

Effectively Managing Cross-Cultural Conflict

MISSION OBJECTIVE

- A. I will seek to resolve conflict using Biblical principles while incorporating the various ways cultures solve differences.

TEAM CARE AND ACCOUNTABILITY (20 Minutes)

1. Share how your experience went using the *Discovery Group* outline with your family or friends.
2. Talk further about plans towards establishing an outreach group in the next two or three weeks.
3. What other experiences have you had in following up on your cross-cultural friendships. (Keep using and referring to your *Contact Log*.)
4. What did you learn from study #11 in *My Favorite Missionary* and the video clips?
5. What needs or challenges are you facing that we can pray for?
6. Pray together especially for each other and the friends from other cultures whom you have met.

PRESENTATION (18:14 Minutes)

Watch: *Effectively Managing Cross-Cultural Conflict*. Take notes using the following outline.

1. “That they all may be (a) _____, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You;
 that they also may be (b) _____ in Us, that the (c) _____ may
 believe that You sent Me” (John 17:21).
2. “But (a) _____ your enemies, do (b) _____, and lend, hoping

for nothing in return.... Therefore be (c)_____, just as your Father also

is merciful” (Luke 6:35-36).

3. Not until you feel that you could sacrifice your own self-dignity, and even lay down your life in order to save an erring brother, have you cast the beam out of your own eye so that you are prepared to help your brother. Then you can approach him and touch his heart. No one has ever been (a)_____ from a wrong position by censure and reproach; but many have thus been driven from Christ and led to seal their hearts against conviction. A tender spirit, a gentle, (b)_____ deportment, may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins. The revelation of Christ in your own character will have a (c)_____ power upon all with whom you come in contact. Let Christ be daily made manifest in you, and He will reveal through you the creative energy of His word—a gentle, persuasive, yet mighty influence to re-create other souls in the beauty of the Lord our God” (*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing* 128).

4. When differences arise among brethren as to the understanding of any point of truth, there is one (a)_____ rule to follow. In the spirit of meekness and love for God and one another, let brethren come together, and after earnest prayer, with a sincere desire to know God’s will, study the Bible with the spirit of a little child, to see how (b)_____ they can draw together, and not sacrifice anything but their selfish dignity. They should regard themselves as in

the presence of the whole universe of God, who are watching with intense interest as brother tries to see (c)_____ to (d)_____ with

brother, to understand the words of Christ, that they may be doers of the word”
(1888 Materials 1008).

DISCOVERY AND DISCUSSION (35 Minutes)

1. What did you gain from the presentation that is useful to help you deal with conflict in a more godly and helpful way?
2. Read Galatians 6:1-5. What further insights for handling conflict do these verses give you?
3. Read Philippians 2:1-8. What further insights do these verses give you?

4. Every person sees each situation differently from how others see it. Cultural perspectives add even more complexity. Read the following scenario:

An English-speaking church has rented the use of their building to a group of refugees so they can use it on Sabbath afternoon and Tuesday evenings to worship in their own language. The group has not paid their rent in three months though they have promised to do so several times. The kitchen is usually left untidy and smells like their unique food. One of the English-speaking elders walks through the church lobby one afternoon and sees the children running around during the worship service, up on the platform and into the hallways. He feels it is very disrespectful to the reverence of the sanctuary. Later he notices some crayon markings on one of the walls.

5. By yourself or in groups of twos place a check mark by the sentences that you think would help solve this cross-cultural conflict.

_____ Hold back your comments and accusations until you better understand their culture.

_____ Talk to the children directly to teach them correct principles of reverence.

_____ Ask the group's leaders if you can serve as a consultant and spiritual mentor for their church plant.

_____ Ask the church board to discontinue renting to this group because it is not a good stewardship of the churches resources.

_____ Call the group's leaders to meet with the board to discuss the issues in an honest and straightforward manner.

_____ Talk to the group leader alone, asking questions to help you understand what is happening.

_____ Change the locks on the church and don't give the group the new key.

_____ Plan meals and other get-together times to informally make friendships and let the problems work themselves out.

_____ Help the afternoon church group find another location to meet in.

_____ Build a friendship with someone of the group's culture who can help you understand how people in that group typically think, act, interact, and solve conflicts.

_____ Other:

6. Discuss together what you think are bad ideas, good ideas, and the best ideas. Write your best plans here:

7. Read this additional scenario:

Malee and Jim are newly married. They are living in the basement of the house where Malee's parents live. Her parents are immigrants from Thailand and Jim is a fourth generation American of German ancestry. The couple attends the same small group Bible study that you do and one day Malee confides that she and her husband are already really struggling in their marriage. She says Jim is often complaining about the amount of time she spends with her parents and that he seldom joins them. Jim also spends money freely without consulting her. If her parents do something Jim doesn't like, he tells them directly and they feel so embarrassed. She had no idea there would be so much conflict in marriage and just wants harmony at home.

8. Without any list of suggestions this time, what advice would you give to Malee?

9. How would you help Jim work through his conflicts in this home?

(For further learning about cross-cultural conflict and peace-making you may enjoy the resources that were especially helpful to the development of this lesson: *Cross-Cultural Conflict*, by Duane Elmer and the websites peacemaker.training and rw360.org).

ASSIGNMENTS (5 Minutes)

1. What have you learned today and how will you use it this week?
2. Optional Assignment. If it is an area that you feel a need for, read and pray through *Forgiving Those Who Have Injured Us*.
3. Apply the principles you have learned in this lesson to at least one relationship this week, preferably in a cross-cultural situation. Complete the form: *Field Activity #12*.
4. What do you plan to do to follow up on any of the friendships you have developed?
5. Mobilize and Multiply. Share with a friend or family member what you learned about solving conflict cross-culturally. Ask if there is a conflict that he or she has with someone that could be helped through these principles. Pray for God to bring resolution and unity and encourage him or her to take steps soon.
6. Watch the following video clips (check online for updates):
 - Divisions, unions, and conferences share how they can partner with church members to reach refugees.
7. Read some possibilities for advancing the work in *Potential Mission Steps for Church Administrators*.
8. Complete study #12 in *My Favorite Missionary* and focus your prayers on those who are “Non Religious” in *Praying for the World Next Door*.

TEAM PRAYER (10 Minutes)

Pray for the amazing miracle of unity in the church both locally and globally; confess the pride and prejudice that divides us; ask for the death of Jesus and the ministry of the Holy Spirit to take away all that separates us and make our love for each other a wonder to the world. Begin to also pray for other people who could go this training and get involved reaching out cross-culturally.

- *But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one.... For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father (Ephesians 2:14, 18).*
- *“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:20-21).*
- *When the laborers have an abiding Christ in their own souls, when all selfishness is dead, when there is no rivalry, no strife for the supremacy, when oneness exists, when they sanctify themselves, so that love for one another is seen and felt, then the showers of the grace of the Holy Spirit will just as surely come upon them as that God’s promise will never fail in one jot or tittle (Selected Messages 1 175).*