

SURJ Thanksgiving Toolkit:

BRINGING JUSTICE HOME

This November has been a solemn month. Donald Trump's victory has shaken many of us to our core. We know that in a few months, a president will take office who has pledged violence, deportation, racial profiling, and religious persecution. Additionally, many of us fear what a Trump presidency will mean for people who are poor, women, disabled, queer, and trans. These are terrifying times.

Right now, as white people, we have to resist the urge to retreat. White people -- men and women alike, mostly those with economic privilege -- put Trump in the White House. We must organize and reach people, specifically the people who we have not yet reached. We cannot wait for people of color to tell us what to do.

Powerful resistance is swelling across the country. Water Protectors at Standing Rock have not wavered in their

resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline. The Movement for Black Lives continues to build power and alliances around their Vision. Undocumented people across the country have mobilized actions and are preparing deportation resistance. Muslim faith groups are opening their mosques and welcoming the community in. Students are walking out. Rural communities are building their own safety plans. Queer and trans groups are offering life-saving medical and legal support.

When the stakes are so high, it can feel impossible to pick your first step. Sometimes the first place to start is at home, with the people we are closest to. Many of us are preparing to sit at tables with people who don't share our views for "Thanksgiving" and the upcoming Winter holidays. We hope these tools will support you as you move friends and family to action, have courageous conversations, and take steps to build the movement that we need.

SURJ HOLIDAY HOTLINE

If we're going to make significant change in our country, we have to break some of the customs we have as white people. One of those is not to talk about race at the dinner table. We want to encourage everyone to go home for the holidays and have courageous and loving conversations with our families about race, Trump and what's at stake.

When you get stuck, SURJ has you covered--

simply text SOS to 82623

*We'll help you out with some key talking points that tend to come up in these tough conversations. If you get **really** stuck, we'll even hop on the phone with you for a short 1:1 coaching call. It's vital for white people to break white silence about the danger of Trump's presidency -- we we'll make sure you have the tools you need to have those conversations over the holidays!*

If you do not have texting services, please call (201) 691- SURJ (7875) and leave a message.
You will get a call back as soon as we can respond!

Visit www.showingupforracialjustice.org/thanksgiving to learn more about how it works

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Remember:

- All White folks need to talk about racial justice this year, including those of us who see ourselves as progressive. Those conversations are opportunities to discuss what we can do to address racism in ourselves and our communities, and to challenge the scapegoating of “other” White people- especially working class White folks and/or White folks living in rural or rust belt towns.
- Conversations with Trump supporters aren’t about proving yourself right, they are about changing hearts and minds.
- Drop shaming, blaming, and stereotypes.
- Be prepared to listen, especially when you don’t agree. Be sure you aren’t just waiting to plan a response.
- The election just happened, and emotions are high from all perspectives. Check in with yourself, and remember the high pressure environment we are working in
- Many people will not be reached with a framework of “white privilege” or “systems of oppression,” particularly rural, poor, and working class people. Use language and references that more people relate to
- Online only goes so far. Once things get tense, take the conversation off of Facebook, email, or text message. Meet in person or have a phone call.
- Find a stopping point. You are not likely to change someone’s world view in one sitting. End when the conversation is in a place of agreement, and revisit it again later.

Getting Started:

In some communities, people don’t talk about politics. Many families prefer to keep the conversation away from the holiday table. That said, we know these spaces can also be the spots where we have the most influence. Here are some ways to get the conversation started:

- When someone asks about how you are doing, say, “I am feeling really [sad/scared/upset] after this election.”
- “I feel nervous to bring this up, but I think we really need to have a conversation about what happened during the election.”
- “What are you thinking about the election?”

Most folks will shut down if they feel like they are being attacked. Try thinking about what you know about this person. Are they a parent? Do they volunteer in their community? What are their values? Approach from this place, not from one of disagreement. Also, if it feels safe, consider sharing your personal story. Often times, personal connection to an issue is what creates transformation.

I’m not a racist for supporting Trump.

I’m really happy to hear you say that you are against racism. I’m worried because I’ve heard Trump say things about Muslims, immigrants, and people of color. I understand that you don’t agree. Have you thought about ways to show people of color that you’re with them?

What changed you this year and brought you to vote for Trump?

I didn’t vote for Trump -- I can’t believe how racist the rest of America is.

