

## USG Racial Healing SGM ~ Story ~ May, 2021

drawn from Soul Matters materials, see the full packet for more of all of these elements

[www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com](http://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com)



### To Engage Before We Meet (Any or All)

#### Spiritual Exercises

##### *Zoom Your (or Their) Story*

We hold on to each other by holding on to their stories. And yet too often we let those stories slip away. Parents and grandparents long to remember their children and grandchildren when they were young. Likewise, children and grandchildren wish they captured more stories of their elders before they were gone. So why wait? During Covid, Zoom has become a way for us to connect across distance, but it also offers us a way to capture each other's stories. All we need to do is hop on, hit record and let the storytelling begin! For this exercise, think of someone whose story you want to hold tight. Invite them to join you on zoom. Be sure to come with a [rich question](#), (see [storycorps.org/participate/great-questions/](http://storycorps.org/participate/great-questions/) for examples.) For instance: What has been the best day of your life? When did you first fall in love? What was war like? Who is your best friend and why? What was your proudest moment? What was life like when you were my age? It's likely you already have a burning question to ask; use that! Or maybe it is the story of your relationship you want to capture. In that case, think of this less like an interview and more like a conversation. Come with a sparky question you both can answer, like: Are there things about me that you've always wanted to know but have never asked? Or What is your first memory of me? Maybe you just record telling each other jokes! Take this option seriously. We guarantee you will be grateful you did it. Years from now you will be telling the story of how you took the time to capture the stories that mean so much!

##### *Have the Stories that Shaped America Shaped You?*

Books change the world. We know this. But often the stories that shaped the world have yet to make it into our hands. Use this month to correct that. Below are numerous lists of books that have shaped the course of our country's history. Dig through those lists to find one that you've not read, but also that you think you need to read. In fact, that's where the soul work likely sits: in the process of noticing which one sticks out to you and figuring out why. Here's the lists. Have fun exploring!

- **Books That Shaped America, 1950 to 2000**  
<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/books-that-shaped-america/1950-to-2000.html>
- **Books That Shaped America, 1900 to 1950**  
<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/books-that-shaped-america/1900-to-1950.html>
- **20 Books That Have Changed the Way We Think About Race in America**  
<https://www.insidehook.com/article/books/20-books-that-have-changed-the-way-we-think-about-race-in-america>
- **Top 10 Banned Books That Changed The Face Of Black History**  
<https://ncac.org/news/blog/top-10-banned-books-that-changed-the-face-of-black-history>

##### *Imagine the Story Re-Written*

This exercise is more meditative. It's an invitation to spend the month wrestling with a juicy question. Here it is: **If you could erase one event from the world's history, which would it be and why?**

Most of us will likely enjoy reflecting on it on our own, maybe journaling about it over a week or two. But what about hauling the question around with you and asking it of friends and family? Also spend some time thinking about what the question has to teach you. It a fun exercise, but more likely than not, you will also find a challenge in it. Or hope?

## Resources

### Videos

**The Danger of a Single Story, Chimamanda Adichie** (18 mins)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_ngozi\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story?nolanguage=en%3Futm\\_source%3Dtedcomshare](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?nolanguage=en%3Futm_source%3Dtedcomshare)

**A Catalyst for Humanity: A Conversation with Isabel Wilkerson** (1 hr 6 mins)

Part of [Public Health Storytelling](#): Powerful Narratives for a Healthier World

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxVeDIs\\_XXg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxVeDIs_XXg)

### Podcasts

**Tell Me A Story: What Narratives Reveal About The Mind** (50 mins)

From Hidden Brain <https://www.npr.org/2020/01/09/794683840/tell-me-a-story-what-narratives-reveal-about-the-mind>

On stories as magic tricks that expose the peculiar biases of our minds.

### Reflection

**A Story Inherited, Jabari S. Jones**

“Not belonging here” is a story I have inherited, an American inheritance. I was born and raised here, yet to some I am and always will be from “somewhere else.” ...

Full piece found at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/reflection/story-inherited>

### Articles

**The Myth of the Absent Black Father, Teddy Burrage**

<https://blackgirlinmaine.com/parenting/the-myth-of-the-absent-black-father/>

**notes from BALLE talk, Adrienne Maree Brown**

<http://adriennemareebrown.net/tag/narrative/>

### Music

**Aisha Badru-Soil’s Daughter**

<https://music.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvXOKgOQVYP52JG70n0bKUYS-pciU0VR2>

**Tracy Chapman-New Beginning**

<https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=72PkUgZ651k&list=PLvXOKgOQVYP52JG70n0bKUYS-pciU0VR2>

### Movies

**When They See Us** <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/30/arts/television/when-they-see-us.html>

## Session Plan

### Chalice Lighting

We evolve in the midst of narratives meant only for some and ways of being made narrow by fear and power. We must, then, have the courage to listen to the truth of our own lives, to the wisdom that comes from within. [enfleshed](#)

**Check-in** *Share something of your journey with racism or where racism is showing up in your life now.*

### Reading

As I considered it, the truth of the matter was that we were living within an old story; and a new story needed to be told, but we didn't have the language for it. The old story was of victimization, marginalization, oppression, oppressors; and the new story would see all of us evolving, self-expanding, and finding a new place in this wonderful cosmology that is a reality we have not paid attention to. So, in order to get to that point—and here is where my transformation begins—I had to reconsider what I thought about people, because I had hardened my view of others and who they were and what they meant. I had spent my time raising two little African American boys who had to be taught how to survive in society. In doing that, I taught them to view the world in only one way; and I myself was hardened into a position that either you were with me or you were against me or us.

*Barbara Holmes ~ drbarbaraholmes.com*

### Sitting in Silence

#### Questions

1. How has the role of story in your life changed as you've grown older?
2. What stories did your "elders" pass down to you? Have you cared for them and passed them on as those elders hoped?
3. What story does your family of origin tell about you? Does that telling leave you feeling seen or misunderstood? Celebrated or unfairly characterized?
4. What unrecognized current cultural or political "story" strikes you as most dangerous?
5. What does it take to walk away from a story you've been living for a long time?

### Sharing/Deep Listening

*Respond with your thoughts and experiences with the topic. We create a safe space by listening deeply and not responding. When sharing, connect with what is true for you. When listening, give the speaker your full attention rather than thinking about what you will share.*

### Reflection and Gratitude

*This is a time to reflect briefly to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared. Consider lifting up one comment or experience for which you are particularly grateful.*

### Song

**Sweet Honey in the Rock-Wanting Memories** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vW2TpW4gCt8>

### Extinguishing the Chalice

There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you. Maya Angelou

