

An abstract artwork featuring a dark blue background with lighter blue, wavy, vertical stripes. In the upper left corner is a solid red circle. Scattered across the right side are several red, multi-pointed star-like shapes of varying sizes. Three dark blue silhouettes of human figures are positioned in the center and right. One figure on the left is in a dynamic, almost dancing pose with arms raised. Another figure on the right is also in a dynamic pose, leaning back. A third figure is partially visible in the lower center, appearing to be in a more grounded or seated position.

Laboring Toward Wholeness

A TRAINING ON DISMANTLING PATRIARCHY

Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz, Jenny Castro, Erica Littlewolf,
Chantelle Todman Moore, Linda Gehman Peachey, Regina Shands Stoltzfus

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Laboring Toward Wholeness A Training on Dismantling Patriarchy

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INTRODUCTION

Do you remember the moment when you realized that you were created in the image of God? For some of us, this has been a truth we've grown up knowing. For others, it's been a lifelong process of discovery. Shaped first by familial and cultural norms and then by peers, community and society, we each have developed an understanding of who we are created to be and how we are to be in the world.

Even in this day and time, we need not search far to see the fruit of patriarchy pervading and influencing our systems and social structures. We see it in the prevalence of sexualized violence. (We have chosen to use the term sexualized violence which describes any violence, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targeting a person's sexuality). We see it in the lack of women in leadership in our organizations and institutions. We see it in messages we communicate and the stereotypes we pass on to our children. We see it in the dollar amounts we pay women to do the same jobs as men. We see it in the way we collectively treat people who don't conform to prescribed gender roles and expectations. We see it in myriad insignificant conversations we have daily.

Patriarchy is a social structure in which men hold power and domination over all others.¹ It is not God's intention for humanity and creation. We offer this alternative vision. Through this training we'll explore the history and roots of patriarchy and how it got entangled with our faith. We'll unpack the church's role in perpetuating it as well as our responsibility to dismantle it. We'll search the Bible for truths about who we are created to be. And we'll learn to recognize and respond to sexism and patriarchy in our own lives and contexts.

¹ Adapted from the Indigenous People's Solidarity Movement Ottawa.

CURRICULUM WRITERS

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ERICA LITTLEWOLF is from the Northern Cheyenne tribe of southeastern Montana and currently lives in her home community of Busby. She works for Mennonite Central Committee Central States with the Indigenous Visioning Circle, where she is committed to the work of decolonization, authentic relationship and healing. She has a bachelor's degree in psychology and American Indian studies and applies her schooling to social justice issues and how they affect Indigenous people.

CHANTELLE TODMAN MOORE, MBA, is co-founder of unlock Ngenuity, a consulting, coaching and research business. Chantelle holds a bachelor's degree in International Community Development and an MBA in International Economic Development. She is a Qualified Administrator for the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) and is passionate about embracing diversity and difference as a gift, seeking justice as a mandate and being moved to act by love. She lives in Philadelphia with her family.

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MENNONITE CHURCH USA'S OFFICE OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Women in Leadership works to dismantle patriarchal systems in Mennonite Church USA by empowering women to live out the call of God on their lives, increase their capacities, and contribute their wisdom in congregations, conferences, agencies and institutions.

RECOMMENDED AGENDA

DAY ONE

Welcome and Opening with prayer / ritual

Section One: 2 hours

Break: 15 minutes

Section Two: 2 hours

Lunch

Section Three: 1.5 hours

Break: 15 minutes

Section Four: 1–2 hours

Adjourn for the day

DAY TWO

Welcome and Opening

Section Five: 1.5 hours

Break: 15 minutes

Section Six: 1.5 hours

Lunch

Section Seven: 2 hours

Break: 15 minutes

Section Eight: 1.5 hours

Adjourn for the day

DAY THREE (HALF DAY)

Welcome and Opening

Section Nine: 2 hours

Break: 15 minutes

Adjourn training

Total time: 17–18 hours of material, with breaks

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1. Establishing Norms and Ways of Being Together

OBJECTIVES

Introduce participants/facilitators and cocreate guidelines for how participants/facilitators share the space where they explore the norms and impacts of patriarchy and sexism within our faith community and society.

TIME

1.5-2 hours

FORMAT

- Interactive activity
- Circle set-up

TRAINING AIDS / PARTICIPANT MATERIALS

- Talking piece
- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Center / focal point / alter (small, low table with tablecloth, candles, etc.)
- Participant's Workbook

PROCEDURE

- Have participants sit on chairs in a circle.

ESTABLISHING NORMS AND WAYS OF BEING TOGETHER

- Welcome everyone to the circle.
- Acknowledge ancestral Indigenous land
- Have facilitators introduce themselves.
- Begin with prayer / ritual.
- Review Community Commitments.
- Establish ways of being together.
- How does gender impact your participation in the training?
- Getting to know you activity:
 - Who's in the room?
- Learner-centered small groups:
 - What does the group know?



OPENING AND WELCOME

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Below is an example of the acknowledgment we used in Lancaster County. Be sure and find out who the tribes are in the area where your training is taking place.

We want to welcome you to this space by recognizing that the lands where we are currently meeting were once ancestral lands of a number of Indigenous tribes including the Susquehannocks, who are best known in Lancaster County as the Conestogas, as well as the Nanticokes and the Delaware/Lenape people. We pay our respects to their elders past and present. We take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration and settlement that bring us together today. And let us recognize that remembering is a starting point, not an ending point.

Facilitators open space by welcoming participants and naming the objective:

Through this training we'll explore the history and roots of patriarchy and how it got entangled into our faith. We'll unpack the church's role in perpetuating it as well as our responsibility to dismantle it. We'll search the Bible for truths about who we are created to be. And we'll learn to recognize and respond to sexism and patriarchy in

ESTABLISHING NORMS AND WAYS OF BEING TOGETHER

our own lives and contexts.

Post objective somewhere visible in the room.

RITUAL/ PRAYER

Facilitator invites participants to consider all that they bring into the space with them and invites the Spirit to accompany us in the work we'll do together.

Use prayer: Spirit Stroke (See Resources, Section Three.)

GETTING TO KNOW YOU ACTIVITIES

Who's in the room?

Introduce circle process and talking piece:

- Circle process: See "Description and introduction to the circle process," "Talking Circle Guidelines" and "Circle Process" for background and steps for how to facilitate the circle process.

Round One:

Participants respond to the following prompts:

- Name?
- What brought you to this space today?

Round Two:

- Name a woman you want to bring into this space and why?

Optional additional activities: (*Most recommended)

- Trainingforchange.org (resources) – tools
- Pair share: movie / book / music that has influenced your perspective
- Getting to know you grid/boxes – mixer activity
- *Place yourself on the continuum (e.g., introvert / extrovert; seasons; food, etc.)

Establishing Ways of Being Together

Review the following Community Commitments:

CENTERING THE MARGINS: We create and hold space at the center of our shared experience (discussion, worship, action) for those whose voices have been historically on the margins in our country, in our communities, in academia, in our denomination and in conference and congregational settings.

COMFORT WITH DISCOMFORT: We come into this shared space, expecting to be challenged and uncomfortable, pushed out of our comfort zone, letting go of “business as usual” or what feels normal to us.

BRINGING OUR WHOLE SELVES: We create a context together where we each can feel safe enough to be authentic, sharing the gift of ourselves with one another.

NAMING HARD THINGS: We will not always get it right. We will make mistakes. We enter this space expecting to encounter difficult situations. We commit to naming and engaging with one another when things get hard. We commit to speaking truth with love.

PRACTICING GRACE AND SPACE: We will extend grace to each other. We’ll set boundaries, recognizing that sometimes the most loving thing we can do is create healthy space between us.

MAINSTREAM AND MARGINS ACTIVITY AND/OR VIDEO:

See Resources for instructions to introduce this activity.

HOW DOES GENDER IMPACT YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE TRAINING?

(Note for facilitators: The following should be addressed intentionally and with care to create a space and honest naming of realities without provoking a combative atmosphere.)

In our society and in most of the world, the assumption is that any space is a male space and more specifically, a white, male space. We are inviting participants who identify as male, to take on and keep a posture of a learner, listener and to coinhabit this space.

Introduce the following concepts:

- 1** Being intentional:
 - a. Create a garden - a place to hold topics/concerns/thoughts/questions as they arise to come back to at a later time on the agenda.
 - b. Housekeeping - be intentional about letting people know about breaks, bathrooms, mealtimes, etc.
 - c. Speak for yourself - everyone has their own voice and agency to decide how and when they want to share, please do not decide for someone else, speak only for yourself.
 - d. Take care of self - Only you know what you need during difficult conversations. Feel free to step out of the room or take a break if you need to. If you need to process with someone else, please talk to a facilitator who can arrange for that to happen.
 - e. Racialized and gendered history - acknowledge that there is a shared history that people have experienced differently depending on their gender and being mindful of the danger of a single story (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie).

- 2** Values-based approach
 - a. **TIME/TIME OPPRESSION:** Acknowledge work that needs to be done in a limited amount of time and the need to honor the goals and objectives of the training.

ESTABLISHING NORMS AND WAYS OF BEING TOGETHER

- b. **DEFINING RESPECT:** Respect is subjective and shaped by your cultural values. Be mindful that what may feel disrespectful to one person may be truth telling to another. When a person is speaking, we will give our full attention
- c. **CONFIDENTIALITY:** What is said in the room, stays in the room unless permission has been asked and granted. Do not tell other people's stories.
- d. **STEP UP, STEP BACK:** Recognize that if you are not someone who has been speaking during the training, it may be time to speak up. If you are someone whose voice has been heard often, it may be time to remain silent.
- e. **BEING FULLY PRESENT:** We are investing time and space for this important conversation and work. Please respect your and others' investment and be fully present throughout the process. Keep social media, cell phone usage and daydreaming to a minimum.
- f. **SAFETY:** Many of the activities and conversations throughout this training invite participants to share vulnerably from their own lives and experience. It is our priority that participants feel safe. Self-disclosure is always determined by each individual. No one should ever feel forced to share ANYTHING they don't want to. Please feel completely free to opt out of an activity or conversation based on your needs.
- g. **FOCUS:** Often, when left for spans of time to discuss or work in groups, it is tempting to indulge in irrelevant conversation. Many times, this queues us into our own discomfort or avoidance of difficult and challenging work. We encourage participants to be attentive, especially when the temptation is great to be distracted.

Ask participants for any additional community guidelines or ground rules not already listed.

WHAT DOES THE GROUP KNOW?

Have participants respond to the following prompts and facilitate a conversation:

- Pair share - What are the stereotypes about your gender that you have heard and what truths counter that narrative? What stereotypes have you heard about other genders and what counter narratives have you learned?
- What are your expectations for the training?
- What do you hope to learn?

RESOURCES FOR SECTION ONE:

“Mainstream and Margin Exercise.” Training for Change.

<https://www.trainingforchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Mainstream-Margin-in-Groups.pdf>

https://www.trainingforchange.org/training_tools/mainstream-margin/

“Mainstream and Margins.” Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G6FFB63ZKUY>

“Circle Process Document.”

Harley Eagle, “Description and Introduction to the Circle Process: For the Indigenous Vision Center.”

“Talking Circle Guidelines.”

Chimamanda Adichie, “The Danger of a Single Story.” https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript?language=en

Mainstream and Margin Exercise

GOALS

- To assist participants to identify with both marginal and mainstream roles that they play in society.
- To boost awareness of the oppressive characteristics of the mainstream role.
- To gain hope through identifying how they can support social change while in a mainstream role.
- To practice the skills of an ally.

HOW TO LEAD

1 Keep the introduction simple, like “Tonight we’re going to explore some dynamics of diversity in groups.” Don’t reveal the goals of the exercise except in the most general way.

2 In small groups individuals share a time when they felt marginalized. Earlier in life is better (pre-adult may be most productive, but don’t be rigid about this.) Give your personal example. After each person has shared, ask the small groups to talk about how the mainstream appeared to them to be at the time they were on the margin, “What were the characteristics of the mainstream?”

3 Harvest the work so far by listing “Characteristics of the mainstream.” Be relaxed, give lots of expansive energy. Get as close as you can energetically to the group; love them because it’s going to get harder.

4 In the same small groups: ask participants again to remember what their experience was of being marginalized. Ask them to imagine “an initiative that they would have liked to come from the mainstream that would have assisted them to re-negotiate their relationship to the mainstream.” Repeat this memorized instruction several times. Give your own personal example. Point out that you’re not asking them to fantasize the

ESTABLISHING NORMS AND WAYS OF BEING TOGETHER

mainstream incorporating them, but instead to re-negotiate their relationship with the mainstream. [Be patient with how difficult this instruction is!]

5 Harvest the work of the small groups with a list titled “Initiatives the Mainstream Could Take.” Be satisfied with a fairly small list; add a couple of your own if appropriate.

6 Ask participants if they themselves have any aspects of themselves that are mainstream, or any roles they play that are mainstream. Ask for a show of hands. Ask for examples. Add examples of your own.

7 [The key moment:] Announce to them that they now know 90 percent of what they need to know to be ready for a world of diversity. What they now know contains both good news and bad news. Share with them the bad news that in their mainstream roles, the list of Mainstream Characteristics applies to them. Follow immediately with the good news: as a mainstreamer, they can take these initiatives and change the hardship of marginalized people.

8 Explain that they will now get to practice using their own wisdom about what mainstreamers can do (the Initiative list). Organize a mingle with one-way interactions, in which whoever starts says “In my mainstream role as _____, I _____ (do one of the Initiatives). Demonstrate how this works with co-facilitator or a participant. Take questions, then start it.

