

Session 3: Radical Inclusion

INTRODUCTION

Recap

Last session we discussed how selfless love is at the foundation of flourishing communities.

Share in Pairs: How did you show love through action after the last gathering? Where did you see God at work?

Vision + Objective

Flourishing communities practice radical inclusion: generously welcoming all to be seen, heard, and honored in the fullness of who God has made them to be.

Opening Discussion

In pairs, share experiences of being the “new” person. How did it feel? What made you feel welcomed or out of place?

Pray to transition.

PASSAGE STUDY

Background

The early church grows despite persecution, and the good news of Jesus is reaching Gentiles (Acts 10-11). Jewish believers disagree on whether Gentiles should be circumcised, an outward sign of their identity as the chosen people of God (Gen. 17).

Read Acts 15:1-11

Observation:

- What is the conflict, and what is at stake?
- What are God’s actions in the passage? How does that compare/contrast to the various leaders’ actions and assertions?

Interpretation:

- What stands out to you about Peter's comments?
- What keywords or phrases get at the heart of his message?
- What do you learn about God's intent for God’s people from this passage?

Application:

- What are the unspoken expectations of your community that might be barriers for new people or those exploring faith? Consider this question from a racial/ethnic lens. What costs might non-majority members bear?
- What challenges or inspires you from today's discussion?

RESPONSE**Activity**

To truly be a welcoming community, we need to better understand one another. Cultural Values give language to principles, beliefs, or norms of a community (and are often but not always shaped by nationality or ethnicity). Pass out the Cultural Values sheet. For each value pairing, mark yourself along the continuum for how strongly you identify with one or the other. Using a different symbol or color, mark where you would place your church community's culture along each continuum.

Share:

- What do you notice about your own values and that of the community's?
- Where are potential places of conflict or tension based on varying cultural values? What are some opportunities?

Action Step

- Brainstorm ways your small group or church can be more welcoming and inclusive. Connect with the leaders of those spaces and volunteer to implement 1-2 of those ideas.
- Host a community potluck and invite friends! Ask everyone to bring a dish from their childhood/family/heritage. During the meal, have each person to share about their dish and why it is meaningful to them.

Prayer