

**A SIX-SESSION FRESNO METRO MINISTRY CURRICULUM  
FOR FOSTERING CROSS-CULTURAL  
UNDERSTANDING AND RELATIONSHIPS**



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**FRESNO METRO MINISTRY**  
**1055 N. VAN NESS, SUITE H**  
**FRESNO, CA 93728**  
**PHONE (559) 485-1416**  
**FAX(559) 485-9109**

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**BACKGROUND:** *The Cross Cultural Cluster plan is one of several Metro Ministry projects developed "to build linkages to enhance understanding, confront racism, deter violence, create justice, and salvage our community's young people".*

**WHAT IS THE CURRENT REALITY?** *Fresno is a very fragmented community. People generally do not cross cultural, racial, or economic barriers to get to know, understand, and appreciate one another as individuals or as persons of unique cultural backgrounds and traditions. Violence is often only a spark away.*

**WHAT WILL HELP?** *Guided conversation is a first step in building communication linkages and in building foundations for deterring prejudice and creating justice.*

**GOAL FOR THE CROSS CULTURAL CLUSTERS:** *To build linkages by establishing foundations to reduce community fragmentation, enhance cultural understanding, confront racism, deter violence, and create justice*

**OBJECTIVES FOR THE CROSS-CULTURAL CLUSTERS:**

- (1) Open direct communication lines among persons of diverse backgrounds.*
- (2) Help each cluster participant reflect upon the origins of his or her attitudes and actions regarding people who are different from themselves.*
- (3) Help each cluster participant better understand their own cultural background and traditions, and the cultural background and traditions of others.*
- (4) Help each participant reflect upon how they and others handle conflict and differences.*
- (5) Help participants realize that racism and discrimination are unhelpful realities in our community and nation.*
- (6) Enhance the commitment of participants to work in whatever way they can to make this a better community for everyone.*

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## **WHAT IS THE CLUSTER PLAN?**

***Cross-cultural groups of eight to fifteen persons will meet together for six two-hour sessions and follow a guided plan for each session. Some 4 or 5 session clusters may also be offered.***

***All the participants will respond one at a time to the same question, and then move on to the next question.***

## **HOW ARE CLUSTERS FORMED?**

***There are four ways clusters are formed:***

***1. CLUSTER SPONSOR: One group (organization, congregation, business, civic group, club, union, etc.) will commit to developing one or more clusters. The sponsoring group will recruit ten persons with at least four distinct cultural heritages who commit to the six sessions. The group sponsor sets the time of the gatherings, arranges the place, provides weekly reminders, and serves as host. Fresno Metro Ministry will either provide a facilitator for the six sessions, or provide training for persons in that group to be facilitators.***

***2. FOUR POINT LINKAGE SPONSORSHIP: Four groups (organizations, congregations, clubs, civic groups, businesses, unions, etc.) join in partnership with one another to sponsor one or more clusters. Each group will draw from its own membership in order to provide the diverse cultural participation. As an example, a Black church, Latino church, Asian Church, and White church could be partners. There would be no limit in the number of groups which this linkage sponsorship develops. These four groups would have the same responsibilities for scheduling, reminding, hosting, and arranging facilities as described above in "Cluster Sponsor".***

***3. METRO MINISTRY CROSS-CULTURAL CLUSTER SPONSORSHIP: Metro will recruit and coordinate, creating community-wide clusters one by one.***

***4. SPECIALIZED CLUSTERS: Some groups can be specialized, like all business persons, or clergy, or laborers, or teachers, community leaders, or employees at the same place of work. Some groups could also be formed from a specific neighborhood.***

## **THE SIX-SESSION CLUSTER FORMAT**

### **SESSION # ONE: GETTING TO KNOW YOU"**

#### **I. Getting started**

**Welcome** by representative of sponsoring group and introduction of facilitator.

#### **Establish "group rules"**

- **level of confidentiality to be honored.** It is recommended that all agree to treat as confidential anything said if the person saying it makes that request; otherwise, it's okay to repeat to others the nature of the conversation without identifying who said what.
- **mutual respect**
- **interpreters when needed**
- **each person use own personal judgement as how open or how guarded they want to be**
- **commitment to be present when possible**
- **facilitator as participant**, but will be the last to share
- **questions only for clarification,**
- **each person responds to the question before anyone moves to next question, and repeats their name**
- **"catch-up" for those who missed a session.** It is suggested that you start the next session with one blended question from the previous session for anyone who missed that session.

