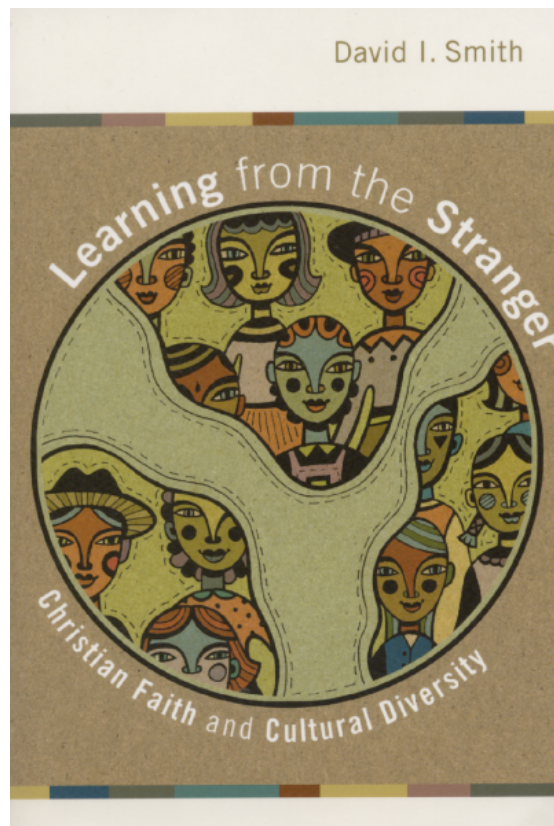


Study Guide for *Learning from the Stranger*



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Introduction

Welcome to the Study Guide for *Learning from the Stranger (LFS)*. This guide is designed for individual or group study. It can be used in a classroom setting, a church group, as orientation for a mission trip, or before embarking on any type of intercultural adventure.

While you may benefit greatly from reading this book on your own, your understanding will be enriched if you join with others to ponder, explore, and struggle with the ideas presented. The Study Guide is intended to help you take the time to dig deeper into the issues and put into practice your own learning from the stranger.

Each lesson consists of four sections:

- Rooted in the Word: a scriptural grounding;
- Preparing the Soil: questions and prompts which, along with the scripture, prepare you for reading the chapter in *LFS*;
- Growing Together: questions for group study and discussion; and
- Branching Out: activities and challenges to take what you have learned a step further.

It is our hope that using this Study Guide will inspire you to want to learn more and that you will gain as much from this book as we have.

MJP & CS

2010

Prologue: Relinquishing the Center



Rooted in the Word

Exodus 22:21 Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt.

Leviticus 19:18 Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

Leviticus 19:34 The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. (NKJV)



Preparing the Soil

1. What do you think of when you hear the term “the stranger”? Make a list of the associations that come to mind.
2. Are there Christian ways of viewing the stranger?
3. The Bible passages above direct us to love the stranger. However, the title of this book is not “Loving the Stranger” but *Learning from the Stranger*. How does this contrast with the ideas generated in question #1?
4. Consider the title of the Prologue, “Relinquishing the Center.” In what ways do we put ourselves in the center?
5. Look at an “upside-down” map of the world (do an internet search for “upside-down world map”). What impact does this view of the world map have for our perspectives on countries/peoples?
6. Activity: Commonalities (Icebreaker). (Leaders see Appendix A: Study Guide Leader Resources)

“Many of us want to serve from our own cultural context....Superiority cloaked in the desire to serve is still superiority.”
—Duane Elmer, *Cross-cultural Servanthood*, 16-17.



Growing Together

1. On page 3, Smith comments on the use of the word “sharing.” In which sense have you used the term when you “share God’s love”?
2. Think of a time when you have been involved in volunteer work or service learning. Did your project fit into the paradigm Smith describes on page 5?

- our ability to contribute to other cultures
- our competence
- our possession of truth

- the needy
- the heathen
- the stranger

3. What evidences of egocentricity do you battle on an on-going basis?
4. How might relinquishing the center impact our ability to learn from the stranger?
5. Why are we so terribly uncomfortable when we are not in the center?
6. On page 7, Smith states his purpose for the book. Summarize it here, in your own words.