9 Closing. This can take a variety of forms depending on time and cultural appropriateness: sharing in buddies, journal-writing, meditation, go-round in which everyone shares (for example, a feeling, or a brief insight), music for reflection, a group song, a prayer.

Adapted from https://www.trainingforchange.org/training_tools/mainstream-margin/

Circle Process

USE OF CIRCLES AND FACILITATORS AS CIRCLE KEEPER

USE OF CIRCLES IS BASED ON THE PREMISE THAT:

- each of us wants to be connected to others in a good way.
- we all share core values that indicate what connecting in a good way means.
- understanding that being connected in a good way and acting from our values are not always easy to do, especially during times of difficult conversations or conflict.

CIRCLE KEEPERS

- don't control the circle but help participants uphold its integrity.
- help to hold a space that is clear, open, respectful and free - this means knowing when/how to interrupt, when to open and close the circle, when to take a break, how to remind people to adhere to the agreed-upon guidelines.
- are participants in the circle, not observers.
- don't need to be a mediator or group facilitator. It's not a position of power, but a responsibility to others to keep to the values of the circle.
-

TALKING PIECE

- is an object of focus accepted and used by the group.
- provides greater opportunity for listening and reflection since a person has to wait for the talking piece to come around before speaking. Participants focus more on what people are saying than on preparing an immediate response.
- prevents one-on-one debates since people cannot respond out of turn.
- shares the responsibility for discussion. It reinforces equality in the circle since it provides equal opportunity for all to participate.
- provides more opportunity for those who are often silent to be heard since they don't have to compete with those more verbal.
- moves in one direction for each round. For other rounds it doesn't have to start with the same person.

DESCRIPTION AND INTRODUCTION TO THE CIRCLE PROCESS FOR THE INDIGENOUS VISION CENTER

WRITTEN BY HARLEY EAGLE

The Circle process finds its logic in the patterns of nature. It follows cycles just as we find in the natural world—the seasons, the cycle of day and night and the natural rhythms of our bodies. We are told by Indigenous teachings that in order to walk as balanced human beings, we need to pay attention to four areas within us, the Spiritual, Emotional, Physical, and Intellectual. The Circle as a discussion and decision-making process attempts to follow the flow of the four quadrants. What follows in this document is a brief description of that flow.

First is the Spiritual quadrant. This is where we set the tone for the work and bring focus to why we are here, reminding ourselves and each other of the issue before us. We also strive to remember that we are all members of the human race, with different experiences and understandings, but we all have contributions to make to the process. For some we may need to remember that we do not have all the answers but are a piece of the puzzle. For others we may need to realize that we are valued in this setting and that people will want to hear what we have to offer. We are all valued in this process and encouraged to remember what it means to treat ourselves and others with Humility, Respect, Integrity, Generosity, and Compassion and to have Courage and Fortitude in the process.

The next quadrant is the Emotional. This is where we hear the stories. For this work, the stories are not easy to hear and will elicit deep emotions. It is important to let them be and to stay engaged in the listening process, to not jump to solutions or to take a defensive stance. We may also find ourselves reacting to the stories and we may begin to identify with certain aspects of the stories and with certain players. This is a good thing and to be expected as this helps to build trust and ownership for this work. It will also have you asking the questions of why and how could this have happened and of being curious to know more. These questions and this curiosity lead us into the next quadrant.

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In Indigenous teachings, the Physical quadrant is not only about our body and paying attention to its needs to maintain good health, but it also pays attention to the relational and how things are connected. It is here we begin the hard work of analyzing the results of intentions and looking carefully at the history and the experience of Indigenous peoples in this part of the world. This is the quadrant where we go deep and explore profound issues that are foundational to the functioning of our society and figure out how they all fit together and have brought us to results found in the stories.

Finally we end with the Intellectual quadrant. Only by working through the three previous quadrants can we come to a place where we can make good decisions together. This is the section where we present ideas of how to move ahead in ways that will effect change and break harmful cycles. We will also look at what others are doing and will be able to see that we are not alone in trying to effect much needed change. It is also a time to present our own ideas and test them with each other, based on what we have learned from moving through the previous quadrants.

One point brought up time and time again for many folks working on the issue of systemic change is that the process cannot be strictly an academic or intellectual exercise. It must be focused on the stories and the high level of emotion they bring and bring out. Indeed, it is often our experience that motivates many of us in this work of change. At the center of the Circle process is “self”—finding where each of us fits into this picture and in fact, by design, leads us to a deeper understanding of who we are and where we fit both in the making of the problem and the undoing of it. For that, we need courage and we need each other. We need courage to hear and embrace the stories that each of us carry. We need each other for support and for a fullness of ideas on this journey of transformation.

Talking Circle Guidelines

(AS USED BY INDIGENOUS ISSUES FORUM)

HUMILITY: For our time together we remember that we are all human beings here and equal in the eyes of Creator. Strive to be modest and unpretentious.

RESPECT: Speak and listen with respect; take time to consider words carefully. Give full attention to the other participants. Consider those not in the room — ancestors, elders, children, loved ones, and enemies. Respect the process and facilitator, staying focused on the topic or question at hand.

INTEGRITY: We ask that we all speak from our own experiences and understanding with honor and honesty. Hold each other's stories and comments with integrity, in confidence, by not sharing them beyond the circle.

GENEROSITY: Be generous with your time. This is a time and space for all to share equally, not to control the conversation. Be generous with your emotions and support. Sometimes the topic is difficult and we may need each other.

COURAGE: Allowing oneself to share in this style can be scary. Some of us are fearful of public speaking. Some of us are fearful of taking this opportunity to be equal with everyone. Some of us are fearful of giving up power and control, of a new process or of expressing our emotions. Most of us are nervous in some way or another. Take courage. You are not the only one. Be willing to risk.

COMPASSION: Strive to walk with others and yourself with empathy and sympathy, remembering that we are all connected and in this together. Be a co-journeyer with others and be ready to support one another.

FORTITUDE: Sometimes the topics and reason for circles can be extremely difficult. We will often need to be patient with others and practice tolerance and keep an open mind because you may hear difficult things that evoke strong emotions. At times we may need to embrace the uncomfortable and will need fortitude to do so. The circle process itself may be difficult if it is new to you. Be patient with yourself.

2. Shared Understandings

OBJECTIVES

Participants gain a working knowledge of terms, begin to form a common language around gender, how patriarchal systems function and their impact on ourselves and our society.

TIME

2 hours

FORMAT

- Interactive activity

TRAINING AIDS / PARTICIPANT MATERIALS

- Handout or page in curriculum

PROCEDURE

- Begin with reminder of our ways of being from first session: Speak your own truth. Practice good speaking and listening. Remember that just because an experience is not yours, it doesn't mean that it isn't true.
- Proceed with "Identity" activity in pairs or groups of 3 or 4.
- Individual/Group Activity: Terms and Definitions
- Introducing the Oppression Tree discussion



IDENTITY

Have participants turn to Section Two in the participant manual and the page with a circle on it labeled “Identity.” Two of the quadrants are blank; the other two are labeled GENDER and RACE.

For this activity set up participants in pairs or in small groups of no more than three to four people. Each participant identifies and fills the other two quadrants with two of their identities that are important to them — they get to determine what the word “important” means to them. Facilitators can include some suggestions: profession, nationality, marital status, etc.

This activity should take at least an hour.

Round One — Storytelling:

In pairs or small groups have participants answer the following prompts:

- Which identities did you add to the circle?
- Talk about the two identities that you added and why you chose them.

Round Two — Labels:

In pairs or small groups have participants answer the following prompts:

- Talk to each other about what it means to see the labels “race” and “gender” applied to you.
- Have you thought about these labels as part of your identity? Why or why not?
- What did you learn growing up about these identities (as they pertain to you)?

Round Three — Storytelling:

In pairs or small groups have participants answer the following prompts:

- Of the four identities included in your circle, which of your identities are you most aware of?
- Which of your identities are you least aware of?

Even if you choose the same two identities as you did for the first round, pay attention to the difference in this question. Why are you very aware of one of your

SHARED UNDERSTANDINGS

identities and relatively unaware of another? For example, does your awareness shift in different settings?

Debrief these conversations as a large group. Invite participants to answer the following questions in order:

1. What did it feel like to have this discussion in your small group?
2. What themes emerged?
3. What are the connections and disconnects in your group?

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Trainers will hand out definitions and terms to participants (either use the resource page with large print to photocopy and cut out the terms and definitions or write them on poster paper or sentence strips ahead of time). Each person will have one definition or one term. (See Resources for this section.)

Have participants stand up and move around the room to find their match (definitions to terms). (Allow about 5 minutes.)

Participants will present (read out) their terms and definitions to the group and then post them on the walls.

INTRODUCING OPPRESSION TREE

Talk through the Oppression Tree. Ask participants to reflect on what they notice and any connections to the discussions we have had so far. This exercise is to introduce the oppression tree and invite participants to think about root causes of oppressions, their manifestations in everyday life and their interconnectedness. The oppression tree should be projected and visible to participants. The facilitator highlights key connections and points.

RESOURCES FOR SECTION TWO

Oppression Tree handout

Terms to Know (Large Print)

Terms to Know

ableism - discrimination and prejudice against people living with disabilities

capitalism – an economic system based on competitive production which aims to maximize profits and accumulate material wealth through the commodification of every aspect of life (cultural, political, environmental, religious and social) (adapted from the Indigenous People's Solidarity Movement Ottawa)

classism - bias/prejudice against or in favor of people belonging to a particular social class

colonialism – the establishment of a state's sovereignty over a territory, including the imposition of social, religious, cultural, economic and political structures over the people living on that territory (adapted from the Indigenous People's Solidarity Movement Ottawa)

colorism – prejudicial or preferential treatment of same race people, based solely on their color (Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens: Womanist Prose*, 1983)

Doctrine of Discovery - a philosophical and legal framework dating to the 15th century that gave Christian governments moral and legal rights to invade and seize Indigenous lands and dominate Indigenous Peoples. The patterns of oppression that continue to dispossess Indigenous Peoples of their land today are found in numerous historical documents such as Papal Bulls, Royal Charters and U.S. Supreme Court rulings as recent as 2005. Collectively, these and other concepts form a paradigm of domination that has legitimated extractive industries that displace and destroy many Indigenous Peoples and other vulnerable communities, as well as harm the earth.

gender identity - a person's internal sense of being male, female, some combination of male and female or neither male or female (*Merriam Webster Dictionary*); which may or may not correspond with birth sex.

SHARED UNDERSTANDINGS

internalized oppression – people believing and behaving as if they are less than because they don't belong to a dominant culture group (adapted from Iris DeLeon-Hartshorn, Tobin Miller Shearer and Regina Shands Stoltzfus, *Set Free: A Journey Toward Solidarity Against Racism*, 2001)

intersectionality -- Every person embodies multiple social locations (race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic class, religion, ethnicity, culture, ability, size, etc.). Intersectionality is how society empowers or disempowers people based on these multiple social locations. (Roots of Justice adapted from Kimberle Crenshaw)

machismo - male chauvinism. It should be noted that machismo is often invoked to emphasize how sexism is worse in Latino culture. We do not deny sexism exists in Latino culture, but it isn't worse or more prevalent than in the U.S. or among white/dominant culture. (adapted from Ada María Isasi-Díaz, *En la Lucha: Elaborating a Mujerista Theology*)

patriarchy – a social structure in which men hold power and domination over others, including women and non-human beings (from the Indigenous People's Solidarity Movement Ottawa)

power – the ability to influence or shape a reality (Chantelle Todman Moore)

privilege – a set of unearned benefits given to people who fit into a specific social group; the other side of oppression

racism – race prejudice + systemic misuse of power (Damascus Road)

sexism – a belief in the inherent superiority of one sex over all others and thereby its right to dominance (Audre Lorde) Male privilege + power (adapted from Damascus Road)

sexualized violence - any violence, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targeting a person's sexuality. This includes rape, sexualized assault, acquaintance assault or date rape, drug- or alcohol-facilitated sexual assault, manipulation and coercion (psychological violence), intimate partner violence, sexual harassment (unwanted sexual advances or obscene remarks), exploitation,

SHARED UNDERSTANDINGS

anything that compromises a person's right to claim his/her sexuality without violence, violence against a person who does not conform to gender stereotypes.

white supremacy – a Eurocentric belief and practice according to which white people are superior to non-whites (the Indigenous People's Solidarity Movement Ottawa)

TERMS

ableism

capitalism

classism
colonialism

colorism

Doctrine of Discovery

gender identity

internalized oppression

intersectionality

machismo

patriarchy

power

racism

sexism

sexualized
violence

white
supremacy

DEFINITIONS

the ability to influence
or shape a reality

a set of unearned
benefits given to
people who fit into a
specific social group;
the other side of
oppression

race prejudice + systemic
misuse of power

the establishment of a
state's sovereignty over
a territory including the
imposition of social,
[religious] cultural,
economic and political
structures over the people
living on that territory

a social structure
in which men
hold power and
domination over
others, including
women and non-
human beings

a belief in the
inherent superiority
of one sex over
all others and
thereby its right to
dominance; male
privilege + power

Every person embodies multiple social locations (race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic class, religion, ethnicity, culture, ability, size, etc.). Intersectionality is how society empowers or disempowers people based on these multiple social locations.

