

5 Tips for Leading an ASIAN AMERICAN SMALL GROUP

Thank you for leading a small group for students that are part of the Asian American and Asian Canadian diaspora! Spaces for Asian American and Asian Canadians to engage Scripture together are opportunities to go deeper in engaging aspects of our racial, cultural, and ethnic identities, as well as discerning what God might be saying to our people and communities.

As the host of the small group time, you get to help people feel welcome in the space, as well as invite people to share what they're bringing to the "potluck" of communal Scripture study!

1. AFFIRM OUR DIVERSITY

While much of Asian American and Asian Canadian has been seen as primarily East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean) historically within North America, there are more than 20 ethnicities represented in the diaspora, including many from South and Southeast Asian backgrounds. Migration story (immigrant, refugee, adoptee, etc.), generation (immigrant through seventh generation in the West), geography (proximity to Asian centers or not), and religious background are also notable variables. Thus, with a diversity of experiences, please affirm the many Asian American and Asian Canadian stories and be prepared to encounter many different backgrounds, upbringings, perspectives, etc. within your small group.

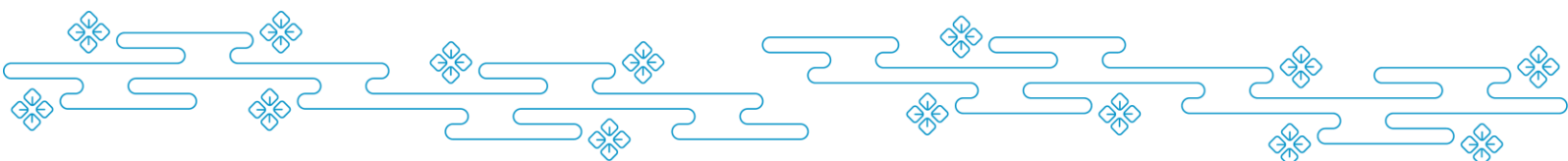
2. LEAN INTO OUR COMMUNAL IDENTITIES

As you think about the questions and discussion time, we invite you to consider communal aspects of discussion, as well as application. Scripture is a story for communities of people, not just for individuals. While individual application can be helpful, our communal cultures bring a needed point of view and help us connect more deeply with a communal context. People may be coming from many different places, but invite folks to consider what God might be saying to the communities that they're coming from, not just individually. And what might God be saying to Asian Americans as well?

3. HOST THE SCRIPTURE POTLUCK

It will be helpful to remind participants that Bible study time is communal and not the leader just straight up teaching—more like a potluck than a chef preparing a gourmet meal. Those from church backgrounds may be more used to the leader teaching, and hierarchical values in many Asian cultures means that younger members may expect this as well. It is appropriate in many Asian contexts for a leader to be older and also look out for study members, but that doesn't mean you can't facilitate if you're the same age or younger than your group members! The communal method of study invites everyone to bring their observations and questions, so remind people of that. It's like a potluck where everyone's contributions are needed for the meal. As host, you get to help invite people to the table, highlight people's dishes, etc.

It can be helpful to provide warm-up space, whether that's to discuss in pairs first before inviting sharing in the broader group. Or, being more directive sometimes allows everyone to share (e.g., "Let's go around and each share one observation we've made.")



4. ENGAGE HOLISTICALLY

We invite you to interact with Scripture—not just in our heads, but also in our bodies and spirit. That means possibly trying creative elements (e.g., having folks pose in snapshots of the passage and imagine how they would have felt as that person), as well as application addressing injustices in the world and embodied practices.

Some ideas for application:

- How is this good news for our world and society, not just our individual faith?
- How might this speak to the Asian American community, or your family, or loving our neighbor or yourself? (sometimes stereotypes/racism have wounded our view of ourselves/communities)
- How does ____ (interpretation piece in passage) affect how we engage ____ (an injustice, a community, etc.)?

5. RESPOND TO HOLY SPIRIT'S LEADING

We trust, if you're leading in this space, that God has invited you to lead and that God is moving in you and through you! So, we hope that you can also enjoy this opportunity to lead out in this setting, responding to what God's doing in you and your group! We invite y'all to listen to what Holy Spirit is doing and to invite the group to do so as well—to welcome the questions (and not just looking for a "right" answer) and to press into God's invitation in the moment.

