



## **Threaded Learning Group Facilitator Training**

Learning groups are a part of Threaded's history and will be a critical part of our future because we believe that relationships are developed and cultivated in small groups. With this in mind we work to create diverse small group experiences that will help to inspire relationship, reconciliation and collaborative action between the diverse Body of Christ and our facilitators are a key component for that work.

***"Of all people, Christians should be the most active in reaching out to those of other races, instead of accepting the status quo of division and animosity"- Billy Graham***

### **About Threaded:**

#### **Vision:**

We want the Body of Christ to be seen as a mesmerizing tapestry --restored to unity, displaying its dazzling colors, knitted and stitched together in purpose and love so that it captivates the world and draws them closer to the God who threaded it together.

#### **Mission:**

To inspire relationships, reconciliation and collaborative action among the diverse Body of Christ

#### **Values:**

##### ***Kingdom- Oriented***

The eternal vision of heaven is a multi-ethnic church (Rev. 7:9-12). Jesus leads us to pray, seek, and serve for that kingdom reality on earth now as it will be in heaven (Mt. 6:10; Eph. 2:14-22). That is the aim of our hearts and efforts together. This group is not about a church. It is about The Church, beautiful in her diversity, united in the life of her head Jesus Christ, and more exciting and satisfying than we can imagine.

##### ***Confessional Conversations***

There is no resurrection without a cross. No healing without addressing the pain. Vulnerability breeds vulnerability. So, in moving forward together the first steps must be in humility, with a willingness to confess how we have sinned in the area of race relations, and a readiness to share and listen to personal stories Christ is redeeming.

##### ***Grace Extending***

The Grace of Jesus Christ has been lavished upon us. Therefore we must extend it to others as we entertain this conversation. There are no tokens at the table. Everyone is welcome, and adds meaningfully to our growing understanding. We are not all at the same point on the journey and there is nothing that makes someone want to quit like the lack of Grace.

### ***Compassionate and courageous contending***

Everyone's experience and contribution is valid, so we will fight to let their voice be heard and show empathy and compassion even if we do not agree with them. We are compelled by the love of Jesus Christ. We will suffer with, speak truth lovingly, and move into conflict and injustice for the sake of others coming to know the reconciling power of Jesus Christ.

### ***Rejoice Always***

In a broken world of difficulties and divisions, the Spirit leads us to celebrate any place where the kingdom advances against the walls of racism. Things may be bad and they are certainly not perfect but we seek to rejoice at the victories we can find. We will pray for the power to carry on through the defeats.

## **General Facilitation Techniques**

### **Distinctions Between Facilitator and Teacher**

The distinction between teacher and facilitator can be understood by how participants receive information. The traditional, normative teaching approach views participants as "empty vessels" in which information is poured into students by teachers. A teacher-student dichotomy epitomises the power relationship.

In contrast, a facilitator helps participants interpret the information presented by other participants. Facilitators do not use time to impart the "right answer", but rather to create an environment that allows for the sharing of multiple perspectives and realities, mirroring what a respectful and equitable society looks like. In addition, facilitators manage group dynamics to best meet the participants' needs.

In order to meet the needs of participants, facilitators need to be able to suspend judgment and meet people wherever they are in their own learning process. At times facilitators can be caught in their own judgments, such as thinking of participants as naïve, ignorant or stubborn. These judgements may reflect facilitators' frustrations or stereotypes and can interfere with the ability to include everyone in the process. We endeavor to make the experience meaningful for all.

### **Facilitators have their own triggers:**

Triggers are experiences, incidents or words that elicit extremely strong emotional feelings. Triggers are unique to each facilitator and are based on life experiences and personal sensibilities. Facilitators openly reacting to triggers undermines a safe environment and can derail the discussion. Developing an awareness of personal triggers beforehand can help facilitators is an important step in managing group dynamics.

### **Be on the lookout for glimmers:**

Glimmers are how people begin to express their safety and interest. You will notice their communication and body language change.

### **Facilitation Techniques:**

There are many important behaviors and skills facilitators can employ to help guide a group towards a goal or learning point.

1. **Bridging-** Making connections, tying one learning point to another
2. **Checking for understanding-** making sure directions and questions are clear
3. **Clarifying-** interpreting, clarifying misunderstandings, defining terms

4. **Encouraging-** Prompting, nonjudgmental responses, open-ended questions, respectful probing
5. **Evaluating-** asking questions that encourage group members to examine an issue from a different perspective
6. **Gatekeeping-** managing time and group participation
7. **Giving-** judiciously offering facts or personal experience to clarify a point
8. **Modeling-** demonstrating a measured level of personal sharing, encourages participation
9. **Naming Feelings-** interpreting and acknowledging emotional energy in the group
10. **Orienting-** bring the group back to tasks, reiterating the question or topic
11. **Resolving-** conciliating difference, cooperative problem solving
12. **Seeking-** Asking for clarification, suggestions and more information
13. **Summarizing-** pulling it all together, restating important points

It is valuable for facilitators to debrief with other facilitators after a session. Sharing reactions can help manage assumptions, an opportunity to receive support and reinforce coping or facilitation strategies. In addition, facilitators should find a trusted person with whom to process their own perspective, keeping in mind the importance of maintaining confidentiality.