Prejudicial or preferential
treatment of same race
people based solely on
their color

a Eurocentric belief and
practice according to
which white people are
superior to non-whites

an economic system
based on competitive
production which aims
to maximize profits and
accumulate material
wealth through the
commodification of every
aspect of life (cultural,
political, environmental,
religious and social)

a philosophical and legal framework dating to the 15th century that gave Christian governments moral and legal rights to invade and seize Indigenous lands and dominate Indigenous Peoples. The patterns of oppression that continue to dispossess Indigenous Peoples of their land today are found in numerous historical documents such as Papal Bulls, Royal Charters and U.S. Supreme Court rulings as recent as 2005. Collectively, these and other concepts form a paradigm of domination that has legitimated extractive industries that displace and destroy many Indigenous Peoples and other vulnerable communities, as well as harm the earth.

— — — — —

people believing
and behaving as
if they are less
than because they
don't belong to a
dominant culture
group

Any violence, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targeting a person's sexuality. This includes rape, sexualized assault, acquaintance assault or date rape, drug- or alcohol-facilitated sexual assault, manipulation and coercion (psychological violence), intimate partner violence, sexual harassment (unwanted sexual advances or obscene remarks), Exploitation, anything that compromises a person's right to claim his/her sexuality without violence, violence against a person who does not conform to gender stereotypes.

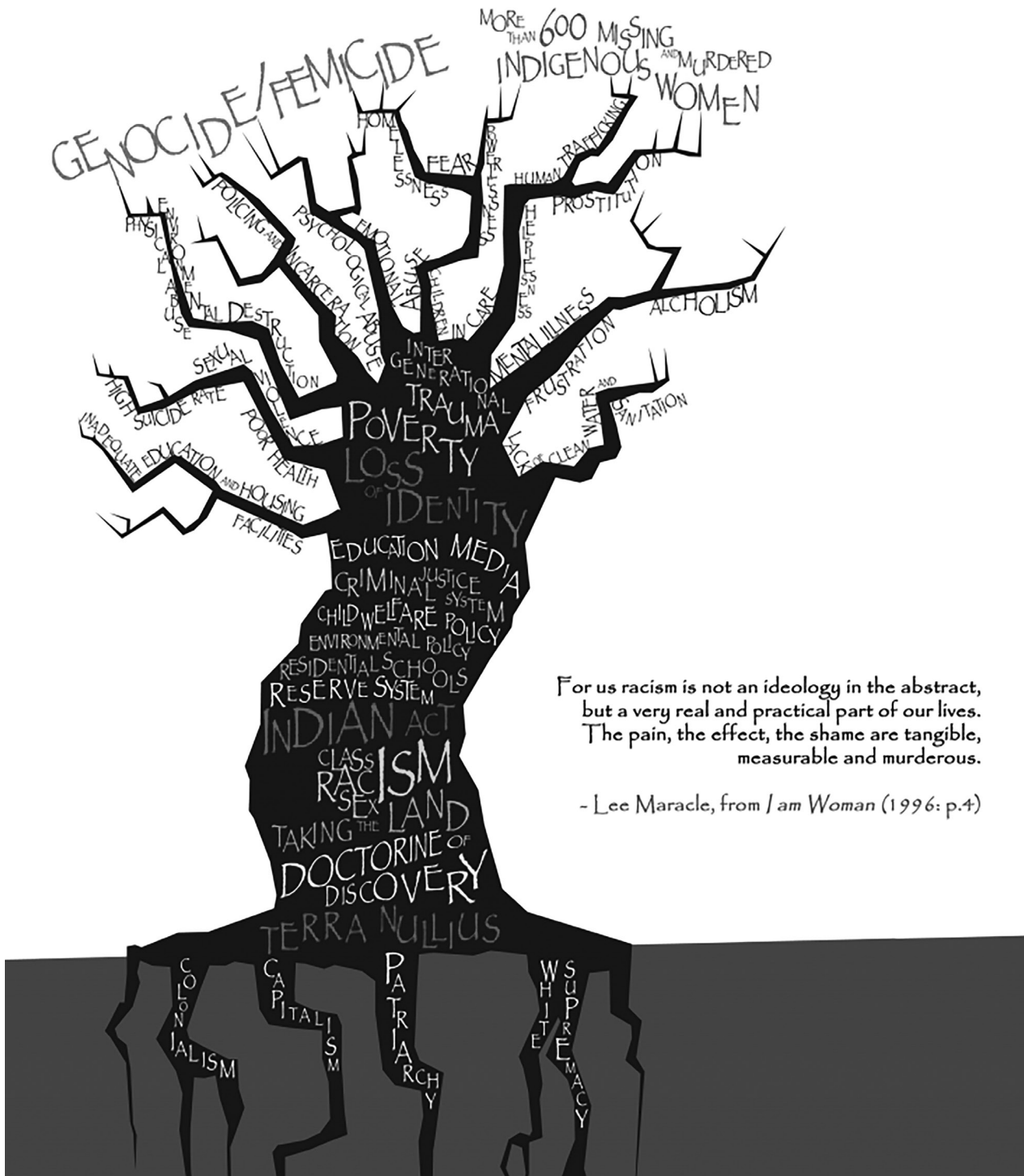
discrimination and
prejudice against people
living with disabilities

bias/prejudice against
or in favor of people
belonging to a
particular social class

a person's internal sense of being man, woman, some combination of man and woman or neither man nor woman (Merriam Webster Dictionary); which may or may not correspond with birth sex.

male chauvinism

Oppression Tree



3. Patriarchy in History

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand the long history (hundreds/thousands of years) of rulers teaching the idea of white male supremacy.
- Understand the connection between Christianity and patriarchy.
- Articulate their own histories of living in our gendered bodies and being socialized into ideas about our bodies and what that means for who we are, how we are treated and how we treat others.

TIME

1–2 hours, depending on group size and facilitators' discretion

FORMAT

- Interactive activities - as individuals, in pairs and in large group circle format
- Short lecture

TRAINING AIDS / PARTICIPANT MATERIALS

- Essay on the history of patriarchy and quotes for discussion
- Writing materials (paper, pens/pencils)
- Wall space and butcher paper or long roll of paper for timeline
- Large/small image as part of the participant materials
- A prayer or reading that is body positive

PROCEDURE

- Mini-lecture on the history of patriarchy and Christianity
- “Quotes for Discussion” (optional)

PATRIARCHY IN HISTORY

- Timeline of patriarchy
- Body love reflection and sharing
- Closing thoughts and prayer



MINI-LECTURE:

Cover the broad strokes of the accompanying essay. The essay will be background reading for the facilitator, and additional reading for any of the participants that want to go deeper into the history.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY:

Use the “Quotes for Discussion” (See Resources for Section Three.) to invite individual reflection on some of the themes in the essay. Choose one quote and consider the following questions:

- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the quotation? Why or why not?
- To what extent do you think this is true? Why or why not?
- What feelings/emotions does the statement elicit in you?
- If this statement is still true, how does this express itself in society?

TIMELINE OF PATRIARCHY:

The group will create a timeline together of patriarchy’s history and signs of resistance. Write significant events in history and invite participants to add their own. In a different color include examples/instances of resistance (in **bold** below); invite participants to add their own.

Note for facilitators: We recommend this be done on large pieces of paper (e.g. butcher paper) taped to the wall or on a large surface such as a whiteboard.

- Laws that reinforce patriarchy – e.g. Hammurabi’s Code - and women considered to be property, unable to inherit land/family wealth
- **Five sisters (Malah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah) seek inheritance rights from Moses**
- Imposition of a male monotheistic, transcendent God

PATRIARCHY IN HISTORY

- Mind/reason/spirit considered superior to body/passion/earth
- **Many provisions in the Mosaic covenant insist on care for widows, orphans and strangers**
- Mary Magdalene and other women disciples whose stories are lost in church history
- **Mary, Jesus' mother, expresses great faith in God (e.g. the Magnificat); and women join Jesus' movement as disciples and friends.**
- **Jesus makes Mary Magdalene the first apostle to the apostles**
- Systems of domination and colonialism, e.g. Doctrine of Discovery
- **Resistance by indigenous and enslaved peoples**
- Industrialization took men out of the home and into the public sphere. Women's place was in the home – where they were considered 'safe'
- Witch hunts – thousands of women were killed.
- Language – in English “man” meaning “human”
- **Women organize for the right to vote, finally granted in the U.S. in 1920.**
- **Women insist on more inclusive language**
- **Introduction of intersectionality into feminist thought**

Debrief this exercise, allowing people to look at the timeline and then discuss in the large group, answering these questions:

- What do you see? What do you notice? What's missing?
- What do you have a question about?
- What is the impact on people and their communities?
- How does the system of patriarchy work?

BODY LOVE:

Facilitator introduces the session by explaining how Christianity is an embodied faith. We participate in rituals that use our bodies (prayer, communion, singing, baptism, etc.), and we worship a God who took on human flesh and was born from a woman's body. Jesus cared a lot about our body's physical needs, for food, healing and caring touch; and interacted with women in ways that broke protocol in their cultural context.

Participants are given the prompt “What I love about my body”; they then write for five (strictly timed) minutes. This should be something they are comfortable sharing with another person. When the five minutes are up, participants share with a partner what they wrote. They may also

PATRIARCHY IN HISTORY

share how it felt to answer the question – was it easy? Had they ever thought about this before? What does it mean to “love” one’s body?

Note for facilitators:

For this activity please be mindful about the note on safety and self-disclosure in the introduction to the curriculum. As the facilitator, please be careful tending to group dynamics all the way through. Participants should be assured throughout the curriculum that they can make decisions about self-disclosure – no one should ever feel forced to share anything they don’t want to share. Also, confidentiality should be part of the group’s agreements with one another.

Closing prayer or reading that is body positive. (See Resources for Section Three.)

RESOURCES FOR SECTION THREE

Linda Gehman Peachey, “On the History of Patriarchy”

Quotes for Discussion

Prayers

ON THE HISTORY OF PATRIARCHY AND SEXISM

BY LINDA GEHMAN PEACHEY

In thinking about the roots of patriarchy and where this dynamic of male supremacy comes from, many see this arising out of a male rejection of and separation from the mother (and nature). For example, in *Sexism and God-Talk*, Rosemary Radford Reuther ties this history to male puberty rites, since these traditions take men out of the sphere of the mother's influence. (73)

In *Remembering Esperanza*, Mark Kline Taylor emphasizes that this impulse of defining male maturation in terms of separation from the mother not only tends to make women inferior, but it also makes women into monsters, who need to be subdued, muted and controlled. (105) For example, he observes that in many ancient creation accounts, the mythology implies that "the Mother is the primal threat, generating in men, it seems, a matrophobia, a terror of maternal power." (106) The message then is that "Women's reproductive powers should not be seen as laden with divine good power but are an evil force requiring a subordination of women that entails even the multiplying of female pain." (107)

Reuther goes on to speak of male monotheism as a construct of a male ruling class which split reality into "a dualism of transcendent Spirit (mind/ego) and inferior and dependent nature." (54) Prior to this, there had been a more unified view of reality as a matrix, in which all beings, Gods and humans, existed together. But in this new understanding, men identified themselves with a transcendent God image, and women and nature were to be tamed and conquered. (47)

In this understanding, primal matter becomes the "lower pole in the hierarchy of being. Thus the hierarchy of God-male-female does not merely make woman secondary in relation to God, it also gives her a negative identity in relation to the divine. Whereas the male is seen essentially as the image of the male transcendent ego or God, woman is seen as the image of the lower, material nature. Although both are seen as 'mixed natures,' the male identity points 'above' and the female 'below.' Gender becomes a primary symbol for the dualism of transcendence and immanence, spirit and matter." (54) This helps to explain why there is such opposition and even irrational

resistance to speaking of God in female terms.

Reuther argues that the result of these impulses was to burden women with the most tedious work (freeing men to be the definers of culture and law), and to silence women, and make them the object rather than the subjects of society. “Male transcendence is defined as flight from and warfare against the realm of the mother, the realm of body and nature, all that limits and confines rather than being controlled by the human (male).” (75)

Taylor notes that these impulses were made even more severe with Aristotle and Greek philosophy, so that “The monster making and muting, or the monster making/monster slaying of women viewed as ‘wild’ because of their reproductive powers, has been described as one of the founding metaphors of Western civilization.” (109)

Reuther concurs, noting that at the end of the Greco-Roman era, “Late-antique culture is obsessed with the fear of mortality, of corruptibility. To be born in the flesh is already to be subject to change, which is a devolution toward decay and death. ... All that sustains physical life — sex, eating, reproduction, even sleep — comes to be seen as sustaining the realm of ‘death,’ against which a realm of consciousness has been abstracted as the realm of ‘true life.’ Women, as representatives of sexual reproduction and motherhood, are the bearers of death, from which male spirit must flee to ‘light and life.’” (79-80)

Sally McFague points out that this disdain for the body, and especially certain kinds of bodies, led further to a disregard for the work they do. Since men’s work is associated with the mind, “we favor jobs requiring mental activity over those requiring bodily activity, especially those directly concerned with the body, such as cleaning up after it, feeding it, washing its clothes (the so-called dirty work). Moreover, body work is disdained because it is associated with women and certain races and classes; white, upper-class males seldom do it.” (114-115)

Kelly Brown Douglas emphasizes the negative impact of these body-denying impulses in *What’s Faith Got to Do with It? Black Bodies/Christian Souls*. Indeed, she argues that as Christianity became wedded to this platonic tradition, it led to the very denial of its message.

