

I AM FROM

CULTURAL CONVERSATION CARDS

USER MANUAL

I am From Conversation Cards can be used to enter into enjoyable conversations that can lead to closer relationships and spiritual transformation.

In this manual, you'll find:

[Instructions on Using the Cards](#)

[A Guide to Using the Cards with Care](#)

[Three Ways to Interact with the Topics](#)

[Five Dynamic Uses for the Cards](#)

[A Guide to Transitioning to the Gospel](#)

[Important Definitions](#)

[A View of Every Card in the Deck](#)

Instructions

HOW TO BEGIN A CONVERSATION

To introduce the cards, say something like, “Hi, my name is _____. I believe it’s important to listen to people’s cultural and spiritual journeys. I have a deck of cards with topics like family and cultural values. I’d like to invite you to read and sort the cards. Then I’ll ask you about them. Would you share your thoughts with me?”

HOW TO USE THE CARDS

Read the *Guide Card* out loud for the first topic you wish to discuss. Use it to understand the topic and know what to do. Then ask the questions on the back of the card. Continue to do this with the other topics. (*Note: You can listen only or share your answers to the questions as well.*)

TYPES OF CARDS

You can view all of the cards at the end of this document.

Guide Cards (5): These cards provide introductions, directions and questions that correspond to each of the five topics.

Topic Cards (48): These cards help people process up to five influential aspects of culture. If you are using all five topics, we encourage the following order: 1) Ancestry, 2) Growing Up, 3) Family Expectations, 4) Cultural Values, 5) Cultural Experiences. (*Note: When someone indicates a card is not true for them, it generally means something else is true. There are no “opposite” Topic Cards such as “I like jazz” and “I don’t like jazz”.*)

Wrap Up Card (1): These optional questions give people more space to process the conversation and their lives.

Gospel Transition Card (1): This has a sample gospel transition and thoughts on how to connect the truth of the gospel to people’s deep desires and unique cultures.

Use with Care

These cards can surface painful family history and personal experiences, especially for ethnic minorities/people of color. We must listen to people's stories with empathy, respect and humility. The following steps will help you prepare your heart and attitude before using these cards with others, especially people whom you don't know or don't know well:

1. Use these cards to reflect on your own race, ethnicity and culture - including your privileges and pains.
2. Use these cards to talk to friends who are of a different race, ethnicity or culture. Ask them for honest feedback.
3. Seek to know people for who they are, not as representatives of their race, ethnicity or culture.
4. Educate yourself on the historic and current challenges ethnic minorities/people of color experience.
5. Acknowledge others' pain and resist the temptation to try to "fix it" or share your own pain or guilt in response. Hurting people need their pain to be acknowledged with empathy *and should not feel the need to comfort you.*
6. Trust God to work. Let conversations go where God leads them. Love others by listening well and being a safe person.

MORE WAYS TO USE WITH CARE

Acknowledge Pain: When someone shares their pain, acknowledge it sincerely, even if what is shared makes you feel uncomfortable. Say something like, *"That's a really painful part of your family's history. I'm very sorry that happened and that it is still affecting you and your family."*

When There's a Lack of Trust: If you think someone may not trust you due to painful historical realities, be vulnerable by sorting the cards and answering the questions before others do the same.

Editing the Deck: You may set aside cards which you believe would hinder an open and safe conversation. *(Note: Don't remove cards to avoid discussions that may make you uncomfortable.)*

Three Ways to Interact with the Topics

EXPEDITED

The expedited approach is the fastest way to go through the cards. Ask people to sort the cards in each category and then ask them the questions on the Guide cards. This approach allows people to sort the cards as a private exercise to help them process that topic before answering questions. This may work best with cultures that are highly time and task-oriented or in locations where free time is limited. Of course, follow up conversations could go into more depth.

CONFIDED

The confided approach takes more time, but allows you to connect more deeply. Ask people to share something about each Topic Card as they read and sort them. Say something like, “Read each card and share why each one is, is partially, or isn’t true for you. Feel free to share the stories and thoughts each card brings to mind.” Then ask the questions on the Guide cards. This approach allows people to better process since they are verbally sharing with another person. This may work best with cultures that prioritize face-to-face relationships or in circumstances where there is a lot of free time or time to meet and continue the conversation.