**(1) Tell something about your name, what it means or your feelings about it, or nicknames.**

**(2) To what part of the world do you trace or assume your ancestors? (grandparents, great grandparents, etc.)**

**(3) Tell about your childhood community and things you did (do) as a young child.**

**(4) Tell how you happen to be in (Fresno), and something about your current situation (family, community, job, school, etc.)**

## **SESSION # 2: "MY LIFE AND THEIRS"**

**(1) Tell about your family and/or cultural traditions and values, both as a child and now, including special celebrations, holidays, reunions, relationships, heroes, hand-me-down stories, etc.**

**(2) Tell about how you felt when you realized that you were different from some other people in your community or region.**

**(3) What is it that you feel about your ethnic/cultural group now that's different from how you use to feel?**

**(4) Where did you have to go as a child to see, or know about, persons who were of different cultures than your own? Who were some of these "different" people?**

### **SESSION # 3: "FEELINGS, ATTITUDES, AND ACTIONS"**

**(1) Tell about a time, or times, you felt fearful because of differences such as culture, race, or ethnic considerations.**

**(2) Tell about a time you felt discriminated against. (Tell about a time someone treated you badly because you were not like them)**

**(3) Tell about a time you witnessed discrimination against others. (Tell about a time that you saw others treated badly because they were different)**

**(4) Tell about a time you may have discriminated against others, even if unintentionally and if only in your attitude. (Tell about a time you treated someone badly because they were different from you)**

**(5) How are your attitudes and actions regarding persons of other ethnic/cultural/racial groups similar to and differ from your childhood family's attitudes and actions? What experiences shaped your views?**

**(For children: In what ways have your feelings about others who are different from you changed? What caused the change?)**

### **SESSION # 4: "HANDLING DIFFERENCES"**

**(1) How do you resolve disputes, differences, and conflicts, and how does that differ with traditional ways of handling conflict and decision-making within your cultural tradition? (What do you do when somebody disagrees with you?)**

**(2) What do you do when you get angry? Do your friends do the same thing when they are angry?**

**(3) Tell how the way you handle differences and disputes with persons of your own cultural/ethnic background may differ from how you handle similar differences and disputes with persons of another cultural/ethnic background. (Do you behave any differently if the person you are mad at looks like you? How?)**

**(4) Tell about a time you felt good about how you handled a conflict, dispute, or difference, without anyone getting hurt.**

### **SESSION # 5: "HOPES AND FEARS"**

**(1) Tell about your hopes and your fears for yourself and for your family?**

**(2) Tell about your hopes and your fears for your neighborhood?**

**(3) Tell about your hopes and your fears for our larger community. (What makes you feel good and what scares you?)**

**(4) What restores your hope?**

### **SESSION # 6: "MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER"**

**(1) What have you learned in this experience that surprised you the most, or that you feel good about?**

**(2) What emotions did you experience? (pain, joy, anger, etc.)**

**(3) How do you see this experience helpful to you in fostering cross-cultural understanding and justice in the community?**

**(4) Group Brainstorming**

- *What are some current issues that surfaced in these sessions that might be the subject of subsequent community action?*

(5) *How can you share and build upon this experience?*

*(What did you learn about yourself?*

*What did you learn about others (you go to school with)?*

*Did you make any new friends?)*

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**FRESNO, CA 93728**

**PHONE (209) 485-1416**

**FAX (209) 485-9109**

**E-mail [metromin@qnis.net](mailto:metromin@qnis.net)**

**Website [www.fresnometroministry.org](http://www.fresnometroministry.org)**