

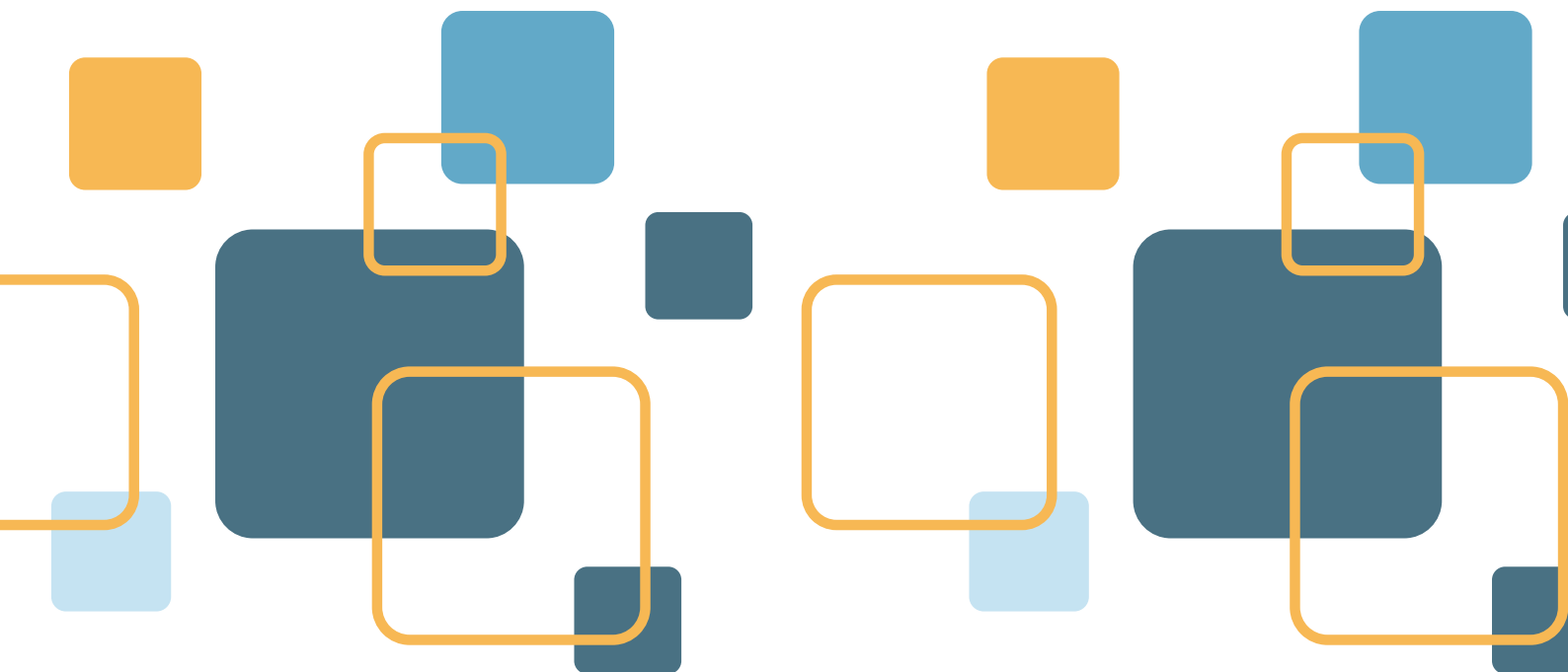
# SEASON OF ADVOCACY

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL  
TOOL KIT EDITION

**WEEK 2: APRIL 13 - 19**



EPISCOPAL CITY MISSION





# INTRODUCTION

READ OUT LOUD OR PUT INTO YOUR OWN WORDS

For the next month or two, we'll be doing activities that are part of Episcopal City Mission's "Season of Advocacy." We'll be learning about social and racial justice issues and then writing letters to state legislators to urge them to pass bills that will make our state more equal and just.

The first bill we'll be working on, S.1053, would create a group to study the history of slavery in Massachusetts and recommend what the state can do to make amends for the harms of racist policies from slavery until now.

You may or may not have heard the term "reparations" before.

In your mind, what does the word "reparations" mean?

Note for Facilitator: (answers do not need to be about reparations for slavery. Focus on the root word, "repair." If the answers all focus on monetary reparations, encourage them to think about other aspects of repair as well.)

"Reparations" in general are defined as "the process of making amends for a wrong."



