

Kentucky Annual Conference Children & Family Ministry Team

On Anti-Racism in Children's Ministry

Our team endorses the statements from [Bishop Leonard Fairley](#) of Kentucky and from the [Council of Bishops](#) condemning racism and injustice.

Our team's mission is to train and equip children and family leaders throughout the KAC and provide resources for those seeking to grow their children and family ministries. We want to apply that mission to the revived conversation about racism and injustice in our communities.

Step 1: Self-examination

All church children's ministry leaders, particularly those who are white and serving in majority white congregations, should ask themselves these questions:

- What races are represented in our books, Bible storybooks, illustrated Bibles, curriculum, coloring sheets, websites, and the artwork on our walls?
- Are the creators of our curriculum, training materials, and ministry resources only white?
- Do our art supplies include shades that represent the spectrum of skin colors?
- Which Black leaders and people of color do I follow and look to for leadership on social media?
- Have the children in my church learned from me that Jesus and most of those around him were people of color?

Another way to practice self-examination is to explore our own implicit bias. Start that process here with a [\\$20 Online Implicit Bias Course](#) from the UMC's Religion & Race team, or take this test by the [Project Implicit](#) from Harvard University.

Step 2: Education

Leaders from the Black community have posted, published, and spoken truth about injustice for centuries. All the resources that we need to educate ourselves already exist. Our team has collected a few recommended information sources, but this list is in no way comprehensive.

[Resources for children's leaders](#)

- [“Time to Talk about Race in Children’s Ministry”](#) panel discussion sponsored by Group Publishing and Children’s Ministry Magazine.
- [Why We Must Start Talking about Race in our Children’s Ministry](#) article by Henry Zonio.
- [Racism and the Role of the Children’s Ministry Leader](#) by Michayla White.
- Excellent [“Let’s Talk About Race” video](#) by Kindergarten teacher Vera Ahiyya.

Resources for parents

- [Raising Anti-Racist Kids online event](#) on Thursday, June 18 @ 5pm EST, led by Ibram X. Kendi and Derecka Purnell.
- [List of books](#) on racial injustice from IVPpress
- [Anti-Racist Resources for Kids](#) from Brightly.com
- [The Conscious Kid](#), a website and social media account that provides frequent context and instruction for teaching anti-racism to children.

Step 3: Do something.

Kids learn by *doing*. Here are some experiences that children’s leaders can offer:

- Schedule and lead a prayer vigil for justice.
- Make signs that communicate messages of peace and advocacy for kids to post in the windows of their houses or cars. Example wording:
 - No Justice, No Peace
 - Justice for All God’s Children
 - Black Lives Matter
 - Do Justly. Love Mercy. Walk Humbly.
 - The Shepherd Leaves the 99 to Seek the 1
- Assemble snack packs and buy water to deliver to protestors in your town.
- Pull up a list of anti-racist children’s books, such as [this one](#) or [this one](#), and then find YouTube videos of those books being read. Or visit this [BLM Online Reading](#) room with the kids from your church. Watch together and discuss.
- Write letters and e-mails to government leaders. Find [contact information](#) and use [sample scripts](#).

Final thoughts

If you find that you have been perpetuating racist ideas through your language, curriculum, and activities, it is never too late to change. Listen to Black church members and Black leaders in

your community--this means asking questions and really listening. But remember, this is not a new conversation for Black people; they have been Black their whole lives, which means they have lived this and talked this out more times than they can count. Follow their lead, but do not expect them to teach you everything from scratch.

When talking to kids in your church, give them space to share what they are hearing and how they feel about it. Do not project adult feelings onto kids!

If this document has raised more questions for you than it has answered, our team would love to listen to those questions! Do not hesitate to reach out to any of us.

Sarah Flannery
Assistant Pastor at First UMC, Lexington
sarah@1stumc.org

Kristina White
Children's Ministry Director at Southern Hill UMC, Lexington
kwhite@southernhillsumc.org