: FEEDBACK AND NOTES

CHECK-IN

🕒 5-10 minutes

Allow one of the teachers to lead the group in a name game, an icebreaker, a get-to-know-you questions or a simple 'How are things?' moment. Spend more time if the group seems eager to connect with each other. Light the chalice and say:

We light this chalice as a symbol of our faith, the light of truth, and the warmth of love.

COVENANT

🕒 3 minutes

Review the discussion of how the group wants to be together. Update the notes, if necessary. Save the covenant for future classes.

- Share this document on your screen, if you can.

PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE A PRIMER ON MELANIN

🕒 15 minutes

- Our resource book is All the Colors We Are. Use this link to access a video of the book being read out loud:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O11hI9B9bzY>
One teacher should have the video queued up and ads passed before class and share their screen while it plays. After watching the video, ask some questions so that kids can recall their scientific learning and try out their own reasoning.
- Here are some questions (with answers following) to discuss:
 - All living things have color. This color comes from chemicals called pigments. Who knows what color chlorophyll is? (green) Can you guess what color the pigment carotene might be? (orange)
 - While many people talk about race in terms like 'black' and 'white', all people have skin in one of many, many shades of brown. Does anyone know what the name of this brown pigment is? (melanin)
 - Skin comes in different colors for only one reason – to protect us. What does the color in our skin color helps to protect us from? (the sun's harmful rays) Melanin is the brown pigment that prevents the sun from damaging our cells. Some people have lots of active melanin and other people have less active melanin.

- Who knows which part of the earth gets the most sunshine? Where is the climate the warmest? (between the Tropic lines and the Equator).
- If you had to predict, would you expect people near the equator to have lots of active melanin or not much at all? (lots of active melanin). Describe what skin with lots active melanin would look like. (dark brown, not prone to burning pink)
- Of course, there are people living in far northern climates now who have dark skin. Where does their melanin come from? (from their ancestors who pass it down to their children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren through their genes).
- Those of us who have light skin without much active melanin to start out with, we like to spend time out in the sun, too, right? What happens to us? (we burn or we tan). Guess what's happening inside our bodies when we get tan? (we're making more melanin).
- **For 5th and 6th graders:** Interestingly, there are some people who have lived way up north for 1000s of years, like the Lapp and the Inuit people. They have dark skin, too. The reason is complicated. Can anyone guess? Does anyone know how people get the Vitamin D that they need? (from the sun or from food sources like fish). Guess where northern people like the Inuit often get their Vitamin D? (fish) So, do they need to let lots of sun into their skin? (nope).

ACTIVITY TWO

PREJUDICE OR RACISM?

🕒 15 minutes

- Ask for a volunteer to share a definition of prejudice. Remind the children that you talked about this word last week in the Story lesson.
- Offer these two ideas:
 1. Prejudice is an individual experience. When one person makes assumptions about another and makes decisions about their own approval or disapproval, fear or trust without adequate information, then prejudice leads to discrimination.
 2. Racism is the word we use when prejudice and power get systematically combined, to discriminate against individuals or groups of people. That is, when the people who get to make all the rules and pick the winners and losers have lots of their own prejudices and shared prejudices, whole groups of people get treated unfairly.
- At the end of this lesson are 10 pages, each with an example of prejudice and racism in action. One of the teachers should have this lesson open on their computer so they can share it with the class. Display the first one, read or ask a child to volunteer to read it, and decide together if it is an example of Prejudice or Racism (**it's not simple, as these scenarios describe complex ways that prejudice and racism are often interwoven**). Move through as many as you can and still have some time for the wondering questions.
- If this is too hard for the kids, whether because they are younger or it's just not clicking, try inviting kids to share a story about a time when they or a friend responded to prejudice, racism, or hurtful words in a way that showed they were UU and believed in inherent worth and dignity of all people.

Wondering Questions

- Which of the two might be easier for us to change, prejudice or racism? How do we change prejudice in people's minds and hearts?
- Does that mean that kids can't work to change racism? Can one person make a difference? Revisit each card in the "Racism" box and talk about how ONE UU KID could make a difference in that situation.

CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING

🕒 3 minutes

Share this page on one teacher's screen. Join hands in a circle (by having everyone hold their hands up at the edge of the view of their camera). Speak these words or something similarly hopeful from your own heart. Invite the kids to echo you after each phrase:

We promise to see the rainbow of beauty in every human face.

We promise to honor every person's inherent worth and dignity.

We promise to work to weed out prejudice in our own hearts and minds.

We promise to work to make the world more safe and fair for all.

We promise to see the rainbow of beauty in every human face.

Unlight the chalice, saying: though we extinguish the light of the chalice here, we know that the light of truth and the warmth of love go with us in our hearts.

Prejudice or Racism?

Mr. and Mrs. Smith aren't Republicans or Democrats. They're independent voters and they decide which candidate they support based on the candidate's ideas. In 2008, they liked Barack Obama's ideas, but in the end, they didn't vote for him because they weren't sure a black person could be president.

Prejudice or Racism?

At recess, the kids always want to pick the African-American kids to be on their basketball teams. The captains figure that kids with dark skin and dark hair are always going to be really good at basketball and they want their team to win.

Prejudice or Racism?

Most of the schools in Detroit don't get much money because the taxes people pay aren't enough to support good education. In the towns and suburbs outside Detroit, the taxes give lots and lots of money to the schools for nice computers and new libraries. The schools in Detroit serve mostly African-American kids. The kids who live in the suburbs are mostly white.

Prejudice or Racism?

In South Africa, the water company installed meters in every house in Soweto Township, but not anywhere else. The meters shut off the water when the people in the house have used 5,000 gallons a month. Everywhere else, people can use 10,000 gallons and they just have to pay extra if they use more. Almost all the people who live in Soweto Township are black.

Prejudice or Racism?

Whenever Pat sees a group of Hmong teenage boys coming down the sidewalk, Pat crosses the street to walk on the opposite side. Pat is scared that all Hmong teenagers are in gangs and might want to beat people up.

Prejudice or Racism?

The mayor of a small town doesn't trust Latino people. The mayor worries that they may all be illegal immigrants from Mexico who aren't supposed to be working in this small town. When the mayor sees someone who looks Latino, the mayor thinks, "Hmm, I bet that person is here against the law." However, the mayor doesn't make any rules against Latino people or tell the police to check on anyone's family to see if they are allowed to be here. The mayor keeps these thoughts private.

Prejudice or Racism?

At the airport, most people go through security and have to put their luggage in the x-ray machine. A family with the last name Hussein is going through security. Their grandparents moved to the United States almost 70 years ago. All the kids in the family were born in the United States. They are of Arab descent and are Muslims. When they go through airport security, their whole family is taken to a separate room where they wait for half an hour. Police ask them questions about where they live and who they know in Iraq. They go through all their bags and take their computers away. This happens almost every time the Hussein family flies.

Prejudice or Racism?

When Mrs. Jones goes to the store to buy band-aids, she can't find any that match her daughter's skin color. All the bandaids are light-colored and Mrs. Jones and her daughter have darker brown skin. When the little girl got a cut on her forehead, the bandaid stood out and looked pretty obvious.

Prejudice or Racism?

In a school cafeteria, most of the white kids sit at tables together and most of the Hmong kids sit together and most of the African-American kids sit at their own tables, too.

Prejudice or Racism?

When a new family moves into the neighborhood, the Smith parents tell their children not to play with the new children. The new family has one parent who is has light skin and blond hair and one parent who is from India and has dark skin and dark hair. The Smiths tell their kids that people should only marry other people who look like them.