Chapter 1: How Not to Bless the Nations



Rooted in the Word

Genesis 12:1-3 The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.

“I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.”



Preparing the Soil

1. You may have heard the axiom “blessed to be a blessing.” How do you interpret this phrase? How does the church interpret it? On what side do you picture yourself? Are you the giver or the receiver?
2. Read the story of Abraham and Abimelek (Genesis 20:1-18). Which of Abraham’s initial fears seem legitimate?
3. Activity: Guidelines. (See Appendix A.)



Growing Together

1. Abraham was overcome by “a fear that had sustained repeated deception in the name of self-preservation” (14). What do you fear? What actions have you committed out of fear?
2. God speaks to Abraham through Abimelek, “a foreign king” (15). What has God taught you through foreigners—someone from a different culture, a different socio-economic background, a different language group, etc.? Has God spoken to you through someone who is not a Christian?
3. Have you experienced episodes of powerlessness? in your own community? in a community in which you were a stranger? How did you react?
4. What repercussions might our fear or lack of trust in God’s promises have on those around us? Have we been a blessing or a curse on those around us? Do we lead people to faith or confirm their negative opinions about people of faith?
5. “Every human community has a multitude of unspoken rules...” (16). What unwritten rules do you think the U.S. has? Have you observed any unwritten rules when you have been in other cultural contexts? [reference Guidelines Activity]

“God is with me, God works and speaks in my culture (despite its defects), and if I take the risk of venturing into other cultures I bring God with me; I have little expectation that God is saying things to members of the other culture that I need to hear, or that they will teach me obedience or challenge my sin” (LFS, 21).
Can you give examples?

6. In what ways might a North American still retain power even when in another country? In what ways might a Caucasian retain power in other communities?
7. Have you ever had an opportunity to lay down your power for a stranger?
8. Stereotyping “is a particularly fertile source of misunderstanding and prejudice when cultural differences are in play” (19). What are your stereotypes? What do you “know” about other cultures?
9. If you are participating in an intercultural exchange, what stereotypes (partial knowledge) did you have before the encounter that may prevent you from seeing someone from the other cultural group as an individual?
10. Can you think of an example of when you (or someone you know) thought you understood something, only to find out later that you misunderstood? Can you think of a time you may have acted on your assumed “knowledge”? How did you come to know the situation on a deeper level? What did it take to bring you there?



Branching Out

1. Think of a stereotype or “partial knowledge” that you have heard about a particular group. Talk to someone from that culture about this stereotype. On what is it based? Where does it fall short?
2. Check local census data, the chamber of commerce, or a local library regarding your city, town, or county. How many language groups are represented? How many nationalities or ethnic groups are represented?

Chapter 2: Culture and Bad Breath



Rooted in the Word

Esther 3:8-9

Then Haman said to King Xerxes, "There is a certain people dispersed and scattered among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom whose customs are different from those of all other people and who do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will put ten thousand talents of silver into the royal treasury for the men who carry out this business."



Preparing the Soil

1. What parallels do you see between the passage above and issues we struggle with today?
2. What differences have you noticed in your encounters with people of other cultures? How might outsiders view their experiences with North American culture?
3. Examine some items in your home and find out where they are from. Make a list of the different countries represented.
4. How would you define North American culture? What are the most important values? How do you know that?
5. What is the "American Dream"? How is it manifested in society?
- 6.

In egocentrism *my* ways are superior to yours; in ethnocentrism, *our* ways are superior to *yours*... Because most of our egocentrism and ethnocentrism is unconscious, others see it but we are mostly unaware.

—Duane Elmer, *Cross-cultural Servanthood*, 132,133



Growing Together

1. This chapter encourages us to recognize that we are all products of our culture. Smith compares culture to bad breath. Is this a fitting analogy? Why or why not? Can you think of another?
2. "The most interesting differences are invisible... to ourselves" (25). Have you ever been made aware that someone considered your behavior odd? Give an example.
3. Think about your church and a typical worship service. What elements of the service are culturally conditioned? Are there aspects of your worship that you would consider to be universal? Explain.
4. What would you have to do to view another culture from a perspective other than wearing "home-tinted spectacles"?
5. What is your reaction to the descriptions of the different restaurant scenarios? Comment on the behaviors and implied values in each. Do you agree with the interpretations?



