

Is your church group interested in hosting one of the following EMBRACE events?

Workshops (Designed for 20 – 40 people)

‘And you welcomed me’

This 2.5 hour event provides an opportunity to learn about different ways of engaging with migrant people and responding to particular challenges they might face. The workshops run in an informal café-style manner allowing for exchange of ideas and open discussion.

‘Small World’ Café ~ An introduction to cultures in NI

This café-style event provides an opportunity to learn first-hand about different cultures that are represented in N. Ireland. Individuals representing different cultures will be available to share stories and experiences and to answer questions from participants.

Training (Designed for 10 – 20 people)

‘Migration and Us’

This 2 hour interactive training session explores inward and outward migration and provides information on the rights and entitlements of migrant workers in N Ireland. It aims to dispel myths and provide practical information on issues relating to migration.

‘A Stitch in Time’ – Responding to Racism at a Local Level

This 2 hour interactive session is designed to stimulate thinking and discussion around issues of welcome and integration, racism and the process of escalation through the use of artwork.

Speaking Engagements (For any size of group)

If you are interested in having an EMBRACE representative share a reflection on welcome and migration issues, please contact us.

If you are interested in having EMBRACE facilitate one of the above options with your group, or if you have further questions, please contact Aneta at aneta@embraceni.org, 07731378037.

A STITCH IN TIME

Responding to Racism at a Local Level

An illustrated resource to stimulate ideas
for small group work

Notes for Leaders

‘A Stitch in Time’ is a series of four picture cards designed to stimulate thinking and discussion around issues of welcome and integration, racism and the process of escalation, and ultimately how we might strive proactively to make our communities a more welcoming place for everyone.

The title of the series comes from the saying ‘**A stitch in time saves nine**’ referring to the idea that the mending or ‘stitching up’ of a small hole or tear will save the need for more stitching when the hole has become larger. This series of postcards provides four glimpses, over a period of time, into the home of a family living in Northern Ireland. Throughout the series as the visible signs of racism escalate, we might ask how could ‘A Stitch in Time’ have helped to prevent this escalation? What response is required of the neighbours and community?

It is very important that people who work with this series do not get the wrong impression about the situation in Northern Ireland. **Most migrants have a positive or very positive experience of living here;** however, racist incidents do happen.

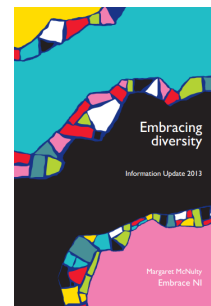
EMBRACE has worked with designer Anna Wherrett of Root Design (www.rootdesignbelfast.co.uk) to produce the series with the hope that it might generate discussion and raise awareness around the issues of racism and how we all can work to create a more welcoming community.

We can deliver the material in this booklet as a free training session. Please contact us for more information. We can also provide Migrant Awareness Training and a variety of supporting materials.

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EMBRACE Materials



Information Update, **Embracing Diversity**, provides an introduction to some of the complex issues of immigration, asylum and racism.

The **EMBRACE Welcome Poster** can be used in church halls and doorways to make people from other countries feel more welcome.



Who's who? Who's here? presents an overview of migration terminology, statistics and nationalities.

Hear My Voice is a series of first-hand personal stories of welcome and integration challenges.



These and other free resources can be obtained from the EMBRACE office.

A Fish Out of Water

Exploring the Impact of Migration at a Personal Level

Six postcards designed to stimulate thinking and discussion around issues of welcome and migration, integration and ultimately how we might strive proactively to make our communities a more welcoming place for everyone.



The postcards come accompanied with Leader's notes, and Bible Study ideas and the EMBRACE Information Sheet: 'Migration and Us'.

Introduction

Where racism is involved there can be a process of escalation. Negative attitudes may lead to derogatory language. This might lead to harassment and threats with the final result being physical attack. This can happen when there is no intervention to transform negative thinking or modify negative behaviours.

The process outlined in the cards is based to some extent on an understanding of the processes involved in racism as outlined by the social scientist, Gordon Allport, in the 1950s. His Scale of Prejudice and Discrimination is measured from 1 – 5.

- Antilocution: 'hate speech' including jokes, stereotypes and negative images
- Avoidance: people in a minority group are actively avoided
- Discrimination: the denying of opportunities and services
- Physical Attack
- Extermination

This scale is used in PSNI training and is a reminder of the long-term possibilities if racism is unchecked. The cards do not address the Avoidance stage but leaders could examine how far lack of contact between local people and incomers may inadvertently encourage racism.

The cards do not examine extremist philosophies that might foster ideas of extermination but leaders may wish to bear in mind the possibility of introducing broader themes including the race laws in South Africa or in the USA and how the latter were accompanied by lynchings; the treatment of Jewish people through history and prior to the holocaust (including the failure of majorities to protect them); and more recent experiences such as the extermination of people in Rwanda.

It may be helpful to have further background knowledge about recent immigration locally and the challenges faced by the people who come here. Please see Appendices 2 and 3.

For an overview of immigration and asylum issues and the role of the Churches read the latest edition of *Embracing Diversity; Information Update*, available online along with other information at: www.embraceni.org/category/about-us/embrace-resources/

Facilitation Ideas

The following ideas might be useful for some groups; however, please use what will be most beneficial for the group you are working with.