This happened especially under Augustine, who took Paul’s tendencies toward celibacy and embrace of self-denial (especially of the body’s needs) and made sexual desire the epitome of sin. His theology “considered sexual desire nothing less than diabolical and a reflection of humanity’s

fallen state. Clearly influenced by platonic dualism, Augustine argued that the body with its passions was always to be subjugated to the soul with its rationality. Sexual desire was considered a sign of the body's rebellion against the rule of reason." (35)

This led to severing "sexual intimacy from intimate relationality. ... It is rendered an object of either procreation or lust, again precluding the possibility of sexual intimacy as an expression of human love." (37)

Further, sexuality then became a way to oppress people. She notes that according to Foucault, sexuality "is the axis where the human body and reproduction come together. Power can thus be exerted over a people through careful regulation of their bodies, their perceptions of their bodies, and their reproductive capacities." Sexuality thus becomes a means for maintaining unjust power, by distinguishing between groups of people. (51)

In a Platonized Christianity, sexual deviance is not just sinful but demonic: "Inasmuch as certain peoples are sexualized, they are God's enemies. Essentially, a circular logic functioned to allow Christians to discern the enemies of God. Lustful sexuality was a sign of God's enemies, at the same time that God's enemies were characterized as lustfully sexual." (51)

Because Platonized Christianity sexualizes marginalized peoples, "it leaves those who have been sexually demonized susceptible to being sacrificed even as it leaves its adherents vulnerable to becoming the sacrificers." (68)

Referring to the work of Orlando Patterson, Douglas concurs that since black people were seen as having "a sinful and satanic/ nature, the lynching of black people became for white southerners equivalent to casting out Satan from their midst." (65-66) In this way, the cross of the Ku Klux Klan "'became identified with the crucifixion of the Negro, the dominant symbol of the Southern Euro-American supremacist's civil religion.'" (66)

Douglas shows how Platonized Christianity is really a heresy. "Since the crucifixion initially showed God's solidarity with victims of coercive state power, the fact that it came to align itself with such power shows that it is 'anti-Christ.'" (73)

Further, since it "denounces the body, it betrays Christianity's incarnational identity." (73) Indeed, the incarnation made clear "that the body, far from being intrinsically evil, is what potentially

participates in making the ways of God known in human history. In other words, the mark of one's humanity (i.e., body) is not offensive to God, but is taken on by God so that the fullness of God may be revealed." (76)

Taylor, in his chapter 4, "Seeing Connections," endeavors to understand the connections between various types of oppressions:

- Hetero-realism: leads to "alienation from passionate and intimate relationships with persons of one's own gender, and second, by alienation from one's own gendered body and sexuality." (115)
- Classism: relates to the way in which androcentric models involve abstraction from materiality, and a process of making all things into commodities. Thus, "abstraction from materiality becomes an abuse of materiality, because care and attention are spent in the abstracted world of exchange, while relations to the material world become a matter of taking from it to replenish the world of exchange." (128)
- Racism: refers to European color symbolism that equates blackness with all things bad. But even more so, he asserts that there was also a "denial and repression of whatever Europeans find threatening in themselves." (140)
 - Connects to sexism in that those who are 'black' are made into monsters, who, like women, must be slain. (141ff)
 - Connects to classism in the abstraction of oneself from the earth and one's own 'excrement' — e.g. referring to Kovell, he summarizes that "The love of property and the drives to accumulate are (and here Kovell not only expands his analysis of the anal phase) efforts to gain back the loved part of one's excrement, only in a whitened and gilded (gold) form." (146)

"If Kovell is right, the rage and hostility of whites toward blacks, expressed systemically in both dominative and aversive racist structures is also rage and hostility toward our own matrix. ... The abstracting from the mother, from the infant-mother symbiosis that is a matrix from which we never really become totally free, not only involves the continual subordination of women to men celebrated in various mythologies of the dismembering of Tiamat (sexism); it also involves the alienation of women and men from intimate friendship with their own gender and from being at home with their own bodies (hetero-realism), the alienation of women and men from just distribution of the

earth's goods (classism), and further, the systemic dismemberment of black men and women's bodies and lives (racism)." (147)

Taylor then summarizes that "a key theme pertaining to connections between oppressions has been that of abstraction: abstracting from the woman/mother in sexism, from the body and same-gender friendships in hetero-realism; from one's self and finitude in racism; from the earth and a sharing of its resources in classism." (243)

One example of the results of this kind of abstraction can be observed in what happened with the advent of writing. As Gerda Lerner has pointed out, writing gave more power to the elite to govern and determine sacred knowledge. It also permitted a move toward "worship of the power of abstraction, which can become a means of controlling illiterate masses." (See Rita Nakashima Brock, "Christology and Eros" in *Creating Women's Theology*, 106.)

Reuther also notes the dynamics of projection which results in distinguishing between one's own group and leads to exploiting the "other." "Projection externalizes the sense of inadequacy and negativity from the dominant group, making the other the cultural 'carrier' of these rejected qualities. The dominant group can then rationalize exploitation as the right to reduce the other to a servile condition, (to) abuse, and even kill them on the grounds of their lesser value." (162)

For her, this constitutes the fundamental nature of sin: "This very process of false naming and exploitation constitutes the fundamental distortion and corruption of human relationality. Evil comes about precisely by the distortion of the self-other relationship into the good-evil, superior-inferior dualism. The good potential of human nature then is to be sought primarily in conversion to relationality." (163)

Again, she summarizes: "Sexism as sin centers on distorted relationality. The objectification of women as bearers of repressed and negative parts of the male psyche involves the distortion of the being of both males and females. Men fail to integrate into their own identity those repressed capacities which they project onto women. Women, in turn, are denied those capacities for autonomous selfhood, decision making, and critical intelligence monopolized by males." (174)

The end result means there is no capacity for true communication and relationships: "Because each lacks an individuated self, there is no genuine person-to-person communication between them. He reduces her to the body that services his domestic and sexual needs but with whom he

does not communicate. She experiences the slow soul-starvation of communication denial.” (174) Reuther says that sexism also distorts male humanity, as men have not “succeeded in actualizing a humanity that we (women) should generally want to emulate. ... The distortion of males in macho-masculine culture permits both a ravaging of relationships and an insensitivity to this ravaging.” (178)

Referring to the work of Daniel Maguire, Reuther lists the following as the evil of this macho-masculinity: violence, hierarchical and anticomunitarian bias, abstractionism, consequentialism and misogyny. “Whether it is women, land, or ideas, the normal male mode of relationship is one of conquer or be conquered, dominate or be dominated.” (179) In the end, although women might be more victimized, female existence is “less dehumanized.” (180)

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Brock, Rita Nakashima, “Christology and Eros,” in *Creating Women’s Theology: A Movement Engaging Process Thought*, ed. Monica A. Coleman, Nancy R. Howell, and Helene Tallon Russell. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011.

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McFague, Sally, “Eco-feminism and Nature” in *Creating Women’s Theology: A Movement Engaging Process Thought*, ed. Monica A. Coleman, Nancy R. Howell, and Helene Tallon Russell. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011.

Reuther, Rosemary Radford, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*. Beacon Press, 1993.

Taylor, Mark Kline, *Remembering Esperanza: A Cultural-Political Theology for North American Praxis*. Orbis Books, 1990.

Prayers

BLESSING THE BODY

by Jan Richardson

This blessing takes
one look at you
and all it can say is
Holy.

Holy hands,
Holy face,
Holy feet.
Holy everything
in between.

Holy even in pain.
Holy even when weary,
In brokenness, holy,
In shame, holy still.

Holy in delight.
Holy in distress.
Holy when being born.
Holy when we lay it down
at the hour of our death.

So, friend,
open your eyes
(*holy eyes*).
For one moment
see what this blessing sees,

PATRIARCHY IN HISTORY

this blessing that knows
how you have been formed
and knit together
in wonder and
in love.

Welcome this blessing
that holds its hands
in prayer
when it meets you;
receive this blessing
that wants to kneel
in reverence
before you;
you who are
temple,
sanctuary,
home for God
in this world.

*-from Third Sunday in Lent 2012,
The Painted Prayerbook.
(online blog)*

MOTHER GOD

by The Rev. Alma Terese Beck

Sovereign God, Mother of the Universe, you alone are my nourishment and salvation. Nurse me at your breast, fill me with your Spirit, and like a she-bear with her cub, protect with your awesome power and might.

SPIRIT STROKE

by The Rev. Diane Moore

Holy Spirit
Unexplainable in words
Yet WORD here experienced.

God-verbbed

Humanity sensing
Movement
Breath
Presence...

Here-Now-Today
Flutter of comfort

In my sorrow
Inner affirmation
In my turmoil
Enfolding warmth
In my being
Nudging me
Into myself

Presence
Inexplicable
Ineffable
Indescribable
Yet invisibly present
Cloud of murmurs wafting WORD

I know Spirit surging...
Soft enfolding...
Breath of wingtips
Whisper love
Flowing otherness
And I yield...
Melting anxiety

PATRIARCHY IN HISTORY

Ultimate God Centered-ness

I am whole-wombed SHE

Born in expiration,

Born through inspiration

Born in exhalation

Becoming EXULTATION...

Of the one "I AM"

Both from Women's Uncommon Prayers, Our Lives Revealed, Nurtured, Celebrated, (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2000), p. 220-221.

THIS IS MY HOUSE

by Frances Crowhill Miller

This is my house, this is my home

This temple is holy, it's where I belong

It is my foundation, where spirit meets breath

Where waters are flowing, where I find my rest

Been too many years I've lived without home

Believing the story that I don't belong

But I have discovered my own flesh and blood

My gateway to everything, my expression of love

Come home to your body, despite the scorn

hurled at us through history, come find your own

Beyond the lies, the fear and deceit

Your body is sacred, your body is sweet

Takes years to unlearn the things we've been told

Like we were created to live in man's world

PATRIARCHY IN HISTORY

to nurture others while nurture is good
it's only one aspect of true womanhood

So come home to your body, come home and be
one with creation, creator at ease.
Follow the pathways, that only you know,
Into the center, where flesh meets the soul

From CMW Journal. Center for Mennonite Writing. 2014. <https://mennonitewriting.org/journal/6/3/Frances-Miller-My-Home/>

#136, SING THE STORY

Giver of life,
Bearer of pain,
Maker of love,
affirming in your incarnation
the goodness of the flesh,
may the yearnings of our bodies
be fulfilled in sacraments of love,
and our earthly embracings
be a foretaste of the pleasure
that shall be,
in the glory
of the resurrection body
of Jesus Christ. AMEN.

Reading from Sing the Story. Faith & Life Resources, 2007.

SHALOM: A PRAYER FROM MANY SPIRITUAL SOURCES TO BEGIN AND END THE DAY

by Elizabeth Kaeton

Let me be at peace within myself,
Let me accept that I am profoundly loved and
need never be afraid.
Let me be aware of the Source of Being that is common to us all
and to all living creatures.
Let me be filled with the presence of the Great Compassion
toward myself and toward
all living beings.
Let me always be an instrument of my own liberation and
not of my own oppression,
Let me see the face of Jesus in others.
Let me be the face of Jesus for others.
Let me be at peace within myself. Amen.

From Women's Uncommon Prayers, Our Lives Revealed, Nurtured, Celebrated. (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2000), 23.

Quotes for Discussion

“The Mother is the primal threat, generating in men, it seems, a matrophobia, a terror of maternal power.” (Taylor, 106)

“Male transcendence is defined as flight from and warfare against the realm of the mother, the realm of body and nature, all that limits and confines rather than being controlled by the human (male).” (Reuther, 75)

“Whereas the male is seen essentially as the image of the male transcendent ego or God, woman is seen as the image of the lower, material nature.” (Reuther, 54)

“The body with its passions should always be subjugated to the soul with its rationality. Sexual desire is a sign of the body’s rebellion against the rule of reason.” (Douglas, in describing Augustine’s theology, 35)

Western Christianity has often sexualized marginalized peoples, leaving “those who have been sexually demonized susceptible to being sacrificed even as it leaves its adherents vulnerable to becoming the sacrificers.” (Douglas, 68)

Heterosexism leads to “alienation from passionate and intimate relationships with persons of one’s own gender, and second, by alienation from one’s own gendered body and sexuality.” (Taylor, 115)

European color symbolism equates blackness with all things bad. But even more so, there is also a “denial and repression of whatever Europeans find threatening in themselves.” (Taylor, 140)

“Projection externalizes the sense of inadequacy and negativity from the dominant group, making the other the cultural ‘carrier’ of these rejected qualities. The dominant group can then rationalize exploitation as the right to reduce the other to a servile condition, abuse, and even kill them on the grounds of their lesser value.” (Reuther, 162)

A key theme pertaining to connections between oppressions is that of *abstraction*: “abstracting from the woman/mother in sexism, from the body and same-gender friendships in hetero-realism; from one’s self and finitude in racism; from the earth and a sharing of its resources in classism.” (Taylor, 243)

”

4. Patriarchy Is Alive and Well

OBJECTIVES

Participants will explore intersectionality and patriarchy's current incarnation in our society. Participants will hear stories and name lived experiences with patriarchy, adding leaves to the "patriarchy tree" to identify what it looks like in current times.