# INTRODUCTION

## CONTINUED

There is even a biblical basis for reparations:

“One of the foundational texts of the Bible is the story of the Hebrews being liberated from slavery. When the Hebrews are liberated from their bondage under Pharaoh, they receive gold and silver from their former oppressors as reparation (**Exodus 12:35b-36**). Likewise, later in the biblical narrative, Jerusalem receives reparations when the people return after exile: King Darius uses the royal treasury to fulfill the reparations even though he was not the king who forced them to abandon their homeland (**Ezra 6:1-12**). It was not King Darius’ personal wrongdoing that caused him to offer reparations. Rather, it was his recognition that his nation had committed a sin against the people of Israel. Repeatedly in scripture, reparations establish equality and enable new futures (**Deuteronomy 15:12-15; Ezekiel 33:15; Proverbs 6:30-31; Luke 19:1-9**).” ([Source: Sojourners](#))



# PURPOSE

**Engage with Youth:** Foster open conversations with youth about social justice issues, including the historical context of slavery and its lasting effects on marginalized communities. Create a safe and inclusive environment where youth feel encouraged to ask questions and explore complex topics.

**Inform Youth:** For middle school and high school students to understand the concept of reparations for slavery and the faith-based case for reparations, and take one action in support of passing a bill that would create a reparations commission for Massachusetts.

**Empower Action:** Empower youth to take tangible actions in support of social justice causes, such as writing letters to legislators, participating in peaceful protests, or organizing community awareness campaigns. Highlight the importance of civic engagement and the impact that even small acts of advocacy can have on shaping public policy and advancing social justice goals.

# WATCH VIDEO

SHARE ANY REACTIONS  
OR REFLECTIONS

[Click Here to Watch Video](#)



**NOTE FOR FACILITATOR:**  
ASK STUDENTS TO SHARE ANY REACTIONS.

DID THEY KNOW THIS INFORMATION ALREADY?  
WAS THIS A SURPRISE?  
HOW DOES HEARING ABOUT THIS MAKE THEM FEEL?



# CONVERSATION CONTINUED

One of the signs of the ongoing impacts of slavery and discriminatory government policies today is the “Racial Wealth Gap” - the difference between the wealth white families and Black families (and other families of color) have to pass on to their children. *The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis found Black Americans hold about 4% of the total wealth in the United States. “Put another way: The wealth of the richest 400 Americans is approximately equal to that of 43 million Black Americans,” the report says. “In comparison, white Americans hold 84% of the total wealth.” (source) In Boston that gap is even wider - in 2015, “a Boston Federal Reserve Bank 2015 study that found the median net worth for white households in Greater Boston was \$250,000 dollars while for Black households, it was just \$8 dollars.” (source)*

# WATCH

## REFLECT & DISCUSS

The size of this gap nationally - if Black people in America had access to the wealth their labor generated during slavery, and had the same opportunities throughout history as white Americans - is 14 trillion dollars.

The U.S. Government actually had an opportunity to address this back in 1865, right after the end of slavery. The government made a promise to newly freed Black Americans that they could have their own land - and then abruptly took it back. This video explains more:



[Click Here to Watch Video](#)



# WATCH

## REFLECT & DISCUSS

This all probably sounds overwhelming and impossible to truly fix. The Senate bill that we are inviting you to support, S.1053, would take the first step in Massachusetts, by studying the history in our state and making recommendations for things our state could do.

Discussion questions:

- Can you think of a time when you have harmed someone? What did you have to do to make it right, and repair the relationship?
- When harm has occurred over hundreds of years, who is responsible for making it right? Does making it right matter?
- How can cities, states, or even countries repair harms they have caused through racist policies?



# ACTIVITY

## WRITE A LETTER OR EMAIL

Write a letter or postcard to the Judiciary Committee!

Provide paper, pens, stamps, and envelopes, or blank postcards to write on.  
Collect the letters at the end to mail them together.

Example Letter:

[YOUR ADDRESS]

[DATE]

Joint Committee on the Judiciary  
24 Beacon Street, Room 511-C & 136  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Judiciary Committee Members,

My name is [FIRST AND LAST NAME], and I have lived in [MA city/town] for X years. I am writing in support of Senate Bill S.1053, which would create a commission to study reparations for slavery and make proposals for the state of Massachusetts.

[INCLUDE 1-4 SENTENCES THAT ARE PERSONAL FOR YOU. WHY DOES THIS MATTER TO YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT THEM TO KNOW?]

Thank you for your work on behalf of the Commonwealth, and I hope you will give S.1053 a favorable report.

Sincerely,

[NAME]



# CONTACT INFORMATION

NEED MORE RESOURCES OR INFORMATION REGARDING THIS WEEK'S TOOL KIT OR POLICY BILL, CONTACT **HANNAH HAFTER**, LEAD ORGANIZER OR VISIT OUR THE ECM WEBISTE.



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