



USG Racial Healing SGM ~ Heritage ~ October, 2023

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

www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com

Session Plan

Chalice Lighting Some people are your relatives, but others are your ancestors, and you choose the ones you want to have as ancestors. You create yourself out of those values. ~ Ralph Ellison

Check-in *Share recent experiences facing racism in ourselves or others.*

Quotes for Inspiration/Readings

In times like these, I look to the past. I come from people not meant to survive, and here is our bloodline, stronger than ever. ~ Brittany Packnett

My father used to say that stories are part of the most precious heritage of humankind. ~ Tahir Shah

There's a tension in me. I've lived with what Toni Morrison calls the white gaze... while I was writing *This Here Flesh*, I had to keep asking myself, "Who's in the room with you, Cole?" I'm almost embarrassed to say how many times the answer was some white intellectual man that didn't care about me... these kind of specters, these haunts were just looming over my writing and I had to kind of keep exorcizing the room and say, "No, I know who I want in the room with me. I want my ancestors. I want my own voice, my own soul." ~ [Cole Arthur Riley](#), on the heritage of [the white gaze](#)

Here is what I would like for you to know: In America, it is traditional to destroy the black body — it is heritage. ~ [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)

Remember the Sky Joy Harjo

Full poem found [HERE](#) Video reflection [HERE](#)

Remember the sky that you were born under,
know each of the star's stories.

Remember the moon, know who she is.

Remember the sun's birth at dawn, that is the
strongest point of time. Remember sundown
and the giving away to night.

Remember your birth, how your mother
struggled to give you form and breath.

You are evidence of her life, and her mother's,
and hers.

Remember your father. He is your life, also.

Remember the earth whose skin you are:
red earth, black earth, yellow earth, white earth
brown earth, we are earth.

Remember the plants, trees, animal life who all

have their tribes, their families, their histories,
too.

Talk to them, listen to them. They are alive
poems.

Remember the wind. Remember her voice. She
knows the origin of this universe.

Remember you are all people and all people
are you.

Remember you are this universe and this
universe is you.

Remember all is in motion, is growing, is you.

Remember language comes from this.

Remember the dance language is, that life is.

Remember.

This is the thing: If you have the option to not think about or even consider history,... that's how you know you're on board the ship that serves hors d'oeuvres and fluffs your pillows, while others are out at sea, swimming or drowning, or clinging to little inflatable rafts that they have to take turns keeping inflated, people short of breath, who've never even heard of the words hors d'oeuvres or fluff.

~ [Tommy Orange](#)

The mission of your life should be to leave a better world behind than what you inherited.

~ Sri Ravi Shankar

Questions

1. What metaphor best describes your relationship to your family heritage? A giant hug? A dinner table with everyone talking at once? An anchor? A guidepost?
2. What story told by (or about) your ancestors has shaped you the most?
3. How has staying close to your ancestors been healing for you?
4. If you could talk to one of your ancestors, who would you choose? And what would you ask them?
5. What is your favorite [family memento](#)? And why does it have such a hold on you?
6. If you could change one thing about your family heritage, what would it be?
7. Often parents consciously or [unconsciously](#) transfer their unfilled dreams onto their children. What have you learned about dancing with your parents' unfulfilled dreams?
8. How have your ancestors helped you understand and hold on to beauty?
9. What story do you want to be remembered by?
10. What article of clothing ties you to your ancestors?
11. We usually think of heritage as tied to people, but *places* shape us as much as our family trees. What "inheritance" was passed on to you by your childhood hometown or [childhood house](#)?
12. What's the legacy of your first embarrassment?
13. What's the legacy of your first award/triumph?
14. It's been said that we are remembered for the rules we break. What broken rule might you be remembered by? What rule did your parents break?

Three Deep Breaths

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 on 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.

Songs

American Oxygen, Rihanna <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ao8cGLIMtvG>

Stand Up, Cynthia Erivo <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sn19xvfoXvk>

Sunday Bloody Sunday, Deon Jones feat. Jon Batiste https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQR_00_Zz6s

Ancestors Watching, Black Youth Project 100 Choir, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrO9a8Tukka>

History, Kina Grannis <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcvcnPUqX9U>

Extinguishing the Chalice

To acknowledge our ancestors means we are aware that we did not make ourselves. ~ Alice Walker