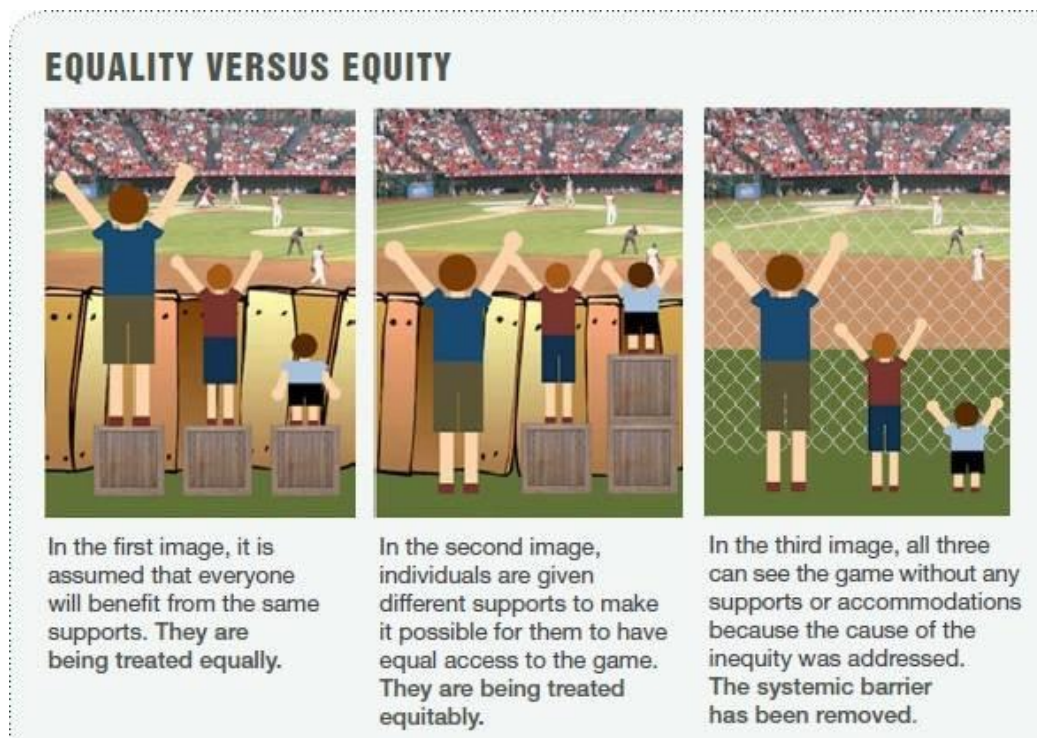


## A Primer for conversations around Racial Justice

As people of faith who seek Racial Justice and Equity it is important to understand the why behind our quest. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. referred to this destination as the Beloved Community. Grounded in a faith that proclaims God as creator and redeemer of the whole world, we are called to follow Christ in loving all of creation. The result would be a unified community in which all are known in their beautiful uniqueness and loved for it. In essence, to answer the call to Racial Justice and Equity, one must understand the Spiritual Imperative, the why of the work. This imperative can come from different places for different people. Here are just a few examples from Scripture that can remind us of our interconnectedness.

- In Genesis 25 we learn of the death of Abraham. Despite forming what will be known as 2 separate nations, Isaac and Ishmael, come together to bury their father. This tells us that any separation they had, was not enough for them to deny their connection. This is what it means to honor our differences.
- The genealogy of Christ includes names of women from foreign and ostracized communities. Ruth and Rahab were each from nations with whom the Hebrew children were forbidden to marry. And yet they are the mothers of Jesus.
- Throughout his ministry Christ associates, elevates and praises those who are different, reminding all around him that we are connected and can learn from one another; the Syrophenician woman, the Samaritan woman at the well,

This kind of understanding of Justice goes beyond Equality or even beyond Equity. See this image.



Racial Justice is not a quest for equality or sameness, which would expect people to deny their uniqueness and diversity. Racial Equity, acknowledges our differences, leveling the playing field so that access becomes equal. But the work of Justice that embraces a Beloved Community goes beyond even this. Beloved Community includes the people inside the ballpark, not just those on the outside, looking in. True Justice would be the removal of the WALL that separates, and hopefully, even removal of the fence. This work is about dismantling Systems that deceives us into believing we are separate.

## CONVERSATIONS AROUND RACE ARE DIFFICULT

But they can be done faithfully when we;

- ❖ Create space for Uncomfortable Learning & Humble Listening
- ❖ Embrace the opportunity to Practice Curiosity and Name the Grief
- ❖ Honor the conversations as an opportunity to Extend and Receive Grace
- ❖ Look at the Big Picture AND our Daily Living by Examining Systems & how they impact individuals
- ❖ Look squarely at resources, power and privilege
- ❖ Are Hopeful, making the conversation a Steward of our Best Values

## ESSENTIAL DEFINITIONS

- ❖ Diversity: An Awareness and Appreciation of Difference.
- ❖ Cultural Competency: skill development for working across cultural lines
- ❖ Prejudice is personal and inevitable. We all have prejudices that are shape by the lenses through which we see the world. These lenses can include things like; Gender, Citizenship, Sexuality, Ability, Age, Religion, Class, Race and other cultural and social self-identifiers.
- ❖ Discrimination is deferential action based on prejudice
- ❖ Privilege is a special right or advantage available only to a particular person or group of people. In the context of social inequality can refer to age, disability, ethnic or racial category, gender, sexual orientation, religion and/or social class.
- ❖ Racism is Prejudice + Privilege + Systemic (Institutionalized) Power  
*institutionalized system that supports and justifies oppression*

## EXAMPLES OF RACISM

