

becoming all things



**TEACHING
KIT**

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BECOMING ALL THINGS TEACHING KIT

INTRODUCTION

The *Becoming All Things Teaching Kit* is designed for pastors, professors, org leaders, small group leaders, and individuals to use as a teaching series.

Whether you are a seasoned leader well-versed in topics of culture and ethnicity in Scripture or you've never taught on these topics before, this teaching kit will equip you with the content and research you need to lead your people to God's heart for multiculturalism, share about the spirituality inherent in our cultural identities, discuss how to connect with others across cultures, and more.

The *Becoming All Things Teaching Kit* also offers an accompanying study guide to facilitate thoughtful conversations with smaller groups and/or individual reflections throughout each week following the lessons. Combined, the *Becoming All Things Teaching Kit* and *Becoming All Things Small Group Guide* will empower your church, class, or small group with best practices for pursuing biblical diversity and cultural flourishing.

BECOMING ALL THINGS TEACHING KIT

OVERVIEW

The *Becoming All Things Teaching Kit* is a four-part series of outlines, resources, and practical takeaways that capture the essence of Dr. Michelle Ami Reyes' book, *Becoming All Things: How Small Changes Lead to Lasting Connections Across Cultures*. Each outline is rooted in Scripture and is intended for expository teaching and exegesis. The accompanying study guide offers 8-10 questions per lesson along with Scripture passages, quotes, contemplative practices, prayer prompts, and practical application.

The goal of this teaching kit is to equip your church, class, and/or small group with a biblical framework for cultural identities and cross-cultural relationships and offer practical small steps to pursue the diverse kingdom of God as individuals, families, schools, and the church as a whole. By the end of this series, your people will have a better understanding of the meaning of gospel-rooted diversity and multiculturalism, a roadmap for developing and celebrating their God-given cultural identities, and the ability to bravely embody the model of Jesus to love people of different cultures.

BECOMING ALL THINGS TEACHING KIT

TEACHING DESIGN

This section explains the weekly breakdown of each lesson, the design of the series, and the resources available to you as you craft your lesson each week.

Creative License

Each teaching outline gives you, the teacher, the creative license to tailor the message to your individual congregation, class, and/or small group. Each lesson offers a Bible text, the main idea, three big teaching points, and supplemental quotes. The rest is up for you to craft.

Practical Takeaways

In the conclusion of each outline, there is a section called, “Where do we go from here?” This section offers practical takeaways for your people to begin implementing.

Recommended Resources For Going Deeper

At the end of each outline, you will find a list of illustration ideas and supplemental texts to refer to as you craft your lesson.

Study Guide

Each teaching outline has an accompanying study guide for your people to walk through that week.

BECOMING ALL THINGS TEACHING KIT

TEACHING DESIGN

Here is a bird's eye view of the four-part teaching series

Lesson One Worshipping God as Cultural Image Bearers (Rev. 7:9-10)

Lesson Two Developing Our Cultural Identities for God's Glory (Gen. 11)

Lesson Three Connecting Across Cultures for the Sake of the Gospel
(1 Cor. 9:19-23)

Lesson Four Representing Jesus by Embracing Cultural Discomfort
(Acts 15)

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THE BECOMING ALL THINGS TEACHING KIT

How can you and your people get the most out of this series? Check out the following suggestions:

1. If your church or organization has a team (i.e., staff), bring them through this kit before you embark on the series as a way to have your leadership aligned on the content.
2. Promote this series with the accompanying *Becoming All Things Graphics* in a way that is engaging to your church, class, and/or small group and is winsome to your community (see attachment). The social media kit includes: 1) a catchy flyer to let everyone know the series is coming up, 2) announcement graphics and copy for social media for each week of the series, 3) powerpoint slides that are customizable (title + blank subtitles). Best practice is to announce this series with the flyer three weeks in advance. Social media graphics for each subsequent lesson can be published on the following Wednesday.
3. For a church or organization, prepare your small group leaders by sending them the teaching kit and accompanying small group guide at least three weeks before the first lesson. Encourage them to invite folks to their small groups for this special teaching series, so that people in your church or organization can go deeper into these topics.

4. Consider including a personalized video from the author. When your church, class, and/or small group purchases a minimum of 50 books, they will receive a personalized two-three minute video from Dr. Michelle Ami Reyes to welcome them to the *Becoming All Things* sermon series.
5. Book Dr. Michelle Ami Reyes to speak at your church, class, and/or small group or to do a live Q&A after your group finishes the *Becoming All Things* teaching series. You will also receive a discount rate on Michelle's speaking fee for bulk purchases of books. For example, 25 or more books get a 25% discount on the speaking fee. Contact Michelle on her website (michelleamireyes.com/booking) to find out how you can bring in Michelle as a guest speaker.
6. Be sure to check out the "Where Do We Go From Here" section at the end of this kit. It will tell you how to follow up with your people and continue the journey of becoming all things.

