



Beloved Conversations

You've signed the MOU and sent the payment...
Now What?

Upon purchasing a license to use the Beloved Conversations curriculum, congregational leaders become members of the Beloved Conversations Network, a group of over 50 congregations across North America who, like you, are grappling with how to shift their personal and collective identities away from mono-cultural religious practices.

The Fahs Collaborative realizes that change does not happen without thoughtful planning, spiritual discernment, and a highly relational commitment to the process of “doing the work for as long as it takes.” As such, the Collaborative provides professional staff supports to help your congregation. Individual and group coaching via digital formats (video conference, phone calls, and so forth) is highly recommended for congregational leadership (Ministers, Religious Educators, etc.) and group facilitators. We are all still learning how to create this new vision of our world, and Beloved Conversations Network members are expected to share their successes and struggles; we really believe it takes a village!

Below you will find a preparation check list and also a description of Beloved Conversations that you can use in promoting the program in your congregation.

How to prepare for Beloved Conversations in your congregation:

- Our Assistant Director will send you the password for the curriculum files located on the Fahs Collaborative website: www.meadville.edu/BCCurriculum
- Choose Facilitators. Send us the names of facilitators, so they can be added to all communications.
- Download and read the curriculum, especially the notes for facilitators. **NOTE:** The curriculum is intended ONLY for those leading the learning experience (e.g., ministers, group facilitators). Participants should NOT have access to the curriculum.
- Schedule your first coaching session with your Retreat Leader. For this first session, we recommend that all facilitators attend the call, if possible. We will cover your questions about the retreat and the curriculum, and make sure you feel ready to roll.
- Coordinate with your Retreat Leader to arrange travel.
- If you haven't already, set your dates for the 8 sessions. Let us know your last session date.
- Invite folks to sign up.

- Organize and/or purchase the music for the sessions listed in the Facilitators' Notes
- Order the boxes for the retreat. from the "Oriental Trading Company" (approx. \$20 p/dozen). Search their website for item # IN-48/1949. One is needed per participant.
- Plan retreat food and logistics.
- Set up times for participants to watch the movie Gran Torino before the retreat.
- Day Of Retreat Room Set-up
 - Prep for accessibility issues within the group (motor chairs, microphones, light sensitivities, etc.)
 - One chair for every participant
 - Small tables that seat 4-6 people at each table for lunch and crafting
 - A small table with cloth, chalice, and matches/lighter
- Retreat Materials Provided by the Host Congregation:
 - LCD projector and screen. Speakers are needed (Retreat Facilitator can provide if necessary)
 - Name tags
 - Journals (one for each participant)
 - Markers & flip-chart with paper
 - One wooden "treasure box" for each participant (see ordering information above)
 - Tempera paints and/or markers, stickers, etc. suitable for decorating wood boxes, brushes, water, scissors, glue

Opening Retreat Agenda

Friday

- By 4:00 Retreat Leader meets with Facilitators and Minister(s)
- By 5:30 Room, chairs, tables and AV equipment should be set up
- 6:00 Light meal (informal introduction of RL to participants)
- 6:45 Clean up, begin moving toward chairs/tables
- 6:50-6:55 Host does a Chalice Lighting/Opening Words
Introduces Retreat Leader to group
- 6:55-9:30 Session #1

Saturday

- 8:30 Room, chairs, tables and AV equipment should be set up
Welcoming food (tea, coffee, muffins, etc.)
- 9:00 Begin Session #2
- 11:30 Host sets up arts and crafts table and boxes
- 11:45 Host insures lunch has arrived
- 12:00 Break for lunch
- 12:30 Begin art project with wooden boxes
- 1:15 Begin Session #3
- 4:45 Retreat ends



Beloved Conversations

Teaching Hearts and Minds to Open for Multicultural Change

“If you told me 10 weeks ago that I’d be sitting in circle with Black Christians, singing a gospel song about interconnectedness, I would have told you that you were crazy!”
- White, male humanist

“Thank you for telling something I didn’t want to hear. You’re helping me return to the real intentions of my heart.” – White, female, Jewish elder

“Simply because Black people know oppression does not mean we have nothing to learn about how we’ve been shaped by racism.” – Black, female lay leader

Beloved Conversations is a teaching and learning curriculum that holds both the tensions and joys of an intentional multicultural community. The curriculum assumes that every conversation with another human being is a cross-cultural conversation, even if your conversation partner is from the same cultural group. Nested inside communities of faith, Beloved Conversations creates the first step – a learning laboratory – for how to live healthily in a multi-racial, multicultural, and often theologically diverse community.

Beloved Conversations opens with a 1.5 day learning laboratory in the form of a “retreat” (usually a Friday evening and Saturday). The Retreat explicitly models the pedagogy and spirit of the curriculum. Now that a learning community is formed, eight, two-hour seminars are designed as follow-up sessions to help participants locate their individual and group assumptions about race and ethnicity in their lives. The curriculum is experiential through and through, using music, visual arts, digital media, theater, film, and the best practices of small group ministry to make its point. The Retreat is led by an authorized staff member from the Fahs Collaborative, and the eight sessions that follow the retreat are facilitated by two facilitators from within the congregation.

Topics

1. The Invisible Footprint of Racial/Ethnic History
2. Exploring the Dynamic of Racism and Privilege
3. Racism Today: Micro-Aggressions
4. Interrupting Racism
5. Community Audit: The Experience of Race & Ethnicity in your Community
6. The Legacy of Racism
7. Toward a New Identity: How Can We Be-in-the-World?
8. Collecting our Wisdom: A Celebration of Learning and Commitment