



# Creativity for Belonging

## 10 Parish Actions for Racial Justice

Inspired by UN World Creativity & Innovation Day (21 April)  
Practical ideas for parishes across Birmingham, Coventry, Gloucester,  
Hereford, Lichfield & Worcester

### INTRODUCTION

21 April is designated UN World Creativity and Innovation Day. It's a useful spark for parish life because the UN frames creativity and innovation as essential to problem-solving in "all aspects of human development", including the kind of culture change institutions need when exclusion has become normal. In church terms, that means moving beyond good intentions into practices that change who feels safe, who belongs, who is heard, and who gets to lead. While April 21 can be a helpful moment to launch or refresh this work, these ideas can be used at any time of year, in any parish context, as part of steady, faithful change.

That's exactly the lane the West Midlands Racial Justice Initiative exists for: transforming church structures and communities across the six dioceses of Birmingham, Coventry, Gloucester, Hereford, Lichfield, and Worcester so the Church becomes a place where everyone can truly belong and thrive, including United Kingdom Minoritised Ethnic/Global Majority Heritage (UKME/GMH) people. "From Lament to Action" names the same urgency in plain language: the Church cannot be credible while staying in apology and lament, it must take swift action that leads to real change.

These are things any parish in any of our dioceses can do. The purpose is to make the entry point obvious and energising: parishes don't need to be experts, and they don't need big budgets. They need willingness, local relationships, and a first step they can actually do. Some ideas suit a microgrant, many cost nothing. The win is simple: a parish that starts acting becomes a parish that can tell a different story, one where inclusion is not a statement, it's a lived practice.

**Idea 1:** Storytelling pulpit exchange. Pair a parish with a nearby People of the Global Majority church for two Sundays, one visit each way, then a shared meal. This encourages a practical response to the report's point that "cultural assimilation" into a predominantly white, middle-class church culture can feel like the price of admission, by making visible space for different traditions, voices, and ways of worship to be received as fully belonging.

**Idea 2:** Culture and liturgy co-design night (perfect around 21 April). One evening where People of the Global Majority in the parish and local community co-design one service element for the next month (intercessions, music, testimony, readings, welcome words), so "cultural expression" is normal, not "special."

**Idea 3:** Belonging walkthrough audit. A mixed group walks the whole Sunday journey (website, signage, welcome, language, who leads, who gets heard), then the PCC commits to three changes with dates. This is the practical version of moving from "bland statements" to "intentional action" in participation.

**Idea 4:** Anti-racism learning as standard practice for parish leadership (including safeguarding). Anyone stepping into PCC, safeguarding roles, welcome teams, children and youth teams, or preaching and worship leading completes a short learning module



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and joins a facilitated conversation early in their role. This keeps learning embedded in how we form and support leaders, so it's understood as part of good ministry and safe practice, not an optional extra.

**Idea 5:** Reverse mentoring, parish version. Create two “listening pairs” between long-standing parish leaders and People of the Global Majority congregants (or local community members), meeting monthly for three months, with one agreed change coming out of each cycle. This adapts the report’s reverse mentoring recommendation into something parishes can actually do.

**Idea 6:** Youth partnering across churches. Set up a termly joint youth gathering with a UKME/GMH majority church and a church where UKME/GMH young people are a minority, with shared leadership and shared planning. The report explicitly calls for partnership so youth spaces become “inclusive and equal in opportunities.”

**Idea 7:** Youth mentoring pathway, safeguarding-led. Identify one or two People of the Global Majority young people who want to explore leadership, then connect them to a trained mentor and a real role, within safeguarding protocols. This maps directly onto the report’s mentoring and referral-platform recommendations for young people’s leadership journeys.

**Idea 8:** Complaints and repair pathway people can trust. Publish a clear parish pathway for reporting racist harm, including timelines, who receives reports (not just the incumbent), and what “repair” can include (apology, changed practice, mediation, removal from role). This responds to the report’s warning that current routes leave little room for reconciliation or restitution and create fear of retribution.

**Idea 9:** Data-to-action on appointments and visibility. Make diversity monitoring standard for every parish recruitment and volunteering process, track progression (who applies, who is shortlisted, who is selected, who stays), and review it quarterly at PCC. This aligns with the report’s insistence that data and monitoring are “crucial” and that current processes block proper monitoring of appointments and progression.

**Idea 10:** Truth-telling and barrier-breaking. Run a guided “what our parish inherits” session linking the building, memorials, money, local industry, and empire, then commit to one visible act of repair now, such as offering translation support and occasionally including hymns or prayers in locally used languages so language and cultural barriers don’t decide who belongs.

**You’re welcome to use these ideas or come up with your own.**  
**Keep us up to date with progress! Email: [hello@wmracialjustice.org.uk](mailto:hello@wmracialjustice.org.uk)**  
**Visit: [www.wmracialjustice.org.uk](http://www.wmracialjustice.org.uk) for more information.**