LESSON OUTLINE 1

WORSHIPPING GOD AS CULTURAL IMAGE BEARERS

Text: Revelation 7:9-10

Big Idea of the Message: Our cultural identities are fundamentally tied to our spiritual identities.

I. Introduction

A. Christians often try to downplay our God-given cultural identities.

1. Different reasons for downplaying cultural identity include:
cultural identities feel divisive; we're focusing on differences instead of similarities; "I just see you."

2. Problematic use of Galatians 3:28.

B. Main Idea: Our cultural identities are fundamentally tied to our spiritual identities.

II. Teaching

A. Cultural identities continue in the new heavens and the new earth (v. 9).

1. Rev. 7:9 is a picture of the ideal humanity with each person retaining their ethnicity, story, and voice.
2. If God didn't value our cultural identities, they would not continue into the new heavens and new earth.
3. Multicultural = the equal presence and value of more than one distinct cultural group, which can include but also go beyond

ethnic groups and is manifested in various behaviors, cultural assumptions and values, patterns of thinking, and communication styles.

B. The focus of God's multicultural people is a posture of worship (v. 10).

1. Rev. 7:9 is a picture of believers as multiethnic and multicultural, coming from all the nations of the earth to worship God together.
2. We must value people of every language, not for multiculturalism's sake, but to showcase the power of unifying in worship before the Lord Almighty.

C. This vision of the future in Rev. 7:9-10 should impact how we live today.

1. We must acknowledge the real and good diversity of the body of Christ.
2. As a church, class, or organization, we can think through how this vision impacts our leadership, teaching and preaching, and discipleship.

III. Application

A. Where do we go from here?

1. 3 suggestions: 1) we will commit to hiring racially-conscious Christians of leaders; 2) we will incorporate curriculum on culture into our church's, school's and/or organization's annual discipleship processes; 3) we will host a monthly (or quarterly) gathering for prayer and lament to allow people of different

ethnicities to share their testimonies, stories, and experiences, and to have concentrated time of worship together.

- B. The image of believers fellowshiping together throughout all eternity is a beautiful, cultural mosaic. Let's live this out on earth as it is in heaven!

Recommended Resources for Going Deeper:

Illustrations: See Michelle's opening story in Ch. 1 of *Becoming All Things*

For other texts on race, culture, and multiculturalism, see:

1. J. Daniel Hays, *From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2003).
2. Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
3. Kenneth A. Matthews and M. Sydney Park, *The Post-Racial Church: A Biblical Framework for Multiethnic Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2011).
4. James K. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009).
5. Derwin L. Gray, *Building a Multiethnic Church: A Gospel Vision of Love, Grace, and Reconciliation in a Divided World* (Thomas Nelson, 2021).
6. Mark Hearn, *Technicolor: Inspiring Your Church to Embrace Multicultural Ministry* (B&H Books, 2017).

LESSON OUTLINE 2

DEVELOPING OUR CULTURAL IDENTITIES FOR GOD'S GLORY

Text: Genesis 1:28; 9:1; 11:1-9

Big Idea of the Message: God desires his image bearers to spread into the world and develop distinct cultural identities.

I. Introduction

- A. Our interpretation of Scripture informs how we live our life—and some of our interpretations are faulty.
 - 1. Traditional interpretations of the Tower of Babel see diversity as a result of sin and God's dispersal of peoples as a curse.
 - 2. But what if there is more to the story?
- B. Genesis 11 speaks to human flourishing and ultimately showcases God's desire for his image bearers to spread into the world and develop distinct cultural identities.

II. Teaching

- A. Developing our cultural identities and flourishing as ethnic peoples is how we lean into God's vision for humanity (Gen. 1:28; 9:1).
 - 1. Gen. 1:28 and 9:1 summarize God's cultural mandate for humans to increase, diversify, and fill the earth.
 - 2. Cultural identity = the narratives born of our ethnic heritage.
 - 3. To develop our cultural identity means to understand the stories, values, and perspectives that have been passed down to us from our communities.

4. If you were to write down what you think is good, beautiful, and important in the world, you'd be formulating the beginnings of your cultural narrative.

B. The dispersing of peoples at Babel in Gen. 11 is God's intervention to continue his plan in creation - his push to further spread, multiply, and develop diverse ethnic identities (v. 5-9).