- Invite people to 'step into the shoes' of one of the persons 'present' in the picture (i.e. the mother or child in the photo on the window ledge, the person living in the home across the street, the person who wrote the words 'go home' on the window, the person who cross-stitched the 'home sweet home' needlepoint, etc.)
- Begin conversations on each card by asking the group: What do you see? What has changed from the previous card?
- The cards are numbered and help to illustrate the process of escalation; however, it is helpful to note that events do not always escalate in the same way in each incident. It is quite possible that a person's experience will just move from 'card 2' to 'card 4' or vice versa or not escalate at all.
- What individual or group actions would help to prevent racism and racist incidents? You may find it helpful to refer to 'How Should We Respond to Racism?' (Appendix 2).

How can I find out more?

EMBRACE runs **Workshops** for groups of church people, to support and advise them on local initiatives they can undertake at congregational and local community level to welcome incomers. Topics include how to cope with language barriers; the setting up of English classes; how drop in centres and clubs can promote integration and friendship; and general information about the challenges faced by migrant people.

The group can also facilitate **Migration Awareness Training**. Knowledge makes it easier to dispel negative attitudes that may be based on myths or ignorance.

EMBRACE produces an annual information update about immigration and associated issues, *Embracing Diversity*, see <http://www.embraceni.org/category/about-us/embrace-resources>. See also www.embraceni.org/category/information/.

Other resources are helpful in building welcome at parish/congregational level. www.embraceni.org/category/about-us/embrace-resources/

The website also includes Advice for Churches on signposting minority-ethnic people in crisis situations www.embraceni.org/category/christian-response/advice-for-churches/

The United Bible Societies has produced the resource, *On the Road a Journey through the Bible* a combination of Bible stories, prayers, personal experiences and suggested questions for discussion. See www.la-bible.net/doc/dons08072.pdf

And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you
Leviticus 19:33-34

I was a stranger and you made me welcome Matthew 25: 35

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Who are they?

Research about recent European migrants found that they were mostly young people between the ages of 18 to 34 without dependents when they arrive. Around 60% were young men. They often work below the level of their skills and qualifications.

What jobs do migrant workers do?

A report on central and eastern European workers, 2004–2009, showed them filling the following jobs: 10,840 in administration, business and management, 6,000 in manufacturing, 5,025 in food/fish/meat processing, 3,805 in hospitality and catering, 3,740 in construction and land, 2,240 in agriculture, 1,480 in retailing, 1,460 in the health sector, 855 in transport, 145 in entertainment and leisure and 535 others. These may not be entirely accurate as agencies enrol workers in the admin sector and they move to other jobs. The IT and health sectors have drawn skilled people from outside Europe.

Do immigrants cost us money?

There are costs because of increased pressure on medical, education and housing services, but migrant workers pay tax and national insurance like the rest of us and contribute to the local economy by paying rent and buying food, clothing and other necessities. They are ineligible for out of work benefits until they have been living here for some time.

Do we need migrants?

A research study published in 2009 found that migrant workers helped maintain an adequate labour supply during the 2004–2008 economic boom and seem to have made the difference between some businesses surviving, or relocating abroad. 31% of 600 businesses in one survey said that migrants were important to their survival. This rose to 50% in health and social care and agriculture. See *Economic, Labour Market and Skills Impacts of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland* www.delni.gov.uk/skillsimpacts/migrantworkers.

'If you look at food processing, if it wasn't for inward migration ... the factories would have closed. Everyone in them would have lost their jobs, most of the farmers on which the rural economy depends would also have lost their jobs...'

Dungannon interviewee in *Immigration and Social Cohesion in the UK*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2008

Suggestions for Discussion

Card 1:

Home Sweet Home



This card represents the family home of someone who has come here from another country, before there have been any negative experiences.

Physical things to note:

- The clock shows a smiley face
- There is a full skein of thread on the window sill
- The cross stitch picture

Optional questions and points for discussion:

- Have you or someone you know moved or migrated somewhere else? What was that experience like? How were you made to feel welcome in that new place?
- Why do people move here or away from here? How do people choose where to live?
- What hopes and expectations might people have when they move to a new place?
- How do they feel and how do the people around them feel?
- What makes a home a home? How can we help to make people feel at home?
- How can we influence people's attitudes to newcomers?

- How could one use the thread to weave links that help bring the community together?
- How could churches/groups come together to prevent the possibility of racist attacks or respond if they happen?



The words 'Go home' have been daubed on the window of the family's home.

Physical things to note:

- The clock shows a sad face
- There is now a needle in the thread ready to try to repair the damage already done
- The saying on the cross stitch in the window reads 'Sticks and Stones'

Optional questions and points for discussion:

- What truth (or un-truth) do you find in the proverb 'sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me'?
- Have you or someone you know experienced hate speech?
- What does it feel like to be rejected?
- How would you respond if this happened to your family?
- How would it feel to continue living in the house?
- Why do people use hate speech and how do you challenge this to promote positive change?

How many new people have come here recently?

The 2011 Census indicates that 95.49% of the people living in N Ireland were born in the UK or the Republic of Ireland. Of the remaining 4.51%, 45,407 were born in the rest of the European Union, and 36,046 in other countries. The greatest number of people came between 2004 and 2009. Some stay just long enough to save enough for specific projects such as buying a house or setting up a business back home. Others settle here, especially if they have children. Fewer new people are coming now because of the recession.

What countries are recent immigrants from?

In the early 2000s people from Portugal and its former colonies came to work in Mid-Ulster, mostly in the food industry. The largest groups of people from outside Europe, working in the health sector, are from the Philippines and India. Since 12 new countries joined the European Union in 2004 the majority of people have come from Central and Eastern Europe, with the greatest numbers from Poland and Lithuania, but there are people here from many other countries.

Why do they choose to come here?

Most people respond to advertisements or are recruited in their home country by agencies. Some may come because friends have had good experiences. A large number come here in order to improve their English. Others want to leave areas of high unemployment or where wages and salaries are very low.

