



RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

Meeting Segment Guide

Produced by the Policy and Advocacy Team
as part of the *Social Justice Stocktake*



Today, we're going to take some time to look at the issues of racism and discrimination, and how they play out in our community, and more widely in Australia. We're going to spend some time praying about these issues and what we can do about them.

The following resources have been created to assist you to run a 5-8 minute segment in your Corps' or mission expression Meeting, Team Meeting, ALT Meeting or any space where you gather with other people.

These resources are ready to print and use in your Meeting. Below you'll find:



TALKING POINTS



**A PRAYER TIME GUIDE
(INCLUDING THREE WRITTEN PRAYERS)**



EXTENDED SEGMENT OPTIONS



LINKS TO FURTHER RESOURCES

For further support in connecting with issues in your local community, contact us at policy.advocacy@salvationarmy.org.au



Talking Points



INTRODUCTION

‘Discrimination’ is a word that conjures up many different things for many people. Perhaps you’ve heard about discrimination but don’t think you’ve ever really seen it taking place. Perhaps, when you hear the word, you remember a time that you saw somebody experiencing discrimination. Or perhaps you remember a time when you experienced discrimination yourself.

Today, we’re going to take some time to look at the issues of racism and discrimination, and how they play out in our community, and more widely in Australia. We’re going to spend some time praying about these issues and what we can do about them. If you want to talk about anything that is raised here today, or if anything worries you, please feel free to chat to us afterwards.

RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

» **Racism can take many forms** and involves “prejudice, discrimination or hatred directed at someone because of their colour, ethnicity or national origin”ⁱ. When we’re talking about discrimination, we’re talking about the fact that some people are denied opportunities that are available to others because of something that is entirely irrelevant to the opportunity.

» **Discrimination can be overt – that is, where people openly act or speak in a way that disadvantages a particular group.** More often though, discrimination is subtle – like when someone makes a ‘joke’ at the expense of a group or writes selection criteria that would have the effect of excluding a particular group of people from a particular opportunity. Discrimination can also be structural. This occurs where the inherent design of a system, or the way a system operates, has the effect of disadvantaging a group of people. A system may be designed in a discriminatory way simply because not everyone who is affected by a decision has been

included in making that decision. Sometimes policies are designed without thinking how the policy will affect a particular group.

» **Discrimination of any kind has an ongoing, negative effect on many people within our community.** In Australia, it is unlawful to discriminate on the basis of age, disability, race, sex, intersex status, gender identity or sexual orientation in certain areas of public lifeⁱⁱ, but unfortunately this doesn’t mean that it doesn’t happen in society. In fact, racism is a common occurrence in Australia, with 20 per cent of Australians having experienced racism in the form of race hate talk, while others have been attacked because of their raceⁱⁱⁱ. While racism and discrimination can be experienced by anyone, some groups in society experience it at higher rates – for example Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and migrants and refugees^{iv}.

» **We know that racism, and discrimination, are not what God wants for this world.** Racism is fundamentally incompatible with our belief that all people are made in the image of God and are equal in value.

» **In Scripture we learn that God values and loves every single person equally.** As we read through Genesis, we learn that each and every person is created in God’s image (Genesis 1:27) and has God’s divine imprint on them (Genesis 9:6). God shows no partiality or favouritism (Acts 10:34). Scripture is unequivocal when it comes to this. It says, “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28, NIV). The phrase “one in Christ Jesus” establishes a new identity in Christ, not in gender or class or ethnicity.

i. Australian Human Rights Commission. (2021). ‘What is Racism?’. <http://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/what-racism>

ii. The Salvation Army Australia. (2020). ‘A Pathway to Social Justice’. https://issuu.com/evaburrowscollege/docs/pathway_to_social_justice_final_accessible_oct13. p. 131 Australian Human Rights Commission. (2021). ‘What is Racism?’. <http://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/what-racism>

iii. Australian Human Rights Commission. (2021). ‘Who Experiences Racism?’. <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/who-experiences-racism>

iv. Ibid



Talking Points



» **During his time on Earth, Jesus came face to face with racism. Samaritans were the recipients of prejudice and discrimination.** In the centuries prior to Jesus' birth, the Samaritans were the offspring of intermarriages with Assyrians and Hebrews. Because of this, Jews felt that the supposed 'racial purity' of the Samaritans was stained. The social fallout of this belief generated consistent animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans. As a Jew, Jesus was expected to follow these cultural norms, yet we learn that time and time again, rather than go along with them, he challenged them. When he met with the Samaritan woman at the well (captured in John Chapter 4), Jesus engaged her in conversation, treated her with dignity and listened to her. On a different occasion, Jesus told the well-known Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), noting that human need, and our response to it, goes beyond racial and social lines. He made the point that a person is our 'neighbour' no matter where they are from.

