



by Heather McGhee

Episode 2 - Discussion Guide

You've listened to *The Sum of Us* podcast, and now you want to get into it and talk about what you've learned! Use this guide to help prompt discussions around your kitchen table, in your classroom, your Sunday worship circles, your book clubs (or podcast clubs!), your bike group—anywhere you might be!

What about this episode resonated with you the most? Why?

What part of the episode did you struggle the most to understand or agree with? Why?

Why was focusing on the universality of clean water so crucial to building a diverse coalition?

If you could ask Justin a question, what would it be?

Extra Credit: Find out what community in your state has the highest “toxic release inventory” or most polluted water. What is the demographic makeup of that area? Identify local environmental leaders and lend your support





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Episode 3 - Discussion Guide

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What about this episode resonated with you the most? Why?

What part of the episode did you struggle the most to understand or agree with? Why?

What is the role of empathy in organizing?

How did moving away from political jargon and talking about values allow Desmond and Neil to connect with more people? Why do you think that was so?

What areas of our society do you think have the most potential for healing if we could work together across political lines? What are common values that could be activated across the divide?

Extra Credit: Find out more about the voting laws in your state. Which communities are most impacted? How representative—by race, class, gender—is your state government? Find a local organization working on democracy reform and lend your support.





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Episode 4 - Discussion Guide

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What part of the episode did you struggle the most to understand or agree with? Why?

Stand Up Kansas City fought pay inequality by also fighting racism—how do you believe that these two concepts coexist? Do you think they reinforce each other? Why?

At their first protest, Terrence and Bridget both had to overcome the fear of losing their livelihoods before standing on the frontlines. What are other fears that stop people from becoming activists? What are ways people can overcome those fears?

Extra Credit: What is the minimum wage in your city and state? Using the Economic Policy Institute's [Family Budget Calculator](#), find out how much income a family would actually need to meet their basic needs in your area. Research your state's biggest low-wage employers and think of creative ways to hold them accountable.





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Episode 5 - Discussion Guide

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What about this episode resonated with you the most? Why?

What part of the episode did you struggle the most to understand or agree with? Why?

What is your relationship to the refugee experience? How did that inform your experience of this episode? What did it bring up for you? If you are not in proximity to the refugee experience, how did this episode inform your understanding of that experience?

How do you think increased diversity among farmers would impact our food systems?

What qualities do you think people and groups need to cultivate to be part of a cooperative like Liberation Farms, as opposed to a solo family farm like the Hilliards'?

Extra Credit: Learn more about the history of black farmers in the US. What policies and practices have led to the extraordinary land loss? What are some solutions? Learn more about the history and renewed interest in Community Land Trusts. Are there any in your community?





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Episode 6 - Discussion Guide

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What about this episode resonated with you the most? Why?

What part of the episode did you struggle the most to understand or agree with? Why?

How would you try to bridge the divide between residents who want to keep the siren and those who want the trauma acknowledged?

What's important to keep in mind when you're activating/organizing in support of a group you don't directly belong to?

Extra Credit: Learn more about the history of sundown ordinances and Indigenous boarding schools. Does your state or town acknowledge its own traumatic and racist histories? Find out who is working in your area to teach a fuller version of history and lend your support.





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Episode 7 - Discussion Guide

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What about this episode resonated with you the most? Why?

What part of the episode did you struggle the most to understand or agree with? Why?

What views did you have about abortion going into the episode? What impact did listening to Dr. Boyd’s journey and the history of the anti-choice and compassionate religious movements have on those views?

Extra Credit: Learn more about the status of reproductive rights in your state and neighboring states. Read the landmark “Turnaway Study” demonstrating the real-life impact of abortion restrictions.





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Episode 8 - Discussion Guide

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What about this episode resonated with you the most? Why?

What part of the episode did you struggle the most to understand or agree with? Why?

What are your thoughts on the current land back movements for Indigenous and Black people? If you're not familiar with these movements, what do you think the government's role in providing reparations should be?

Why do apologies for atrocities and injustices matter? To those who apologize, and to those who seek them?

What did you think of Heather's idea that reparations are "seed capital for the nation we're becoming"? How can people look past zero-sum arguments against reparations?



Extra Credit: Learn more about the global history of reparations and reconciliation efforts, and when they've occurred in the United States. Read about the Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation framework designed by Dr. Gail Christopher and where there are TRHT efforts in your state or a nearby college campus. Find a local celebration of the National Day of Racial Healing, which takes place on January 17 each year.