1. The real problem at Babel is that humans have stopped spreading and diversifying, preferring to congregate in one place and unify around something other than God.
2. God's confusion of "tongues" prevents the people from making projects that reject God's naming and identity giving. In fact, God's intervention with the creation of diverse languages actually forces them to fulfill God's original command in Genesis 1:28: "fill the earth and subdue it," something that these Babel builders were afraid to do—they were afraid of being "scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth," a phrase repeated three times (vv. 4, 8, and 9).
3. Human cultural and linguistic diversity is a tool of God's grace and not a curse.

C. Our cultural identities are rooted in both the imago Dei and the fall, so part of learning to embrace our cultural identities and value them mean learning to differentiate what is good and right from what is an idol (Gen. 11:1-4).

1. At Babel, humans were trying to define who they were (culturally, spiritually) apart from God.
2. What are the idols in your culture?

III. Application

- A. How can each of us, as followers of Jesus, lean into our cultural identities so that we can fully flourish?
- B. Where do we go from here? (see p. 15-21 in *Becoming All Things*)
 - 1. 3 suggestions: 1) teach culture and race regularly from the pulpit, in the classroom, or organizational seminars/workshops;
 - 2) pay for/encourage each people in our church, class, or organization to take a DNA test (e.g., 23andme, Ancestry.com);
 - 3) encourage each person to read a history book about their ethnic heritages.
- C. Going throughout the world and developing unique ethnic narratives is a fundamental aspect of what it means to be human.

Recommended Resources for Going Deeper:

Illustrations: See Michelle's opening story in Ch. 2 of *Becoming All Things*

For other texts on cultural identity development, see:

- 1. Sarah Shin, *Beyond Colorblind: Redeeming Our Ethnic Journey* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2017).
- 2. Orlando Crespo, *Being Latino in Christ: Finding Wholeness in Your Ethnic Identity* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2009).
- 3. Esau McCaulley, *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2020).
- 4. D.A. Horton, *Intensional: Kingdom Ethnicity in a Divided World* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2019).

LESSON OUTLINE 3

CONNECTING ACROSS CULTURES FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL

Text: 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Big Idea of the Message: Each of us is called to go on a journey of becoming all things to all people.

I. Introduction

A. Connecting with people of other cultures is hard.

1. Share some personal stories and examples of awkward or difficult moments with someone.

B. Each of us is called to go on a journey of becoming all things to all people.

II. Teaching

A. Becoming all things is a posture that desires to see the world through other people's eyes, to value what they value, and both honor and center their way of life.

1. For example: Paul knew how to talk with Jews in the synagogues and discuss philosophy with Greeks in the public square.
2. Though his underlying convictions did not waver, he adopted different approaches toward circumcision and dietary laws depending on who was with him.

B. Inherent in the posture of becoming all things to all people is seeing each person as a unique individual.

1. Implicit in Paul's statement in verses 20-21 is the belief that each individual Jew and Gentile (i.e., those not under the law) is distinct and unique.
2. No two Jews and no two Gentiles are the same, and Paul's goal is to learn how to connect with as many of them as possible.

C. Becoming all things to all people is missional

1. Our motivation to connect across cultures must be fueled by a deep understanding of who God has made us to be and a love for all peoples.
2. We adapt our words, behavior, and body language to each person in order to point people toward Christ. In other words, becoming all things to all people is an extension of our call to love our neighbor.

III. Application

A. Where do we go from here?

1. 3 suggestions: 1) we will not treat any person at our church, in our school, or organization as a representative of an entire ethnic group; 2) we will give each person the honor of self-definition; 3) we will focus on an individual's cultural narrative by asking questions such as "What is your story?" and "What are your ethnic roots?"

B. Healthy relationships across cultures are possible. We can all come together—majority and minority, Black, Brown, and white—and thrive. But the road forward begins with a willingness to embrace change.

C. We must be willing to think differently about who we are and the way we're supposed to live our lives for the sake of the gospel.

Recommended Resources for Going Deeper:

Illustrations: See Michelle's introduction of *Becoming All Things*

For other texts on cultural identity development, see:

1. Marvin J. Newell, *Crossing Cultures in Scripture: Biblical Principles for Mission Practice* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016).
2. MelindaJoy Mingo, *The Colors of Culture: The Beauty of Diverse Friendships* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020).
3. Patty Lane, *A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multicultural World Paperback* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002).
4. Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally: A Model for Effective Personal Relationships* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016).
5. Andreas K. Köstenberger and T. Desmond Alexander, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011).

LESSON OUTLINE 4

REPRESENTING JESUS BY EMBRACING CULTURAL DISCOMFORT

Text: Acts 15

Big Idea of the Message: Loving our neighbor means not demanding that everyone be just like us.

