

Redemption: Leader's Guide

INTRO & CAST VISION (3 min)

Welcome & Quick Vision Reminder. Remind why we are doing this four-week series.

Introductions. Introduce yourselves and your ethnicity again. Be as specific as possible.

Clarify. Remind the group about Ground Rules of Engagement and pray for safety and honoring of the other in this conversation.

DEBRIEF THE WEEK (5 min)

Share in Pairs: Last week, some of us agreed to share with others what we were learning about brokenness, and others of us committed to reaching out to another ethnic community. How did that go? What did you learn?

OVERVIEW

Each week we will be looking at our ethnic stories and how they tie to different aspects of God's greater story—the gospel. We will be looking at the beauty, brokenness, redemption, and restoration of our ethnic journeys.

Today we will specifically be looking at the redemption and healing that we can experience through Jesus. It is this process of redemption that brings out the beauty in how God made us and that helps us not feel stuck in brokenness. Today's video is full of hope.

VIDEO WITH DEBRIEF QUESTIONS (20 min)

Play the video and invite everyone to take notes on the handout. Ask them to jot down key words or feelings. Afterwards, discuss in pairs or in small groups.

- Which story or quote resonated with you the most? Why?
- What are you learning about redemption?

BIBLICAL REFLECTION: Luke 18:9–14 (15 min)

In every area of our lives—including our ethnic journeys—we can be complacent, or we can practice humility and confession. Here is the story of a Jewish religious leader, called a Pharisee, and an oppressive tax collector. Tax collectors benefitted from the privilege of being allowed to skim off the top of people's taxes, so they could get wealthy. But they were also ostracized socially.

Ask someone to read the passage out loud.

Verses 14–22 contain the good news.

- **vv. 11–12** How would you describe the religious leader’s prayer?
- **v. 13** What do you like about how the tax collector prays?
- **v. 14** Why does one person end up right with God but not the other person?

This passage is a great model for how we can approach all aspects of our lives, like our anger. We can justify why we are angry, or we can honestly and humbly bring our brokenness to Jesus and ask him to forgive, heal, and transform us.

Share in Pairs: How is this passage speaking to you? How might you like to grow in being more like this tax collector?

This passage can also inform how we approach our ethnic journeys. Last week in our session on Brokenness, we took a step in the process of looking at ourselves, of asking for forgiveness, and of forgiving others. Today we are going deeper into how reconciliation actually works between us and God, and with each other.

RESPONDING TO JESUS HANDOUT (12 min)

Reviewing the Gospel. Read out loud together, taking turns on each circle.

Afterwards, discuss in pairs:

- What do you like about this summary of God’s plan for you and our world?

Invitation to Respond. As the leader, it is good for you to read all of the response page, pausing at the end of each of the 3 responses so they can reflect or write down their answers. Please celebrate the decisions that people are making.

ACTIVE RESPONSE (5 min)

>>Commit to a Small Group.

If you are not already part of a small group, join one. Faith grows and is lived out in community.

Stretch Goal – Share the Story.

Think of one person who would benefit from hearing about how God’s story intersects with our ethnic journeys. Meet up with him/her and share your story in light of God’s story! Maybe share the videos with them.

Teaching Notes

BEFORE THE STUDY

Ask Jesus to step ahead of you and prepare the way. You'll be talking about the healing Jesus brought to your ethnic journeys and hearing compelling stories in the videos. And you as the leader will be inviting people to say yes to following Jesus. Make sure you prepare for not only leading, but also doing the call to faith. Ask Jesus to open ears and hearts, and ask the Holy Spirit to show up. You don't have to be perfect; you just need to take small steps of faith as you lead in this way. Expect and ask Jesus to show up.

Prepare for leading the group through the Responding to Jesus handout.

- Familiarize yourself with the Big Story gospel outline. You can search on Google for "Big Story gospel presentation" to find notes and videos.
- Consider notecards. Offer notecards to the group before going through the 3 responses. Ask everyone to write down their commitments so you can follow up with them after the study.

**You may want to take 2 weeks or 2 hours on this topic.

MORE ON FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness (both extending and receiving) leads to freedom (Luke 5:27–32, Matthew 5:1–12; 18:35). Confession leads to healing (1 John 1:8–10). Without forgiveness before God as our foundation, true reconciliation cannot be achieved. Instead, everything we do is an attempt to buy our own forgiveness (penance, achieving atonement for ourselves) and we are, in effect, denying the cross and finished work of Jesus.

Without confession and forgiveness (which, by acknowledging the cross and resurrection, frees us from having to pay for our own sins), we are caught in a perpetual cycle of attempting to pay for the brokenness of our respective ethnicities (forever in Circle 2). This makes it impossible for our ethnicity to ever be good outside of the ways we pay for or attempt to redeem, in our own strength, the failures and sins of our people. Instead of making you earn your goodness, God invites you to live into the freedom of the new life he has called you to: reconciliation, justice, and mission.

VIDEO 3: Cheat Sheet

NAME (in order of appearance)	NOTES
SEAN (African American)	"I've grown to see the gospel has something to say to black people... Jesus isn't colonizing my culture, he's cleansing, transforming and redeeming it with him at the center."
TODD (German American)	"God said to me... 'I created you. You are white and that means that there is something good about that.'"
CHARLENE (Ghanaian)	"I didn't know that Christians cared about what was happening in the world... I realized that these were students who believed that God cared about justice, that God cares about black students and that God was calling them to make space on campus for black voices to be heard. It was then that I realized that I didn't need to be white to follow Jesus... and that my black life matters to God."
ELEANOR (Asian American, Filipino)	"The good news of Jesus telling me truths about myself was a complete game-changer for me" "I'm not just good enough, but I am made well."
NOEMI (Mexican American)	"Growing up undocumented in the United States is a scary experience... Over the years though I started to read Christian material... I started to notice that Ruth, Esther, Moses, were all immigrants, even Jesus."
ANDREW (German, Scottish, Irish, English, Armenian)	A: "I remember Brent saying to me... 'You are a part of the hope in this world and that God is making you to be a gift to me and my people.'" B: "Because I too needed Jesus to restore my image of white people and God was using Andrew to do that." A: "I went from white is normal to white is wrong to now that white is being restored in God's hands."
JULIE (Swiss German American)	"And as I studied James, God started speaking to me about privilege and he started to convict my heart of the ways that I benefited unjustly from being white."
NOEMI (Mexican American)	"Learning the history of the black community helped me realize that not all laws are just and it helped me move beyond shame into an embrace of my created goodness in the image of God."
MEGAN (Native American, Irish, Scottish)	"That was the first time I felt like I could come as I was, that there was a space for me in the circle and that who I was was enough."
LEAH (Puerto Rican, Italian, Polish)	"As I began to let Jesus be the one to define my identity, I realized that he's the only one who can tell me who I am because he's the one that made me."
MEGAN (Native American, Irish, Scottish)	"I am God's child and creation... a perfect and beautiful creation made with a calling and a purpose."
KAITLIN (Chinese American)	"I have a Chinese name... and I feel that God has been redeeming that name ... in my life, actually giving me a purpose in my ethnic identity as a Chinese American woman to be someone who speaks of and stands for Christ."
TODD (German American)	"It hasn't always been a smooth journey because it's easy for that sense of guilt to creep in but God has been gracious to provide those invitations to keep pressing in and keep learning and growing."
SEAN (African American)	"I've grown over the years to see my blackness as part of the multilayer character of God. He isn't one ethnicity but all our ethnicities, together but still distinct that reflect who he is."