» **In looking to Scripture, we do not only read that we are all equal in God's sight** – we read that in God's Kingdom, diversity is celebrated. In describing God's Kingdom in Revelation, John writes, "There before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb" (Revelation 7:9, NIV). As a result, we in The Salvation Army believe that the world is enriched by a diversity of cultures and ethnicities. We see this in our own congregations and workplaces, and recognise that God is at work in and through each of us.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

» **As followers of Christ, we work towards a world where racism and discrimination do not exist.** In doing that, through The Salvation Army, we are committed to delivering worship and programs which are inclusive to all people, and deliver all of our services without discrimination^v or exception.

At an organisational level, we have specific departments, such as the Diversity and Inclusion Team, which help us to work towards this world. Our Territorial Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Team also works alongside us in mission, helping us to understand how we can be more inclusive of, and better celebrate, our First Nations' Peoples. There is still work to be done within The Salvation Army in this space, and the Army continues to explore new ways in which to combat racial discrimination both within its own structure, and within the societies in which it ministers.

» **At a government level, there is still work to be done** in eliminating racism in our communities, and ensuring that Australia is a safe place for every person.

» **As individuals, each of us has the opportunity to be the reality that we want to see in the rest of society.** We can do this by thinking critically about the systems and structures we use and support, and by committing to ongoing learning about cultures that are different from our own, their history and their relevance to society today. In doing so, we recognise the inherent value in every person and appreciate the diversity of cultures and ethnicities. In taking part in opportunities for truth-telling, we can challenge our own ideas and language about other cultures and question when others use language that minimises or discriminates against another person. We can choose to fight against racism, calling it out when we see it, and celebrating the good things about our racial diversity.

» **We believe that a world without racism and discrimination is possible,** and it is this world that we work towards. In doing this, we work towards the inherent dignity of all peoples being recognised. We will begin to see this world manifest when there is equal representation and genuine inclusiveness, and when people feel that their voice is valued.

v. The Salvation Army Australia. (2021). 'Inclusion'. <https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/about-us/inclusion/>



Prayer Time



Play one of the following songs, and ask people to spend some time in silent, individual prayer while the song plays. Ask them to pray for people experiencing, and for people perpetrating, racism or discrimination in your community.

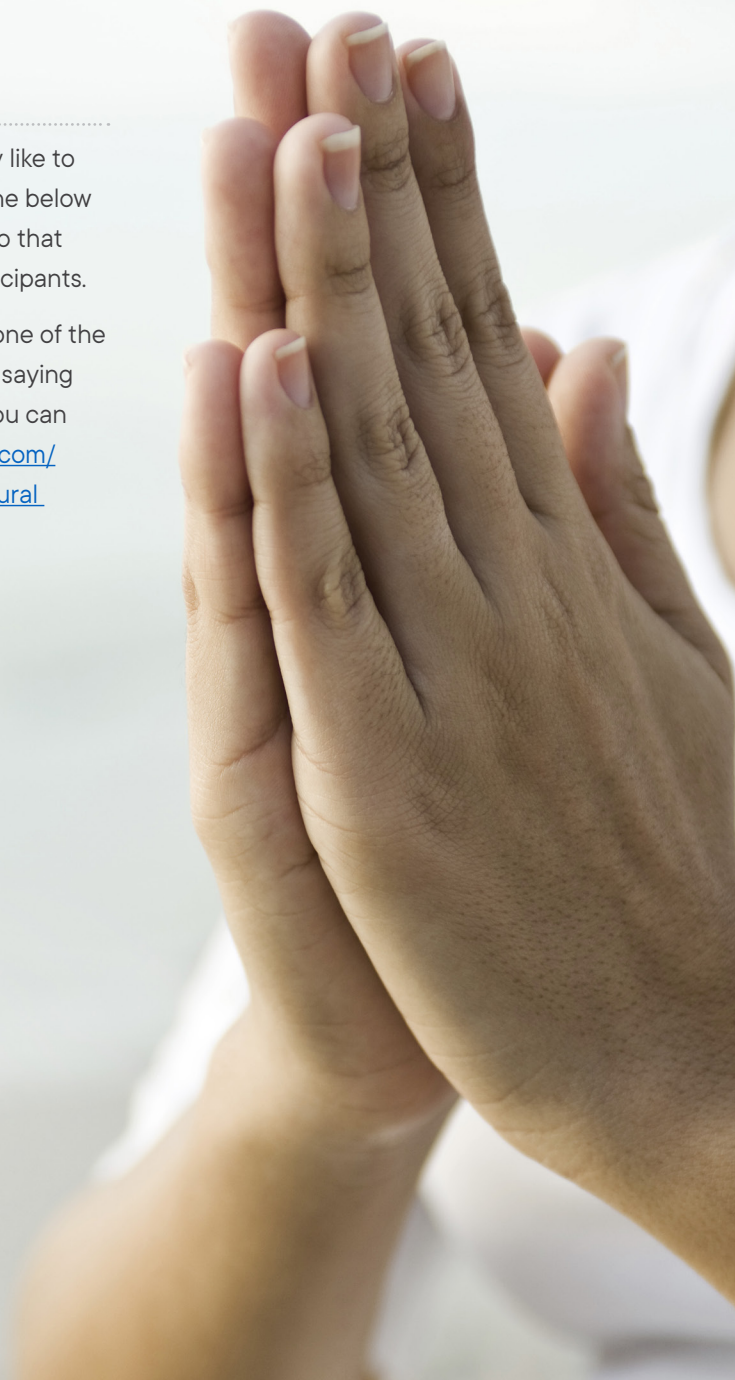
**The Salvation Army Songbook No. 938 –
We Have Caught The Vision Splendid ([lyrics](#))**

