

Components of Leadership Training for Small Group and GIG Leaders

The small group meeting and Groups Investigating God (GIG) discussion guides have been designed to help you and your student leaders grow as Jesus' disciples. Both sets of guides utilize the Beyond Colorblind video series as a launching point for understanding our ethnic stories in light of God's greater story. Below is a list of training resources that will help your leaders prepare to lead these discussions well.

Warning: Talking about ethnicity, culture, and race can be a complicated and controversial conversation in the U.S. today. You should be prepared to handle these potentially volatile topics. The videos may also bring up painful memories for some of your students. You should be ready to offer prayer ministry.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Biblical Foundations for Race and Ethnicity
2. Preparing to Share Ethnic Stories
3. Leading a Call to Faith Using Race and Ethnicity Language
4. Insta-GIG and Pocket Proxe Training
5. Additional Recommendations

1. Biblical Foundations for Race & Ethnicity

Shifting to a biblical framework for how Jesus redeems race and ethnicity

As students lead Beyond Colorblind discussions, it is critical that they lead from Scripture, and they can articulate the biblical foundations for how we are engaging the topic of race and ethnicity. We want to shift the conversation from secular thinking about ethnicity to a Kingdom way of thinking. We are not entering this conversation because sociologists have told us to. We are entering this conversation because we follow Jesus and because redeeming our ethnic and cultural journey is a major priority for him. Please consider this your invitation to grow in thinking about this for yourself and in articulating for your students.

There are many methods for helping your leaders grow in biblical foundations of race and ethnicity. Here are a few options:

- Vision talks: Short talks that you or a trained leader can give before a meeting to help cast vision and give a biblical frame for the upcoming series. Feel free to edit the script to your context. Repetition is a powerful teaching method, so don't be afraid to reiterate your main points as often as you can.

- Overview Video & Discussion
- Ethnicity Matters Video & Discussion
- Biblical Survey Activity: As a group, crowdsource a biblical survey of race and ethnicity.
- Read and discuss InterVarsity's *Commitment to Biblical Multiethnicity* paper

SAMPLE VISION TALK: Jesus and the Samaritan woman

We often make the mistake as Christians of thinking of ethnicity as irrelevant to Scripture. However, there are actually cross-cultural dynamics throughout the Bible — we just need to learn to see them. In Jesus' day, Jews and Samaritans not only had centuries of hatred and mistrust, but they also actively lived in separate regions and avoided each other at all costs. Yet in John 4, we see that not only does Jesus go out of his way to enter into Samaria, but he engages with a Samaritan woman. He crosses barriers to talk to her, which alarms her, and she is the one who points out how unusual Jesus is. Jesus answers her with patience, love, and truth and ultimately gives her healing that sends her out to proclaim Jesus to her entire Samaritan community.

Instead of ignoring her ethnicity, Jesus sees deeply into her story, and he answers her uniquely Samaritan questions. He gives her good news that heals where she is hurting, which in turn overflows into good news for her entire town. Jesus sees deeply into your story, how you are wired, and he cares about your ethnicity. As you let Jesus redeem your ethnic story, many will be healed by Jesus working through you. To follow Jesus, we need to go to "Samaria," crossing into their world, seeing who they are, and witnessing God redeem their ethnic journey as well.

We're living in a world with more and more racial turmoil and hatred and nobody has been left unscathed (include any recent racial incidents that may have happened in your campus or community). This is the world we are living in, and it's the world we're going to have to provide an answer to as followers of Jesus. This leadership series is going to be about equipping us to actually be a part of the solution instead of just bystanders to the problem. Over the next few weeks we are going to really dive into our ethnic journeys. **This may be a conversation that feels new or intimidating. For others, it may feel like a relief to finally be talking about these things.** If you are willing to be honest with yourself, with each other, and with Jesus about your ethnic story, we believe that Jesus will meet you in this process and empower you to not only experience transformation in your ethnic identity, but also to bring racial healing to your campus as well. God cares about your ethnic journey. Will you engage?

ADDITIONAL VISION TALK IDEAS

These passages reveal that all people are welcome in God's kingdom:

- **Acts 10:34–35** "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right."
- **Revelation 7:9–10** "After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.'"
- **Revelation 21:22–24** "I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it."

This passage challenges us to carry on God's mission to break down barriers between peoples.

- **Ephesians 2:14–16** "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility."

