

Ethnicity Matters Discussion Guide

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Introduction

1. What are the thoughts and beliefs about ethnicity and culture that you received from where you grew up?

In this seven-minute video, James will unpack some biblical passages to help shape our views on ethnicity and culture, while also beginning to address some applications to ministry. As you listen, what connects with you? What doesn't?

Show video: "Ethnicity Matters"

2. What are some of the things said in the video that connect with you? What are some of the things said that don't connect with you?

Biblical foundations of culture and ethnicity

James directly references multiple Bible verses:

- Genesis 1:28. *Fill the earth.*
- Genesis 11. *Babel and different languages.*
- Genesis 12:3. *Abram's call.*
- Acts 2. *Pentecost and different languages.*
- Galatians 2:1-10. *Paul's and Peter's focused ministries.*
- Galatians 3:28. *Jew nor Greek, male nor female.*
- Revelations 7:9. *Every nation, tribe, people, and language.*

Take some time to look at three passages in particular — *Genesis 12:1-3*, *Acts 2:1-21*, *Galatians 2:1-10* — and answer this question:

3. How might each of these passages reflect on God's view of ethnicity and culture?
4. In what ways has this confirmed your previous views on ethnicity and culture? In what ways has it changed your previous views?

Ministry application in culture and ethnicity

Given that the Scriptures support both ethnic identity and racial reconciliation, James encourages us to both *focus* and *integrate* when seeking multiethnicity in our ministries.

5. Do you find *yourself* leaning more toward a more ethnic-specific or ethnic-general ministry context?
6. Do you find *those in your ministry context* leaning more towards ethnic-specific or ethnic-general ministry?
7. What are the benefits of a more *focused* ministry? What are the benefits of a more *integrated* ministry?
8. What are the unintended consequences of a more focused ministry? What are the unintended negatives of a more integrated ministry?
9. If you or your ministry leans more towards ethnic-specific ministry, how might you benefit by having integrated elements in your ministry? What could you do?
10. If you or your ministry leans more towards ethnic-general ministry, how might you benefit by having focused elements in your ministry? What could you do?

Whether or not you are a part of an ethnic-specific ministry or an ethnic-general ministry, both models are intended to reflect multiethnicity in different ways. Both need to be intentional to emphasize ethnic identity and racial reconciliation in discipleship, knowing that each value empowers the other.

Leader's Notes

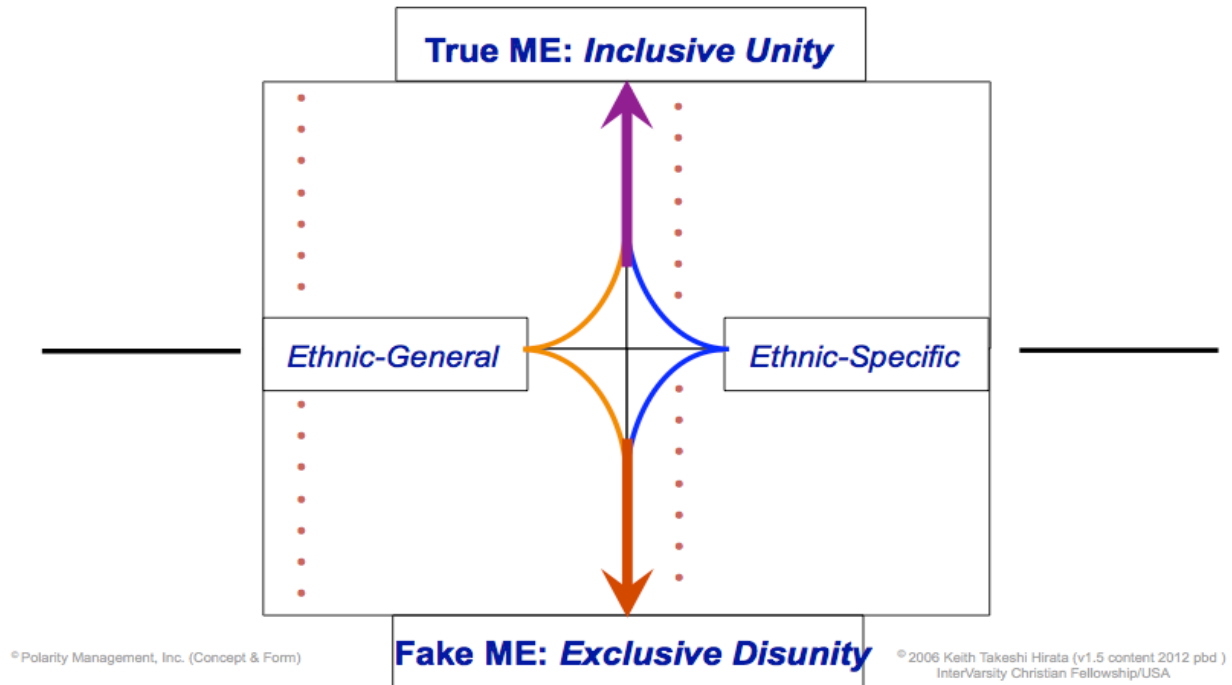
Main idea: Ethnicity and culture are affirmed in Scripture — though our primary identity is in Christ — and both focus and integration are needed in ministries that seek to be truly multiethnic.