'_____ Recruitment Agency was looking for welders back in Poland ... They got a fellow recruited from a factory where I worked. He went and then few others and few more and it went like a snow ball. I came too.' Tomasz, Poland

The New Workers: Migration, Labour and Citizenship in Northern Ireland in the 21st Century edited by B. Garvey, P. Stewart, J. Kulinska, R. Campuzano

Do many people seek sanctuary/asylum here?

Very small numbers apply for asylum here each year. The UK Border Agency was considering 140 applications from individuals, or people with dependents in 2012. In October that year 80% of applicants receiving support were from 5 countries: China (147), Zimbabwe (34), Nigeria (35), Sudan (36) and Somalia (38). In January 2013 there were just 420 people in supported accommodation while their applications are considered.

Appendix 3

Migration and Us

EMBRACE Information Sheet 2

Spring 2013



The Lord said to Abram: Leave your country, your family, and your relatives and go to the land that I will show you.

Genesis 12: 1–5

Are we not all migrants or descendants of migrants to this land?

Our People Our Times: A History of Northern Ireland's Cultural Diversity, NI Museum Council

Where have we gone to and why?

Over 80 million people in the world have Irish blood; 36.5 million US residents claimed Irish ancestry in 2007. Historically some were transported or sold into slavery or left because of poverty, hunger, persecution, discrimination, civil war or unemployment.

Are many local people still leaving?

Over 20,000 people still leave N Ireland each year to study, to take up jobs or to see the world. (This number will now also include some people who are returning to their home countries.)

Is inward migration new?

There have always been incomers to Ireland, from pre-historic times onwards: Anglo-Normans in the twelfth century, Scots and the English in the seventeenth. Huguenots and Jewish people came to escape persecution. Italian and Indian communities developed from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Small numbers of Vietnamese refugees came in the 1960s and larger numbers of Chinese people migrated from Hong Kong around the same time.

Why are there increased numbers now?

The Troubles and high unemployment contributed to outward migration in the 1970s and 1980s. A declining birth rate has led to a reduction in the numbers of young people available for work. (The population of Belfast, for example, dropped from 400,000 in the middle of the twentieth century to 270,000 in 2006.) So, when violence reduced and the economy began to expand, there was a shortage of workers, and skills gaps also emerged.

- What can the community do to reassure and support the family?
- What is the role of the churches/groups in helping to support people who have experienced hate speech?

Card 3:

Friend or Foe



The window has been cracked and the family does not know whether to expect support.

Physical things to note:

- There is a shadowy figure outside the house
- The clock shows the eleventh hour which is used to describe the final moments where there is still a possibility of rescuing the situation
- There has been a lot of effort to repair the damage (symbolised by the stitching in the window)
- The thread is running out

Optional questions and points for discussion:

- How do the different family members feel?
- How do you know who is a friend or a foe?
- Are there cultural differences which might effect attitudes e.g. towards police or receiving a visit after dark?
- Are there local 'rules' that increase fear of contact?

- How should one approach a family who has been attacked?
- Is the language barrier important?
- How can the thread be used to repair the damage or develop links?



A brick has been thrown through the window of the house.

Physical things to note:

- The photograph is no longer on the windowsill
- The thread has nearly run out
- The clock is at all the nines (999 if there is a second hand)
- The brick is damaged as well as the window

Optional questions and points for discussion:

- How would you respond if this was your home?
- How long could you stay if there were continued attacks?
- Do you have experience of people being forced from their homes for any reason?
- The brick that has been thrown is also damaged. How might this be a metaphor for the damaged person who threw the brick?

Reporting Race Hate Crimes or Discrimination

Unless someone is in danger, it is important to have the permission of the victim before you take action. Many people fear making their situation worse by making a complaint. Where people are willing, there are a number of ways of reporting an incident. Racially motivated crimes come under the heading of 'hate crime'.

In an emergency you should dial **999**; for non-emergency calls to the police phone **0845 600 8000**. There are PSNI **Hate Crime and Minority Liaison Officers** in police stations. The PSNI have access to translators and telephone translation services and have copies of their leaflet on Racial Incidents on their website in English, Polish, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Mandarin, Russian, Latvian, Slovakian and Romanian www.psnipolice.uk

You can also report a hate crime online at www.urzone.com/hatecrime/hatecrime.asp

You can also report incidents confidentially on the **Crimestoppers** number **0800 555 111**

The **Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)** also has an **Online Incident Report Form** www.nicem.org.uk/services/support-to-victims-of-racial-harassment-and-discrimination/report-an-incident

The **Belfast Migrant Centre** offers support for victims of racist harassment (**028 9043 8962** www.belfastmigrantcentre.org/)

The **Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)** encourages reporting of neighbourhood harassment to their district offices. Contact details can be found at www.nihe.gov.uk/index/about/contact_us_home/your_nearest_office.htm

They have also published a **Hate Harassment Support Pack** www.nihe.gov.uk/hate_harrassment_support_pack.pdf

The **Equality Commission for Northern Ireland** is responsible for preventing discrimination and promoting equality. It covers various areas of discrimination including gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, marital status and religious or political belief. If you want advice from the Equality Commission about unlawful discrimination contact them on: information@equalityni.org or by telephone on **028 9089 0890** (Enquiry Line).

You shall love your neighbour as yourself. Mark 12: 30

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What Can We Do?

Everyone should be prepared to challenge racist language (including jokes) or myths and negative remarks about minority groups. Migration awareness or anti-racism training will help to give you confidence. Be aware of your own prejudices.

It is helpful to be prepared in case there is a racist incident in your area. Here are just some suggestions as to what you can do both before and after such an event.

