



What is Truth?

An Embodied Lenten Series

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Part of “A Toolkit for Reparations in Community: A Resource for the Body of Christ” www.diomass.org/reparations-toolkit

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Session 4: Moving at the Speed of Trust

Overview

When we are immersed in the white dominant culture it is easy to get caught up in the urgency of quick fixes and sweeping solutions. These come at the cost of cultivating deep trust with those who are most impacted. Session 4 engages this reality and invites us into exploring how we begin to create and sustain trust in relationship with one another.

Preparation and set-up

This session includes a song to listen to together online. You will also need writing material.

Centering breath (five minutes)

As a group, breathe in for a count of three, hold for a count of three, and exhale for a count of three. Do this three times.

Opening prayer (five minutes)

God, we acknowledge that cultivating deep trust can be challenging. We ask that you would be with us in this process and help us to challenge ourselves and be gracious to one another. Help us to grow our trust in you and in one another, so that, together with the Holy Spirit, we may move to the place of relationship and repair. Amen.

Creating the container (20-30 minutes)

Read the poem one time through. Sit in silence for one minute. Read the poem again. Sit in silence for one minute. For the final time, read only the line in bold type. Reflect on the questions provided.

*There is no such thing as a “safe space” —
We exist in the real world.
We all carry scars and have caused wounds.
This space
seeks to turn down the volume of the world outside,
and amplify voices that have to fight to be heard elsewhere,
This space will not be perfect.
It will not always be what we wish it to be
But
It will be our space together,
and we will work on it side by side.*

— By Beth Strano [Used here with permission]

- Intellectually you might know, as Strano says, “this space will not be perfect,” but in what ways do you strive for perfection in groups like these anyway? What gets in your way of being more “real” with one another?
- What do we lose when we preference perfection over connection?
- What is the link between dropping the myth of being perfect and building trust?
- If your group has created group agreements or expectations, revisit them and adjust as needed. How might the group practice reminding one another that this space will not be perfect when you ultimately fall into the want to be perfect?

Embodied exercise: Dance Party (20-30 minutes)

Before this practice, take three collective breaths as a group, coming back to your center and to your breath.

Pull up “[Superlove,](#)” by [Whethan, featuring Oh Wonder](#), turn up the volume, and press play. Stand up, if you feel comfortable doing so, and move your body to the music. If it would be more comfortable to sit and move, please do what you need to do. It might also be helpful to close your eyes, dim the lights, or, if you are online—turn your video camera off. Whatever you do, play the whole song and let your body move.

- How was this experience for you?
- What was difficult about this exercise?
- Did you experience any silliness, delight, or joy? What enabled that?
- How are joy and trust connected?

Engagement and reflection (30-40 minutes)

Take 15 minutes journaling and reflecting on the quote below. Focus on one or two of the questions that follow that speak to you. Return to the whole group and share what spoke the most to you.

“Trust is built slowly, through shared, mutual experiences. Trust is built by showing vulnerability and inviting trust as a response.”

—adrienne marie brown, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*. (For more, see [Unitarian Universalist online Resource Guide, Emergent Strategy for Linear Thinkers.](#))

As a group, we must check in on our assumptions about what levels of trust exist in this space. We mustn't fall into the myth that solely sharing space is enough for us to have trust. Furthermore, doing this practice of slowing down and checking assumptions builds trust.

- What are our mutual shared experiences?
- What are the differences among us?
- How freely do we talk about these differences as a group?
- What enables or hinders us from talking more freely?
- In what ways are we tilling the ground that builds trust?
- The season of Lent invites us to let go of things that hinder our connection to God and community or take up things that connect us to God and community. Beyond doing this series, are there Lenten practices and experiences that we want to have collectively for the remaining few weeks of Lent as we seek to cultivate deeper trust?

Closing prayer (five minutes)

Invite one of the group members to offer the following prayer to close.

God, we want to be people who trust you and trust one another. We know that deep trust does not come from quick fixes and false pretenses, but from centering relationships and joy. Fill us with the wisdom to turn to you when we feel the urge to turn away from moving at the speed of trust. Amen.

Going deeper

Suggestions for individual and household follow-up reflection, study, and action:

- For further reflection, respond to a few questions from the “Repairing Relationships” section (from the bottom of page 12) in “[The Process Toward Reparations: A Template](#).”
- What impact do your relationships have on the truths you must tell? Who is missing from your conversation? Do you need to address the differences, modify or rebuild the relationships, divest from certain relationships?
- The 2022 Lenten Preaching Series hosted by the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Boston—“The Spiritual Practice of Truth”—will follow the session themes in this series. You are invited to reflect further on each session theme by watching the corresponding sermon from the preaching series, which will be available at <https://www.stpaulboston.org/sermon-index>.