Branching Out

1. Taking your cue from Smith’s restaurant stories, imagine a typical “slice of life” in North America—driving a car, shopping for groceries, getting breakfast, for example. Describe it in minute detail. Consider what elements of this experience might seem odd or unusual to someone from another culture.
2. Select any North American blockbuster movie. View it looking for evidence of American values. Make a list.

As a way to create a warm atmosphere and make students feel comfortable in my graduate class, I encouraged students to bring food so that we could eat supper together while we had our discussions. One day an international student approached me after class and shared that it was a big adjustment to look at, let alone eat in front of the professor. She had been warned in advance about eye contact, but was surprised to see intentional community-building in a course through the sharing of food; in her culture, classes were competitive environments and eating in front of a teacher would be considered very impolite. —DB

Chapter 3: Cage, Carnival or Calling?



Rooted in the Word

1 Corinthians 9:21-23 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.



Preparing the Soil

1. What products and practices are most important in North American society? How do you know that they are important? What cultural evidence is there that they are important?
2. What are some strengths of North American society? Weaknesses? Would you describe North American values as good? Bad? Should they be different?
3. How would you describe your lifestyle now (consumption patterns, living patterns, media attention, etc.)? List some of the people, products, and practices that are important in your life (e.g., roommate, car, dinner with the family, etc.).
4. What do you consider to be enduring moral principles? That is, what values would be the same anywhere, in any culture? Do you think those principles might be adapted or altered in specific situations?
5. What values are most important to you (e.g., freedom, independence, loyalty, etc.)? What values are you not willing to compromise for anything?



Growing Together

1. This chapter asks us to evaluate whether certain aspects of our culture are inherently good or bad. What aspects of your own culture would you categorize as demanding repentance?
2. Do you agree with Smith's conclusion that "mainstream North American culture values self-reliance highly and is on the whole more oriented toward approaching the world as a set of objects..." (44)? What experience in

"Our coziness with the surrounding culture has made us so blind to many of its evils that, instead of calling them into question, we offer our own versions of them—in God's name and with a good conscience."

—Miraslov Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 36

*Nadie escoge a su familia
o a su raza cuando nace,
ni el ser rico, pobre,
bueno, malo,
valiente, o cobarde.
Nacemos de una decisión
donde no fuimos consultados,
y nadie nos promete
resultados.*

[No one chooses his family or his race when he's born, nor to be rich, poor, good, bad, brave, or cowardly. We are born from a decision in which we were not consulted, and no one promises us results.]
—Ruben Blades, "Vida,"

Tiempos, Sony US Latin, 1999

What connections might there be between the words of this song and Smith's statement, "Our selves are not in our hands. Our stories are more than I-stories" (*LFS*, 41)?

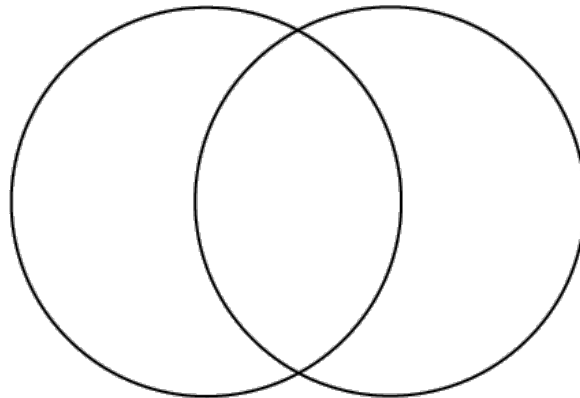
your own life would either support or counter that statement?

3. What examples can you think of where two cultures have equal power in a society? Is it possible? When there is inequality of power, what steps would you need to take to combat the resulting disadvantage? (See p. 51)
4. What aspects of our culture might we equate with Christianity that are merely cultural constructs?
5. If you have attended church or school in another culture, comment on church/classroom etiquette compared to your home institution. When you compare, do you use the new culture or your own as the norm? That is, do you evaluate the new culture against your own, or do you begin to evaluate your own on the basis of the new culture?



