

November 26, 2014

Dear RE Families,

These have been days of great anguish following the grand jury decision of no indictment in the death of young Michael Brown. The protests in Ferguson, MO and across the country demonstrate the outrage many feel about that decision and about the broader treatment of people of color in the criminal justice system. Last year's UUA Common Read, [*The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*](#) by Michelle Alexander addressed this problem.

Images of anger and voices of protest dominate the media. In my home, as I imagine in yours, there have been many questions and conversations. As a parent, it is important to me to talk with my children, to help them understand the issues and learn to discuss them with others in a way that upholds our UU values. It is important to me, as a parent, to think deeply about what I want to teach my children about justice.

I was grateful in the immediate aftermath of the Ferguson Grand Jury's decision to read a statement from UUA President Peter Morales, which you can [read here](#). Today, I received resources from the UU Ferguson Response Team, which included these resources for families:

- [How to Talk with Students about Ferguson](#), PBS
- [Talking with Kids about Racism](#), The Huffington Post

Additional resources may be found on the St. Louis [Standing on the Side of Love Facebook](#) page and the [Standing on the Side of Love website](#).

I would add to these the resources collected on the [Teaching Tolerance website](#), which includes Michelle Alexander's November 26th op-ed in *The New York Times*, "[Telling My Son About Ferguson](#)."

Racism is hard to talk about. [White privilege](#) can blind us to the experiences of people of color. We don't want to believe it exists so we resist seeing it. We are afraid to say the wrong thing, so often we say nothing. We too often focus on individual acts rather than institutionalized systems.

I encourage you to open your heart, reflect on your values, think about justice, and talk with your children. Help them learn to apply their UU lens and values to the issues. Help them develop meaningful responses to peers who might think differently. Help them engage in a process of learning about modern day racism, and learn along with them.

In fellowship,
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