

Extending Our Reach to Our World

Activities Guide

The Salvation Army / Multicultural Ministries Department / Central Territory / USA



We are therefore
Christ's ambassadors ... (2 Corinthians 5:20)

Activities Guide

Background

Cultural Awareness Week (CAW) and Reconciliation Sunday is held annually in January the week before—and ending with the Sunday prior to—Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Each year, CAW provides an opportunity to promote cross-cultural understanding and to celebrate cultural diversity. It also challenges us to pray and act against the barriers that have spiritually and historically divided people and to see people “from every nation, tribe, people and language” (Rev 7:9) as a part of God’s good creation.

Theme & Scripture

“Extending Our Reach to Our World” is our theme. The scripture for the theme comes from 2 Corinthians 5:20.

“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.” (NIV)

Each year at territorial headquarters, the Multicultural Ministries Department plans a variety of events that inform, encourage cross-cultural interaction and that are fun. The following list of events and activities is not exhaustive, but is designed to be a “starter.” You can adapt any of these to your setting.

Activity “Starters

Displays

♦♦ Display a world and/or US map. Locate the country of origin or state of birth of those who work or come into your building for services. You’ll be amazed at the cultural diversity represented within your community.

♦ Theme Displays

For this year’s CAW, employees are invited to bring items that represent “hands”. These may include photographs, prints, original artwork, “hand-crafted” items, or sculpture / figurines.

♦♦ Provide squares and have individuals make ‘hand prints’. Use the squares to create a mosaic. On the squares, individuals can write an action that expresses how they would ‘extend their reach to their world’.

Food

♦ Take a look around your community and identify the various ethnic restaurants. Plan an outing to one of them with a group from your church. Variation: Plan a progressive dinner choosing 3-4 different restaurants.

♦ Plan a progressive ethnic food festival. Have people prepare ethnic foods to share. The meal can occur during a lunch time or

with an evening program.

♦♦ Cooking Show — This year, choose the popular ‘Cooking Show’ format. Have someone demonstrate preparing an ethnic food dish, and share information about the culture. Then, enjoy a meal together.

♦♦ Host an ethnic ‘coffee’ or ‘tea’. Have people bring ethnic desserts and share stories. Go to www.fooddownunder.com for ideas.

Team Building

♦♦ Invite small groups or teams to create an activity that represents “Extending Our Reach to Our World.” This activity can be done throughout Cultural Awareness Week.

♦♦ Begin a new ministry, such as an ESL class for your neighborhood or a Homework Club for the children of new immigrants. Your local school can help to identify children who could benefit from such a program.

Relationship Building

♦♦ Build relationships with people across cultures. Get to know someone of another culture, a different race/ethnicity, or who comes from a different country better. Perhaps you could learn a few words of their language. Spend some time over coffee or lunch listening to their story. Share the insights you gained from this new friendship.

♦ Sponsor a Story Corps. Go to www.storycorps.net for details.

♦♦ Cross-cultural Forum. Invite individuals from different cultures to share their stories. Provide a time for Q&A.

Bible Studies

♦♦ Have bible studies that focus on passages in scripture where people of different cultures encounter each other. What do these passages teach us? Scriptures to consider are: Centurion Encounter, Matthew 8:5-13 / Canaanite woman, Matthew 15:21-28 / Jesus at Nazareth, Luke 4:16-20 / The Samaritan, Luke 10:30-37 / Jesus Talks with a Samaritan Woman, John 4:1-42 / Greeks Come to Jesus, John 12: 20-33 / Peter & Cornelius, Acts 10

Books & Movies

♦ Have a book study. Several provide study guides at the end of each chapter. Consider *The Heart of Racial Justice: How Soul Change leads to Social Change*, by Brenda Salter-McNeil and Rick Richardson.

♦♦ View a movie that deals with cross-cultural issues. Check www.christianitytoday.com for study guides. They have guides for adults and teens on movies such as *Freedom Writers Diary*, *Remember the Titans*, *To Kill A Mocking Bird*, *Amazing Grace*, *Hotel Rwanda*, *Crash*, *Spanglish*, and many more. In several instances, the movies may be adult oriented, so discretion should be exercised when viewing them with youth and students. *The Kite Runner* has resources for churches and small groups produced by Lifetogether. This FREE curriculum has movie clips with downloadable discussion guides for participants and leaders.

You can access these resources at wingclips.com. Other movies that address cross-cultural topics include *Changing Lanes*, *The NameSake*, and *Race to Freedom*.

Cross-Cultural Experiences

♦♦ Field Trips

A visit to a local ethnic museum, historical tour, or festival is a great way to learn more about your culture/ethnic group or one other than your own. You'll get a 'flavor' for different cultures around the world without ever leaving your city. Go to GOOGLE DIRECTORY to get a list in your area.