BEYOND COLORBLIND OVERVIEW VIDEO & DISCUSSION

Watch the [Beyond Colorblind Overview Video](#) together.

1. What is your favorite Bible passage about crossing cultures?
2. How do you feel about going deeper into your own story?
3. How do you feel about leading others into parts of their story that they may have never looked at before?

ETHNICITY MATTERS VIDEO & DISCUSSION

Watch the [Ethnicity Matters Video](#) together. While originally created to explain our different ministry strategies (ethnic general and ethnic focused), it also addresses questions regarding ethnicity and colorblindness.

1. What are some of the things said in the video that connect with you? What are some of the things said that don't connect with you?
2. The video references multiple Bible verses. Which ones do you find helpful in understanding God's view of ethnicity and culture? Why?

BIBLICAL SURVEY ACTIVITY

As a group, crowdsource a biblical survey of ethnicity and culture.

1. Provide a list of relevant Scriptures (both OT and NT) and assign individuals or pairs to study a passage and answer these two questions:
 - a. How is ethnicity and culture mentioned in this passage? (Are there specific ethnicities or cultures mentioned? Why do you think that is significant?)
 - b. What is the role of ethnicity and culture in this passage?
 - c. BACKGROUND NOTE: For the purpose of this exercise, invite participants to consider the words "nations," "Gentiles," and "ethnicity" as similar terms all relating to unique cultures and people groups.
2. Have each individual or pair share with the whole group.
3. As a large group,
 - a. Where do you notice commonalities across the passages?
 - b. Where do you notice differences or tensions?
 - c. What are some general biblical principles of ethnicity and culture that you can distill from these passages?
 - d. How might these principles be relevant to our ministry?

Some key points you may want to draw out of the discussion:

- Throughout Scripture, the Bible acknowledges different ethnicities and cultures and God's heart for the nations and all people groups.
- Because of God's heart for all nations, God goes to great lengths to reach them. In the Old Testament, God calls Israel to be a blessing to all nations. In the New Testament, God sends his Son, and, by the Holy Spirit, establishes his Church to reach all nations.
- Tensions: The nations are both a source of God's love and an object of God's wrath. While Scripture portrays the nations as sinful and idolatrous, they are also portrayed as a part of God's Kingdom.
- Israel was always meant to be a blessing to other nations and people groups. The same is true for the Church—called to make disciples of all nations.
- In Christ, ethnicity and culture are both affirmed and relativized. We are most defined by our identity in Christ, but our ethnic identities continue to be affirmed.

Possible Passage Clusters

- Genesis 1:28–31
- Genesis 11:1–9; 12:1–3
- Psalm 67:1–7
- Isaiah 66:14–24
- Matthew 28:17–20; Acts 1:1–8
- John 4:1–30
- Acts 2:1–13
- Acts 10:1–48
- Acts 15:3–31
- Acts 17:16–34
- Romans 14:1–15:9
- 1 Corinthians 9:19–23
- Galatians 2:1–10; 3:26–29
- Ephesians 2:11–22
- Revelation 5:9; 7:9–10; 21:22–27

READING AND DISCUSSING INTERVARSITY'S COMMITMENT TO BIBLICAL MULTIETHNICITY PAPER

Invite your group to read InterVarsity's [Commitment to Biblical Multiethnicity](#) paper, either before your meeting or at your meeting together. As they read, invite them to highlight passages that resonate with them, are confusing, or were new insights.

Discussion Questions:

1. What parts of this paper resonated with you? What was new for you?
2. What was confusing for you? Were there places where you disagreed?
3. How might the biblical insights articulated in this paper guide our ministry in biblically engaging issues of race and ethnicity?

2. Preparing to Share Ethnic Stories

How to help your leaders articulate their ethnic journeys

As students engage with the Beyond Colorblind campaign, it is important for them to be able to share how God has brought personal redemption to their ethnic stories. These conversations are usually new for students and some may find it difficult to identify how God has been present in their ethnic journey. Before launching the discussions on campus, use the following Ethnic Story Worksheet to help student leaders begin to describe their ethnic stories.

THE BIG STORY AND YOUR ETHNIC STORY ACTIVITY

Print and hand out copies of [The Big Story \(Four Circles\) & Your Ethnic Story](#) worksheet.

Tell Your Story.

Instruct students to pay attention as you tell your story using the four circles. Debrief what they heard:

- What was compelling about the story? How did it connect with you?
- How clear was the need for Jesus? Why?
- How did you hear each of the four circles represented in this ethnic story?