Branching Out

1. Do you belong to a particular subculture (Italian-Americans, classic car buffs, sports fans, etc.)? How do the characteristics of that culture shape you as an individual? Talk to three people from within that subculture to find out how they feel they are shaped by it.
2. Make yourself fully present to intercultural situations. Indulge yourself in a one-week fast of North American culture and media. Give up your fast food, music, email, online chat, television, movies, etc. Discuss what things cage you in your culture.
3. Consider the movie you examined in chapter 2 (Branching Out). On the Venn diagram below, compare the values depicted in the movie to your own values. Where are they different? Where do they overlap?



Chapter 4: On Loving Foreigners



Rooted in the Word

Luke 15:28-32 ... The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, “Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!”

“My son,” the father said, “you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”

Acts 20:35 It is more blessed to give than to receive.



Preparing the Soil

1. In the parable of the lost son (Luke 15:11-32), what did the elder brother have to learn from his “black sheep” younger brother? Why was this so hard for him? How might this relate to our own unwillingness to learn from the stranger?
2. Read the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Sketch a scene from the parable and highlight the character with whom you most closely identify.
3. Recall how this parable was taught to you in Sunday school. Search the internet or your church library to see what kinds of lesson themes are presented.
4. Discuss common interpretations of the parable in relation to issues of power in society. How might the parable be seen differently in different cultures?
5. Remembering that the “Good” Samaritan belonged to a group that was shunned in Jewish society, who in your community would fill the role of the Samaritan? Retell the story with that figure in the role of the Samaritan. Does it change your reaction to the story?



Growing Together

1. This is a very familiar story. What features of Smith’s interpretation and exegesis were new, arresting, or significant? Make a list of those features.
2. When considering the parable, have you ever put yourself in the position of the wounded man? Why or why not?
3. Smith states that “the question of which specific others one should love was, moreover, a politically charged one in a land under Roman... occupation” (62). Is your cultural situation also politically charged? How?
4. Who are the “neighbors” who come to mind when you hear the commandment from Matthew 22: “Love your neighbor as yourself”? What do they look like? How culturally similar or dissimilar are they to you?

The African idea of *ubuntu* may help us understand the attitude of love that Jesus calls us to. *Ubuntu* is “welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, with a servant spirit that affirms others and says ‘I am because you are; you are because I am.’”
—Paul John Isaak, quoted in *LFS*, footnote 21, p. 163.

5. Smith mentions “considerate responsiveness” (69) and “mutual vulnerability” (76) as ways to love your neighbor. How would you define these terms? What would it mean in your life to love the stranger in this way?
6. Loving the foreigner is more than simply finding foreign things exotic or “cool.” How can you go beyond this?
7. How do we reconcile the words of Acts 20:35 with what Smith seems to be saying in this chapter?
8. “Foreign others are now no longer just objects of my charity—they are the neighbors that I need” (74-75). Who might be the neighbors that you need? Why?

When I was a Peace Corps volunteer in the Philippines I would get invited to eat in peoples’ homes. I would eat very little because I knew that whatever I didn’t eat would be available for others to eat. But one day my host mother asked me, “How does it make you feel when you give to others?” “Good,” I replied. “Well, then,” she instructed, “don’t rob these other people of that opportunity.”
—DDG



Branching Out

1. Look for an opportunity this week to allow someone to be a blessing to you. Practice gracious acceptance of this gift. What does not being in the donor position teach you?
2. Attend a festival, meeting, rally, or church service or visit a grocery store, bakery, butcher shop of another cultural group. What did you learn? Have you found an antidote to any “partial knowledge” you may have held prior to this experience?

Chapter 5: Plausible Ways of Falling Short



Rooted in the Word

Psalm 12:1-4 [see *LFS*, 95]

Help, LORD, for the godly are no more;
the faithful have vanished from among men.
Everyone lies to his neighbor;
their flattering lips speak with deception.
May the LORD cut off all flattering lips
and every boastful tongue
that says, “We will triumph with our tongues;
we own our lips—who is our master?”