Worship Together

- ♦ The George Barna website, www.barna.org, provides information on the values and beliefs of different culture groups.
- ♦ In cities across the U.S., even smaller cities, there are almost always evangelical churches from one ethnic group or another. Generally they are very open to visitors and sometimes provide translation for English speakers. To share in worship with an ethnic church can open the heart of many in your congregation and can even lead to more in-depth relationships with folks from that church.
- ♦ Another easily arranged experience will be to invite people from an ethnic congregation to come to your church to share special music, or worship dance along with a testimony. Teaching your congregation to greet the visitors in their language can be a different and fun preparatory step and can be done in 5 minutes or so in the main meeting
- ♦♦ Whatever part of the globe people come from, there is much to be learned about their cultural experiences. Many immigrants have absolutely astounding testimonies as to how they came to Christ and how God brought them through persecution, and other problems, to arrive where they are at this time in their lives. Many can bring "modern" history to life. The impact can transform people's thinking about that people group.
- ♦♦ Invite a missionary to share or a young person who has served on a short-term missions team. Those who have lived in other countries even for a short period of time often return different people. They begin to see people from other cultures and often have less fear in reaching out to them. Many hidden prejudices can be broken by even short term missions trips. This is true, not only for youth, but for people of all ages.

Festivals

This is an opportunity that is very beneficial, and available, yet overlooked. Each major city and often rural communities are filled with potential cross-cultural "laboratory" experiences for church members. Many cities have international festivals or festivals for East Asians, or Africans or other specific people groups. Interesting foods, music, dance, crafts and storytelling provide a positive setting for learning about and meeting people from different cultures.

Children's Ministries

Begin now to plan a vacation bible school or Back Yard Bible Club with the children in your neighborhood. Partner with an organization such as World Relief or the church of a culture or ethnic group that is different than your own.

Child Sponsorship/Homes

♦♦ Sponsor a child or children's home. Create a display board with a map, information about the culture, photos and prayers for that part of the world. Contact the territorial Sponsorship Office or go to Missions@usc.Salvationarmy.org.

Kid's Garage Sale for World Services

♦♦ Have your families, children and youth clean up the toys they're no longer using and the new or "nearly" new clothes they aren't wearing anymore for a Garage Sale. Donate the proceeds to World Services. Provide an opportunity for the children and youth to select the part of the world they want their money to go to. Share your Children and Youth Programs with people who shop your Garage sale. Make a note to invite the kids that show up back to your programs.

Collections

Have children collect items for children and youth in homeless shelters. Things collected can include activity books, crayons, markers, toiletries, socks, T-shirts, etc. Learn how homelessness affects young people. A similar thing can be done for children who are new to the community as refugees.

Sports

♦♦ Sporting events provide an excellent opportunity for cross-cultural fellowship. Host a games event and invite youth and adults for some friendly competition. Games might include ping pong, soccer, basketball and/or volleyball. Do a little research to see what kinds of games the different cultural groups in your community enjoy or might enjoy teaching you!

Cross-Cultural Conference

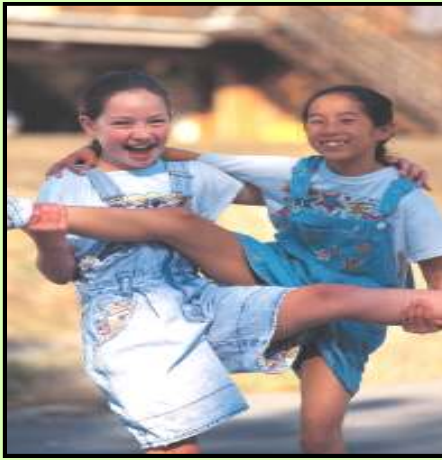
♦♦ Work with ethnic pastors in your community to plan with their congregations a cross-cultural conference or festival. Your festival might target children. Include stories, crafts, traditional music, dance and testimonies as a part of the experience. Consider having a booth where different countries are represented. Give attendees a "Passport" to visit the countries. ♦♦ *represent staff top choices.*

*For information on these "starters" or to share your ideas for Cultural Awareness Week celebrations, contact USC MultiCultural@usc.salvationarmy.org

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“America is experiencing the greatest cultural diversification it has ever seen.”

[Culture ConneXions, at www.simusa.org]

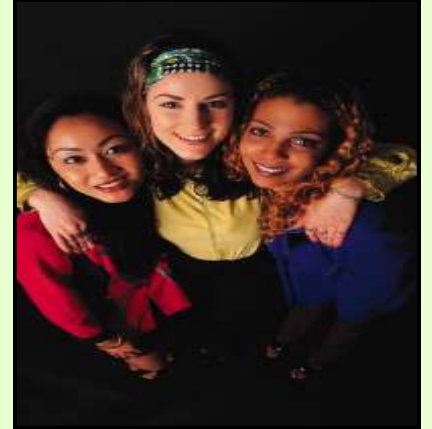


God, is bringing the nations to your neighborhood and to mine!

“From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out to him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.” ... ” Acts 17:26-27

What is Culture?

“An integrated system of beliefs (about God, or reality, or ultimate meaning), of values (about what is true, good, beautiful, and normative), of customs (how to behave, relate to others, talk, pray, dress, work, play, trade, farm, eat, etc.), and of institutions which express these beliefs, values and customs (governments, law courts, temples or churches, family, schools, hospitals, factories, shops, unions, clubs, etc.), which binds a society together and gives it a sense of identity, dignity, security, and continuity.” [Lausanne Committee on World Evangelism, “ A Definition of Culture” in *The Willowbank Report* (LCWE, 1978) <<http://www.gospelcom.net/lcwe/LOP/lop02.htm#2>>]



The World is at our doorstep.