TIME

1.5 hours

FORMAT

- Interactive activities
- Large circle set up
- Conversational circles set up with flip chart paper and markers

TRAINING AIDS / PARTICIPANT MATERIALS

- Video of Kimberlé Crenshaw discussing intersectionality
- Screen
- Projector
- Patriarchy tree visual
- Leaves template
- Flip chart paper and markers
- Participant's Workbook

PROCEDURE

- Have participants sit in large circle
- Facilitator(s) introduces theme for section

PATRIARCHY IS ALIVE AND WELL

- Video: Intersectionality and Patriarchy
 - “The Urgency of Intersectionality” by Kimberlé Crenshaw, TedWomen 2016.
- Current realities of patriarchy and our stories
 - Patriarchy Tree - looking at roots and leaves
 - Storytelling - hearing testimonies (excerpts of stories submitted)
- Closing



CURRENT REALITIES OF PATRIARCHY AND OUR STORIES

Intersectionality and Patriarchy

- Watch “The “Urgency of Intersectionality” by Kimberlé Crenshaw.
- Invite participants to journal their feelings, responses, what they heard and saw in the video. (Option: use the journal page in participant manual to write/reflect.)

CURRENT REALITIES AND IMPORTANCE OF STORIES

Facilitator(s) introduce the patriarchy tree activity

- Use tree outline and ask participants to write examples of how patriarchy is evident in our culture and world. Write these items on the trunk and branches of the tree. Then hand out “leaves” (two per participant) and have participants write one incident per leaf of when they experienced or observed patriarchy (systemic) and/or sexism (interpersonal).
- Have participants share their incidents from their leaves and facilitators should place the leaves on the correlating/appropriate branches.

Hand out excerpts from submitted testimonials (See resources from Section 4.) and select participants to read them out loud to the group. Ask participants to listen to these excerpts of stories with compassion, paying attention to how these stories connect with your own.

Facilitator(s) will summarize the group’s work in identifying current realities of patriarchy in our society.

CLOSING

RESOURCES FOR SECTION FOUR

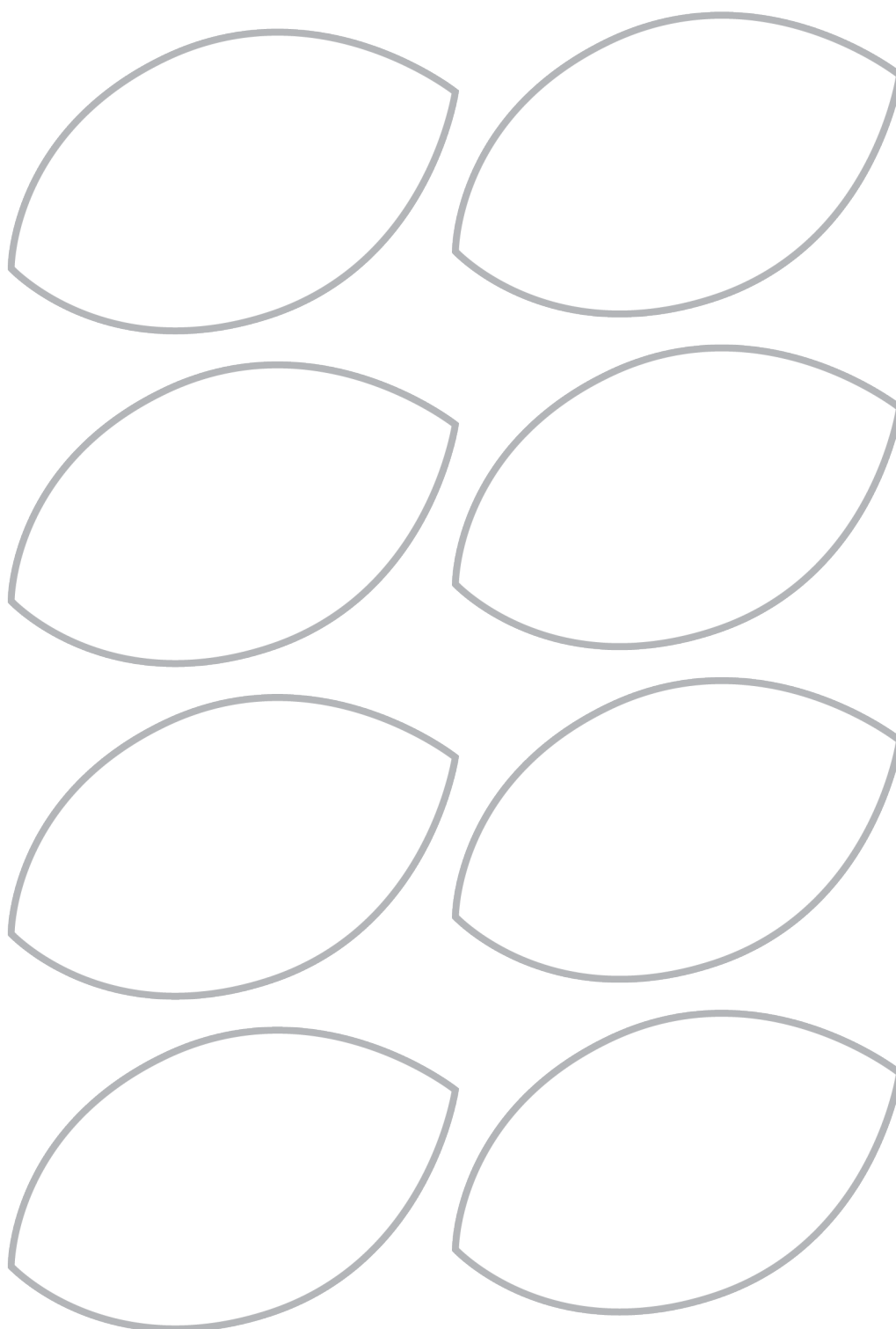
Kimberlé Crenshaw, “The “Urgency of Intersectionality.” TedWomen, 2016. Video. 18.50 min.
https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality

Leaf template

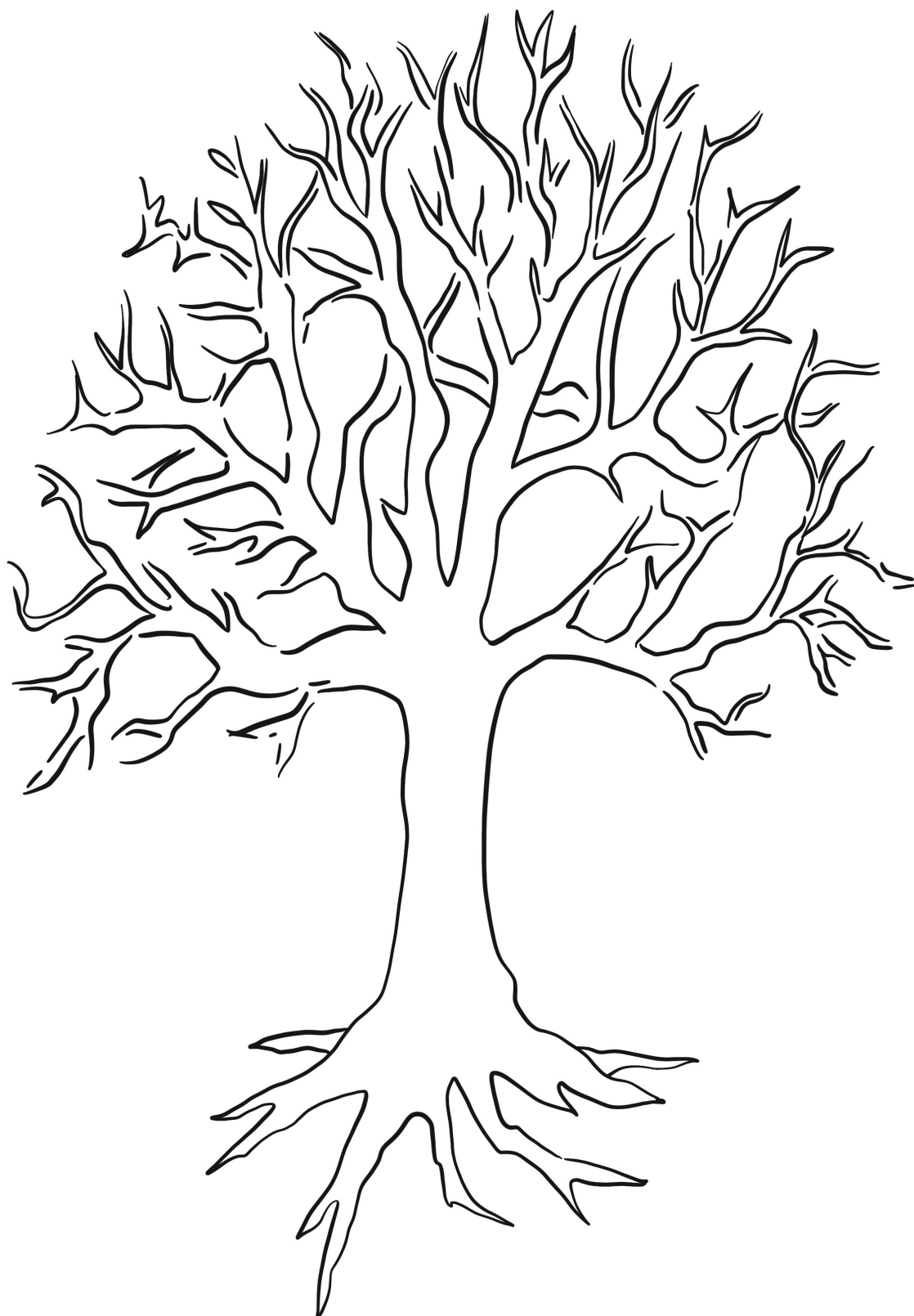
Patriarchy tree outline

Excerpts of testimonies

PATRIARCHY IS ALIVE AND WELL



PATRIARCHY IS ALIVE AND WELL



Testimonials

“Have I told you my boot story? I have these amazing knee-high boots with three-inch heels that I often wear in the winter. I have had so many inappropriate comments from men and women, particularly when I’m leading [a worship service]. One woman asked me about my “hooker” boots. One man asked me if I wore these boots because they made my butt look nice. It’s not the worst story you’ll hear by any stretch, but I’m always very conscious of clothing as a female pastor for these reasons.”

“My supervisor — as pastor — accused me of imposing my “pet issue” onto the youth in the congregation when I developed a Sunday school curriculum designed to help youth think about faith, theology, the Bible, and issues of sexual vitality and violence. My boss knew I was a sexual assault survivor and thought my decision to address the subject with the congregation’s youth was self-serving.”

“At the college campus where I was campus pastor, my ministry team consisted entirely of men. My boss would absolutely flip if he was not in charge. Often, when I tried to lead, he would take over, saying my leadership style was “no leadership style at all.” I was often told that my relational style wasn’t professional. I wasn’t allowed to serve communion.”

“I had a church job focused on addressing issues of gender and oppression. I was tasked with putting together a set of worship resources for undoing patriarchy. When I had done all the work and was finished, my male boss made an executive decision not to promote the resources because he wanted to avoid alienating conservative parts of the church.”

“I am a survivor of sexual violence. I have pastoral, administrative, academic, and advocacy experience in matters of theology, trauma, and sexual violence. At one point, the place I worked put together a team to process a way forward regarding an issue of sexual abuse. I let my superiors know I would be open to participating. I was not invited to be a member of the team. Instead, I was asked to be the team’s

notetaker. My role would be to attend meetings, document what was discussed, but refrain from contributing. I was told this would be an opportunity for me to grow and learn from those with more wisdom. Aware that I had more experience and knowledge in this field than some of the others invited onto the team, that my expertise was not being recognized or respected, and that it would feel awful to sit through these meetings in silence, I declined.”

“I moved to another (more conservative) state to start my ministry. I felt suspect as I began the licensing process with the local Mennonite conference, being a single woman coming from “the West.” I didn’t even know that where I was from could be considered “the West.” The person who was assigned to me to “guide” me before my licensing was an older white man who made sure to let me know his wife had just felt called to remove her head covering a few months ago. He assured me he had “no problem” with women in ministry, he was just in “unfamiliar territory.” He flipped when I said I didn’t agree with what the Confession of Faith said about marriage being between one man and one woman. He had to take my credentials to a committee. It took three hours for the deciding body (made up of mostly white men) to process my licensing, but after that they reluctantly gave me my license. The conference minister (a white man) made sure to tell me that ‘this was a close one.’ ”

“I experienced sexual harassment in the church I grew up in, both as a kid and as an adult. The boys in the youth group once beat my arms so badly, I literally couldn’t raise them up high enough to dress myself the next day. It was considered an accident, “all in good fun.” One of those boys once climbed into my bunk during youth camp, put his hand up under my shirt and felt my breasts— all while maintaining eye contact with the two youth sponsors who were hanging out with the other youth on the floor of the cabin.”

“I was sexually assaulted as a Mennonite seminary student, on campus, by another Mennonite seminary student. The school treated the assault as a matter of irresponsible and unfortunate — but mutual — sex between two well-meaning students.

”

5. Patriarchy Affects Us All — Men Too!

OBJECTIVES

Participants will identify visible and invisible examples of patriarchy and sexism in a variety of contexts (home, church, community, school). In affinity groups, participants will unpack the messages our society uses to shape our gender identities through the lens of intersectional oppression. They will identify sources and outcomes of those messages, as well as who benefits from them and who is harmed by them. They will identify specific ways that sexism and patriarchy have both systemically and individually hurt men as well as women. They will name specific ways women participate in patriarchy.

