

CPC defines cultural engagement as our thoughtful and gracious participation in society, as both individuals and as a church community, so that people encounter God through our words and actions.

At the core of this pillar is the deep conviction that, as the church, we are not called to retreat away from culture. On the contrary, we are to live and exist within the culture as examples. We are to be beacons of God's mission in his world.

As we continue our discussion around Cultural Engagement, it is essential to recognize we live in a pluralistic culture. Meaning, we live in an area where our communities believe many different things and hold various convictions. Or put another way, there are many different stories about the world that swirl around us.

So with that in mind, how do we share the gospel in a pluralist culture? How do we thoughtfully and graciously tell our personal faith stories? (see Lesson 1 for tips on sharing your faith story) How do we live our faith in public with others who may not share our beliefs?

Icebreaker:

Have one or two of you share their 2-3 minute faith story with the rest of the group. Allow time for the group to ask questions about these stories.

Study

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

(vv. 1-2)

1. "The Gospel" literally means the good news. Historically it meant to announce good news. As we seek to engage our culture, why is it important we remember that at the core of our own story is the gospel event? (v. 1)

2. The gospel demands a response from us. How does the analogy of relying on electricity help us understand the nature of our response to the gospel? (v. 2)

“When those lines came by our farm, a very different way of living presented itself. Our relationships to fundamental aspects of life—daylight and dark, hot and cold, clean and dirty, work and leisure, preparing food and preserving it—could then be vastly changed for the better. But we still had to believe in the electricity and its arrangements, understand them, and take the practical steps involved in relying on it.” Dallas Willard, Divine Conspiracy.

3. What changes happen when a person relies on the gospel and re-orient their life around Jesus? What change needs to happen for you to rely on the gospel and re-orient your life around Jesus?

The Big Idea: The Gospel Changes Things

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, (v. 3)

The Gospel changes the problem of sin

4. Why is it significant that we need to understand as of first importance that Christ died? What does this reality tell our culture about Christ and his Kingdom?

5. Why is it of first importance to know that Christ died for our sins? Literally, “for the sake of our sins.”

The Gospel Changes You

For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed. (vv. 9-11)

6. What do these verses tell us about how the gospel changed Paul personally?

7. In verse 10, Paul mentions grace three times. Biblical Grace is defined as unmerited favor from God. What difference does it make to you that God’s grace is undeserved? (v. 9) What difference does it make to you that God’s grace is unconditional? (v. 10)

Maybe this is the first time you've heard about this gospel. Perhaps God is stirring something in you that recognizes the history-changing news that Jesus is King. He died, was buried and was resurrected to birth as something new in this world. He is inviting you to live into that reality. The first step is to repent. It's to recognize the ways your life has become tangled with other stories of the world. To repent means to change, to turn from those other stories, and seek the grace of Jesus. This grace has the power to wrap your life up in the work God is doing in this world and the work God's son, Jesus, did on the cross.

8. Has the gospel changed you? If so, how?

9. What new God stories are defining your life because of the gospel?

Part 3-Homework

10. Continue to work on writing and sharing your own faith story. Your faith story should include what God did in your life and is presently doing in your life. It should also be according to the scriptures, so those listening will hear how the gospel changed your story.

11. Pray for the people on your list who have yet to know and rely on the gospel.

12. Begin reflecting more intentionally on ways you can increase your personal outreach efforts to engage your culture.

Extra Study:

What can you learn about these critical gospel terms?

The Grace of God

The Gospel Call

Substitutionary Atonement

Redemption

Reconciliation

Repentance

Conversion

Justification

Salvation

Positional Sanctification