

Being an **Inclusive Church**

...and not an exclusive club



Racial Justice Sunday

Sunday 9 September 2012

Or any other appropriate Sunday in autumn

[**www.ctbi.org.uk/racialjusticesunday**](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/racialjusticesunday)



Being an Inclusive Church

What is Racial Justice Sunday?

Have you ever felt really left out or unjustly treated?

In your church or community, are there individuals or groups who feel excluded or on the fringes?

As Christians do these situations matter to us and if so, why?

† Racial Justice Sunday has been marked by our different church traditions for some years now. The day was initiated because it was believed that churches needed support to help their members develop the confidence to get to grips with prejudice and racism in themselves, in the church and in wider society. It was hoped that then individuals might respect and honour those different from themselves, that the Church might become inclusive in the way that we believe God wants it to be and society transformed.

† One of the suggested readings for Racial Justice Sunday is from the Epistle of James. In his letter he challenges us straight on by saying there is no point in making impressive statements in preaching and teaching about faith and justice if we continue to pursue exclusive practices, run programmes which are difficult for some to access, or if we fail to embrace the stranger. James challenges us to walk the talk.

† As we approach Racial Justice Sunday on 9th September, Black History Month in October, One World Week at the end of that same month and Inter-faith week in November, let us pause and consider the positions of the insider and the outsider. As insiders we might reflect on the security that having a strong sense of belonging brings us but also on our need to be constantly on guard against forming cliques and making hasty judgements about the outsider to whom we should extend the hand of friendship and not simply the hand of nominal acquaintanceship so often found in church. If we consider ourselves to be outsiders we could reflect on what steps we might take to share our gifts and skills with the Church, notwithstanding any feelings of injustice we might have if the Church seems not to notice us or fails to encourage our contribution and participation. And as outsiders we might need to resist the temptation to 'retreat into the ghetto'.

Racial Justice Sunday 2012

† We acknowledge the need to address seriously all kinds of injustice and exclusion relating to any group of human beings, and whilst the Racial Justice Sunday material being prepared for us to use in our churches could be used to address other forms of justice and inclusion issues, it is specifically focused on justice and inclusion relating to ethnicity, nationality and culture.

† When justice comes, we rejoice with one another and thank God. This year, again our prayers go out for Doreen and Neville Lawrence who have seen some justice at last, with the conviction of two of the racist killers of Stephen Lawrence. However it grieves us that this family has had to wait 18 years to see some justice and we know there is still a long way to go. Let us also remember others who have been abused or killed in similar ways in recent years and their families who are also longing to see justice done.

† You will find that the Racial Justice Sunday material lends itself to corporate reflection and planning. A minister, priest or lay preacher may plan a Racial Justice Service on their own, but it could be beneficial for two people or a small worship group of different ages, including children and young people, to facilitate it together.



You may like to include this article in your Church magazine some time during the spring or summer so that members and friends of your church have an opportunity to think about Racial Justice Sunday and its significance before it takes place.

You may wish to hold Racial Justice Sunday on 9th September, but you could use the material in your worship on another Sunday in the autumn or in fact any time in 2012. You can also adapt these materials to suit your local context.

Order your Racial Justice Sunday resources using the form overleaf. Available from mid April 2012. Resources also available to download from:
www.ctbi.org.uk/racialjusticesunday

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