TIME

1.5 hours

FORMAT

- Interactive activities
- Large circle set up
- Two separate enclosed spaces for affinity groups

TRAINING AIDS / PARTICIPANT MATERIALS

- Participant's Workbook
- Male facilitator(s)
- Large (half-sheet of paper) sized sticky notes
- Markers
- Flip chart paper
- Projector
- Film trailers - "The Mask We Live In" and "Miss Representation"
- Screen

PROCEDURE

- Have participants sit on chairs in a circle.
- Facilitator(s) introduce the section theme
- Group Activity - Patriarchy: Visible & Invisible (Iceberg)
- Introduce affinity groups and process.
 - Note the limitations of binary affinity groups.
- Divide into affinity groups (three groups: men, women of color and white/dominant-culture women) for discussion.
- Return to large group and review learnings from affinity group.
- Discuss: **How does patriarchy and sexism hurt men, women and society as a whole?**
- Introduce section and watch video.
- Pair sharing
- Closing process



GROUP ACTIVITY - PATRIARCHY: VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE

Transition the large group conversation into four smaller group conversation circles by having participants number off from 1 to 4 around the circle.

Participants move into smaller groups with the following societal areas noted at the top of each flip chart paper/section with a copy of the Patriarchy Iceberg (See Resources for Section Five).

- Church
- Home/Family
- Community
- Education/Schools

Facilitators explain: Patriarchy can manifest itself in visible ways. For example, only male leadership in churches or businesses, higher pay scales for men. Patriarchy can also manifest itself in invisible ways. For example, mindsets, beliefs and attitudes regarding women being the weaker gender, the belief regarding strength being symbolized by the ability to have power over someone else, or that it is not “manly” to cry or show strong emotions that would be considered “feminine.”

PATRIARCHY AFFECTS US ALL — MEN TOO

Groups will list the visible and invisible ways patriarchy is revealed or manifests itself within each of four sectors (Church, Home/Family, Community and Education/Schools).

Participants will return to the larger circle and each small group will present their findings for the larger group processing.

AFFINITY GROUPS: HOW DOES PATRIARCHY AND SEXISM HURT MEN, WOMEN AND SOCIETY AS A WHOLE?

Brief introduction to the purpose and role of affinity groups (provide resource to describe affinity groups).

- Affinity groups provide safer spaces for people to talk about how a certain dynamic and/or issue impacts them.
- Affinity groups allow for an opportunity for more open and honest dialogue away from those who may be perceived or experienced as participants/perpetrators of the dynamic and/or issue.

People who identify as men will meet in one room. People who identify as women of color will meet in one room, and people who identify as white/dominant culture women will meet in a third space. Ideally no more than fifteen (15) participants in each group.

Acknowledge that the activities from this section may have triggers and to remember the need for self-care.

Note that the limitation of binary gender affinity groups means that those who do not identify as either male or female will have to choose to participate in a group discussion where they do not feel they can completely relate. Invite participants to join a group that correlates with the public bathroom they choose when there isn't a neutral option.

Break into affinity groups and choose a facilitator for each group.

Discussion questions (for each facilitator to ask group):

PATRIARCHY AFFECTS US ALL — MEN TOO

- What are some messages our society tells us about what it means to be women?
- What are some messages our society tells us about what it means to be men?
- How do these messages shape us?
- Who benefits from these messages?
- How do these messages hurt us?

Have participants first write their responses on sticky notes and place on flip chart paper. Facilitator of each affinity group reads responses to whole group and then leads group discussion for each question. Spend about 10–15 minutes per question, for a total of one hour.

Large group processing:

Facilitator(s) welcome participants back to the large group space. Remind participants of confidentiality and that we will be discussing general themes and not specific statements. Remember to speak for yourself. Ask, How was the affinity group experience for you?

INTRODUCE VIDEOS

Introduce videos and watch the film trailers: “Miss Representation” and “The Mask You Live In.” See Resources for this Section.

Pair share: Turn to the person next to you and share one or two words that describe your feelings from the videos. Then ask, What thoughts or feelings come to mind in light of the clips we watched?

As a group, debrief and discuss messages we received about our genders. If intersectionality does not come up organically, facilitators should name that reality, drawing connections using examples from the real world (i.e. caricatures of Black, Asian or Latina women in the media). Facilitator(s) write down general themes and key points on flip chart paper.

CLOSING CEREMONY

Note to facilitator: This process/section is not about fixing or solving patriarchy and sexism but about creating a space to acknowledge and lament the impact of these systems. Finding solutions and strategies to resist will come later.

PATRIARCHY AFFECTS US ALL — MEN TOO

Have each person write down on an index card the personal ways they are impacted by and participate in patriarchy/sexism.

Invite participants to place their index cards at the central focal point/altar as a way of acknowledging ways we have bought into these systems and the pain that causes and creating a space to hold this together.

RESOURCES FOR SECTION FIVE

Patriarchy Iceberg

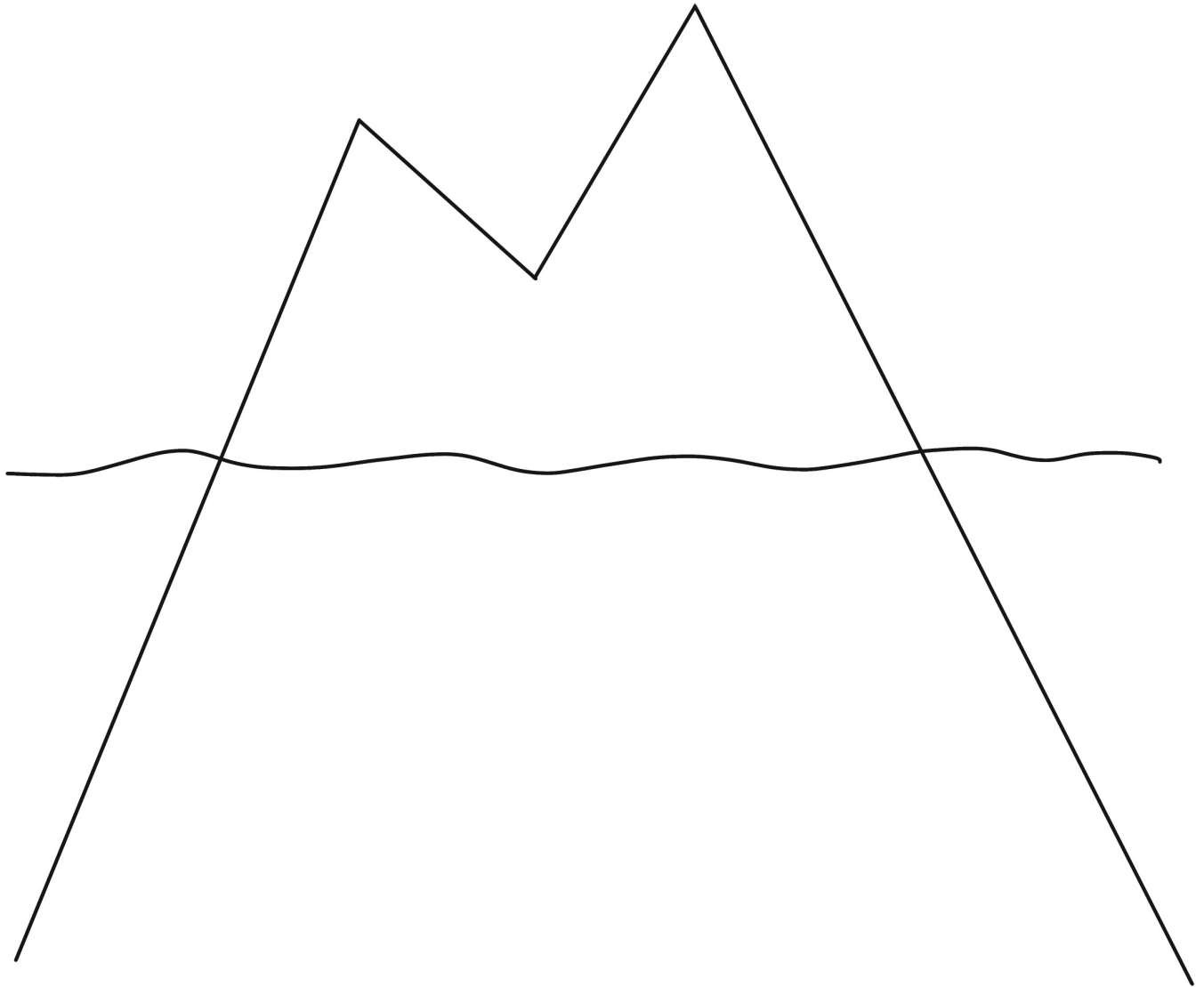
“The Mask You Live In.” Jennifer Siebel Newsom, producer. The Representation Project. Video trailer, YouTube. 3:09 min. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hc45-ptHMxo>

“Miss Representation” Jennifer Siebel Newsom, producer. The Representation Project. Video trailer, YouTube. 2:48 min. <http://therepresentationproject.org/film/miss-representation-film/>

Racial Identity caucusing strategy (PDF)

White caucus FAQ (PDF)

PATRIARCHY ICEBERG



What are visible expressions of patriarchy and what elements are invisible?

6. What Does the Bible Say?

OBJECTIVES

To explore and unpack what the Bible really says about women and debunk the myths that perpetuate patriarchy.

TIME

2 hours

FORMAT

Group work, small group conversation, large group conversation

TRAINING AIDS / PARTICIPANT MATERIALS

- Bibles
- Printed text that groups can mark up
- Poster paper or whiteboard
- Markers

PROCEDURE

- Divide participants into groups
- Assign each small group a passage from resources below
- Groups will read scripture texts and respond to assigned questions



BIBLE STUDY

Groups will be assigned and explore passages on women. Together, they'll read the passage(s) and prepare to present the women to the large group. In their presentations, they should focus on the following key questions:

- Who do you identify with in this/these passage(s)? Why?
- What messages do we receive through this/these passage(s)?
- What does it mean to be a man/woman based on this passage?
- Are the characters living fully into who they are? Why or why not?
What keeps them from it?
- What empowers them to live in the fullness of who they are?

As groups present, we'll keep a list of myths on a white paper/board and keep adding to it as we go. Some of the passages will not contain myth but, instead, will reveal insight that debunks myths that have been named. We'll have another piece of paper with TRUTH (or something like that) written on top).

Passages / Characters:

GENESIS 1

God creates the world in six days. Women and men are created in God's image and at the same time.

Additional Questions: How do women and men both reflect the image of God? Is order important in the story of Creation? Why or why not?

GENESIS 2

(This passage can be grouped with Psalms 40 and 70 if necessary.)

Genesis 2 states that it was not good for Adam to be alone and no other creature was found to be a fitting companion. God decided to create a "helper" suitable for him. In Hebrew the word *helper* is a strong, influential person rather than the English interpretation of "secondary."

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Who is helper here?

Additional Questions: What does it mean to be a helper?

PSALM 40 AND 70

(This passage can be grouped with Genesis 2 if necessary.)

Additional Question: Who is helper in these passages? How do you understand God's role as helper?

If it doesn't arise naturally, invite groups to think about the word ezer translated to helper here and in Genesis. Note that the same word used to describe woman is used to describe God.

GENESIS 3

(This passage can be grouped with Luke 1:26-56 if necessary.)

Eve has been used as a classic archetype of women.

Additional Questions: Describe Eve based on this passage. Name some characteristics that make her human. How has she been used as a symbol for what women should or should not be?

LUKE 1:26–56

(This passage can be grouped with Genesis 3 if necessary.)

Mary has been used as classic archetype of women.

Additional Questions: Describe Mary based on this passage. Name some characteristics that make her human. How has she been used as a symbol for what women should (not) be?

PSALM 131; ISAIAH 42:14, 49:15; ISAIAH 66:13; LUKE 13:34

While Jesus did refer to God as father, to perhaps emphasize a close and personal image of God (e.g. Psalms 68:5 and 103:13), Scripture also uses feminine imagery to describe God.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Additional Question: Is it possible to think of God as both father and mother, man and woman?

MARK 5:21–43

Jesus heals both the bleeding woman and the dead girl.

LUKE 13:10–17

Jesus heals the crippled woman on the Sabbath.

JOHN 4:1–42

Jesus offers the woman from Samaria living water.

MATTHEW 15:21–28

Jesus is moved to act by the Canaanite woman.

JOHN 20:1–18

Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene.

SONG OF SOLOMON 4; 1 TIMOTHY 2:8–15; 1 PETER 3:1–7; PROVERBS 31:10–31

Additional questions: What do we learn about women's bodies from these passages?

Note to facilitator: this conversation should lead to a discussion on how women's bodies are both celebrated and condemned in the scriptures and which narrative the church has chosen to lift up.

After all groups have presented, participants will journal about any/all of the following questions:

- Talk about a new insight that surprised you.
- Which passage challenged you during this activity?
- Which of these myths have you been told, or have you told yourself?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

RESOURCES FOR SECTION SIX

Linda Gehman Peachey, “Created Equal.” 2009. (pdf) <https://mcc.org/sites/mcc.org/files/media/common/documents/createdequalenglishwebversion.pdf>

Melissa Florer-Bixler, “A Woman of Strength.”

Bible passages with questions handouts

A WOMAN OF STRENGTH

by Melissa Florer-Bixler

A woman of strength: who can find her? She is like a precious ruby.

When her spouse is forced to fight in the army, when she's all alone to work and take care of her family, he knows that she'll be all right.

She makes good things happen even when there doesn't seem to be enough.

She creates with her hands and starts her own business, trading for what she needs.

She gets up early to work. She makes sure everyone is fed and that the people who work for her know just what to do.

She decides what other kinds of business she wants to do; if she wants to plant fruit trees she does it herself.

She cinches strength around her like a belt and makes her arms strong.

She can tell what people want to buy because she understands the world she lives in and what people need. She's always paying attention.

She's aware that others need help because times are hard, and she reaches out to give to those who are hungry.

She has more than enough and she takes care of her family.

Her clothes are strength and dignity, she thinks about the future and laughs, even though times are so hard.

