



Resource Toolkit

Houses of Worship for Racial Justice Weekend

November 5-7, 2021

In partnership with the NYC Racial Justice Commission

Dear Faith Leader:

Your participation in Houses of Worship for Racial Justice on November 5-7, 2021 is critical to building a racial equitable, fair, and just city for Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, and all People of Color – thank you.

We are offering this Resource Kit to help you deliver effective, accurate, and timely information your faith community will need to be a part of this civic engagement opportunity to begin to dismantle structural racism in the NYC Charter. The Resource Kit includes talking points to help you frame your message to the faith community and key action steps for individuals or groups.

Info Session and Preparation Call on 11/3

Commission staff will conduct a conference call to help prepare participating Faith Leaders for the Weekend on Wednesday November 3rd, 2021 from 3:00-4:00pm:

- [Join on Zoom](#)
- Use Dial-in number: 1 646 558 8656 | Enter Code: 879 0222 8648

Confirm your participation by emailing Harold Miller at hcmiller@charter.nyc.gov or [register online](#).

Thank you again for supporting the NYC Racial Justice Commission!

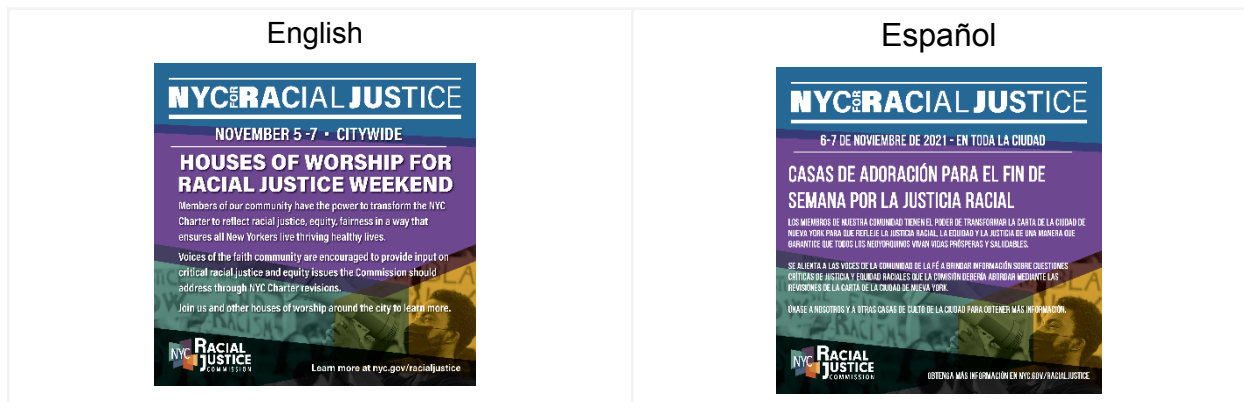
Let your community know you are participating by sharing on social media!

Sample messages and [graphics to download](#):

- This weekend, we will share how you voices of the faith community can guide @RacialJusticeNYC to help advance #racialjustice for all New Yorkers. Join us 11/5-11/7! #HOW4RacialJustice
- Our past and where we are today need not be the story of our future. Now is the time to transform the #NYCCharter to represent our values and the rights of all New Yorkers. Join us this weekend to learn about @RacialJusticeNYC #HOW4RacialJustice
- Members of our community have the power to transform the #NYCCharter to reflect racial justice, equity, fairness in a way that ensures all New Yorkers live



thriving healthy lives. Join us this weekend to learn more about
@RacialJusticeNYC. #HOW4RacialJustice



Alt text: Graphic with the text Houses of Worship for Racial Justice Weekend

Ways to participate

Help all members in your community have a voice in the NYC Charter revisions that advance racial justice, and encourage them with the information

- **Speak to your congregation:**
 - Use the talking points or sermon guide including in this document in your upcoming sermons, pastoral comments, or conversations with your community
- **Share information online:**
 - Use the digital [Take Action toolkit](#) to share information about how your congregation and community can take part in the Commission's process
 - Encourage your members to attend an upcoming [public input session](#) and deliver testimony
- **Provide your testimony or input:**
 - Attend an upcoming [public input session](#) and speak directly to the Commission
 - [Share input online](#)

Talking Points

Use these key messages to engage with your community:

- What is the NYC Racial Justice Commission?
 - In March 2021, Mayor Bill de Blasio formed the Racial Justice Commission and appointed 11 Commissioners to focus on racial



justice and reconciliation and root out structural racism in the NYC Charter.

