

Welcoming Diversity: Congregational Inventory

Given that our landscape and communities are becoming more diverse, congregations are faced with the challenge of how to reach out to people of different racial/ethnic/linguistic/cultural backgrounds. An important step in meeting that challenge is to ask whether your congregation is truly welcoming to all people. While your initial answer may be “Yes”, intentional and focused introspection may reveal hidden barriers that can hinder people of minority ethnic backgrounds from feeling at home in your congregation. The following inventory focuses on six areas: *Perceptions, Leadership, Worship, Visual, Educational, and Events* to enable a process self-reflection. It is recommended that this inventory be used by a committee or a team of interested persons.

To stimulate your discussion, using a 1-3 scale, read each statement and place your most appropriate response to the left in the space provided.

NA = not applicable; **DK**= don’t know; **1** = not at all true; **2** = sometimes true; **3** = true, most of the time.

PERCEPTIONS, ATTITUDES, VALUES – WHAT WE HOLD IN OUR MINDS AND HEARTS AFFECT OUR ACTIONS!

1.	The healing of racism and an appreciation for racial/ethnic diversity are values of the leadership of our congregation.
2.	Opportunities for dialogue are provided about these values between our congregation and our leadership.
3.	Our leaders comprehend and communicate the way in which ethnic, economic, social and political justice makes visible God’s offer of full life for all.
4.	Our congregation is receptive to preaching, teaching, and dialogue about the harm of racism and the value of diversity.
5.	Our congregation is open to the ideas that people from other ethnic traditions bring about worship, education, community, and outreach.
6.	Our congregation is aware of our denomination’s position on issues of racism, poverty, and violence because the positions are consistently held before the people.
7.	Members who reflect our congregations’ ethnic diversity are being recruited and equipped for leadership.
8.	Our congregation addresses root causes of poverty, racism, and other forms of discrimination, while also relieving immediate needs through ministries of charity, compassion, and mercy.
9. a	Past attitudes/actions of prejudice and discrimination have been addressed in our congregation forthrightly and healing is taking place around these issues.
9b	We have a process of reconciliation in place, when needed.

LEADERSHIP/ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE – Leaders and structure set a congregation’s course.

10.	Our congregation’s leadership promotes anti-racism, diversity and a multicultural ethos.
11.	The Leadership is conscious of diversity when selecting suppliers of items and services
12.a	Our congregation has a team that works with the leadership to address issues of racism in our congregation and society.
12.b	The team has developed a strategy for addressing racism within the congregation and community
12.c	The resources of our congregation support this team.
13.	People outside our congregation’s primary ethnic group are consulted about how we might address unintentional racism and become more inclusive.
14.a	We have a system of greeting in place so that all those who attend receive a warm welcome.
14.b	Members of the “greeting team” are educated to be welcoming to a wide variety of people.
14.c	The members of the “greeting team” are representative of the ethnic make-up of our congregation.

WORSHIP – Does our worship inspire us to greater understanding and appreciation for the diversity of God’s people?

15.	Our worship, liturgies and music incorporate a variety of ethnic/cultural traditions.
16.	We invite speakers, dramatists, musicians, etc. who represent a variety of ethnic/cultural traditions.
17.	Our preaching addresses the sin of racism and challenges the congregation to examine themselves in light of scriptures.
18.	The Gospel message is expressed in ways relevant to diverse people.
19.	We give voice in worship to issues important to diverse people.
20.	As a congregation we welcome and befriend all visitors before, during and after worship.

VISUAL – Visuals are strong messages. What do we see around us?

21.	A wide variety of ethnic people are represented in our windows, pictures, wall hangings, etc.
22.	The classrooms for young children are supplied with dolls, books, games, and other toys that represent a wide diversity of peoples and cultures.
23.	All study/work rooms and libraries have books, DVD’s, etc. that represent a wide variety of ethnicities and cultures.
24.	Our displays, brochures, and publicity pieces reflect diversity.
25.	The staff and leadership visually reflect a commitment to multicultural ministry.

EDUCATIONAL – What are we reading, studying, and promoting?

26.	We strive to teach a respect for diversity.
27.a	Our educational materials reflect a variety of ethnicities and cultures (and language groups if appropriate to our congregation.)
27.b	People from various cultures and ethnicities are consulted when new curriculum or educational materials are developed.
28.a	We regularly offer classes that give insight into people of different ethnicities and cultures.
28.b	We are sensitive to the differences in teaching and learning styles among people from a variety of cultures and traditions.
28.c	Our faith is presented in terms of the history, tradition, and contribution of minority cultures as well as the dominant culture.
29.a	We offer on-site racism and diversity sensitivity training.
29.b	We promote off-site racism and diversity sensitivity training for members of our congregation.
29.c	We offer our resources and venue for racism and diversity awareness training

EVENTS – Do we schedule events to broaden our experiences and perspectives?

30.	Our congregation invites other congregations representing different ethnic/cultural groups to share in opportunities for outreach, recreation, and worship.
31.	Our congregation promotes time for members to visit or to participate in other ethnic/cultural groups' work, play or worship experiences.
32.	We hold activities to celebrate the diversity already among us and to become familiar with a variety of ethnicities and cultural traditions.

Thank you for your time and effort given to this inventory. This exercise is intended to help your congregation, synod or Church group engage in conversation about its own reality with regard to ethnic and cultural diversity. To follow up this initial conversation, you can design ongoing reconciling actions that will serve as a guide for planning and annual evaluation. If you would like more information and guidance kindly contact your Synod Racial Justice Advocate or the RJMM Office of the United Reformed Church at rj.mm@urc.org.uk or michael.jagessar@urc.org.uk . Telephone 020 7916 8655

The URC is a MULTICULTURAL Church committed to empowering all towards just, inclusive, renewing and transforming intercultural mission and ministry.

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[This inventory has been adapted from The Welcoming Diversity Inventory for Congregations by GRACE/RACIAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE, 183 Lakeside NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503-3210]