- Organise training on diversity and migration awareness. (EMBRACE can help.) You can start by reading our leaflet 'Migration and Us'.
www.embraceni.org/category/about-us/embrace-resources/
- Build links with people from other nationalities and backgrounds who have moved into your area.
- Bring churches together to plan a joint response in the event of a racist incident.
- Make sure you know how to contact the right people in the agencies who can help.
- Visit people who have been attacked to reassure them and see if there is anything you can do.
- Go in pairs and, if there are women alone in the house, ensure that there is a woman among the visitors.
- Never give publicity to an incident unless the victims want it to be known.
- If you are acting on behalf of someone keep a very careful record of events.
- Ensure that there is one person who can make a statement on behalf of everyone.
- Bear in mind that blanket statements attacking people who act in a racist way do little to help the victims and can make whole communities feel picked on and resentful.

So Peter ... said: 'Truly I understand that God shows no partiality...' Acts 10:34

For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. Ephesians 2:14

- The brick was moulded. To what extent are attitudes that are moulded permanent?
- What do you see as the role of the neighbours, community and churches in responding to such an incident?

Conclusion

- Referring back to Card 1: Home Sweet Home, what have you learnt that would help you build peaceful communities?
- What have you learnt that might help you to challenge racism in your daily life?
- Is there more the group could do to plan a joint response?

Bible Study Suggestions

The cards are designed to show how racism can escalate if there are no positive interventions and it is important that participants in a group discussion are made aware of this. The process illustrated is not inevitable. It might, for example be possible to spend time discussing how one would respond to the situation in Card 2 in such a way that the family could return to the feeling of Home Sweet Home illustrated in Card 1.

There are plenty of biblical references to the need for a place to call home and to the responsibility of those who have a home to show hospitality to others.

The Christian message and response is one of hope and a positive ending and so the cards are not meant to 'end' with 'The End of the Line'; rather they are related topics that can be used independently or in conjunction with one another – at your discretion. This is also the case with the following biblical passages. Indeed, you may find some scripture that we recommend for one card to be more useful for discussion about another one. These are merely suggestions to help provide a focus and some direction. Relevant questions are given for the biblical references. Group leaders can choose biblical passages and questions to use as appropriate.

Card 1: Home Sweet Home

Jeremiah 29

The prophet sends a letter to those who have been exiled from Jerusalem and forced to live in an unfamiliar and difficult culture. Jeremiah stresses the importance of putting down roots and investing in the place where they now are. He tells them to 'build houses and live in them' (v5) and to 'seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you' (v7).

Ruth 1 - 4 (particularly 1:15-18)

Q. What did Ruth bring to her new community? What positive things have migrants brought to this part of the world, historically or currently?

Galatians 3:28 Neither Jew nor Gentile / Ephesians 2:13-22 Barriers broken

Q. Overcoming barriers between 'Jew' and 'Gentile' was both a necessity and a challenge for the early Christian church. What are similar challenges in our day?

Who is Likely to Be a Victim?

Anyone can be a victim of racist attitudes or actions, however people from minority groups are more likely to be. Even age is no barrier.

'I have witnessed a racist attack. It was in P6. Two boys were being picked on by about six people and they said "go back home" ...'

National Children's Bureau report published Belfast, 2010.

'Promise Awoyelu was asleep at about 05:30 GMT on Saturday when she was hit on the head by a brick thrown through her bedroom window ... The child's father, Charles Awoyelu, who has been living in Northern Ireland for seven years, described the attack as 'shocking'. ... 'We are here to make a living and we are a peace-loving family.'

BBC News N Ireland, January 2012

www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-16665103

Many people are exposed to negative behaviour at work. In 2009, 80% of interviewees working in the private care sector said they had experienced racist bullying and discrimination and have felt humiliated at work.

[www.unison.org.uk/file/MW_Racism_and_the_Recession_-_final_report\[1\].pdf](http://www.unison.org.uk/file/MW_Racism_and_the_Recession_-_final_report[1].pdf)

Public officials are not immune from prejudice.

'I asked [a Social Security official]: "Can you please tell me if there is anywhere else I can go for help?" The answer was blunt and direct: "No! Go and ask the Portuguese Government to help you.'

A woman dismissed from her job because she was pregnant.

Animate Research Compendium, 2006

Neither are Christian communities.

'We have once sat in the church ... we smiled as we sat down, but there was nothing in response. They shifted and moved to keep space and distance between us so much that it became embarrassing. ... Was this just? Everywhere we go, it brings home the fact that once you have coloured skin you are regarded as scum ...'

Yvonne Mefor in *Inter-Cultural Insights: Christian Reflections on Racism, Hospitality and Identity from the Island of Ireland*

Some groups report particular anxiety. These comments are from a survey of Polish people living here, who were asked about their concerns:

'I feel more and more unwanted in this country'

'I'm worried about the harassment of Polish people and the lack of understanding towards my countrymen'

Dr Robbie McVeigh and Chris McAfee 'Za Chlebem':

The Impact of the Economic Downturn on the Polish Community in Northern Ireland

www.nicem.org.uk/uploads/publications/Za_Chlebem_Report.pdf

Appendix 2

How Should we Respond to Racism?

EMBRACE Information Sheet 4 Spring 2013



From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth...

Acts 17: 26

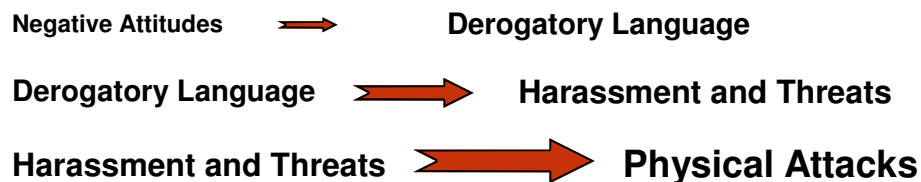
What is Racism?