Preparing the Soil

1. Have you had any misunderstandings in English via email or texting? To what do you attribute that?
2. Have you ever had to rely on English for communication in a cross-cultural setting? How well did it work? Have you used the local language in a similar setting? Compare the experiences.
3. With which cultures/languages do you have the opportunity to interact? What special challenges do you face in those situations?
4. Have you ever been in a situation in which you were on the outside of the mainstream culture? What did it feel like for you? What did you learn?

When traveling in Western Europe with students, I warn them to *not* smile at strangers in the street. My students often protest that this gesture is a way of living out their faith. In fact, they say it would be un-Christian not to be friendly to these strangers. What they don't understand is that in this cultural setting a greeting from an attractive foreigner can imply something quite different!

—IK

Can you think of other examples where we equate our cultural norms with God's ways?



Growing Together

1. Smith mentions that “the voice of a cultural stranger can edge me closer to the contours of God's kingdom, enriching my cultural identity...” (79). Have you had an experience through which you were enriched by a cultural stranger or by different cultural ways?
2. Respond to this statement: Faithfulness to the gospel trumps learning about or engagement with another culture. Is purity sometimes more important to us?
3. When we as Christians learn positive things from other cultures, do these then need to be embodied in our lives? To what extent?
4. Why was the experience so different when students studying abroad participated in a home-stay rather than living together in a residence hall situation (84)?

5. When visiting another country, how can you get beyond a tourist-like attitude? How can you get beyond food, clothing, and entertainment?
6. Do we treat visitors in our country who know little English the same as we expect to be treated when we travel to another country and speak very little of their language? How can we change our attitude of entitlement and privilege?
7. Will having read this chapter make a difference in the kind of travel and cultural experiences you plan?



Branching Out

1. What steps can you take to re-draw/extend the boundaries you have set for yourself? How might God be calling you to serve Him across cultural or linguistic boundaries?
2. Find out what non-English newspapers, television, and radio stations are available in your area. Does the local library stock books in other languages? Are there churches that offer services in other languages? Is there access to government services in other languages?

Chapter 6: Learning from the Stranger



Rooted in the Word

Matthew 7:1-2 Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Philippians 2:5-7 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

Hebrews 13:2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.



Preparing the Soil

1. In what ways do the verses above connect to intercultural learning?
2. Name 2-3 aspects of your culture that an outsider should know. What misunderstandings could result from not knowing these things?



Growing Together

1. Are you aware of how your cultural habits/communication/conduct/outlooks might be seen and interpreted in another cultural context? Give an example of a time when your words or actions were misinterpreted because of a cultural difference.

I often find myself as quite deferential to Dutch viewpoints and fairly reticent/vague about stating my own positions. Even though I am a near-native speaker and know the culture well enough, my North American communication patterns come through. In planning this semester with my Dutch counterparts, they sometimes 'complain' that I'm too nice. It's one thing to understand a culture, it's quite something to embody it.

—HA

2. Have you fallen into the trap of (prematurely) assuming that another cultural group was very much like you? After all, they're modern, sophisticated, well-educated, technologically advanced, and democratically governed. What pitfalls may such premature understanding produce? How do you allow yourself *not* to immediately understand?
3. Conversely, have you fallen into the trap of exoticizing another cultural group, that is, assuming significant cultural differences on the basis of superficial appearances?
4. Making space for the stranger in your life allows you to practice the Christian virtue of hospitality. What are the biblical contours of hospitality?
5. We are lacking the shared reference points when we are in a new culture. What does Smith suggest that we do to remedy this? Have you done that in your encounters with another culture? How?

6. Smith suggests that some kinds of ignorance may be useful. Do you agree? Can you give an example of a time you were (un)successful at being “ignorant”?
7. How would you rate your ability to “suspend judgment, tolerate ambiguity and act graciously in the face of the unexpected” (112)? Rate yourself in each of the three areas. Which is the most difficult for you? Why?
8. “Loving the stranger is not about putting up with the inferior ways of others...” (121). Reconsider an aspect of another culture that you may have seen as inferior. Can you find a strength or positive aspect in it?
9. How can intercultural learning be connected to growing in discipleship?
10. When you have had extended contact with people from another culture, have you taken some different behaviors home with you (such as turning off the water while showering, 122-23)? Have you had to reevaluate your outlooks and ways of doing things? Has it led to some life and attitude changes?
11. If you have gained “genuine understanding” (125) of another culture, what can you do to serve as a mediator or a bridge between cultures?



