



on Racial Justice: Host Guide

A closer look at education and race.

An initiative of Repair the World and NFTY





WELCOME TO TURN THE TABLES

DEAR HOST,

Repair the World is a national nonprofit that mobilizes Jews to give time and effort to the causes they're passionate about. On behalf of the whole team, we want to THANK YOU for joining us in honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by hosting a **Turn the Tables on Racial Justice Experience** in partnership with NFTY – The Reform Jewish Youth Movement. Through this experience, you are joining thousands of people across the country, engaging in important dialogue about issues of racial injustice impacting communities and specifically our education system.

NFTY is a movement that builds strong, welcoming, inspired communities through teen-powered engagement. Together, we pursue *tikkun olam*, personal growth, youth empowerment, and deep connections, all rooted in Reform Judaism.

Racial injustice undermines hope, squanders potential, devastates communities, costs lives. At Repair the World, we believe that service is a way to act for racial justice and because service can: build relationships with others across contexts, be a way to act in solidarity with (and not for) your community, disrupt some of the systems that reinforce inequity, and address urgent short-term needs that broader efforts may neglect to rectify. We do service to build solidarity with our neighbors and with marginalized communities, among Jews, among non-Jews and among the increasing number of Jews of color. **We serve in partnership**, by listening to and taking the lead from others so that we honor a multitude of needs and lived experiences. Caring about racial justice isn't just about "us" or "them," but about everyone. Service, done right, can **support forward momentum in the racial justice movement**.

We also believe that structured yet organic dialogue about critical social issues is a **key catalyst that leads us to action**. NFTY believes that to simply talk about issues is not enough - we are the voice of a generation and we can lead the change that our actions begin. We hope that these conversations help ensure that our actions are thoughtful and intentional, and lead to action in solidarity with our neighbors. Education is the foundation of our society and provides the opportunity for individuals to achieve their potential. Racial injustice permeates our education system, creating deep cracks that have shattered individual lives and also broken our society. In this guide, we will explore the education system as a lens to explore the ways that racial injustice manifests in our society.

This **Host Guide** contains several different discussion activities to help you facilitate constructive and meaningful conversations. We encourage you to invite a diverse array of backgrounds, perspectives and experiences into your discussion, and to please use the activities that most resonate with you and your guests.

We hope that you and your guests leave your group setting with a heightened **AWARENESS** about education injustice in your local community, having had the opportunity to **SPEAK UP** about complex issues surrounding racial justice and access to equitable education, and feel driven to **TAKE ACTION** by volunteering your time. MLK Day is a national day of service, where tens of thousands of people will be honoring Martin Luther King Jr's vision to create a more just America. You can join them by visiting weRepair.org.

It's because of leaders like you that the world can change: group by group and city by city. Thanks again for all you do – and all you will do to make this possible!

The Repair the World team and NFTY

weRepair.org

nfty.org



BE AWARE



SPEAK UP



TAKE ACTION

Share your experience with us!

Tag and post your photos, stories, or videos with [@RepairtheWorld](https://twitter.com/RepairtheWorld) [@NFTY](https://twitter.com/NFTY) [#TurntheTables](https://twitter.com/TurntheTables)



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PREPARATION

A **great dining experience is one that can bring people together**. And just like a great dinner, a Turn the Tables Experience has several ingredients: a tasty meal, some meaty (or vegetarian) conversation about important issues, and an opportunity to get involved.

GETTING STARTED

1. **Read through the Host Guide in its entirety** before choosing which portions you wish you use for your discussion.
2. **Collect and print the necessary materials** and supplies as outlined throughout the **Host Guide**.
3. Print a copy of the [Respectful Conversations](#) sheet to have on hand throughout your experience and to review in advance. It offers guidelines for facilitating fair and meaningful discourse about sensitive subjects.
4. As you read through the guide, be mindful of the space and environment in which you will host your experience. Think about how you want to set up the seating so it's conducive to respectful conversation and dialogue.

SIMMER, DO NOT BOIL.

Productive discomfort is encouraged.