**Facilitation can be emotionally taxing work. Self –care and reflection are imperative.**

## Threaded Curriculum Training

### Threaded Facilitator Expectation:

- Be prepared
- Work within the vision, mission and values of Threaded
- Facilitate instead of teach
- Prepare others to lead groups
- Share the impact with others

### Learning Group Purpose:

- Create candid Gospel centered conversations around race
- Build skills for conversations around race
- Explore the scriptural mandate for diversity among the Body of Christ
- Train up reconcilers and influencers who can have and continue the conversation around race in their churches and communities

### General Template

#### Core Value

#### Quote

#### Getting Started (5:00)

- Session Overview
- Session Aims
- Key Text
- Prayer

#### Biblical Exploration: (40:00)

- Questions around the Key Text that help explore the topic and core value from a Gospel center.

#### Skills building (30:00)

- Rules
- Confrontation Guidelines
- Discussion/ exercise

#### Discussion Questions: 40:00

- Group questions that further conversation around the week's reading and core value

#### Ministry/Church Leaders: (TBD)

- Specific questions for Ministry leaders to wrestle with

#### Reflection (10:00)

- A time of thinking back through the session or the previous weeks and taking stock of where you are on the journey

#### Your Next Steps: (5:00)

- Reading questions for next week's Chapter

#### Experience

- This is an action or experience that your group can do together or as individuals to further their understanding of the core value.

#### Prayer

- Prayer challenge for the week

#### Notes

- This is an area in the curriculum where participants can capture any notes that they have from the discussion or their reading.

## Example Session

### Session Two: Homing Beacon

**Core Value in the corner:** *Compassionate and Courageous Contending*

#### **Quote**

*"We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."* Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*

#### **Getting Started:**

- Session Overview
  - The Holy Spirit serves as our "homing beacon" – the signal that guides us towards the kingdom and righteousness. The Holy Spirit evolves us to care about what Jesus cares about. Micah 6:8 shows us what God cares about and what He wants us to care about as well.
- Session Aims
  - Orient: Recognize that contending against injustice is part of God's vision for His people
  - Explore: Answer the Question: "What role do Christians play in standing against racial injustice?"
  - Engage: Continue personal storytelling about your experience with racial injustice.
- Key Text
  - Micah 6:8
- Prayer

#### **Biblical Exploration:**

- Review Micah 6:8
- Contextually speaking, who is the intended audience of the verse? Why could it be important for us to consider our audience when discussing racial issues?
- Why is Christian involvement in justice so important to God?
- How do justice, kindness and humility work together and why are they a requirement of God?
- What could be some of the consequences of the lack of humility in the midst of the racial injustice conversation?

#### **Skills building:**

- Review Group Rules and Confrontation Guidelines from page X
- As a group discuss something you read, saw or heard this week from the sources below that you feel could be seen as racial injustice.
- Share how it affected you mentally, emotionally or spiritually.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- *"If I have said anything in this letter that overstates the truth and indicates an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything that understates the truth and indicates my having a patience that allows me to settle for anything less than brotherhood, I beg God to forgive me"* **Was there anything in this letter that was over or under stated? Was there any part of this letter that moved you more than another?**
- (As a group) make a list of historical racial injustices that you all can agree are sins in the eyes of God.
- In hindsight we are able to recognize several racial injustices practiced legally in this country by non-Christians and Christians alike. How did Christians justify these actions back. Then and what actions can we take to ensure we don't justify injustice in our own time?
- *In describing negative peace versus positive peace, Dr. King wrote "We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive."* **What are the hidden racial tensions below the surface of today's society? How can we bring these tensions to light in a productive way?**
- *"In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard many ministers say: "Those are social issues, with which the gospel has no real concern."* **Is the Race Problem a gospel issue or merely a social issue? Why or why not?**

### Ministry/Church leaders:

- *“I felt that the white ministers, priests, and rabbis of the South would be among our strongest allies. Instead, some have been outright opponents, refusing to understand the freedom movement and misrepresenting its leaders; all too many others have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained-glass windows. “*
  - Do you believe White Ministers and Churches have gotten better in responding to racial injustice?
  - What ways can the “White Church” respond today in order to breed confidence in people of color?
  - What ways can the “Ethnic Church” respond today in order to stimulate action among those “White Churches” that would be considered inactive.
- *“So often the contemporary church is a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. So often it is an arch defender of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church’s silent—and often even vocal—sanction of things as they are.”* **What are your thoughts when you read something like this?**

### Reflection:

- Before you conclude the day: Was there anything said in the discussion today that triggered you emotionally? If you are ready share the trigger and the emotion you felt.

### Your Next Steps:

- Read “Letters to a Birmingham Jail” (LTABJ) Chapter 5: Why We Can’t Wait for the Multiethnic Church” by Bryan Loritts prior to the next session.
  - Answer these questions as you read
    - What are some of the advances in race relations and freedoms that Loritts refers to as proof of change in our country?
    - What is the one “brick” that Loritts believes still lingers from the Jim Crow era?
    - How does Loritts describe passivity in this chapter?
    - How aware are you of your surroundings in reference to race? Do you count the number of people who look like you the way Loritts did as a child? If so, why?

### Experience:

- Visit a local museum or monument that is connected to our countries racial history. Record your thoughts

### Prayer Exercise:

- This week look for injustice that is happening outside your ethnic community and pray for that community. Pray that God will show you a way to come alongside them.

### Threaded Facilitator Next Steps

- Fill out the sign in sheet. You will be sent a digital form that will allow you to specify times and days that work for you to lead a group
- Pick a partner to co-lead with you.
- Start recruiting for your group
- Facilitators Training August 22, 6:30 @Woodcreek Church
- Reconcile September 19, 2019
- Come.Unity January 19, 2020
- Spring Group Launch- TBD

### **Contact Information**

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### **Notes**