

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC  
**ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA**



**RESOURCES FOR TALKING WITH TEENS ABOUT RACISM**

*Respectfully compiled by  
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**NOTE:** This resource is one tool among many to utilize in having these necessary discussions with our youth. This list is not exhaustive and may not include every resource available, but the information listed below will help tremendously in the ongoing formation of our youth in regards to the eradication of the sin of racism.

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTERS (NFCYM)**

<https://nfcym.org/resources/webinars/open-wide-our-hearts/>

**UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS (USCCB)**

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/>

**CATHOLIC RESOURCES FOR RACIAL JUSTICE** (Shared via Facebook by Fr. Bryan Small, Pastor, Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Decatur)

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kYfjbNmJOf9YSzszxYLapGOocXFIXpsd6Jszekg1k\\_U/mobilebasic](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kYfjbNmJOf9YSzszxYLapGOocXFIXpsd6Jszekg1k_U/mobilebasic)

**OPEN WIDE OUR HEARTS: THE ENDURING CALL TO LOVE, A PASTORAL LETTER AGAINST RACISM**  
(USCCB, 2018)

PDF DOWNLOAD - <https://bit.ly/2YaXQBT>

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS TO US: U.S. BISHOPS PASTORAL LETTER ON RACISM** (USCCB, 1979)

<https://bit.ly/2YaSarC>

**PAX CHRISTI USA ANTI-RACISM RESOURCES**

<https://paxchristiusa.org/resources/antiracismresources/>

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**FR. MIKE SCHMITZ INTERVIEW W/FR. JOSHUA JOHNSON (Diocese of Baton Rouge, LA) Interview**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddmw5Sd7yeE>

***Just Mercy and Selma*** movies streaming for free during the month of June [you can rent the movie for free on YouTube; you can easily find easily on YouTube, licensing may be a question but studios made these available specifically to use to teach people about systemic racism]

<https://www.wral.com/highly-acclaimed-just-mercy-and-selma-movies-streaming-for-free-in-june/19135008/>

**BLACK LIVES MATTER: WHAT WE BELIEVE\*** - <https://blacklivesmatter.com/what-we-believe>

**\*NOTE:** Several of the statements of belief of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) organization via this website directly conflict with Catholic doctrine and teachings. While we do not endorse or support organizations with beliefs conflicting with the Gospel of Christ and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, it is important to remain knowledgeable of the BLM Movement and the principal organization's beliefs as our teens will most certainly ask questions and provide commentary on the organization especially at this time.

It must be noted that certain themes of great importance to Catholics in our efforts to address and eradicate the sins of racism, prejudice, discrimination, ageism, sexism, racial superiority, and any sin that "... violates the fundamental human dignity of those called to be children of the same Father"<sup>1</sup> appear in the some of the BLM statements of beliefs. Consider expounding upon these particular themes (not an exhaustive list) from Catholic perspectives:

- Justice: Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 2411, 1805, 1807
- Community (Communion in Charity): CCC 952-953
- Safeguarding Peace: CCC 2302, 2317

[\*Pacem In Terris \(Peace On Earth\)\*](#) – Pope John XXIII Encyclical on Establishing Universal Peace in Truth, Justice, Charity, and Liberty

[\*Gaudium Et Spes \(Joy and Hope\)\*](#) – Pope Paul VI Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World

Notes on Catholic Social Teaching from Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis - <https://www.cctwincities.org/education-advocacy/catholic-social-teaching/>

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<sup>1</sup> "The Sin of Racism," *Brothers and Sisters to Us: U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Racism in Our Day*, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1979, p.3



**TEACHING FOR CHANGE: BUILDING SOCIAL JUSTICE STARTING IN THE CLASSROOM**

<https://www.teachingforchange.org>

**TALKING TO TEENS WHEN THE WORLD IS ON FIRE**

Victoria -Moten, Teacher, Founder/Director *Homegrown Education*

1. **Ask** them how they are feeling. Scared? Sad? Depressed? Overwhelmed? Angry?
2. **Ask** where they are getting information. Are they quoting memes? News sources that lack credibility? Contain bias? From their friends? Guide them to sources that will equip them with accurate information.
3. **Listen**. Do they want to vent? Organize? Act? Cry? A number of teens are losing friendships in rants online. You may be the last person they trust to really HEAR them. Don't take that trust lightly. Teens, much like adults during this time, are experiencing high levels of trauma. People are dying from hatred and Covid-19. While your teens may even say something you disagree with, still LISTEN first as it will help guide conversations.
4. **Remind** them that they are never too young to be change agents for social justice, basing their actions fully in Catholic Social Teaching. Feeling angry? Do something productive with that anger. Feeling overwhelmed? Take control. **EMPOWER** teens to take action. Many feel like they are too young to do anything. Remind them that teenagers organized [March for Our Lives](#). 16-year-old Olivia Moore organized the [Winston-Salem demonstration](#) and 16-year-old Greta Thunberg organized the [Global Climate Strike](#).

*"I can't protest because my parents won't let me out of the house."* Remind them that change is not made with just marches. Countless people are involved in a variety of ways; provide supplies to protesters: masks, water, milk, food, etc. Post resources on your social media. Provide encouragement to your friends who also feel overwhelmed/angry. Dialogue with those who are ignorant to the problem. Guiding teens to act in different ways may quell anger towards their parents who love them immensely and are genuinely scared for them. Hopefully, this will remind them that their parents' "inactivity" doesn't necessarily mean their parents are against the movement. Remind them that more violence is never the answer to seeking justice and equity.

5. **Encourage** dialogue. A lot of us (adults) are finding that friends/associates we have known for years are ignorant to the hurt, fear, and even the humanity of people of color. The same is true for teens whose friendships are still fresh and influences their ideas. It is important to talk to them about how to navigate these dialogues.

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One thing a teacher said that really resonated with me is “the best way to combat ignorance is to create a generation of informed citizens.” Teach them to attack the logic of argument and provide different perspectives and credible info instead of attacking the person’s character or beliefs. Remember a person’s ethos (deeply held belief) is hard to change, but providing good resources may help change their perspective.

6. **Nurture** your bond. If a teen has come to you (parent, teacher, mentor) they trust you and respect your ideas. Remind them that you are there to support them. Leave your lines of communication open. Remember: our youth are watching us, and actions speak louder than anything we say to them. Act accordingly, our youth need us right now.
  
7. **Educate yourselves.** We cannot pass on any information or knowledge we ourselves do not possess. Use this opportunity to reflect on your own experiences with racism, prejudice, bias, supremacy, privilege, exceptionalism, etc. Utilize resources from this list for your own growth as a disciple of Christ fighting to uphold the God-given human dignity of all people. Sincerely examine your conscious to seek if you have been complicit or apathetic in this movement. Take seriously this opportunity to fight the sin of racism in an active, engaged, and empowering manner different than you ever have before. Also, prepare for the long haul while acting in the short run; this sin will not end overnight with one or two initiatives once every so often or with reading one or two documents.