[For the One](#) – Bethel Music

**The Salvation Army Songbook No. 944 –
What Can I Say To Cheer a
World of Sorrow ([lyrics](#))**

Following this time of individual prayer, you may like to have three different people lead the group in the below prayers. These prayers are on separate pages so that you can easily print and distribute them to participants.

At the end of each prayer, you may like to play one of the '[Lord, Hear Our Prayer](#)' videos, featuring people saying "Lord, hear our prayer" in different languages. You can find these videos here: <http://www.salvastudios.com/videos/2016/lord-hear-our-prayer?rq=multicultural>





Prayer Time



Prayer for our community

Dear Lord,

We come before you today, reflecting on the example you set for us while you were here on Earth. We recognise that you crossed boundaries and challenged social norms, and today we ask for the courage to do the same.

We bring before you all who are experiencing racism – either as a one-off, or on a regular basis.

We pray that those of us for whom racism is not a part of our experience will be awakened. Let us not be lulled into a sense of complacency and forgetfulness. Give us eyes to see.

Forgive us for the times that our thinking, or our conduct, has been less than what you would require of us.

Lord, help us to see your face in the eyes of every person with whom we come into contact. May we be empowered, through word and deed, to bring justice and peace to this world.

In your name we pray,

Amen.



Prayer Time



Prayer for Australia

Dear God,

As we take time to reflect on the effect of racism in our country, we ask for forgiveness for the times when we have turned a blind eye to the struggles being experienced by others.

We thank you for the vast array of nationalities in Australia. Lord, help us to celebrate our differences rather than to fear them. Give us a passion to know more, to treat each other more kindly, and to value each others' voices.

We pray for the leaders of our country – that you would give them new ideas about how to address racism in Australia, and that you would give them the means to make the changes necessary. Give us wisdom and courage to have conversations with our community and our leaders to bring about structural and social change.

Help us, by your Spirit, to gain a vision of your kingdom. We ask for your grace and compassion to have conversations with those in our community who need to experience your love and grace. Help us to love kindness, do justice and walk humbly with you.

Amen.



Prayer Time



Prayer for the world

Loving God,

We recognise in this moment that this world is not as you intended it to be. We acknowledge that you love all people equally, and that your intention is that we all experience the fullness of life that only you can bring.

Help us to work together as a global community to make this world more like you want it to be. Help us, as citizens of the world, to think globally and speak up for the oppressed wherever they may be, recognising that every single person is important to you.

In the name of the One who was sent to minister to all nations,

Amen.



For an extended segment



If you would like to present an extended segment (that goes for longer than 10 minutes), here are some ideas that may take people deeper:

- » Play one of the following 'Racism. It Stops With Me' videos from The Australian Human Rights Commission:
 - » ['Elevator'](#)
 - » ['Taxi'](#)
- » Share information about how your Corps/Centre/mission expression/ALT is fighting against racism or discrimination, or assisting those experiencing it, within your community. Be sure to protect the privacy of specific people.
- » Share the ['Salvo Stories – Auburn Corps' \(4:16\)](#) video for a glimpse in to a Corps that values multiculturalism and diversity.

USEFUL SONGS:

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[The World for God](#) – Phil Laeger, Marty Mikles and Evangeline Booth
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[The Salvation Army Songbook No. 944 – What Can I Say To Cheer a World of Sorrow \(lyrics\)](#)
.....

[The Salvation Army Songbook No. 1003 – O Lord, Whose Human Hands Were Quick \(lyrics\)](#)
.....

[The Salvation Army Songbook No. 938 – We Have Caught The Vision Splendid \(lyrics\)](#)
.....

[For the One](#) – Bethel Music
.....

[The Salvation Army Hallelujah Chorus No. 43 – Just One \(lyrics\)](#)
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For kids:

Check out the SAGALA Resource ['Culture Club'](#) for ideas on ways to engage kids with the concept of cultural diversity.



Further Resources



For more information on this issue, and for further resources, head to:

The Salvation Army's [‘A Pathway to Social Justice’ Report](#)

The Salvation Army's [National Diversity and Inclusion Team Resources](#)

The Australian Human Rights Commission's [‘Race Discrimination’ page](#)

The Australian Human Rights Commission's [‘Let’s Talk Race: A Guide on how to conduct conversations about racism \(2019\)’ Resource](#)

If you’d like any further information on this resource please contact the Policy and Advocacy Team at policy.advocacy@salvationarmy.org.au

Every person can make a difference.

Together, we can make an even greater difference.