I. Introduction

- A. How do you respond when someone makes you feel uncomfortable?
 - 1. Too often we immediately jump to the conclusion that what they are doing or saying is wrong.
- B. Main Idea: Loving our neighbor means not demanding that everyone be just like us.

II. Teaching

- A. Our faith must be contextualized from one person to the next.
 - 1. In Acts 15, a council convenes in Jerusalem, and the apostles challenge the Christian leaders gathered there to stop demanding that Gentiles become Jewish to be considered part of the family of God.
 - 2. The call for cultural conformity has come to an end under the new covenant.
 - 3. New covenant Christianity calls for cultural accommodation.
Cultural accommodation = we don't demand that people change who they are. We change ourselves for them.

B. The practice of cultural accommodation lowers the cultural barriers to the gospel.

1. Examples: Acts 18:18; 21:17-26
2. Paul changes how he eats, how he prays, and how he dresses to prevent any stumbling blocks to his presentation of the gospel among people of other cultures.
3. When we meet people where they are, we enable the maximum number of people to hear of Christ without giving them additional grounds to stumble.

C. We must discern what is culturally a nonnegotiable from what is difficult or burdensome.

1. Paul would never distort the gospel to accommodate cultural preferences, i.e., the message of the Lord Jesus Christ, crucified and raised from the dead (1 Cor. 15:3-4) must not be changed.
2. For example, Paul refuses to accommodate the Greek elite in the Corinthian church with their demands for eloquence.
3. We need to ask if Jesus would have adapted himself in our situation.

III. Application

A. As followers of Jesus, we must be willing to embrace discomfort in order to serve others. How much cultural discomfort are we willing to forbear?

B. We will not know how to answer this question unless we are willing to sit in our own discomfort and begin listening to and appreciating our fellow human beings.

C. Where do we go from here?

1. We will follow the rubric of James 1:19 to be quick to listen,

slow to speak, and slow to anger. 4 suggestions moving forward: 1) we will have a zero tolerance for gossip and criticism about different people's cultural beliefs and expressions; 2) we will make it a habit to repeat the phrase "I am not the standard" whenever cultural conflict arises; 3) we will not penalize people for culturally expressing themselves; 4) we will delight in new cultural narratives and expressions both verbally and in our actions.

D. We should not be afraid of people or fear the discomfort of personal change. We should be afraid of misrepresenting Jesus.

Recommended Resources for Going Deeper:

Illustrations: See the opening story in Ch. 3 of *Becoming All Things*

For other texts on cultural identity development, see:

1. Daniel Hill, *White Awake: An Honest Look at What It Means to Be White* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2017).
2. Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).
3. George Yancy, *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race in America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).
4. Beverly Daniel Tatum, *Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? And other conversations about race* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).
5. Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism* (Boston, MA: Beacon, 2018).

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Congratulations on finishing the *Becoming All Things Teaching Series*! We hope that your experience in learning about culture, race, and faith will not end with this series. Rather, we hope it can kick off the beginning of a life-long journey for your congregation, class, and/or small group to explore and further embrace and embody these biblical concepts in their lives. Here are 6 practical ways that your church, class, or small group can continue the journey of becoming all things:

1. Host a weekend retreat for staff and/or leaders to debrief the *Becoming All Things* teaching series and create a three-step plan to integrate some of the suggestions from this kit into your church, school, and/or organization.
2. Develop a quarterly volunteer training program in which you bring in guest speakers to speak to your staff and/or volunteers on cultural identity development, racial consciousness, and what it looks like to be a multicultural church, school, and/or organization. You can start by bringing in Dr. Michelle Ami Reyes to lead your first training session.
3. Host a “Conversations Across Cultures” special event at your church, school, and/or organization. Set up a room with tables and assign 6 people to a table. Have each person download a free copy of Dr. Michelle Ami Reyes’ ebook “5 Conversation Starters to Connect Across Cultures” (available on her website, michelleamireyes.com). Have a host or Emcee read the brief ebook aloud and then give each table 30

minutes to discuss the questions from the ebook with each other. Spend some time as a big group afterward, processing and debriefing what they learned about themselves and about each other.

4. Start a book club and read *Becoming All Things: How Small Changes Lead to Lasting Connections Across Cultures*. Download the ebook on Michelle's website for accompanying discussion questions for each chapter. Go to michelleamireyes.com.
5. Organize a respective men's groups and women's groups to go through *Becoming All Things* specifically from distinct male and female perspectives.
6. Host a dinner or coffee hour and invite your people to come over and use Dr. Michelle Ami Reyes' free Conversation Cards (available on her website, michelleamireyes.com) to facilitate conversations over food and drink.