

What is a Study Circle?

Picture a room with ten to fifteen ordinary Jacksonville residents sitting in a circle. It's a truly diverse group of people. There are men and women, Blacks, Whites, Asians, Native Americans, Hispanics and other ethnic groups. They represent different religions and generations.

For five weeks, this small group of diverse people, meet at a regular time for two hours. Each week they sit with two trained facilitators who lead an in-depth discussion on race relations. During their time together, they share stories of their lives. Passionate stories, sad stories, angry and happy stories about what they have experienced living in Jacksonville or other communities.

And during that time, something special happens. This group of ordinary people begin to see people who are different from themselves through changed eyes. As they listen to each other's stories, they begin to understand how a person of another race, gender, religion, age or sexual orientation sees the world. They begin to get a glimpse of new possibilities and answers for more inclusive and more satisfying relationships within their neighborhoods and across communities.

This is the world of the Study Circles Initiative sponsored by the Jacksonville Human Rights Commission with assistance from Everyday Democracy (www.everyday-democracy.org), an organization that provides innovative tools and processes to benefit communities in their efforts to engage citizens in dialogue, deliberation and civic engagement.

Why Talk About Race Relations?

It is hard to talk about race. Conversations are likely to touch upon power and privilege, fear and anger, hope and disappointment. Under most circumstances, discussions about race can become heated and emotional, so it's easier to avoid the topic. The study circles process proves that when trained facilitators are available, and there is a safe and open environment, people will listen and freely share their different thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions. As a result, citizens who participate in the process are learning more about themselves and others and developing new levels of respecting and caring.

Talk, Talk, Talk . . . Where's the action?

A key component of the study circles' dialogue to action process is the Action Forum. The action forum is an opportunity for study circles participants from several different groups to interact with each other and to develop their approach to solving problems around racial and



ethnic disparities. The dialogue to action process can lead to a range of possible outcomes. Possible changes can include:

- Changes in individual behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes
- New relationships and networks
- Institutional changes
- Changes in public policy

Change Happens Here!

Changing the story of race in Jacksonville starts with a personal decision. You make the decision to be available, receptive to listen and willing to share your stories and perspectives with other people. What you will find is that while we may come from different racial, ethnic, cultural or religious beliefs, we share concerns about our beloved community – Jacksonville. Change happens here, if you are willing to make it so. Get involved! Join today!

For more information about the Study Circles Initiative: Call: 904-630-4620
Email: StudyCircles@coj.net

change happens Here

REGISTRATION FORM The Study Circle Initiative

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Gender: Female Male

Race/Ethnicity: American Indian Alaska Native Black or African American Hispanic Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander Two or more races White Other

| Preference *1 Location *2 | Evenings 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | | | Mid-day 10:00 - 12 Noon | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----|-----|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu |
| | | | | | | | | |

*1 Please indicate 1st and 2nd choice for meeting day and time.

*2 Please indicate the section of the city that would work best for you, i.e. downtown, Arlington, Beaches, Mandarin, Northside, Riverside or Westside.

Study Circles



JACKSONVILLE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

City Hall at St. James
117 W. Duval St., Suite 350
Jacksonville, FL 32202

(904) 630-4911

Fax (904) 630-4918

TTY number (904) 630-4125

www.coj.net keyword: JHRC

10 REASONS FOR STUDY CIRCLES

- To bring diverse groups of individuals together to interact with each other
- To provide a safe, open environment for dialogue
- To allow individuals of all economic, social, racial, religious and ethnic groups to gain a deeper level of understanding
- To provide an opportunity to reevaluate individual biases, prejudices and stereotypes
- To identify and implement action opportunities
- To get more involved in the community
- Changes in individual behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes
- New relationships and networks
- Institutional changes
- Changes in public policy

Study Circles

City Hall at St. James
117 W. Duval St., Suite 350
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Postage