She's smart and kind. She knows what needs to be done in this time when a foreign army has taken over her country.

Her family can see that it makes her happy that she's figured out what to do. She shows everyone that God's people will survive and thrive, no matter what.

It's one thing to have it easy, to get by with life handing you everything you need.

But a woman like this, a woman who keeps going with God's promises, a woman who finds a way even when things are at the worst — she's the one you want to be like.

Section 6: What does the Bible say?

GENESIS 1:26-31 NRSV

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them
male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Key Questions:

- Who do you identify with in this passage? And why/how?
- What message do we receive through this passage?
- What does it mean to be a man/woman based on this passage?
- Are the characters living fully into who they are? How? If not, what keeps them from living fully into who they are?
- What empowers them to live in the fullness of who they are?
- How do women and men both reflect the image of God?
- Is order important in the story of creation? Why or why not?

Section 6: What does the Bible say?

GENESIS 2 NRSV

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.” So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
this one shall be called Woman,
for out of Man this one was taken.”

Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

Key Questions:

- Who do you identify with in this passage? And why/how?
- What message do we receive through this passage?
- What does it mean to be a man/woman based on this passage?
- Are the characters living fully into who they are? How? If not, what keeps them from living fully into who they are?
- What empowers them to live in the fullness of who they are?
- Who is helper in these passages?
- How do you understand helper in this passage? What does it mean to be a helper?

Section 6: What does the Bible say?

PSALM 40 & 70

PSALM 40 NRSV

I waited patiently for the Lord;
he inclined to me and heard my cry.
He drew me up from the desolate pit,
out of the miry bog,
and set my feet upon a rock,
making my steps secure.
He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear,
and put their trust in the Lord.

Happy are those who make
the Lord their trust,
who do not turn to the proud,
to those who go astray after false gods.
You have multiplied, O Lord my God,
your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us;
none can compare with you.
Were I to proclaim and tell of them,
they would be more than can be counted.

Sacrifice and offering you do not desire,
but you have given me an open ear.
Burnt offering and sin offering
you have not required.
Then I said, "Here I am;
in the scroll of the book it is written of me
I delight to do your will, O my God;
your law is within my heart."

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

I have told the glad news of deliverance
in the great congregation;
see, I have not restrained my lips,
as you know, O Lord.
I have not hidden your saving help within my heart,
I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;
I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness
from the great congregation.

Do not, O Lord, withhold
your mercy from me;
let your steadfast love and your faithfulness
keep me safe forever.
For evils have encompassed me
without number;
my iniquities have overtaken me,
until I cannot see;
they are more than the hairs of my head,
and my heart fails me.

Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me;
O Lord, make haste to help me.
Let all those be put to shame and confusion
who seek to snatch away my life;
let those be turned back and brought to dishonor
who desire my hurt.
Let those be appalled because of their shame
who say to me, "Aha, Aha!"

But may all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who love your salvation
say continually, "Great is the Lord!"
As for me, I am poor and needy,

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

but the Lord takes thought for me.
You are my help and my deliverer;
do not delay, O my God.

PSALM 70:5 NRSV

Be pleased, O God, to deliver me.
O Lord, make haste to help me!
Let those be put to shame and confusion
who seek my life.
Let those be turned back and brought to dishonor
who desire to hurt me.
Let those who say, “Aha, Aha!”
turn back because of their shame.

Let all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you.
Let those who love your salvation
say evermore, “God is great!”
But I am poor and needy;
hasten to me, O God!
You are my help and my deliverer;
O Lord, do not delay!

Key Questions:

- Who do you identify with in these passages? And why/how?
- What message do we receive through these passages?
- What does it mean to be a man/woman based on these passages?
- Are the characters living fully into who they are? How? If not, what keeps them from living fully into who they are?
- What empowers them to live in the fullness of who they are?
- How do you understand help in this passage?
- Who is help in these passages?
- What does it mean to be a help in these passages?

Section 6: What does the Bible say?

GENESIS 3 NRSV

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” He said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.” Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent tricked me, and I ate.” The LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,
cursed are you among all animals
and among all wild creatures;
upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel.”

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

To the woman he said,
“I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children,
yet your desire shall be for your husband,
and he shall rule over you.”

And to the man he said,
“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,
and have eaten of the tree
about which I commanded you,
‘You shall not eat of it,’
cursed is the ground because of you;
in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread
until you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.”

The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living. And the LORD God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them.

Then the LORD God said, “See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”— therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life.

Key Questions:

- Who do you identify with in this passage? And why/how?
- What message do we receive through this passage?
- What does it mean to be a man/woman based on this passage?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

- Are the characters living fully into who they are? How? If not, what keeps them from living fully into who they are?
- What empowers them to live in the fullness of who they are?
- Describe Eve based on this passage.
- Name characteristics that make her human.
- How have those characteristics been used as symbols for what women should or should not be?

Section 6: What does the Bible say?

LUKE 1:26-56 NRSV

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

And Mary said,
"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”
And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

Key Questions:

- Who do you identify with in this passage? And why/how?
- What message do we receive through this passage?
- What does it mean to be a man/woman based on this passage?
- Are the characters living fully into who they are? How? If not, what keeps them from it?
- What empowers them to live in the fullness of who they are?
- Describe Mary based on this passage.
- Name characteristics that make her human.
- How have those characteristics been used as symbols for what women should or should not be?

Section 6: What does the Bible say?

PSALM 131 ISAIAH 42:14; 49:15

ISAIAH 66:13 LUKE 13:34

PSALM 131 NRSV

A Song of Ascents. Of David.
O Lord, my heart is not lifted up,
my eyes are not raised too high;
I do not occupy myself with things
too great and too marvelous for me.
But I have calmed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother;
my soul is like the weaned child that is with me.
O Israel, hope in the Lord
from this time on and forevermore.

Isaiah 42:14 NRSV

For a long time I have held my peace,
I have kept still and restrained myself;
now I will cry out like a woman in labor,
I will gasp and pant.

ISAIAH 42:14 NRSV

For a long time I have held my peace,
I have kept still and restrained myself;
now I will cry out like a woman in labor,
I will gasp and pant.

ISAIAH 49:15 NRSV

Can a woman forget her nursing child,
or show no compassion for the child of her womb?
Even these may forget,
yet I will not forget you.

ISAIAH 66:13 NRSV

As a mother comforts her child,
so I will comfort you;
you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

LUKE 13:34 NRSV

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!
How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood
under her wings, and you were not willing!

Key Questions:

- Who do you identify with in these passages? And why/how?
- What message do we receive through this passage?
- What does it mean to be a man/woman based on these passages?
- Are the characters living fully into who they are? How? If not, what keeps them from living fully into who they are?
- What empowers them to live in the fullness of who they are?
- Is it possible to think of God as both father and mother, man and woman? Why or why not?

Section 6: What does the Bible say?

MARK 5:21-43 NRSV

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.” So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, “If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.” Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my clothes?” And his disciples said to him, “You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, ‘Who touched me?’” He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader’s house to say, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?” But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.” He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, “Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child’s father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha cum,” which means, “Little girl, get up!” And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Key Questions:

- Who do you identify with in this passage? And why/how?
- What message do we receive through this passage?
- What does it mean to be a man/woman based on this passage?
- Are the characters living fully into who they are? How? If not, what keeps them from it?
- What empowers them to live in the fullness of who they are?

Section 6: What does the Bible say?

MARK 5:21-43 NRSV

Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, “Woman, you are set free from your ailment.” When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, “There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day.” But the Lord answered him and said, “You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?” When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

Key Questions:

- Who do you identify with in this passage? And why/how?
- What message do we receive through this passage?
- What does it mean to be a man/woman based on this passage?
- Are the characters living fully into who they are? How? If not, what keeps them from it?
- What empowers them to live in the fullness of who they are?

Section 6: What does the Bible say?

JOHN 4:1-42 NRSV

Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, “Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John”—although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized— he left Judea and started back to Galilee. But he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.” Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come back.” The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!” The woman said to him, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?” Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” They left the city and were on their way to him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.” But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” So the disciples said to one another, “Surely no one has brought him something to eat?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest’? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world.”

Key Questions:

- Who do you identify with in this passage? And why/how?
- What message do we receive through this passage?
- What does it mean to be a man/woman based on this passage?
- Are the characters living fully into who they are? How? If not, what keeps them from it?
- What empowers them to live in the fullness of who they are?

Section 6: What does the Bible say?

MATTHEW 15: 21-28 NRSV

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.” But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.” He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

Key Questions:

- Who do you identify with in this passage? And why/how?
- What message do we receive through this passage?
- What does it mean to be a man/woman based on this passage?
- Are the characters living fully into who they are? How? If not, what keeps them from it?
- What empowers them to live in the fullness of who they are?

Section 6: What does the Bible say?

JOHN 20:1-8 NRSV

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.” But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.” He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

Key Questions:

- Who do you identify with in this passage? And why/how?
- What message do we receive through this passage?
- What does it mean to be a man/woman based on this passage?
- Are the characters living fully into who they are? How? If not, what keeps them from it?
- What empowers them to live into the fullness of who they are?

Section 6: What does the Bible say?

SONG OF SOLOMON 4,
1 TIMOTHY 2:8-15

SONG OF SOLOMON 4 NRSV

How beautiful you are, my love,
how very beautiful!

Your eyes are doves
behind your veil.

Your hair is like a flock of goats,
moving down the slopes of Gilead.

Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes
that have come up from the washing,
all of which bear twins,
and not one among them is bereaved.

Your lips are like a crimson thread,
and your mouth is lovely.

Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate
behind your veil.

Your neck is like the tower of David,
built in courses;

on it hang a thousand bucklers,
all of them shields of warriors.

Your two breasts are like two fawns,
twins of a gazelle,
that feed among the lilies.

Until the day breathes
and the shadows flee,

I will hasten to the mountain of myrrh
and the hill of frankincense.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

You are altogether beautiful, my love;
there is no flaw in you.
Come with me from Lebanon, my bride;
come with me from Lebanon.
Depart from the peak of Amana,
from the peak of Senir and Hermon,
from the dens of lions,
from the mountains of leopards.
You have ravished my heart, my sister, my bride,
you have ravished my heart with a glance of your eyes,
with one jewel of your necklace.
How sweet is your love, my sister, my bride!
how much better is your love than wine,
and the fragrance of your oils than any spice!
Your lips distill nectar, my bride;
honey and milk are under your tongue;
the scent of your garments is like the scent of Lebanon.
A garden locked is my sister, my bride,
a garden locked, a fountain sealed.
Your channel is an orchard of pomegranates
with all choicest fruits,
henna with nard,
nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon,
with all trees of frankincense,
myrrh and aloes,
with all chief spices—
a garden fountain, a well of living water,
and flowing streams from Lebanon.
Awake, O north wind,
and come, O south wind!
Blow upon my garden
that its fragrance may be wafted abroad.
Let my beloved come to his garden,
and eat its choicest fruits.

1 TIMOTHY 2:8-15 NRSV

I desire, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument; also that the women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, but with good works, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God. Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.

Key Questions:

- Who do you identify with in these passages? And why/how?
- What message do we receive through these passages?
- What does it mean to be a man/woman based on these passages?
- Are the characters living fully into who they are? How? If not, what keeps them from it?
- What empowers them to live into the fullness of who they are?
- What do we learn about women's bodies from these passages?

Section 6: What does the Bible say?

1 PETER 3:1-7, PROVERBS 31:10-31

1 PETER 3:1-7 NRSV

Wives, in the same way, accept the authority of your husbands, so that, even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Do not adorn yourselves outwardly by braiding your hair, and by wearing gold ornaments or fine clothing; rather, let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in God's sight. It was in this way long ago that the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves by accepting the authority of their husbands. Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him lord. You have become her daughters as long as you do what is good and never let fears alarm you.

Husbands, in the same way, show consideration for your wives in your life together, paying honor to the woman as the weaker sex, since they too are also heirs of the gracious gift of life—so that nothing may hinder your prayers.

PROVERBS 31:10-31 NRSV

A capable wife who can find?
She is far more precious than jewels.
The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and he will have no lack of gain.
She does him good, and not harm,
all the days of her life.
She seeks wool and flax,
and works with willing hands.
She is like the ships of the merchant,
she brings her food from far away.
She rises while it is still night
and provides food for her household

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

and tasks for her servant-girls.
She considers a field and buys it;
with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.
She girds herself with strength,
and makes her arms strong.
She perceives that her merchandise is profitable.
Her lamp does not go out at night.
She puts her hands to the distaff,
and her hands hold the spindle.
She opens her hand to the poor,
and reaches out her hands to the needy.
She is not afraid for her household when it snows,
for all her household are clothed in crimson.
She makes herself coverings;
her clothing is fine linen and purple.
Her husband is known in the city gates,
taking his seat among the elders of the land.
She makes linen garments and sells them;
she supplies the merchant with sashes.
Strength and dignity are her clothing,
and she laughs at the time to come.
She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.
She looks well to the ways of her household,
and does not eat the bread of idleness.
Her children rise up and call her happy;
her husband too, and he praises her:
“Many women have done excellently,
but you surpass them all.”
Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.
Give her a share in the fruit of her hands,
and let her works praise her in the city gates.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Key Questions:

- Who do you identify with in these passages? And why/how?
- What message do we receive through these passages?
- What does it mean to be a man/woman based on these passages?
- Are the characters living fully into who they are? How? If not, what keeps them from it?
- What empowers them to live into the fullness of who they are?
- What do we learn about women's bodies from these passages?

