



## Guide for Holy Conversation in your Family Race and Racism

When events in our family, community, or world highlight the evil and sin in the world, we have a responsibility to pause, to listen, to repent, and to ask: “God how are you calling me to respond?”

When harm comes to us, the people we love, our community, and/or our world, we feel a physical and emotional reaction to all that we are experiencing. In these moments it is important to create a safe space for sharing and reflecting on our experiences and our feelings. It is important to be open and honest regarding current events. Persons of all ages should be able to share how they are feeling in response to their experiences. Shock, fear, anxiety, concern, and anger are all normal responses to harm that comes to an individual or a community.

It is also helpful to try to minimize screen time and continuous access to media reports and updates. This will help decrease anxiety- protecting all persons from constant coverage and overwhelming images that may only increase their anxiety and fear.

Find ways to listen to your family members as they share their concerns. Create safe space to deeply listen to others too.

The liturgy outlined below provides families a way to create a safe space for conversation and prayer. The hope is that this guide will lead your family in holy conversation as you discover ways that God is calling you to respond – sharing God’s love and light with the rest of the world.

- **Gather:** When harm comes, it is important for families to come together. Create a **Safe Space** where all members of the family can listen, wonder, and pray together. A devotional is listed below to help guide you in this time together.
- **Connect:** Once gathered, take time to connect to God and to one another.
  - *Connecting with God:* Affirm God's presence. Read scripture together. [Mark 12:28-31](#) calls us to love God and to love neighbor. Use this text to guide your conversations. You might also choose to read another scripture or book that brings you comfort and helps you reflect on your emotions.
  - *Connecting with each other:* Physically connect -- look into each other's eyes, hold hands, offer hugs or other comforting gestures. Be present with one another.
- **Wonder:** Wonder together. Reflect on your feelings and concerns. Listen openly as each person shares. Invite persons to express how they are feeling in response to what they are hearing, seeing, or experiencing. Take time to validate all feelings and remember that you do not have to fix anxiety or fear. This will take time. Here are some sample wondering questions:
  - *I wonder:* What have you heard about George Floyd's death?
  - *I wonder:* What questions do you have?
  - *I wonder:* How do you feel in response to this event?
  - *I wonder:* What do you want to say to God?
  - *I wonder:* What is God saying to us?
  - *I wonder:* What can we do next?
  - *I wonder:* What questions do you have?
  - *I wonder:* "How is God calling us to respond?"
  - *(You can add other wondering questions to help family members process their experiences)*

- **Work:**
  - *Reflect:* Take time to journal, color, draw. Give everyone in your family time to be together as they silently process all they are experiencing. You can choose to follow this time with more reflection or wondering. Ask: "I wonder, do you want to tell me about your drawing, journaling, or work?" A great resource for this is: *[Praying in Color by Sybil MacBeth](#)*.
  - *Play:* Remember to play. This is one way we process our emotions. We can use our actions to express our fears and anxieties. It is also a way to help all members of our family experience joy in the midst of turmoil and sadness.
  - *Respond:* Take time to share what you, your church, community, others, are doing to learn and respond to racism. Ponder on what your family can do next. Identifying next steps helps persons of all ages overcome feelings of helplessness. Persons often regain a sense of control and power when there is a clear task
- **Pray:** Talk to God together. Share your emotions, fears, and concerns. Lift up your hopes and ask for help with next steps. A simple breath prayer can help calm anxiety. Take a deep breath together and say: "Lord, you call us to love others." Then breathe out: "help me show love in all my words and actions). Repeat this as a group, slowing your breath and calming your spirit.
- **Bless each other:** Take time to bless one another. Give thanks to God for your safety. Look each family member in the eye, and make the sign of a cross on their forehead or open palm as you say: "God loves you and calls you to share that love with others. God is with you as you do this important work."