Feeling slightly uncomfortable and stretching a bit out of your comfort zone can generate learning and growth. Before starting the program, take a few minutes for everyone to understand your intention in maintaining a safe space that allows each of you to experience some productive discomfort during the evening. You might consider sharing the [Respectful Conversations](#) sheet with everyone present.

WHET YOUR APPETITE

Choosing and Digesting your Discussion Entrée

Select the entrée below that you'd like to chew on. Each option takes a look at a different aspect of racial justice in the education system. Feel free to mix and match pieces from different entrées during your experience or use the sources in the final option to guide your own discussion.

- [Discussion Entrée Option 1: A Lesson on Privilege \(via BuzzFeed and Quartz\)](#)
This entrée asks guests to read and reflect on **two illustrated portrayals of privilege in a classroom** setting, one from [Buzzfeed](#) and the other from [Quartz](#).
- [Discussion Entrée Option 2: Experiences and Realities of Getting Caught in the System](#)
This discussion option features a brief clip from a FRONTLINE PBS documentary that follows **one student's story of skipping school**. Guests will then have the opportunity to read select **poems written by students**

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“given the chance to shed light on the realities of their lives and experiences.”

- [Discussion Entrée Option 3: The School-to-Prison Pipeline as Seen in Late 2015 Media](#)

This entrée takes a look at how racial injustice in the education system is **portrayed on social media and in the news**. You will have an opportunity to follow the Twitter conversation in the days following the assault of a black, female student at Spring Valley High and read an article about dress code policy proposals in Dadeville, Alabama.

- [Discussion Entrée Option 4: Create your Own and Additional Resources](#)

This entree will give you the **opportunity to create your own discussion**, based on any of the materials and resources given to you in this section, along with ideas on how to structure your group’s experiences. Creativity is encouraged so this is for those of you who are interested in expanding your own programmatic opportunities, with resources to help.

NOTE: For more information about the school-to-prison pipeline, here’s a great resource on [“Locating the School-to-Prison Pipeline”](#) created by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

CONCLUDING WITH DESSERT

Closing Reflections and Taking Action

Just as we conclude a meal on a high note with dessert, we want to conclude our conversations with an opportunity for [reflection](#) and an opportunity to take action on what you’ve discussed .

TAKE ACTION!

[Repair the World’s MLK Day 2016 campaign](#) focuses on inspiring the Jewish community to **volunteer** to honor Martin Luther King Jr.’s legacy of service and to **engage** in conversation about issues of racial justice.

MLK Day is a national day of service, where tens of thousands of people will be honoring Martin Luther King Jr’s vision to create a more just America. You can join them by visiting [weRepair.org](#).

And don’t forget to tell us how it goes! Email us at mlk@weprepair.org. Or connect with us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram @RepairtheWorld, #TurntheTables

Have a question, need clarification or want to get more involved with Repair the World’s campaigns? Reach out to us at

mlk@weRepair.org

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RESPECTFUL CONVERSATIONS

The ultimate measure of a person is not where they stand in moments of comfort and convenience, but where they stand in times of challenge and controversy.

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

OVERALL TIPS

The first step to working towards a better society is to talk openly and honestly about the issues that affect our communities. Talking about racial justice is challenging, which is why this section about HOW to have the conversation is much longer than the actual discussion questions! As the host of your group, you are responsible for creating a safe space in which participants can express their opinions thoughtfully and openly, ask difficult questions, and where the feelings of the group are valued and protected.

- **Acknowledge that racial injustice is complicated and far-reaching; we're not going to cover all aspects of this issue.**
- **Appoint a facilitator.**
- **Acknowledge that you might have moments of discomfort – and that it's okay.**
- **Establish group ground rules.**
- **Do not tokenize people – everyone should only speak from their personal experience.**
- **Ensure that everyone who wants to speak, gets a chance to speak.**
- **Be respectful of introverts – and of silence.**
- **Avoid the terms “right” and “wrong.” Try not to use charged language.**
- **If you're offended, share – don't blame. Use “I” statements to avoid blame.**
- **Provide context.**
- **Don't get stuck in facts.**

DIGGING IN

APPOINT A FACILITATOR. Before you begin, decide among your participants who should lead the discussion. The best leader is likely you, but ask a friend if you're not comfortable in that role. A facilitator guides the discussion – s/he doesn't dominate it. If things get out of hand, or if voices are being blocked out, the facilitator intervenes.

ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE MOMENTS OF DISCOMFORT. It can oftentimes be the elephant in the room, but in many cases, it helps to say out loud what others are feeling: “I know we don't usually talk about racial justice, and it might make you or others feel uncomfortable, and that's ok.”

ESTABLISH GROUP GROUND RULES. Before your program begins, collectively establish a set of rules for your discussion. These could be formal, such as “whoever holds this spoon speaks,” or “if you agree, snap your fingers.” These rules could also be informal, including “whatever is said in this room, stays in this room.”

DO NOT TOKENIZE PEOPLE. Individuals can only speak to their own experiences. Do not look to others to speak on behalf of their race, gender, or ethnicity.

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ENSURE THAT EVERYONE WHO WANTS TO SPEAK, GETS A CHANCE TO SPEAK. Very frequently, individuals who are most comfortable expressing their opinions out loud can dominate conversations. The facilitator should respectfully ask for the opinions of others if a few voices begin to dominate the conversation.

BE RESPECTFUL OF INTROVERTS – AND OF SILENCE. Make sure the facilitator is noticing who is not speaking. Encourage those individuals to contribute, but do not force them. Similarly, if the conversation reaches a point of silence, do not push people to speak. Be respectful of reflection.

IF THE DISCUSSION BECOMES HEATED OR UNCOMFORTABLE:

AVOID “RIGHT” AND “WRONG.” While some opinions are commonly accepted as “right,” it is unproductive for conversations like these to cast someone’s statements or beliefs as “wrong.”

IF YOU’RE OFFENDED, SHARE – DON’T BLAME. Ignorance is not animosity. Use the “I felt... when you...” format to discuss how you personally perceived someone’s statement. You could say, for example, “I felt offended when you said that your grandfather worked himself into the middle class, and therefore anyone could achieve the American dream if they tried hard enough. In my experience, some of the opportunities available to your grandfather weren’t available to a lot of people because of formal or informal restrictions and institutional racism.”

TRY NOT TO USE CHARGED LANGUAGE. If someone says something offensive, assume that they simply do not realize that they have said something hurtful. Calling them a racist is one surefire way to make the situation a lot worse. Use the opportunity to share what has offended you and to educate.

PROVIDE CONTEXT. Even though it’s difficult, try to explain why you believe what you believe. Provide examples, facts, and stories to illuminate your opinions, and encourage others to do the same.

DON’T GET STUCK IN FACTS. People often claim truth or fact to back up their opinions without considering other people’s perspectives or the limitations of their own knowledge. Remind people that this is a conversation. Everyone’s personal experience matters. Recommend that people share information to deepen the discussion, not to shut down the conversation.

Never forget: This very moment, we can change our lives. There never was a moment, and never will be, when we are without the power to alter our destiny. This second, we can turn the tables on resistance. This second, we can sit down and do our work. -Steven Pressfield

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DISCUSSION ENTREE: OPTION 1

A LESSON ON PRIVILEGE (via [Buzzfeed](#) and [Quartz.com](#))

Items Needed:

- Copies of [source sheets](#)
- Scrap paper (optional)
- Recycling bin (optional)

Framing:

In November 2014, [Buzzfeed's](#) Nathan Pyle shared a powerful lesson about privilege using a recycling bin and some scrap paper that went viral, with over 4.8 million views. Many people, including Jeff Yang at [Quartz](#), felt the lesson Nathan Pyle shared was a bit too simple and suggested ways to better represent privilege as a concept.

Comics and simulations can be interesting lenses into current issues and can spark interesting reflections. We hope that by examining two comics that tackle different ways of understanding privilege you and your guests will be able to approach the conversation about education and racial justice from different perspectives.