Have Students Work on Their Own Stories.

You may wish to begin by defining cultural values, ethnicity, and race:

- **Culture** is how a group of people share values and practices, such as how families relate, how values are expressed, religious practices, and philosophical perspectives.
- **Ethnicity** comes from the Greek root word *ethnos*, meaning “nation,” and refers to a people group from a specific location. Ethnicity typically refers to people who share a common heritage and a common story. (It is important to note that our ethnic story is influenced by our cultural and racial backgrounds.)
- **Race** is a form of biological grouping defined by skin color and other phenotypical manifestations (shape of facial features, hair type, etc.). Often race is tied to social-status implications in a given historical setting.

[*Full list of MEM definitions are here](#)

Divide students into pairs or small groups to work on their own story using the worksheet, writing down notes as they go. Direct students to work circle by circle. You may wish to check in with them after each section. Help them to give concrete examples in each circle. “Think of specific moments, conversations, or prayer times that influenced you.”

**Some students will get stuck at different points. Assure them that the point of this exercise is to not do this perfectly, but to think of some specifics. As they have gaps, help them invite Jesus to speak, heal, and restore.

Questions to Help Students Think through the Four Circles

There are additional questions on the worksheet.

INTRO

- What's your ethnic background? Be as specific as possible.
- How long has your family been in the United States?

CIRCLE ONE: BEAUTY

- When did you first realize that you were [insert ethnic background]?
- Growing up, what were the good and beautiful things you enjoyed about your ethnicity(s)?
- What did celebrations or holidays look like in your family?
- Are there things from your family that you want to pass down to your kids?

CIRCLE TWO: BROKENNESS

- How have you become aware of areas of brokenness in your ethnicity(s)?
- Where do you see idolatry and patterns of sin tendencies in your ethnic group(s)?
- Where have you seen your people(s) hurt or reject others?
- In what ways have you been hurt or felt rejected by other ethnic groups (or your own ethnic community)?

CIRCLE THREE: REDEMPTION

- How is Jesus redeeming your ethnic journey?
- How is he showing you the goodness he created in your culture(s)?
- How is he breaking off the idolatry in your culture(s), healing broken relationships with other people groups, or healing scars in your story?

CIRCLE FOUR: RESTORATION

- God wants to equip you to cross barriers. With whom have you felt barriers in the past? How is God inviting you to pursue reconciliation with that community?
- You are being sent in God's anointing to his mission on campus. He wants to give you a heart to reach other communities. Who are the new people God is calling you to reach?

Practice Telling Your Stories. Have students share their stories in pairs for 7-10 minutes each. Then, give each other feedback:

- Which were the parts that were clear, that helped the listener understand the story?
- What needs more clarity?
- Where does Jesus show up?
- Who might be open to exploring Jesus because of that story?

Emphasize: We don't expect you to have your story perfect yet. This is an ongoing, multi-layered journey that will take us our whole lives to explore.

Jesus doesn't love you more if you've reached circle four, and he doesn't love you less if you're barely past circle one. He does invite you to press into your journey and to open up this part of your life to his voice and healing.

A FEW NOTES REGARDING COMPLEXITIES

White People

It is often difficult for white students to see anything good in their culture (or that they have a culture at all). You need to be able to call out the strengths and beauty in white culture. Read chapter 12, "Can God Redeem White Culture?" in [Being White: Finding Our Place in a Multiethnic World](#).

When you publicly affirm what is good in white culture, it may sound like white culture is better than other cultures. It is important for you to affirm that while these are DISTINCTLY white values, they are not UNIQUELY white values. Be prepared to have concrete stories to affirm God's beauty as reflected in other ethnic groups.

Multiracial

This may be complicated for biracial people and adoptees. To better understand the multiracial experience, please read [Steve Tamayo's story](#).

International People

Some international students may find it initially difficult to articulate their ethnic beauty or brokenness, especially if they come from a more homogenous nation. It will be helpful to talk about how there is brokenness both within each people group, as well as between people groups on a global scale. Some helpful examples include: colorism in Latin America, Jewish/Palestinian power struggles in the Middle East, and caste system injustices in India.