White people across demographic groups voted for Trump, including majorities of White voters making \$77,000 a year and White women. It seems like voting wasn’t enough to stop him, and that the more we scapegoat other people, especially working class, poor, and/or rural White people, the more powerful he gets.

I’ve realized that even though I work hard to be against racism, I have work to do too, for example, one time, I did _____ and I learned/realized _____. Have you had similar experiences? How do we help each other grow and live up to our values?

Do you think our prejudice has made us ignore real needs in poor, rural and/or rust belt communities?

We don't know how Trump is going to act when he get's into office.

That's true, but some of the things he's said make me very worried about waiting and seeing what happens. He has said some very harmful things, especially about Muslims, immigrants, and women. I'm not willing to wait and see.

Are you concerned about how afraid people, specifically people of color, are feeling?

What would you do if you were an immigrant or Muslim person right now?

Trump will be good for the economy. He's going to stop TPP and repeal NAFTA.

I really want to see better paying jobs and more opportunities, but I have doubts that Trump cares about the same things we do. He's actually argued that wages are too high, that unions are bad, and is known for mistreating workers in his own businesses.

What are your hopes for our economy?

How do we know Trump is being honest?

I'm not worried about Trump's statements about women.

I am very worried because many women experience violence in their homes, workplaces, schools, and in public. It is important to me that our president takes this seriously.

Do you know women who have survived violence? How do you think they are feeling right now?

The protests have caused property destruction.

Many people are very upset about the outcome of the election because they are afraid for what will happen, and angry about the hurtful things they've heard.

How do you think people should express these views?

We need to respect the results of the election.

I am not arguing with the results of the election.

I do not believe we should be able to vote about whether or not people have access to basic human rights, like the ability to feel safe and practice our freedom of religion.

Do you think we should be able to vote on one another's safety?

The media is lying.

I often have a hard time trusting some media sources, too.

What media sources do you trust? Why?

What are you hearing that you think is untrue?

Trump will keep us safe.

Since Trump's election, Muslims, Latina/o/x folks, LGBTQ people, and others have experienced violence hate crimes and threats. Students are being harassed in their schools. I feel like Trump's language, promises, and policies make us less safe.

What makes you feel unsafe?

Nothing will be as bad as you think.

Trump has threatened to bar people from our country purely based on religion. He has proposed watching people at their places of worship. His immigration plans will divide many families and cause a lot of harm to communities if they are carried out. I am worried about waiting to see what happens.

ACTION

Many people, particularly white people who are newly politicized in this moment, are looking for ways to take action for the first time. We recognize that these options will not be a fit for all gatherings. However, if you feel like this year you want to use the holiday table for a call to action, here are some ideas to get you started:

Create a New Tradition

"Thanksgiving" is a holiday that is surrounded in a lot of myths that mask the violence of colonization. Many families are creating new traditions that honor indigenous struggle, both past and present.

- Celebrate Decolonize Day. Decolonizing is a term for the actions we take to make new traditions and build a culture that doesn't celebrate racism.
- Spend the traditional "Thanksgiving" Thursday taking action and learning about indigenous people. Have a community gathering Friday to share actions and celebrate together
- Place objects on your table to start a discussion about people of color led struggle, such as art pieces, protest signs, or a bowl of water.

Engage Children in Action

- Write and send Postcards to Governor of North Dakota in support of #NoDAPL:

Office of Governor

State of North Dakota

600 East Boulevard Avenue

Bismarck, ND 58505-0100

- Draw pictures and notes and send them to community leaders and organizations thanking them and committing to work with them in the coming months
- Make family goals to take action together in the coming year, such as how much you can donate or fundraise, how many events you want to try to go to, or what kind of impact you want to have

Give to the Resistance at Standing Rock

One powerful way to act over the holidays is to raise money to support the resistance at Standing Rock. Make time during your meal to speak about the resistance. You can keep it simple - share what you know about the resistance and why it's inspired you or why you think it's important. Then directly ask people around the table to contribute. Don't be shy about making a direct ask - we're not asking for a favor, we're inviting people into a movement and giving them an opportunity to participate in the resistance. Many folks haven't been asked or invited yet. You can pass a basket or hat to collect money. Here is where to send money.

Move Your Money

One key factor moving the pipeline construction forward are banks that are financing the pipeline's construction. Many of us bank at the institutions providing the funds to move the project forward. We can withdraw our support for these institutions by moving our money and choosing a bank that shares our values and/or isn't financing the project. [Click here to learn more about how to move your money.](#)