Facilitator/Host Instructions:

The facilitator should begin by handing out the [source sheets](#) and reading the text out loud. Guests are encouraged to simulate the teacher's exercise by using the scrap paper and placing a bin at the front of the room.

After simulating or reading the first exercise, ask participants to find a *chevrutah* (a partner) and discuss the guiding questions on the source sheet. They should then continue to read through the second illustration and discuss those guiding questions.

A note about *chevrutah* learning:

Chevrutah literally means "friendship" or "companionship." It is the traditional rabbinic approach to Talmudic study in which a pair of students analyze, discuss, and debate a shared text. Unlike a teacher-student relationship, partnered learning puts each student in the position of analyzing the text, organizing their thoughts into logical arguments, explaining their reasoning to their partner, hearing out their partner's reasoning, and questioning and sharpening each other's ideas, often arriving at entirely new insights into the meaning of the text.

Read each source out loud together. Spend some time wondering about it out loud together before referring to the guiding questions. Read the guiding questions together. Allow space for each partner have the opportunity to share a response. This is a dialogue and a conversation!

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There is no right or wrong amount of time to allow for the *chevrutah* learning. If it seems like the energy is waning, take a temperature check and ask if folks are ready to come back together. If they are, bring the group back together to share pieces of what they discussed and their general reactions.

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DISCUSSION ENTREE: OPTION 2

EXPERIENCES AND REALITIES OF GETTING CAUGHT IN THE SYSTEM

Items Needed:

- Internet-capable video device (such as a tablet, TV or computer) to play the FRONTLINE PBS video clip¹
- Speakers
- Copies of [source sheets](#)

Framing:

As noted in the opening activity, continued listening and seeking out opportunities to hear others' experiences is at the center of both racial justice allyship and action. In this discussion entrée you and your guests will have the opportunity to watch and listen to one person's story of getting caught in the system, and read poetry written by students reflecting on their experiences and realities.

Host Instructions:

Gather participants around a device and play the PBS FRONTLINE clip "[Locked Up for Skipping School: Christel's Story](#)." Use the Guiding Questions below to facilitate group conversation about the video clip.

Afterwards ask participants to find a *chevrutah* (a partner) and read the poems and discuss the guiding questions on the [source sheet](#).

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¹ NOTE: Some more observant Jews refrain from engaging with technological devices on Shabbat and Jewish holidays. If either you or your guests are traditionally observant, feel free to omit the video clips and focus on the written sources. Feel free to adapt any of the other activities accordingly.

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DISCUSSION ENTREE: OPTION 3

THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE AS SEEN IN LATE 2015 MEDIA

Items Needed:

- Copies of the [Source Sheets](#)
- Printouts of tweets or access to view the [#AssaultAtSpringValleyHigh](#) hashtag

Framing:

When examining pressing issues facing our communities it can be important to turn to digital and social media sources to see how these issues are portrayed and how others react to these portrayals.

Host Instructions:

Make copies of the source sheets and print tweets or pull up the [#AssaultAtSpringValleyHigh](#) hashtag.

Share the above framing with guests

Afterwards ask participants to find a *Chevrotah* (a partner) and read the tweets and article and discuss the guiding questions on the [source sheet](#).

A note about *chevrotah* learning:

Chevrotah literally means "friendship" or "companionship." It is the traditional rabbinic approach to Talmudic study in which a pair of students analyze, discuss, and debate a shared text. Unlike a teacher-student relationship, partnered learning puts each student in the position of analyzing the text, organizing their thoughts into logical arguments, explaining their reasoning to their partner, hearing out their partner's reasoning, and questioning and sharpening each other's ideas, often arriving at entirely new insights into the meaning of the text.

Read each source out loud together. Spend some time wondering about it out loud together before referring to the guiding questions. Read the guiding questions together. Allow space for each partner have the opportunity to share a response. This is a dialogue and a conversation!

