

CELEBRATE:



One Body, Many Parts

CTK Believe Out Loud Education Series

Session 5: Intersectionality: Welcoming and inclusion that celebrates and honors the totality of who we each are (i.e., gender, ethnic background, age, origin, etc.)

My beloved speaks and says to me:

'Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.

*The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land.*

The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

(Song of Songs 2:10-13)

Intersectionality*

Presentation by The Rev. Shaneequa Brokenleg

Brief Bio:

The Rev. Isaiah Shaneequa Brokenleg has been appointed staff officer for racial reconciliation for The Episcopal Church, a member of the Presiding Bishop's staff. She is an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe (Sicangu Nation), and a priest in the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota, where she grew up and where she calls home. Brokenleg has a master of divinity from the Church Divinity School of the Pacific and a masters of public health from the University of Minnesota. Prior to priesthood, she worked as a clinical epidemiologist, and served Indian Country in the Great Lakes region. As a winktè (Lakota two-spirit), she is called to be a healer and move our communities in the direction of positive change, in the direction of reconciliation, toward living in right-relationship with one another. She strives to live out her calling through her work, our church, her art, and in her life. Shaneequa did not "come out" to her community. Rather, she "came in" as she understood her call, identity, and role/service in the community through their loving support.

*Intersectionality is a framework for understanding how the various factors that make up an individual or a group are interconnected. It is a useful tool for analyzing how these factors may combine in different ways to produce either equity or inequity in relationships, discrimination or privilege, where focusing on only one specific aspect might obscure a complete picture.

Human beings are intersectional beings.

The Whole person is made up of many parts:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| ▪ Gender | ▪ Culture |
| ▪ Ethnicity | ▪ Level of ability |
| ▪ Generation | ▪ Vocational Calling/Profession |
| ▪ Socioeconomic group | ▪ Religion |
| ▪ Age | ▪ Parent/Child/Etc. |

In some spaces we can be our whole selves and in other places we cannot.

Like a flower, we are made up of many petals. Taking off one petal we cannot know what the whole flower looks like.

- Taking off a single petal, are we just our ethnicity? Just our calling? Just LGBTQIA2+? No. But that is often how people see us and how they form expectations of us.
- Welcoming people, we must be willing to see the whole flower, the whole person. We must be willing to welcome others in their wholeness, welcoming and honoring them as the full flower and not just as single petals. We welcome others for who they are.

In Lakota culture (and many native cultures), difference is not “other” or “bad,” but sacred. Seeing difference in this way, we can welcome in a much different way.

- Grandparents and Auntie observing, voicing (without judgement), and accepting difference. Seeing Shaneequa dancing “like a woman,” the response was awareness and love.
- Church, while intersecting with native culture, can also be a voice of love in a hardened world
 - Grandfather was an Episcopal priest.
 - Attending the cathedral during evening services, Shaneequa met a community of love and support.

Western Culture is not as accepting of difference.

- Moving in with her father in Seattle for a while, Shaneequa was kicked out and lived homeless for a while.
- Reservation School with western students in 6th grade was the first place Shaneequa ever heard a derogatory and demeaning word directed at her.
 - Teacher stopped class and spent a half hour talking about how wíŋktè are sacred.

The Divine source of Intersectionality, Sacredness, and Ability

- Creator gives everyone a full glass.
 - Not everyone has the same ability in the same levels, but everyone gets a full glass.
 - Uncle who couldn’t see had a “crazy-good” memory.
 - Our inability to see another’s full glass is our problem, not the problem of those we refuse to see.

Study Questions:

- What are your “petals”? What are the different elements of your whole self?
- Where have you felt most able to be your whole self?
- Are there places you feel you cannot be your whole self?
- Where have you felt most accepted as your whole self? How did that feel?
- Where have you felt least accepted as your whole self? How did that feel?
- How can the church invite in / call those who are “different” in ability, gender, sexuality, etc.?

Additional Resources:

- What is Intersectionality?/Britannica
- Intersectionality: Social Theory. August Samie. Britannica
- What Is Intersectionality? A Brief History of the Theory/TIME
- Intersectionality. Patricia Hill Collins, Sirma Bilge, 2020