Dictionaries tend to define racism in terms of beliefs that some 'races' are superior to others. Many people today do not hold conscious views of racial superiority but retain ideas about people from different countries or ethnic backgrounds that lead to discriminatory attitudes and actions. Our troubled past has also helped to develop territorialism and suspicion of outsiders.

Negative stereotyping in the wider community is a breeding ground for more overt racism and racist crime. Physical and verbal racial attacks are publicised but more subtle forms of racial discrimination and indifference also affect many aspects of people's lives in a detrimental way.

Racist attitudes develop out of negative thoughts that are often based on fear, myths and ignorance about immigration and why our society is changing. If these attitudes are not challenged they lead to negative language. If this is unchecked, harassment and physical attack can follow.

The incidence of racially motivated crime, recorded by the PSNI, tended to rise during the last decade as the number of people from other countries and ethnic backgrounds increased in our communities. The numbers of these crimes has dropped slightly since then but in 2011–12 there were still 696 racist incidents and 458 racist crimes recorded, of which 199 were violence against the person and 213 were property crimes. These figures are the tip of the iceberg as race crime is underreported. For more detailed figures see www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/updates_domestic_and_hate_



Hebrews 13:2

'Show hospitality to strangers ... some have entertained angels without knowing it.'

From the perspective of a receiving culture, as in the letter to the Hebrews, early Christians are reminded of the long tradition of Jewish hospitality.

Card 2: Sticks and Stones

Psalm 41:7

'All who hate me whisper together about me; They imagine the worst for me'.

The Psalms record the heights and depths of human experience; often the Psalmist pours out to God the agony of being excluded and victimised by those they should be able to trust.

Luke 10:25-37 The Good Samaritan

Q. Jesus readily interacted with everyone and, in one of the best known of all biblical stories, uses the example of the Samaritan to illustrate loving your neighbour. Quickly retell the story in a modern context, thinking aloud in the group as to how the story might unfold today. Do we have the ability to help someone from outside of our own religious or cultural group? Will we 'do the right thing' even when our church leaders do not take the initiative?

Matthew 5:1-10 The Sermon on the Mount

Q. Justice and peace are consummate Christian values. What should they mean for how migrants here are treated (or emigrants from here living abroad)?

Acts 2:6-11 Pentecost

Q. What is the implication of Pentecost for the nature of the Christian community? What does 'universality' mean for Christians?

Card 3: Friend or Foe

Genesis 12-20

The story of Abraham and Sarah is one of many in the Old Testament that tell of migration and of the difficulty of finding security in a strange land. Genesis 12:10 sees them in Egypt and so afraid of the reaction of the local rulers that Abraham tries to pass his wife off as his sister. Several chapters later, in 20:1-13, a similar story takes place in Gerar. It is as if Abraham and Sarah are never quite sure who to trust.

Matthew 25:31-46 “When did I...?”

Q. What is our personal responsibility as Christians towards newcomers here in the light of this passage?

Mark 14: 38 and 71 Weakness and Denial

Q. Is it always cowardice not to stand up for a victim? How do we respond to a plea for help and why?

Acts 10:34-35 Acceptability to God

Q. What do Peter’s words in this passage imply for us?

Card 4: The End of the Line

Matthew 2:13

‘...an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and said: “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him”.

For Christians, the centre of the Bible is the story of Jesus. He, too, shares the experience of exile as his family was forced to flee from the violence of Herod’s soldiers.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph spent the very early part of Jesus’ life as exiles or refugees in Egypt because otherwise Jesus would have been killed by Herod. When they were back and settled in Israel, imagine a dinner time conversation about their time in exile, both the good and the bad (this can be done by people contributing a snippet of conversation, stating whether it is Jesus, Mary or Joseph speaking, and others continuing in the same vein).

John 4:7-42 and Matthew 15:21-28 The Samaritan and Canaanite women

Q. Jesus related to everyone including those despised and looked down on by Israelite society. But at times he tested people, (e.g. it should be clear that regarding Matthew 15:24 Jesus is not seriously suggesting his message is only for Israelites, as John 4:39-41 makes clear). Who are similar groups in our society to the Samaritans and Canaanites mentioned in these passages? How are these groups treated? What should be my response?

In 2010–11 the number of racist crimes against people was slightly lower than the previous year, but there were still 102 reported cases of violence with a racist motivation that resulted in injury and 263 cases of criminal damage. www.psnl.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/updates_domestic_and_hate_motivation_statistics.htm#domestic_abuse_and_hate_motivation_statistics_2004/05_to_2010/11 Race crime is underreported, the clearance rate is low and there are very few prosecutions using the hate crime legislation. The Belfast Migrant Centre has a racial harassment advice and advocacy service and they would like to see more PSNI staff dedicated to hate crime, or at least more specialist training for PSNI officers so that race crimes can be pursued more vigorously through the criminal justice system in N Ireland. Dr Neil Jarman of the Centre for Conflict Research says Last year the police recorded 1719 ‘crimes with a hate motivation’, but there were only seven successful prosecutions using the ‘aggravated by hostility’ aspect of the law. Whether this is because of failures by the police in evidence gathering or flagging up the hate element, or failure of the prosecution service to pursue this aspect of the offence is unclear to date, but we lag behind GB in our success in prosecuting hate crime offenders.