7. What Can I Do?

OBJECTIVES

To name ways we can dismantle patriarchy in our given contexts.

TIME

1.5 hours

FORMAT

Small groups

TRAINING AIDS / PARTICIPANT MATERIALS

- Poster paper
- Markers
- Sticky notes
- Case studies

PROCEDURE

- Facilitator(s) post questions around the room on poster paper.
- Groups of 3 to 4 travel around the room together posting their answers to the questions.
- Groups do a last round of viewing/reading other group's responses to the questions.
- Around tables, small groups will work on case studies involving instances of sexism or examples of patriarchy at varying levels.
- Small groups present their case studies to the larger groups.
- Facilitator co-create an "action plan" from participants' responses to questions and case studies.



WHAT CAN I DO?

Facilitator(s) post the following questions around the room on poster paper. Groups of 3 to 4 travel around the room together answering the questions (writing their comments/answers on sticky notes and posting them under the appropriate question):

- What interventions have you experienced or heard in response to sexism and patriarchy within the spheres of work, church, community and society? What have been the results?
- What can you do on an individual level when you encounter sexism to dismantle patriarchy interpersonally and structurally?
 - What can you do within your family to dismantle patriarchy?
 - What can you do in your congregation to dismantle patriarchy?
 - What can we do together within our church institutions and our communities to disrupt and dismantle patriarchy?

Around tables, small groups (3–4 people) receive case studies involving instances of sexism or encounters with patriarchy in various spheres.

[As participants work on the case studies, facilitators review the responses to the previous activity, grouping similar responses together and creating a bullet list “action plan” that participants can use in responding to their case studies.]

Participants work together to answer the following questions and record their responses:

- Identify and name where and how they see patriarchy and/or sexism operating in this case study.
- Identify if the instances of patriarchy or sexism is an invisible or visible manifestation of patriarchy.
- How can we bring wholeness to the individuals/community/systems involved? What steps can be taken?

When groups have worked through their case studies, they will present their cases and responses to the group. Facilitator will highlight repeated themes and together they’ll add to the “action plan” based on responses to case studies.

RESOURCES FOR SECTION SEVEN

Case Studies

CASE STUDY: BRISA

Brisa gradually took on more and more responsibility in her role at work. When she pleaded with her supervisor to recognize this and change her salary classification, he repeatedly refused to do this. However, when she left the organization and a man was hired to replace her, the job description and classification were finally updated to reflect the work she had been doing and he was hired at a much higher pay level.

Questions to Consider:

- Identify and name where and how you see patriarchy and/or sexism operating.
- Identify whether the above-named patriarchy/sexism is an invisible or visible manifestation of patriarchy.
- How can we bring wholeness to the individual/community/systems involved? What steps should be taken to get there?

CASE STUDY: ORGANIZATIONS

Mennonite organizations support many peace-building and trauma-healing projects around the world, yet only a few of these address violence against women, or specifically mention gender relationships as a focus.

Questions to Consider:

- Identify and name where and how you see patriarchy and/or sexism operating.
- Identify whether the above-named patriarchy/sexism is an invisible or visible manifestation of patriarchy.
- How can we bring wholeness to the individual/community/systems involved?
What steps should be taken to get there?

CASE STUDY: JANE

Jane Rodriguez receives information and fundraising letters from a variety of Mennonite organizations. But the mail is always addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rodriguez, even though it was Jane who volunteered through one of the Mennonite organizations 20 years ago.

Questions to Consider:

- Identify and name where and how you see patriarchy and/or sexism operating.
- Identify whether the above-named patriarchy/sexism is an invisible or visible manifestation of patriarchy.
- How can we bring wholeness to the individual/community/systems involved? What steps should be taken to get there?

CASE STUDY: LESLEY AND STEVE

Lesley and Steve are married and have young children. Their employer is accommodating and allows them to share a job. They have divided up responsibilities for the job and inform their co-workers who they should contact regarding which responsibility. Yet, Steve consistently receives inquiries, suggestions, messages and even complaints regarding Lesley's job and responsibilities.

For example:

"Perhaps you could suggest to Lesley..."

"Does Lesley know ..."

"Has Lesley considered..."

Questions to Consider:

- Identify and name where and how you see patriarchy and/or sexism operating.
- Identify whether the above-named patriarchy/sexism is an invisible or visible manifestation of patriarchy.
- How can we bring wholeness to the individual/community/systems involved?
What steps should be taken to get there?

CASE STUDY: CHURCH MISCONDUCT

In a recent sexual misconduct situation involving a church pastor, congregational leaders referred to professional misconduct as an “extramarital affair and adultery.”

Questions to Consider:

- Identify and name where and how you see patriarchy and/or sexism operating.
- Identify whether the above-named patriarchy/sexism is an invisible or visible manifestation of patriarchy.
- How can we bring wholeness to the individual/community/systems involved? What steps should be taken to get there?

CASE STUDY: JULIE

Julie is a 20-something pastoral intern. Her middle-aged, male supervisor questioned her clothing choices in her end-of-the-year review meeting. When she requested specifics, he named that sometimes in the warmer months of the year when she came into the office, she wore knee-length leggings with long, loose-fitting tops that came down to her mid-thighs. She also wore colorful, dangling earrings. He found this inappropriate.

Questions to Consider:

- Identify and name where and how you see patriarchy and/or sexism operating.
- Identify whether the above-named patriarchy/sexism is an invisible or visible manifestation of patriarchy.
- How can we bring wholeness to the individual/community/systems involved? What steps should be taken to get there?

CASE STUDY: ALEJANDRA

Alejandra is incredibly emotionally expressive — she laughs loud, she cries easily, she doesn't hide her anger. She has been consistently told by supervisors and subordinates that her emotions are a distraction, and she should learn to control them if she wants to advance in her career.

Questions to Consider:

- Identify and name where and how you see patriarchy and/or sexism operating.
- Identify whether the above-named patriarchy/sexism is an invisible or visible manifestation of patriarchy.
- How can we bring wholeness to the individual/community/systems involved? What steps should be taken to get there?

8. God calls us to act!

OBJECTIVES

Highlight spaces and ways patriarchy is being dismantled and sexism is being confronted and examples of a balanced way of being together keeping intersectionality in mind.

Identify elements that make those spaces possible.

Create list of spiritual practices that provide care and nurture for the whole community.

Model for participants a different way of being by engaging them in finding solutions to the questions asked.

TIME

2 hours

FORMAT

- Table group conversation
- Circle sharing

TRAINING AIDS / PARTICIPANT MATERIALS

- Poster paper
- Markers

PROCEDURE

- Table group discussion: examples and characteristics of Beloved Community/shared power.
- Circle conversation about needs and resources for sustaining us.
- Close with movie clip.



GOD CALLS US TO ACT!

Introduce small group discussion and definition of “Beloved Community.” Philosopher-theologian Josiah Royce coined the term in the early 20th century. Martin Luther King, Jr. popularized the idea and envisioned it as a society based on justice, equal opportunity, and love of others.

Dr. King’s Beloved Community is a global vision in which all people can share in the wealth of the earth. In the Beloved Community, poverty, hunger and homelessness will not be tolerated because international standards of human decency will not allow it. Racism and all forms of discrimination, bigotry and prejudice will be replaced by an all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood.²

TABLE GROUP DISCUSSION

In table groups, participants share situations where they’ve seen Beloved Community/shared power within the church and come up with a five-minute creative presentation that connects to the questions below.

- What systems are in place to make those spaces possible? What do you observe in these spaces? Describe the people participating in this kind of community.
- How do you feel in spaces like these?

CIRCLE CONVERSATION

Using the circle process, participants answer any of the following questions:

- What do you need to feel belonging and to participate fully in Beloved Community?
- What spiritual practices can provide care and nurture for the whole community?
- Where have you experienced Beloved Community?

MOVIE CLIP

Close the time by showing a clip from a movie that shows shared power and beloved community:

² “The King Philosophy.” The King Center. <http://thekingcenter.org/king-philosophy/>

GOD CALLS US TO ACT!

- A scene from a popular film
- The video, “Former Women’s Prison Becomes Feminist Community Space,” showing community-building in New York. (See Resources for Section 8.)

RESOURCES FOR SECTION EIGHT

Laura Flanders on the Laura Flanders Show, “Former Women’s Prison Becomes Feminist Community Space.” 2017. YouTube. 26.27 min.

https://archive.org/details/Formers_Women_s_Prison_Becomes_Feminist_Community_Space

9. Closing and Sending

OBJECTIVES

- Overview of what we learned
- Making a personal commitment — “How now shall we live” — to actively dismantle patriarchy and disrupt sexism?
- Resources for further exploration
- Closing ritual

TIME

1 - 1.5 hours

FORMAT

Large Circle

TRAINING AIDS / PARTICIPANT MATERIALS

- Flipchart papers and other notes from previous sessions
- Quarter sheets of 8.5 x 11 paper for “Big Ideas”
- Copies of resource lists
- Candles, centerpiece, symbols of the Beloved Community and gender equity
- Strips of cloth, 6”x4” (enough for one strip per participant)

PROCEDURE

- Use “Big Ideas” 3-2-1 exercise to summarize what we’ve covered through the training.
- Participants identify a lament and a hope going forward.



CURRICULUM SUMMARY/EVALUATION

Big Ideas 3-2-1 exercise:

In small groups of 2–3 (or individually) write down:

- Three (3) ideas I take away.
- Two (2) questions I still have.
- One (1) action step I will complete.

Share with large group.

CLOSING RITUAL: LAMENT AND HOPE

Talk about how this work is labor intensive and heavy.

Participants identify:

What do you lament about patriarchy?

What are your hopes for this work?

Hand out strips of cloth about 6"x4" (one per person).

Note to facilitator: It might make tearing easier if you cut one slit in each piece of cloth ahead of time.

Ask participants to rip the cloth in two pieces lengthwise. Once participants have torn the cloth, they should go to someone and ask the person to carry your lament. Either name your lament or not, and invite another by saying, "Will you carry this with me?" And give that strip to the other person. Each participant holds onto their own cloth that represents their hope. And receives a strip from another to carry with them.

RESOURCES FOR SECTION 9

Big Ideas 3-2-1 Exercise

Big Ideas Exercise:

Invoke participants, individually or in small groups of three, to respond to the following prompts, on quarter sheets of paper (or sticky notes) that can be put in the center of the circle or on a large paper upfront for all to see. Respond to the prompts one at a time and report back from each small group before moving on to the next prompt.

Note: The following 3 questions can be copied and pasted onto quarter sheets of paper that can be given to all groups. Three quarter sheets for the first question, two quarter sheets for the second question and one quarter sheet for the third question. Groups of 3 can come up with group responses or individual responses.



Three big ideas you take from this time together/exercise

Two questions you still have



One action step you can do

10. Additional Resources

Bordas, Juana. *Salsa, Soul and Spirit: Leadership for Multicultural Age*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2012.

Bourgeault, Cynthia. *The Meaning of Mary Magdalene: Discovering the Woman at the Heart of Christianity*. Shambhala, 2010.

Brock, Rita Nakashima and Rebecca Ann Parker. *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire*. Beacon Press, 2009.

Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology, ed. INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence. Duke University Press, 2016.

Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing Across Race, Class and Gender (Perspectives on Gender series), ed. Nancy A. Naples. Routledge, 1998.

Christena Cleveland. Website. <http://www.christenacleveland.com/>

Dube, Musa W. *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretations of the Bible*. Chalice Press, 2000.

Eisler, Riane. *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future*. HarperOne, 1988.

Gehman Peachey, Linda. *Created Equal: Men and Women in the Image of God*. Mennonite Central Committee, 2009.

Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement Ottawa. Website. <https://ipsmo.wordpress.com/honouring-indigenous-women/>

Isasi-Diaz, Ada Maria. *En La Lucha/In the Struggle: Elaborating a Mujerista Theology*. Fortress Press, 2004.

Richardson, Jan. *The Painted Prayerbook*. Website. <http://paintedprayerbook.com/>

Lerner, Gerda. *The Creation of Patriarchy*. Oxford University Press, 1987.

Lewis, Karoline M. "The Truth about Sexism and the Church." *Christianity Today*, June 2016.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Lorde, Audre. "There Is No Hierarchy of Oppressions." 2018. YouTube. 3.28 min. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CPAlSVaiL8>

Race Forward: The Center for Racial Justice Innovation. Website. <https://www.raceforward.org/>

The Representation Project. 2019. Website. <http://therepresentationproject.org/>

Serres, Drew. "Why Patriarchy Persists (and How We Can Change It)." Organizing Change. Online. <https://organizingchange.org/patriarchy-persists-can-change/>

Smith, Andrea. *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. Duke University Press, 2015.

Smith, Andrea Lee. "Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy: Rethinking Women of Color Organizing." *Color of Violence*. Duke University Press, 2016. https://collectiveliberation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Smith_Heteropatriarchy_3_Pillars_of_White_Supremacy.pdf

Training for Change. Website. <http://www.trainingforchange.org/tools>

Taylor, Mark Kline. *Remembering Esperanza: A Cultural-Political Theology for North American Praxis*. Orbis Books, 1990.

West, Traci C. *Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women's Lives Matter*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.

"What's Being Done to Stop Native American Women Disappearing?" The Stream. YouTube. 25 min. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4EVtS_77ps

Williams, Delores S. *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk*. Orbis Books, 2013.

Women's Uncommon Prayers: Our Lives Revealed, Nurtured, Celebrated, ed. Elizabeth Rankin Geitz, Marjorie A. Burke, and Ann Smith. Morehouse Publishing, 2000.