Branching Out

1. Keeping in mind that those who have not shared in your intercultural learning may have limited interest, design an “elevator pitch” (no longer than 5 minutes) highlighting 1 or 2 profound lessons that you learned and *how* you got to that point.
2. Create a photo essay (or video essay) to describe a cultural experience you have had. Try to have the camera images capture something deeper than simple tourist images. Look for things that are symbolic or representative.
3. Experience a different part of your local community. Spend 2-3 hours in an area of town where you will encounter people belonging to a cultural group different than your own. Observe patterns of greetings, interactions, gestures, eye contact, language usage, and anything else of interest. Afterwards, jot down what you learned from this experience.

Chapter 7: Of Babblers and Barbarians



Rooted in the Word

Genesis 11:1-9 Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.

They said to each other, “Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.”

But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that they were building. The LORD said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.”

So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.



Preparing the Soil

1. Reread the stories of Babel and Pentecost. How do you think they relate to one another?
2. Have you ever been invited into the home of a stranger who was very different from you? How did you feel? Alternately, have you invited a person very different from you into your home? How did you feel? In which of the 2 situations did you feel more at ease?
3. Can you come up with some modern day versions of Pentecost? What might it be like if it happened today? Who are the people in the crowd? Who are the disciples? What appears to happen?



Growing Together

1. “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you” (Acts 1: 8). How is our typical view of power turned upside down in the Pentecost story?
2. Peter is a guest in the home of Cornelius, rather than the host. How can the role of host be “potentially condescending” (140)?
3. The Biblical stories of Abimelek and Cornelius appear to give priority to the non-Jew. Why is that significant? If God turned Abraham’s and Peter’s expectations upside down, how might God be urging us to de-center ourselves?

“[Jesus] dramatically altered the practice of *meals*, which were culturally central not just for nourishment but for delineating social boundaries, horizons of possibility and impossibility that demonstrated who was “in” and who was “out” of a person’s social circle. Jesus moved the horizons with abandon, inviting himself over to sinners’ houses for dinner and even welcoming them into Pharisees’ homes.”
—Andy Crouch, *Culture Making*, 137-138

4. How has worship changed in the last 50 years? How are cultural changes reflected in liturgical changes? Notice how faith is very clearly culturally tied. How is our identity—cultural and religious—in flux? What universals are there?
5. Have you ever worshipped in church of a culture different than yours? Did you experience the unity referred to in Ephesians 2:11-19? Why or why not?



6. Evaluate various metaphors used to describe multiculturalism: the “melting pot,” the “salad bowl,” the “cultural mosaic”. Can you think of others? How do they (not) reflect a Christian perspective?
7. In footnote 32 (p. 174) Peter’s words are translated as “I am just now coming to perceive for myself that God is not partial.” Are we, like Peter, just beginning to realize that God is not partial? If Peter needed to go through a process in order to come to this realization, what will it take for us to learn this lesson?



Branching Out

1. Invite a person of another culture to eat a meal at your home. Accept an invitation to eat in the home of a person from another culture. Discuss the dynamics of the guest/host relationship. Did you encounter any issues of power or privilege?
2. Have you recognized your own stories in this book? Share some stories from your own experiences.

Epilogue: Choosing the Journey



Branching Out

1. “It has always been notoriously possible to embrace high-minded principles while failing the test of daily reality” (149). Give some examples from your own experience.
2. Answer the questions that Smith raises in the Epilogue:
 - What small, unglamorous, painstaking actions can you take that one day could add up to loving your neighbor?
 - What opportunities are in your life?
 - What classes do you need to take, or work at more diligently, or with a different spirit?
 - What individuals are there around you whose voice you have not taken the time to hear?
 - What people are there in your vicinity whom you could serve, and from whom you could learn?
 - What issues in your community could use your advocacy? Where could you begin or what could you strengthen?