Margaret McNulty *Embracing Diversity: Information Update 2012*
www.embraceni.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2012-Information-Update.pdf

When I first came here (as a kid), we had a friend that told us about the bands on the 12th of July and that people would follow them, so we decided to go and see them and people started to shout racist comments to us “there’s no black in the union jack, so shoot them out” and would pour drinks and make monkey noises. And I would go home and tell my parents “I really like these people, why don’t they like us?” I’d go to see the bands because I was a friend of those people and I would think that the bands was something organised in NI for everybody, but I didn’t understand that that was actually creating another division... where I used to live something happened a guy attacked my family, we had to move the police had to evacuate my family from the house, and in the whole neighbourhood, nobody saw anything; and they were all standing there watching ...

As a child, back home, when we seen white people we would want to know them and bring them into our home, but I think it’s in our culture, we are more open, whereas here people just keep to themselves; like in Christmas or a big event we’d all come together, neighbours, the community; but I think that the communities are dying in Northern Ireland. The more there is a division, the more they don’t want to know anybody else. And this is not only towards migrants, but also amongst themselves, they don’t want to know other (new) people. If they were strong as a community, they would welcome people and say “this is what we are and what we do”. I’ve found some people that have actually welcomed me and open their arms to me and that makes me feel hope and that’s what I work with and that make me forget the negative part, because if you’re too bitter it makes you withdraw and you end up just like the people who are making you like that. I don’t let anything negative bring me down because I’m a positive person and I have positive friends. They’ve learnt about me, they have kind of adopted my culture and they make me want to stay here. So you’ve got to work with people that make it easy for you, you can’t blame or judge everybody for what few people do or for their ignorance.

Sherley, Liberia

The New Workers: Migration, Labour and Citizenship in Northern Ireland in the 21st Century edited by B. Garvey, P. Stewart, J. Kulinska, R. Campuzano, 2011

Each year EMBRACE produces an Information Update which aims to summarise the current situation about issues relating to immigration, asylum and the issues which face people from other countries and minority-ethnic backgrounds. The extract is taken from a section on racism.

Racist Crime

Unless they are challenged and transformed, negative attitudes lead to negative actions. The incidence of racially motivated crime, recorded by the police, tended to rise during the last decade as the number of people from other countries and ethnic backgrounds rose in our communities.

Helping People to Challenge Racism

Most people will come across instances of racism in their daily social and working lives. They may stay quiet in order not to ‘rock the boat’, or overreact and alienate the people they hope to influence. A facilitated discussion in a safe space can encourage those who are fearful of acting and help people to plan considered and effective responses that suit their individual circumstances.

These ideas may be helpful in discussion.

- Remind people that racism escalates from negative perceptions to negative speech; the isolating of victims; bullying and harassment. **Early intervention is best.**
- Assist people to think about how they might first respond. It may help simply to ask a very **open question** such as ‘What makes you think that?’ or ‘Have you any real evidence that is happening?’
- It is **unhelpful to attack people** for their behaviour, as they are likely to feel resentful and to try to justify what they have said or done. It is more positive to develop a relationship of trust.
- **Reflecting back** to people may help them to understand the significance of what they are saying e.g. ‘Are you saying that everyone from ——— is likely to steal?’
- Some people may be influenced by a **reminder of our past**: ‘That is exactly what they said about us when we arrived in America.’
- People like to think that they **act on principles** so it might help to say: ‘I thought that you were fair-minded, so I am surprised that you would label people in that way.’
- Racist jokes can be seen as a test. People look for approval to see just how far they can go. That can be a good point to **draw a line** and say. ‘I don’t think that is funny. I cannot stand jokes like that. If you go on, I will have to leave.’
- In a work situation it is helpful to find out if there is a **code of conduct** and share your anxieties with the person responsible for ensuring good relations in the workplace.
- It may help to talk about your feelings to others. Defeating racist attitudes is **easier with support**.
- **Do not expect immediate change.** Be prepared to take small steps.

Appendix 1: Quotations in Full

Card 1: Home Sweet Home

The Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) has responsibility for migrant workers and commissioned a report on a wide variety of experiences. Both quotations are from a section of that publication:

A large number of individuals interviewed for the study reported very positive experiences of life in Northern Ireland, both in relation to general quality of life issues and their relationship with the wider society. Several of the interviewees felt that Northern Ireland was very welcoming, and it offered a much better life than other places:

In London, or Paris, you feel like an outsider, different. I never had that feeling here.

I am so happy to live here, when I lived in England there wasn't so much support, but in Northern Ireland it is much better. I feel here at home, I like this country's people. It's different the people here and in England, people here are more like Lithuanian people. In England, people are more closed. People and neighbours are very friendly here, people say hello, hello, it's so nice.

"... Easy Life, Great People, Bad Weather" A Report on the Experiences of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland, by John Bell, Anne Caughey, Ulf Hansson, Agnieszka Martynowicz and Maura Scully, 2009
www.delni.gov.uk/a_report_on_the_experiences_of_migrant_workers_in_northern_ireland.pdf

Card 2: Sticks and Stones

In 2010 a case study was undertaken in Hazelwood Integrated College (IC) in North Belfast with a view to gaining an understanding of the experience of minority-ethnic pupils in N Ireland's education system and in wider society. The report contains powerful evidence of the experience and feelings of individual young people. The words on the card are part of the following statement:

My name is and I'm 17 years old, I'm a year 13 student at Hazelwood College. At the moment I'm sitting my AS Levels in IT, Health and Social Care and Cope. I think I have always known deep inside that I was different. It sometimes felt that there was a different drumbeat or dance inside of me that no one else seemed to have or hear. My dad is black and my mum is white. They met each other when my mum lived in Liverpool for a while. My mum and dad split when I was very young so I've never really had him in my life, so while I don't miss him, I did miss having a dad. My step-dad, however, is my real dad and isn't that what every little girl dreams of, of having a dad in her life that thinks she is the most wonderful thing ever.