Feel free to change questions according to your context, to help the conversation be more effective.

1. It's an open-ended question meant to start conversation. Answers can be about one's own ethnicity or those of others, received from his or her family, friends, church, community, school, and elsewhere.
2. Again, these are conversation starters. Don't feel the need to correct someone right away at this point. Let them share openly, but helpfully direct the conversation if they begin to offend others with their comments.
3. To help people answer this question, you may throw in a few more questions to help generate thought.
 - a. What is going on in this passage?
 - b. What is the main character or narrator saying?
7. If time allows, you can use the framework of a *polarity map* to frame the discussion for questions #7 and #8. *Polarities* happen when two seemingly opposing ideas are held together in tension. If both options are needed, then no one right answer can provide a solution. Polarities, therefore, allows us to look at a situation as a both/and instead of an either/or situation. They allow us to hold these two seemingly opposing ideas in tension, offering a *dichotomy* or *continuum* that needs to be *managed*.

For your discussion, you can use the provided blank polarity map if you have time. An example of one on focused vs. integrated ministries is also attached below.

Ethnic-General vs. Ethnic-Specific Ministry



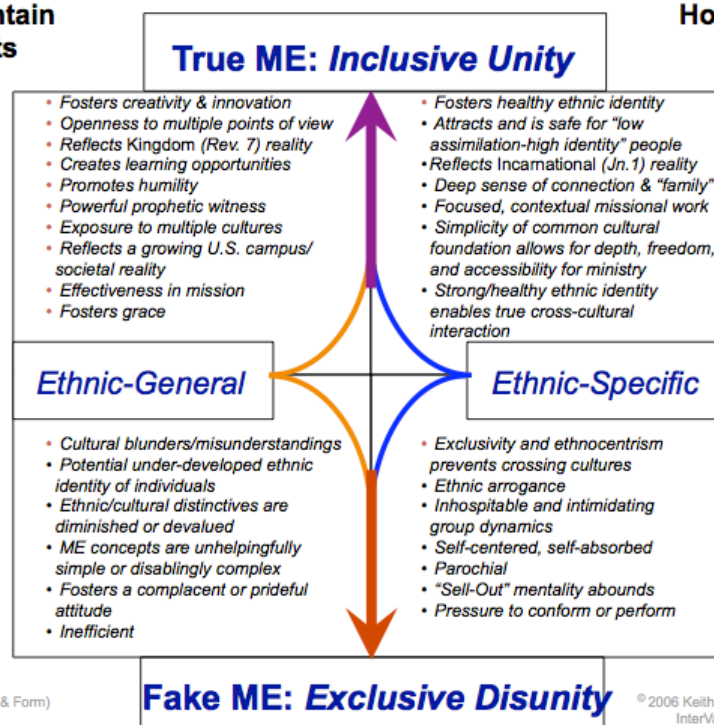
Ethnic-General vs. Ethnic-Specific Ministry

How to gain/maintain positive results

- Ensure that everyone's voice is welcome at the table and has influence
- Promote leaders and role models from various ethnic groups
- Teach each other's histories/stories/ways
- Engage and risk cross-culturally in new and creative ways
- Maintain ethnic-specific tools in your cross-ethnic program

Red Flag Indicators

- "We're all the same" mentality
- Condescending attitude toward ethnic-specific groups
- Complacent attitude regarding representation



How to gain/maintain positive results

- Promote a group culture of hospitality
- Create partnerships with other communities
- Be involved in issues that are unrelated to ones own ethnic group
- Encourage members to engage in cross-ethnic relationships and ministry

Red Flag Indicators

- Visitors/guests don't return a second time
- Language is "us/them"
- Majority of relationships for members are only with one another and those like them
- Overall defensiveness