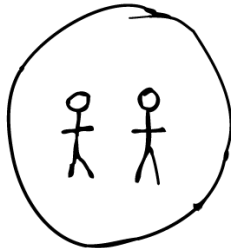
3. Leading a Call to Faith Using Race and Ethnicity Language

How to train your students to pray with those who decide to follow Jesus

RESPONDING TO JESUS

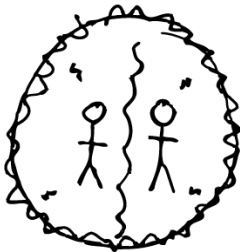
Jesus wants to amplify the beauty and heal the brokenness in each of our ethnic stories, no matter our ethnicity. Receiving such healing moves us past colorblindness into an ethnicity-aware, reconciling community. He is inviting each of us into his story of redemption.

REVIEWING THE GOSPEL



Beauty

We are all created in the image of God. He made us with purpose, dignity, and beauty. We were designed to live in peace with one another, enjoying the unique characteristics of every people group, and learning from one another, with God at the center of our relationships.



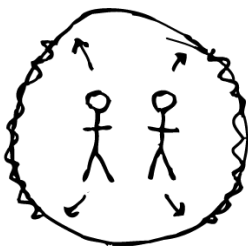
Brokenness

But that is not the world we are living in today. We thought we could do better if we put ourselves at the center of the story, shoving God to the side. The results have been disastrous. Today, our world is clearly divided and hurting. Our ethnic journeys include the story of this pain, both the past and the present. The brokenness is not just external—it's also within each of us. We carry scars from things that people have said and done, or not done to us. Our scars end up damaging others, causing more pain as we tolerate, or even participate in, systems that oppress people.



Redemption

But God did not turn away, leaving us in our brokenness. Jesus took our personal sin and our world's sin into the grave with him when he died on the cross. And he defeated sin by coming back to life, proving that death and destruction do not have the final say. Jesus came to heal us, to affirm the beauty of how he made us, to free us from the damage of brokenness done to us and by us, by individuals and system—and to pardon us for the part we've played in that mess. Our broken ethnic stories become healed and redeemed as we follow Jesus. He helps us embrace our ethnic stories and offers us new hearts and new love to reconcile with each other and work towards restoration.



Restoration

As God heals us, he's not satisfied with our individual transformation alone. Jesus leads us toward restoring relationships, repairing communities, and seeking justice. He breaks our chains of apathy, fear, and pain, and he sends us out to help break others' chains as well. And he invites us to share God's story with others. Our restored ethnic stories help bring healing and restoration to our communities and to our world.

To follow Jesus is to trust him with our personal and collective pain and brokenness, and to trust that by defeating death, he has the power to make all things right.

INVITATION TO RESPOND

As we wrap up our series, let's not just be people who talk about issues, let's be people who do something about it. Here are 3 responses God may be calling us to:

The invitation to forgive. In Matthew 6:12, Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, "And forgive us our sins, as we also have forgiven those who have sinned against us" (ISV). To experience God's forgiveness requires that we forgive others. Forgiveness is not optional as we follow Jesus. Which individuals and groups of people do you need to forgive?

The invitation to adult faith in Jesus. Some of us are ready to make a new faith decision. Are you willing to say yes to following Jesus for yourself, to be healed, forgiven, and transformed by him in all of who you are, including your ethnic story? Will we say yes to him?

On the cross, Jesus paid for all the debts of the world. And because Jesus rose again, we can start over. If you are ready, please pray this prayer.

"God, I believe Jesus is your Son, the Savior of the world. I believe he died on the cross for me and took away all my sins, paying the cost for all of us. I believe in my heart that you raised Jesus from the dead and that he is alive today. I ask that you forgive me for the wrongs that I have done. I receive your forgiveness into my life. By faith I submit all parts of my life to Jesus as King. Please change me—make me the person you want me to be. I commit to being a member of your family on earth, pursuing your purposes and mission for the world. I give you my heart; I give you my life; I want to know you more! In Jesus' name, Amen."

The invitation to share this story of Jesus as Reconciler. We will take a moment and do 30 seconds of listening prayer. Please ask God who else around you needs to hear this message of hope? With whom can you share the gospel this week?

4. Insta-GIG & Pocket Proxe Training

Going deeper in John 4 in preparation to share the story

Please go deeper with John 4:1–42. The campaign (including Small Groups, Proxe, Insta-Gig and Pocket Proxe) are grounded in John 4. Your leaders need to know and own the story and have applied the message. Take them through the following Scripture reflection and then have them walk through the Insta-GIG or Pocket Proxe and corresponding script.

