

Session 2: Chapter 4

Gather

Create and protect connections

If needed, reconnect to your group by introducing yourself with your name and your connection to the congregation. Then go around and share one word that reflects how you are feeling coming to small group.

Then, have someone read out loud the guidelines for gathering found in the *About this Guide* document and any additional guidelines added for your group. Make sure you all understand what time to wrap up your conversation to best honor each other's time.

Center

Ground yourselves in common purpose

Have one person read: *An invitation to a Brave Space* by Micky Scottbey Jones

Together we will create brave space Because there is no such thing as a "safe space"

We exist in the real world

We all carry scars and we have all caused wounds.

In this space

We seek to turn down the volume of the outside world.

We amplify voices that fight to be heard elsewhere,

We call each other to more truth and love

We have the right to start somewhere and continue to grow.

We have the responsibility to examine what we think we know.

We will not be perfect.

It will not always be what we wish it to be

But It will be our brave space together,

And

We will work on it side by side.

Discuss

Pick a few questions below to respond to as a group

1. What institutions do you participate in, and which are the most meaningful to you?
2. Have you ever experienced “institutional betrayal” (p. 105)? If so, what happened? How did it impact how you thought about the institution? Yourself? Others connected to the institution? Did that feeling change over time?
3. Do you believe an institution can successfully do repentance work? If so, what’s involved?
4. Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas suggests that a common pitfall of universities doing work around reparations for slavery is that “after the money has been paid to enslaved ancestors or for scholarships and other programming—systems and structures are not disrupted. Life goes on as usual—and these institutions continue to benefit from the ongoing legacy of white supremacy to the detriment of people of color.” (p. 113) And that, more than that, universities that were not actively involved in the Atlantic Slave Trade then consider themselves off the hook for the work of looking at the way they may uphold white supremacy. What does this example teach us about the work of repentance and institutions more broadly? How might it apply to one or more of the institutions of which you are a part?
5. Institutional betrayal and harm is not unique to the Christian church. And yet there are unique ways in which they have historically showed up in Christian institutions: the propagation of human slavery (preached as a positive in many Christian churches), colonization, forced conversion, not to mention the torture and execution of “heretics,” people of other faiths and no faith.

We have much harm first to acknowledge, and then repent. What are some ways that your own church(es) have done harm, historically? How is the harm ongoing? If you're not aware of any harm, who might be a good person to ask? What might you read or research to find out more?

6. What parts of this chapter were most challenging or thought-provoking for you?

Close *End your discussion with prayer*

Close your time together with the prayer below, adding any prayer concerns from your group. Before you depart, confirm your next gathering date, time, and space.

Loving God, We seek to walk the pathway of your love and compassion. Strengthen us in this work. Where we feel anxiety, grant us peace. Where we encounter fear, grant us courage. Where we face unknowns, grant us hope. May Christ guide us, the Spirit sustain us, and this community uphold us. Amen.