We left Gloucester when I was two and came to live in Belfast with my grandmother.

Card 4: The End of the Line

Many people who are subject to attack experience repeated incidents. This is one media report:

Man may leave after arson attack

A Bulgarian man has said he may leave Northern Ireland after repeatedly being the victim of arson attacks.

In the latest attack on Friday morning his restaurant on Main Street, in Bushmills, was badly damaged.

Adjoining properties were also damaged and a local hostel had to be evacuated during the fire.

Michael Sotirov said it was the third attack on his businesses, which employ 40 people. His Portballintrae home was targeted in an arson attack last month.

"I think I'm going to leave because that's not the place I want to live," Mr Sotirov said.

"At the time I decided to come here I was very happy and everything was going nice, but I have two kids as well and they're not happy at all, my wife's not happy - she can't sleep at night - we're all scared now, we can't really live this life anymore.

"It's completely different, it's not a place we want to stay anymore."

A hate motive is a major line of inquiry in the arson attack which was reported at about 0230 BST on Friday.

The police in Coleraine have appealed for anyone with information in relation to the attack to contact them.

BBC News report

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/7476929.stm

In 2011 the Migrant Workers Research Network published the first hand account of new workers in Ireland. The woman whose words are repeated here also gave evidence of her treatment in the workplace but we have only used the extracts which concern her experience at home and in the community.

... This country has opened doors to migrants but they should also find the way to make them feel at home. Some of us also come from countries that had wars and have lost friends and family and were not trying to cause any trouble ... If I don't speak to you I don't know what makes you laugh, I don't know what makes you cry, I don't know what makes you happy, I don't know your history... ...But in Belfast, you see the problem I think is, See the problem is that if you did not go to school with them and grow up with them [murmur of agreement], you can not break into that friendship, they will call for you and say lets to go for drink but that's as far as it goes...even if I try to make new friends its difficult. I am glad I have sisters! ...

In 2010 the South Tyrone Empowerment Programme (STEP) undertook re-search into some of the challenges faced by minority-ethnic people and migrant workers and the quotation used was just one of many difficulties described. The whole summary of findings is included here.

The following themes emerged from the research:

- While there are some migrant workers who have intentions to stay in Northern Ireland in the short term and therefore do not view integration as a priority, the majority trend is one of settlement in the medium to long term, marked by family reunion and an intention to integrate into the host society
- New migrants tend to settle where there are existing migrant populations, leading to groupings of people from one or several national origins in some neighbourhoods
- The majority of people coming to Northern Ireland have little or no prior knowledge of the political context or the background of the conflict, many have little or no English language and a significant minority are unaware of basic geographical facts, such as the relative British and Irish jurisdictions on the island of Ireland
- The encounter of minority ethnic and migrant populations with Northern Irish people is that they are friendly, polite and welcoming, but many find a superficiality, evasiveness or suspicion in the local population, which can be traced to behaviours formed during the conflict
- The divisions of the conflict are transferred on to other identities in Northern Ireland, such as the allocation or assumption of people from different national origins to sectarian categories, which is often unnoticed or misunderstood until there is an incident (often benign, but sometimes violent) that makes this process clear
- Settlement choices such as where to live, where to send children to school and where to worship are often interpreted in the host community as affiliation to a 'side' in the conflict, sometimes leading to hostility, intimidation, or even the threat of or actual violence or expulsion from accommodation
- There is widespread experience of xenophobia, including verbal, psychological and even physical abuse, but the experience of abuse and damage to property is multiplied where there is a visible difference, i.e. a racist motive
- There is a perception that majority Protestant areas are less receptive to other identities but this has been partly discounted as myth, as many migrants live happily in overwhelmingly Protestant areas and hostility is encountered in majority Catholic areas as well

Research to Identify Additional Difficulties Faced by Minority Ethnic Groups and Migrant Workers because of the Conflict in Northern Ireland (Executive Summary), STEP, 2010

I think it was about then I started noticing I was different. When I went to the local crèche and then nursery school I could see that I was different from all the other kids. Nothing happened much until I was in primary school, and that was the first time I heard the words "Hey you Paki!" I was in a group of loads of other kids all playing and running around, but I knew instinctively that they were shouting at me. The words confused and frightened me all at the same time. They touched insecurity in me that I don't think any kid should feel at such a young age. My stomach tightened and I wanted to run away and hide.

From then on I would day dream about being white. I didn't want to be different or stand out in the crowd. My mother remembers the first time she caught me putting baby powder all over me 'I just want to be white!' To be white, in my mind, came to mean to be safe.

Even my brother wasn't safe. People from the area would come to him and tell him that I wasn't really his sister, I couldn't be, after all, he was so white and I was so dark. They told him I was adopted, not really his sister.

The taunts began in earnest after that. They never shouted at me when the grown ups were around. "NIGGER", "PAKI", "SHIT N SUGAR", on and on. Once the teacher in primary school caught a boy shouting at me, "Hey you Paki, Nigger face!" He had a disability himself and had to walk with crutches. He had to write me a letter of apology; I still have it to this day. At the time, I couldn't understand why, if he was different, why he should pick on someone else who was different.

Then I came to Hazelwood Integrated College. Life here has been so much better. There were lots of kids like me here. Some even darker than I am! I've made some great friends and they have been very protective of me. Now the only racist names that are thrown my way are from those outside of school.