We spend an enormous amount of time just hurling our conclusions at one another. I’m really against conclusional truth. I don’t want to know your conclusions. I want to know your journey. If you tell me your conclusions, I can’t join you on your journey. Tell me your journey and maybe we can walk together for a while.
—Parker Palmer, “On Vocation”

APPENDIX A

GROUP LEADER INFORMATION

Commonalities¹ (Icebreaker)

Group size: Divide into groups of 4-5

Materials: Paper & pencil for each group (optional)

Time: 5 minutes + large group discussion

Procedure

- Have each small group generate a list of things that they have in common with all the other people in their group. They can start with the obvious characteristics they have in common, but must then move to factors or qualities that could not be identified just by looking at the group.
- Have each group compare their list to those of the other groups. Then generate a list of one or more qualities or characteristics the large group has in common.

Ponder

1. What was the most interesting commonality that emerged in your group?
2. What new information did you learn about the members of your group?
3. How difficult or easy was it for you to find commonalities among the members of your group?
4. How are you different from all of the other people in your group?
5. How did stereotypes and preconceived ideas about certain people impact your search for commonalities?
6. What did you discover about the other group members that surprised you?
7. What did you discover about yourself and the things you have in common with other people that surprised you?
8. Might you be more likely to make and maintain friendships with people with whom you have some commonalities or with people with whom you have no commonalities?

Processing questions

1. What is important about finding similarities among different people?
2. How can knowing about commonalities help people develop and maintain friendships?
3. How do our attitudes and values affect our behavior toward other people?
4. How can we celebrate both our commonalities with others and our uniquenesses?

¹ Adapted from Kottman, Terry, et al., *Adventures in Guidance*, 66-67. Used by permission.

Guidelines²

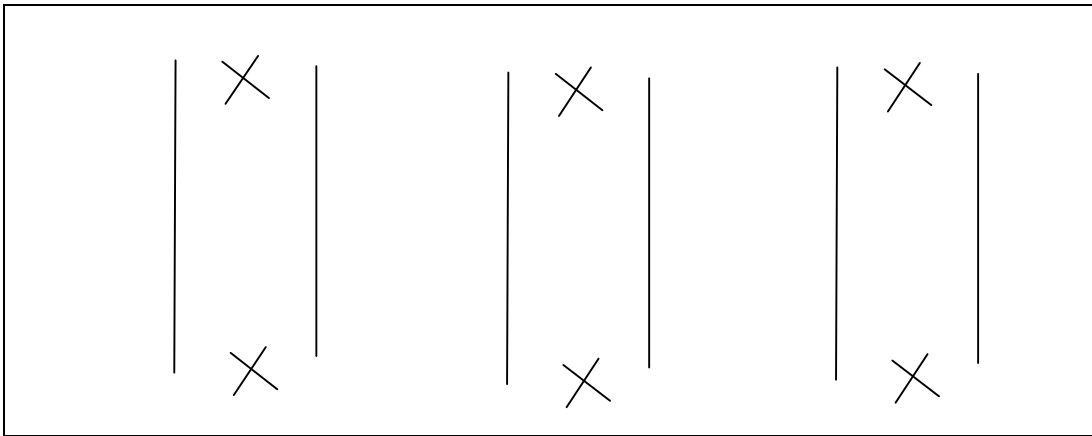
Group size: 6-10

Materials: Open space, masking tape

Time: 10-15 minutes + large group discussion

Preparation

Using tape, make a “course” for each subgroup. The course will consist of two parallel lines that are about 12’ long and 4’ apart. Put a tape X in the middle of the opening at both ends of the course (see diagram).



Procedure

1. Explain to the groups that this activity has only four rules that they must follow:
 - a. Do not hurt yourself. Make sure that as you do this activity you keep yourself safe.
 - b. You must go from one X to another X three times.
 - c. Every trip you make from one X to another X should be unique, special, and different from every other trip by the other members of your group.
 - d. When you successfully make it from one X to another X, the members of your group must acknowledge you in some way.
2. After giving directions, have participants repeat the rules back to you to be sure they have them clear in their minds. Do NOT elaborate further on the rules.
3. After the groups have completed the activity, ask them to repeat the rules. Then ask if anyone made up any other rules. Although they will initially deny this, eventually they will start admitting that, yes, they did make up a rule that they had to stay inside the parallel lines, or that they had to use the Xs on their course rather than those of another group, or that they had to take turns, or that they all clapped instead of using another form of acknowledgement. Ask about what they felt/thought when someone in their group (or another group) didn't follow one of the rules they had made up.