There is no right or wrong amount of time to allow for the *chevrotah* learning. If it seems like the energy is waning, take a temperature check and ask if folks are ready to come back together. If they are, bring the group back together to share pieces of what they discussed and their general reactions.

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DISCUSSION ENTREE: OPTION 4

CREATE YOUR OWN! (AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES)

Have you come across an engaging video, article or piece that you want to use as a prompt for discussion with your guests? Interested in facilitating a conversation without a source? Want to ask your guests to each bring interesting sources that they've come across with them to the dinner and use those to prompt discussion? Go for it!

We recommend creating Guiding Questions beforehand, or asking guests to bring Guiding Questions with them, and then wrapping up your discussion with the Closing Reflections.

Still looking for more inspiration? Check out these additional resources:

Art:

- [Miglietta, Halley. "Ceilings of Oppressions." Posted by Suspension Stories.](#)
- [Dee, Billy. "Sent Down the Drain." Created for Suspension Stories. 2010.](#)

Video/Film:

- [AJ+. "American Kids & The School-To-Prison Pipeline." 18 May 2015.](#)

Click [here](#) to view the video.

Video Description:

Back in the day, when you got in trouble at school, it usually meant you were heading off to the principal's office or to detention. These days? Getting in trouble at school can mean ending up in the juvenile justice system. But how does that happen and who does it affect?

- [California Newsreel. "The Raising of America: Early Childhood and the Future of Our Nation." 2015.](#)

Film Description:

The Raising of America Series is a five-part documentary series that explores the question: Why are so many children in America faring so poorly? What are the consequences for the nation's future? How might we, as a nation, do better? The series investigates these questions through different lenses: What does science tell us about the enduring importance of early life experiences on the brain and body? What it is like to be a parent today? And what policies and structures help or hinder the raising of healthy, happy and compassionate children? The Signature Hour covers all three of these issues. The four subsequent episodes each dive in for a closer look.

[The Raising of America Action Toolkit](#)

Articles about the School-to-Prison Pipeline:

- [Flannery, Mary Ellen. "The School-to-Prison Pipeline: Time to Shut it Down." neaToday. 5 Jan 2015. Web.](#)

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- [Reynolds, Alexander. "The School-to-Prison Pipeline Is Institutional Racism." The Huffington Post. 9 Sept 2015. Web.](#)
- [Holden, Ming. "From Teens in Jail to Teens Onstage: The Odyssey Project." The Huffington Post. 12 Aug 2015. Web.](#)

If you do choose this route, please share your resources and customized activities with us - post using **@RepairtheWorld @nfty #TurntheTables** or email us at **mlk@weRepair.org**.

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DESSERT: CHOOSE YOUR OWN ACTION

CLOSING THE DISCUSSION

After your entree discussion has concluded, we encourage you and your guests to reflect on this dinner experience and process the information presented in your discussion.

We recommend the Triangle-Square-Circle reflection method, which asks participants to share either:

- **Triangle:** Three points they took away from this discussion
- **Square:** Anything that “squares” with their thinking or anything they agreed with
- **Circle:** Something that’s still circling around in their head

FOUR WAYS TO TAKE ACTION - CHOOSE YOUR OWN ACTION!

We believe that meaningful and structured dialogue about community issues is the catalyst that leads to action. We hope that after tonight’s conversation you and your participants feel inspired to **TAKE ACTION** and volunteer around issues of education and racial injustice.

We invite you to end your time together by choosing any one of the following:

- Take action to restore voting rights with the RAC petition: [Urge your Members of Congress to support the Voting Rights Advancement Act \(S. 1659 / H.R. 2867\), which would help restore protections against these restrictive voting laws.](#)
- Bring Awareness about racial justice issues
 - Run a program in your local youth group or region
 - Run a program at your synagogue or community in conjunction with your clergy
- Start a social media campaign using your own hashtag to start a conversation on racial justice
- Volunteer with Repair the World, become a leader, and add your service project to the [map](#)

Visit [weRepair.org](#), where you will find opportunities happening over MLK Weekend in your area!

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Thank you for your participation!

Remember to share your experience with us!

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