Not that long ago, a girl that I thought was a friend, turned on me and shouted out the words that she knew would wound me "Get the fuck out of here you Paki whore!" The person who made up the rhyme "sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me" didn't know what they were talking about.

It was hard growing up 'different', but I know that I'm grateful and thankful for who I am and the adult I'm becoming. I have inner resources and strengths that others of my age don't have. I'm tolerant and understanding of others and their position in life. I'm brave enough to stand my ground and wise enough to know when it is time to walk away. I have one more year at school and then it's time to move on. I'm grateful to the staff at Hazelwood for their support and encouragement through all my stages here.

Welcoming Newcomer and Minority Ethnic Pupils in Northern Ireland, 2010
www.nicie.org/archive/publications/Welcoming%20Newcomer%20Students.pdf

It is easy to find media reports of racist attacks from many parts of N Ireland. This account appeared on the web site 4NI.co.uk.

Racist Attack on Co Antrim Couple

Swastikas and racist slogans have been smeared on a home in Co Antrim, where a taxi driver and his African wife live.

Paul Morton, who has lived in Portballintrae for the past three years, has only been married since July. His wife, Lungile Tiny, originally from Zimbabwe, attends nursing college in Dublin.

Mr Morton's car was also damaged in the incident with paint stripper.

Ulster Unionist Councillor Norman Hillis described those responsible as 'sick and twisted'.

Mr Hillis said: 'These hate-mongers have caused distress and hardship with their sinister attack which is a throwback to darker times.'

Police are treating the incident as a hate crime.

21 September 2007

www.4ni.co.uk/northern_ireland_news.asp?id=66143

The statement about levels of prejudice: '32% reported themselves to be "very" or "a little" prejudiced against minority-ethnic people' is based on research evidence from the 2009 NI Life and Times Survey (NILT). Dr Neil Jarman has summarised the broad findings:

Since 2005, NILT has asked people whether they think there is a lot, a little, or hardly any prejudice against minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland. In each year between 90 and 93 per cent of people said they believed there was 'a lot' or 'a little' prejudice, with only between six and eight per cent believing there was 'hardly any'.

'Self-reported' prejudice has been on the rise in Northern Ireland since the mid 1990s. Fifteen years ago only one in ten people in Northern Ireland described themselves as at all prejudiced. As Figure 2 indicates, by a decade later this had risen to one in four, and over the following few years, about one in three people were prepared to say that they were 'very' or 'a little' prejudiced against people of minority ethnic communities. In the 2008 NILT survey, two per cent of respondents described themselves as 'very prejudiced' and 30 per cent as 'a little prejudiced'. These responses indicate that a large majority of the population are aware of the levels of prejudice in Northern Ireland, while a sizeable percentage considers themselves to be prejudiced. Although there were no notable differences by age, gender or community background in terms of recognising prejudice within society as a whole, men were more willing to admit to being prejudiced than women (35% compared to 30%) and Protestants (41%) were more willing to admit prejudice than Catholics (23%) or people with no religion (24%).

The percentage of people admitting to being prejudiced has increased among all backgrounds between 2005 and 2008, but amongst Protestants it has increased from 33 per cent to 41 per cent, whilst

Catholics and among those of no religion the increase has been less: from 18% to 23% and from 19% to 24% respectively.

2009 ARK survey

www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update63.pdf

Card 3: Friend or Foe

A woman who was born in Africa was interviewed in the course of a project undertaken by Migrant Workers Action Research Network. She gave an account of the racism she experienced as a child growing up in Belfast but the extract used on the card recounts the positive and negative experiences she has had as an adult setting up home in Belfast.

In the past I've had good neighbours and very bad neighbours. In the first place I lived the neighbours helped me to set everything in the house when I just moved in. I was having a child then, and they used to come and listen to music and help me painting; I spend like 5 or 6 months in that house. But now I don't really talk to anybody, I just knock on the next door neighbours and ask them what day do I put the bins out. ...

This is because about 5 or 6 years ago, some guys got into my house in East Belfast, I don't know how they got in the house, there were three of them, and they started shouting that their auntie said that there was noise coming from my house... I said "get out of my house! How did you get in here, you don't have the key to my house, I'll call the police", and they said "oh, really, do you want to call the police and see what happens?" Then my friends started to look a bit nervous and one of them grabbed her child and took him out of the house. One of my friends then came and told me in my ear that those were paramilitaries and could shoot me or slap me around, don't say anything, be careful. But I was still being cheeky, I was telling them to get out of my house, and that I wasn't making noise, I was just trying to fix the place. Then he shouted "if I hear any noise here again, I'll be back in and you won't be smiling again" and then he left. Then my friends (local girls) warned me and said "don't stay in the house, ask them to move you, because if they come back again you don't know what they are going to do."

...Now I live close to the ____ bar, on the Ormeau Road, and these guys were living in a flat below me and were giving me some hassle and other neighbours who I got friendly with told me "if you ever get any trouble or need any help with anything, go to the bar and tell them and they will help you. So I told them that I was getting hassle by these two guys, and they went and had a word with them. That was the only time and I never had any problems again down there. The East is worse for living.

Ann, Liberia

The New Workers: Migration, Labour and Citizenship in Northern Ireland in the 21st

Century edited by B. Garvey, P. Stewart, J. Kulinska, R. Campuzano

[www.strath.ac.uk/media/departments/hrm/pdfs/hrm-pdf-other/Main_template_Layout_1_\(2\).pdf](http://www.strath.ac.uk/media/departments/hrm/pdfs/hrm-pdf-other/Main_template_Layout_1_(2).pdf)