

EQUITY & RACIAL JUSTICE FORUM

BREAKOUT DISCUSSION GUIDE

Each group is tasked with discussing and finding common ground on the following questions. But first:

Nominate a note taker.

Take the notes of your discussion, then save them as a Word document or comparable and submit via email to decaturdestination@gmail.com following the meeting.

After the breakouts conclude and we've returned to general session, your note taker will have the opportunity to share your group's highlights with all attendees..

Take a moment to say hello and review these rules of engagement with your fellow participants. **Now let's begin.**

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Conversations about race are important but are not always easy. Keep in mind the four rules of courageous conversations as your discussion group embarks on these questions.

1. Stay engaged
2. Expect to experience discomfort
3. Speak your truth
4. Expect and accept a lack of closure

1. HISTORY (15 minutes)

Jane Elliott relayed her husband's experience with racism in small-town Iowa in the 1960s. The Beacon Hill Black Alliance shared some of what is going on here in Decatur. Discuss the following with your group:

- » How do you see the history of racism and how it informs economic disparities showing up in Decatur today?
- » Jane Elliott said that "the only thing necessary for the perpetuation of evil is for good people to do nothing." How are individual and collective actions in Decatur perpetuating the problem by ignoring or not actively fighting back against discrimination?



2. EMPATHY & HEALING (15 minutes)

Dr. Catherine Meeks talked about how confronting racism begins inside each of us and how “the personal and the collective are connected.” Dr. Yves-Rose Porcena shared about some of the progress Agnes Scott has made in the collective conversation. Discuss the following with your group:

- » When is a time when you became aware of your inner voices and how did you grow through that experience? What can local institutions do to help facilitate this work in each of us?
- » Catherine Meeks identifies our “inner community” as one impediment to racial healing. What are other impediments to healing and reconciliation in Decatur?

3. POLICIES, PRACTICES, & PROCEDURES (10 minutes)

Tim Wise explained how racism is inherently about systems and doesn’t require overtly bigoted individuals in order to perpetuate inequity. Dr. Mari Ann Banks shared about some of the work that City Schools of Decatur has been doing as an institution to combat this. Discuss the following with your group:

- » How is systemic discrimination perpetuating racist outcomes in Decatur even where there are not explicit individual expressions of hatred?
- » How can we uproot or reform policies, practices, and procedures in Decatur to address institutionalized discrimination and systemic inequity? What specific City policies, practices, or procedures could help bring this about? (Potential topics may include City policies, policing strategies, community education and communication, business diversity, public spaces, public events, transportation, and more.)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION. DON'T FORGET TO
SUBMIT YOUR NOTES TO DECATURDESTINATION@GMAIL.COM

WE'LL SEE YOU BACK IN THE GENERAL SESSION!