² Adapted from Ashby, Jeffrey S., et al., *Active Interventions for Kids and Teens*, 82-85. Used by permission.

This can help participants look at all the ways we make up rules in our everyday lives, mostly unwritten and unspoken rules. Point out that if someone else doesn't follow a rule that they had made up, there is a good chance it will irritate or upset them.

Ponder

1. What rules did you make up as you did the activity? How did you communicate the rules you made up?
2. What was your reaction if other people violated one of the made-up rules? How did you express your thoughts and feelings in this situation?

Processing questions

1. What happens in life when there are rules that haven't been communicated to others? How do you react in those situations?
2. How can you cultivate becoming more respectful to others when they are living by different rules than you are?

APPENDIX B
REFERENCES

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- Elmer, Duane. (2006). *Cross-cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christ-like Humility*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
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- Volf, Miroslav. (1996). *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

APPENDIX C

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES—Books

Bailey, Kenneth. 2008. *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press. Especially the chapter on the Good Samaritan.

Banyai, Istvan. Zoom. 1995. New York: Viking.

Haugen, Gary. *The Good News About Injustice*. 2009. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press.

Lee, Enid, ed. *Beyond Heroes and Holidays: A Practical Guide to K 12 Anti Racist, Multicultural Education and Staff Development*. 1998, 2002. Washington, D.C.: Teaching for Change.

Livermore, David. *Serving with Eyes Wide Open: Doing Short Term Missions with Cultural Intelligence*. 2006. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

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Romanowski, William. *Pop Culture Wars*. 1996. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press.

Russell, Mary Doria. 1996. *The Sparrow*. New York: Random House.

The protagonist is a priest with the uncanny ability to learn to speak languages. Read this book to see how this ability can be used for good or ill.

Seelye, H. Ned. *Teaching Strategies for Intercultural Communication*. 1993. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Smith, David & Barbara Carvill. 2000. *The Gift of the Stranger: Faith, Hospitality and Foreign Language Learning*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing.

See the Appendix, “Interpreting Babel.”

Stearns, Richard. *The Hole in Our Gospel: What does God expect of Us? The Answer that Changed my Life and Might Just Change the World*. 2009. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES—Films

Babel (film) Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu. 2006. Paramount Pictures

Rated R. Four interlocking stories: A Moroccan goatherder, a Mexican nanny, an American couple, and a deaf-and-dumb Japanese girl all look for meaning in life.

The Visitor (film) Dir. Thomas McCarthy. 2007. Groundswell Productions.

An American professor finds a young unmarried couple living in his New York apartment, having rented it from a swindler who claimed it was his. They are Tarek, Palestinian-Syrian and Zainab, Senegalese. He discovers they are illegal immigrants. A friendship slowly develops. When Tarek is threatened with deportation, the professor steps in to help.

The Namesake (film) Dir. Mira Nair. 2006. Fox Searchlight Pictures.

The story of a Bengali family living in the US. The first and second generation immigrants must reconcile their relationships to the new and old countries and to each other.

The Band’s Visit (film) Dir. Erin Kolirin. 2007. July August Productions.

An Egyptian orchestra arrives in Israel for a cultural event, but ends up in the wrong town. What follows is a special night of quiet happenings and confessions as the band makes its own impact on the town and the town on them.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES—Activities

Ashby, Jeffrey S., Terry Kottman, & Donald DeGraaf. (2008). *Active Interventions for Kids and Teens: Adding Adventure and Fun to Counseling!* Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

BaFa'BaFa' <http://www.simulationtrainingsystems.com>

BaFa'BaFa' is a cross-cultural simulation exercise designed to teach sensitivity to difference by providing participants with the opportunity to examine the effect that values, norms, and behaviors have on cross-cultural interactions.