- The Racial Justice Commission (RJC) has the powers of a Charter Revision Commission, including the ability to propose changes to the NYC Charter.
- The Commission is examining the NYC Charter to identify barriers to power, access, and opportunity for Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern and all People of Color (BIPOC*) in New York City and will put forward ballot proposals aimed at removing those barriers and advancing racial equity.
- What is the NYC Charter?
 - The NYC Charter, or the City's Constitution, is the foundation of how our City functions and governs, and it has a direct impact on the way we live and work.
 - It lays out the fundamental structure of our city's government, controls how decisions are made, and details the budget towards projects in housing and education to human rights and emergency services.
- Structural Change, Structural racism, Patterns of Inequity
 - Structural racism requires structural change. We cannot continue to address symptoms of racism through policy changes, we must address the underlying causes of inequity and get to the root of structural racism by changing the foundations of NYC law.
 - This work is necessary because systemic racism has been and continues to shape our reality.
 - Structural change can increase power, access, and opportunity for BIPOC communities in their day-to-day lives, as well as advance a vision where race is not a determinant of outcomes.
 - We may experience or know someone who experiences persistent patterns of inequity. The Racial Justice Commission has shown how structural racism operates in New York City and illustrates its harmful impact on New Yorkers of Color.
 - We must influence how the
- Speak up for racial justice in our city!
 - New York City is our home and this is a chance to demand that the law serves ALL New Yorkers.
 - Every New York City resident, of any age, immigration status, or race, can help the Commission boldly re-build the constitution of the city on a foundation of racial equity and justice.



- Countless people have fought for the right to be involved in civic engagement processes, and we must be involved in all stages to shape the future of our city for generations to come.

Action Steps for Your Community

- Civic engagement that will impact future generations is as easy as going online and submitting an input form at nyc.gov/racialjustice
- Speak up for racial justice at a public input session
- Show up for your fellow New Yorkers in 2022: New Yorkers will vote on these proposed changes in November 2022. The Commission operates independently from the Mayor's Office and other agencies.

Sermon Guide

Opening

Around our community many are discussing new leadership – how will their lives be impacted, what change will come? People are hopeful to recover from the COVID-19 crisis and are seeking justice and safety. Today I'd like to remind you that your voice, and our collective voices, does not lose its power after an election. We must continue to advocate and pursue justice for those most vulnerable, particularly Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Island, Middle Eastern, and all New Yorkers of Color.

Define Structural Racism

Racism has affected New York City since it was founded, and it continues to affect every aspect of our society, including our laws, institutions, culture, and the way our neighborhoods are built. These systems have become complicit in perpetuating inequity for the most vulnerable. This means that changes to the symptoms are not enough. Because the issue is deep seated and has caused damage over centuries, we need to grasp it at the roots.

Though structural racism can be hard to see, the systemic effects are measurable and statistical. People's race continues to be a predominant statistical factor in their economic, health, and wellbeing outcomes, even after considering socio-economic status.

Patterns of inequity in areas from criminalization, decision-making to advancement and social and emotional wellbeing, continue to harm BIPOC New Yorkers, and keep individuals and families from thriving.



Over centuries, explicitly racist laws, policies, and practices created huge disparities in power, access, and opportunity for BIPOC New Yorkers, while others have continued to enjoy power and wealth. For example, the redlined neighborhoods where People of Color lived that were disqualified from the opportunity to participate in the New Deal benefits of the 1930s are largely the same ones dealing today with the greatest environmental harms, and the same neighborhoods hardest hit by COVID-19. We can see how the legacy of these historical wrongs continues to reverberate today.

Our Community's Opportunity

We can create a better future for ourselves, our neighbors, and generations to come, but we need to be involved in the process of what racial justice for our communities looks like.

The Racial Justice Commission is seeking to change the foundational laws of the City. Here lies our chance to reimagine city government with *our values*.

We must speak out against structural racism and speak up for racial justice. This does not have to be a momentous ask – with technology today, taking a stand for justice is at your fingertips. You can go online to nyc.gov/racialjustice. You can share this opportunity on social media and encourage your friends to take hold of their power to create a racially equitable city. You can help your grandmother, your older neighbor access the online form.

Closing

I encourage you to use the power of your voice and get involved in this process to begin dismantling structural racism in our city.

Race is not a determinant of economic, political, social, or psychological outcomes, as it neither confers privilege nor denies opportunities. The worth, talents, and contributions of all people in society should be valued and recognized.

Use your voice to stop these patterns of inequity and build laws on a foundation of our values.