

5 Tips for Leading a MIXED SMALL GROUP

Thank you for leading a Mixed/multiethnic small group! We are so grateful you are stepping into this space of leadership. Here are some suggestions for how to encourage, equip, and empower the Mixed folks in your group.

1. WE CAN REST IN OUR IDENTITY IN THE MULTIETHNIC JESUS

Jesus is Mixed, too! Gospel author Matthew makes it a point to mention Jesus' Hittite, Moabite, and Canaanite ancestors when he lists Jesus' lineage (in Matthew 1). Jesus understands what it's like—the joys and the sorrows—of being from more than one ethnic culture. And he's also the God-human, whose Holy Spirit dwells in us! Our identity is in an embodied Christ who understands and loves us.

Lead your group in the joy of this truth, even as you acknowledge that being multiethnic will feel different for everyone in the group.

2. WE MAKE THIS JOURNEY TOGETHER

One of the beautiful things about being Mixed is that our experiences tend to make us more aware of how everyone is on an ethnic journey and has a unique story. Some folks will be new to thinking of themselves as multiethnic, and others might have thought about it for a long time. Some will identify mainly with one ethnic background, some might identify with more than one, and some will identify in entirely different ways. Many different ethnicities, nationalities, and cultures will be present.

Encourage your group members in the knowledge that God has space for wherever they are in life, over an entire lifetime. They do not have to be or do anything to be "good enough" or to qualify for being in the group.

3. OUR FLUIDITY IS A BEAUTIFUL THING

Since God has space for wherever we are in life, make space for wherever your group members are at with their ethnic story, as well as other identities they have (in terms of gender, faith, nationality, ability, sexuality, etc.). Even something as "simple" as introducing ourselves can be difficult and potentially traumatic.

Remember that the "complications" of our stories may require changing the script or even adjusting the time schedule. Feel the freedom to follow as Holy Spirit leads so you can care for your group well.

4. WE ARE MORE THAN JUST A SINGLE STORY

Again, our Mixed stories might make things “difficult” in a world that assumes everyone is monoethnic. But our ways of disrupting space aren’t just okay: they’re *good*! No one is just one thing or another, but many Christians tend to forget this. We have the joy of reminding people who Jesus is and what the Kingdom of God is like—diverse, beautiful, and yes: “complicated”!

Lead your small group, trusting that God will tell his amazing story through the multitude of stories of folks in the group. So yes, this might mean letting Holy Spirit lead the conversation to places that are unfamiliar. Pray and trust that God will speak, because even God is triune—God, too, is more than just one “simple” thing!

5. WE ALL NEED TO HAVE CYCLES OF LEADING AND REST

Being a person of color in a world made for whiteness can be exhausting, and being a Mixed person of color in a world that assumes monoethnicity can be exhausting, too! Thank you again for agreeing to lead fellow Mixed students in this space. Please take care of yourself (getting enough food and water and resting as much as you can) so that you can take care of others well. You don’t bear the burden of speaking for every Mixed person, and neither do the group members.

As you lead, rest in our Brown, Mixed, Middle Eastern/North African Jesus. He is present, active, willing, and loving. He can bring healing even as he highlights diversity. He loves every one of your group members (including you!) and wants you all to know that he created you Mixed *on purpose* to testify to his goodness and grace.