

Personal Inventory Questions

Instructions: This activity is both a listening and speaking exercise. It is an opportunity for you to explore those influences, incidents, and people in your past that have shaped your thinking and feelings. This is not a conversation, or a problem solving exercise. You will be partnered with another person and will be asked a question that you are to answer within 2-3 minutes. When one partner is speaking, the other is only to listen. You may encourage your partner with nonverbal nods, gestures, or facial expressions, but only one person may speak at a time. If you do not want to respond to the question that you are asked, please say, "May I please have a different question?"

Each of you will answer the same question or a different question before you move on to another partner. At the end of the question and answer period, the whole group will be asked for feedback.

Questions (repeat each for clarity):

1. When and how did you first become aware that there were such things as racial and ethnic differences, and that people were treated differently on the basis of those differences?
2. Growing up, what contact did you have with people whose racial, religious and ethnic heritage was different from your own? What kind of guidance or models did you have for relationships with those people?
3. How did adults in your life help you to understand or interpret the experiences of religious groups or race different from yours? What was their main teaching about these groups?
4. Please describe a painful, personal experience you have had with someone from a different race, religion or ethnicity than you? Today, what is your greatest fear about what someone from a different racial, religious or ethnic group might or could do to you? Where do you think that fear comes from?
5. Name a time when you stood up for your rights or the rights of others. What did you do? What do you wish you'd done? What can you tell us about your experience growing up that would help us understand where you got the courage or strength to do what you did?
6. How has racism or prejudice kept you isolated and separate from others? If it were possible, how would you limit the effects of racism and prejudice in your life? How do you feel about the changing demographics of your community? If there have not been any changes, why not?