

Reachable Reconciliation TalkSheets

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ReachableReconciliation.com

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Introduction

“We know *they* can do it... but how do *we* do it?”

This is the question someone asked me a few years ago, after leading a workshop in Boston on diversity and reconciliation. I’ve learned over the years that whether you’re a youth or an adult, most people have a difficult time beginning cross-cultural conversations and then managing the responses they get. The idea that “being nice” is sufficient just doesn’t hold true. “Nice” makes little difference once one of the individuals in the conversation senses a disconnect.

Teenagers and young adults are still learning to process how another person fits into their framework for understanding life. But as adults we’re well-practiced in our pursuit of the next book, podcast, speaker, or event that can help us expand our perspective of others. Even so, most people are limited to their foundational biases and personal historical patterns set by the rhythms of their personal circle of influence.

We designed these Reachable Reconciliation TalkSheets as a tool to help you create space for everyone in the room to learn and grow into reconciling relationships with each other.

- ▶ So, where do I start?
- ▶ What can I say or not say?
- ▶ How do I listen well in tense situations?
- ▶ What are the rules of discussion so that I’m not being offensive, yet still being honest?
- ▶ How do we have conversations that matter?

These are just a few of the questions that surface when we’re engaging others around diversity, equity, and inclusion. The acronym D.E.I. is now well-known, but the path to get there is still being designed and redesigned. Reachable Reconciliation TalkSheets are written to provide a safe and easy onramp into topical dialogues as we learn each other’s stories. This tool can be used with small groups, Sunday school classes, adult learning environments, youth groups, organizational teams, leadership teams, staff, faculty, volunteers, sports teams, family discussions, and at the dinner table. They’re powerful for groups, breakouts, couples, or even one-on-one with someone with whom you’re attempting to build a connection.

The target is more than just racial division! It’s about including the people who feel left out or marginalized within a dominant mainstream organization, society, and culture. The Scripture references in each TalkSheet are not intended to form your faith; rather, they are there to illuminate each other’s story and grow deeper into your spiritual identity. This can only be done by first taking an inventory of ourselves before we try seeing someone else for who they really are.

Included in these TalkSheets are topics, relevant questions, and slide files for group settings. And we’ve given you guidelines for how to listen well. Make a copy of the guide for each person in the group or pairing, including the designated leader. You can use the same guide as the leader, or as the participant. If you’re looking for a resource that will launch greater trust, cohesiveness, cross-cultural climate, and inclusivity, then this affordable resource is worth the spend!

The pandemic introduced massive change to our culture in the past few years, and many have struggled to connect, converse, reach out, understand, listen, and build relationships. These Reachable Reconciliation TalkSheets will reintroduce you to listening, vulnerability, creative problem-solving, and connecting on deeper levels. We hope they’re a great starting point for your setting, and make a difference in all you do!

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