BIBLICAL REFLECTION ON JOHN 4

Pass out copies of the John 4 passage or have students look at it in their Bibles.

Pass out Insta-GIG

Share background information on the Samaritan/Jewish conflict: In Jesus' time, there was hatred and ethnic division between Samaritans and Jews. Though they shared some common ancestry, they were divided by civil war, betrayal, bloodshed, and ethnic division. Jews avoided Samaritans like the plague.

Recap the story: Our passage today begins in the middle of a conversation. Jesus is talking with a Samaritan woman at a well, while his disciples are in town buying food. He has offered her living water, saying, "Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (v. 14). She asks for this water and we pick up the story with Jesus' response.

Invite reflection:

- How do the disciples react to her ethnicity and gender? (vv. 27-28)
- Jesus uses "harvest" as a metaphor. What does Jesus see that the disciples don't see? (v. 35)
- Describe the impact that woman's story has on villagers.
The first half of the story is how the woman is transformed personally through her interaction with Jesus. The second part of the story is how interacting with Jesus transforms her relationships. (vv. 39-42)
- Describe the before and after of the woman's relationships.
- What do the villagers know about Jesus and his living water by the end of the story?
- Do you believe your story could have this kind of impact on your village?

Summarize:

Instead of pretending that ethnicity doesn't matter, Jesus does see her in her Samaritan context and takes her story and questions seriously. While the disciples ignore this Samaritan woman, Jesus intentionally speaks the truth in love to her. This uncomfortable conversation opens the door for him to offer his living water to the woman. The woman sees ethnicity as something that's supposed to bar conversation and interaction. For Jesus, he sees ethnicity as the vehicle (not the confines) of mission. Jesus both affirms her spiritual questions that come from her heritage and also offers healing (living water) to the places of pain.

The Samaritan woman's story is central to her bearing witness to Jesus as the Messiah. She is becoming a redeemed Samaritan woman, and her story resonates with her village. Imagine if the townspeople said, "Honey, everyone knows everything you've ever done!" But her response might have been, "But he's a Jewish rabbi, who didn't ignore me. He actually spoke to me with kindness in ways that I have not experienced even among my own people." The fact that Jesus was Jewish makes his impact on this woman even more intriguing, even shocking. They have to see this Jesus for themselves!

As a result of the healing she experiences as a Samaritan woman, she is able to love her own people in new ways and bring them to Jesus. Jesus, as a Jewish man, is showing the disciples what it means to be Jewish and love God and love neighbor.

PERSONAL JOURNALING

1. Who is the "person by the well" that I least want to interact with? What kind of fear, anxiety, bitterness, or unforgiveness do I need to repent of?
2. Who is the "Samaritan woman" I could never imagine myself having authority to reach?
3. How do you feel about blessing your own people? Have you felt rejected by your ethnic group?
4. Which community on campus is on your heart? Practice solidarity. Serve in a practical way. Listen. Build bridges.

PRACTICE USING THE INSTA-GIG OR POCKET PROXE

Pass out Insta-GIG or Pocket Proxe and hand out the corresponding script. Have leaders practice in pairs talking the other through the tool.

[Insta-GIG Script](#)

[Pocket Proxe Script](#)

5. Additional Recommendations

Reminders as you prepare to engage in this topic

PRAY. PRAY. PRAY.

Racial and ethnic divisions are a stronghold in the United States and in many countries around the world. Recognize that pursuing healing and reconciliation in Jesus' name is an affront to the enemy and that you may encounter spiritual warfare as you engage in these topics. Be sure to cover these small groups and GIGs in prayer. Remind your students to pray, invite your ministry partners to pray and be sure to pray yourself!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Proxe

- Proxe, Insta-GIG and Pocket Proxe (including scripts & training materials)
- Beyond Colorblind Promo materials (graphics pack, posters, shirts)

Videos

- Beyond Colorblind Videos: Overview, Beauty, Brokenness, Redemption and Restoration
- Spoken Word: The Woman at the Well

Small Group & GIG Guides

- Four Week Small Group Series with Leaders and Participants Guides
- Two Week GIG Series with Leaders and Participants Guides

Leadership Resources

- [Beyond Colorblind: Redeeming Our Ethnic Journey](#) (book)
- Articles: Addressing Barriers to Beyond Colorblind, Leading Lament, and Responding to a Racial Incident