HIGHLIGHTED

The highlighted approach is a hybrid between the expedited and confided approach. It takes a little more time than the expedited approach and may not go as deep as the confided approach. Ask people to sort the cards as you would in the expedited approach, but ask people to highlight and share about a few specific cards. You could ask which cards are most meaningful, influential, relevant, or least important to them. You can also ask about specific cards you saw them process and sort. Then ask the

questions on the Guide cards. This may work best when you aren't sure what cultural values are held by those you initiate with or what their schedule looks like.

Five Dynamic Uses

Though there are other creative ways to use these cards, many have found these cards to be particularly good for the following:

Deepening Relationships: I Am From can deepen relationships with strangers or those you know very well. It encourages people to share significant parts of their stories which are often overlooked.

Building Team Unity: I Am From can help people better understand each other's values, histories and experiences. This can greatly encourage teamwork and make it easier to identify and resolve conflict.

Increasing Cultural Awareness: I Am From can help people better understand their own cultural journeys and better listen to and understand people from any culture.

Enhancing Evangelism: I Am From helps people to connect lost people's deepest desires to the gospel and connect the gospel to their cultural beliefs, values and experiences.

Accelerating Discipleship: I Am From can help disciplers quickly understand a disciple's background and carefully identify the lies they believe, their unresolved pain, and where they most need grace and truth.

How to Transition to the Gospel

After the last topic, you can ask some or all five questions on the Wrap Up Card. Even if you don't use the Wrap Up Card, always give people the opportunity to leave the conversation or change the subject before seeking to talk more. Say something like, "Thank you for going through this with me. I enjoyed listening to you. I hope we can talk again sometime."

To transition to a spiritual or gospel conversation, ask the last question on the Cultural Experiences Guide Card. If spiritually open, skip the Wrap Up Card, thank them (see above), and say something like “I’d love to hear your thoughts on what the Bible says about God’s love for you and your culture. Do you have some more time to share your thoughts with me?” Refer to the Gospel Transitions Card to learn more.

SAMPLE GOSPEL TRANSITION

“I’d love to hear your thoughts on what the Bible says about God’s love for you and your culture. Do you have some more time to share your thoughts with me?”

CONNECT DESIRES TO TRUTH

Listen for people’s deep desire for the gospel. Then ask yourself, “What is the hope the gospel can fulfill, that would best connect with them?”

Hopes could be: never feeling alone, justice, eternal life, healing, forgiveness, peace in light of uncertainty, shame taken away. Hope can even be communicated through a gospel transition question.

An example of a hope-inspired gospel transition: *“You shared a deep desire to be accepted by your family. Could I get your thoughts on what I believe about God’s plan to invite people from all cultures into God’s family?”*

CONNECT TRUTH TO CULTURE

Listen for the truths of the gospel people would best relate to. Then ask yourself, “What truths of the gospel can I emphasize to best relate to them and their culture?”

Here is an example for a culture that values avoiding shame instead of guilt: *“We have brought shame upon ourselves, but Jesus can give us the honor of being children of God.”*

Using the Cards in Different Situations

USING WITH A GROUP

With enough decks for each person: give everyone a set of cards and have them all discuss one topic at a time and one question at a time. With one deck: lay out a topic's cards side by side so all can see them. Each person can take a turn to move cards up (if they are true of them) and down (if they aren't true of them) as they answer each question.

TO GO DEEPER

One way to more deeply understand others is to ask them to share something about each *Topic Card* as they read and sort them. Say something like, “*As you read each card share why each one is, is partially, or isn't true for you. Feel free to share the stories and thoughts each card surfaces.*”

Important Definitions

Culture: The customs, beliefs, values, ways of communicating and preferences of a group of people. *(Note: Some aspects of culture are easy to recognize: language, food, music and clothing. Other aspects are difficult to recognize: beliefs, values, ways of communicating and views of time.)*

Ethnicity: A background common to those who share similar geographical origins, physical characteristics, history, or culture.

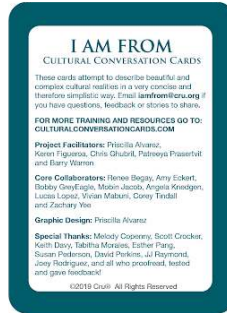
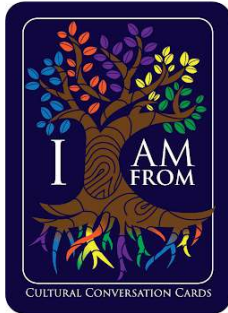
Race: The concept of race is not biologically supported but was created to group people based solely on shared physical characteristics. *(Note: Historically, the concept of race has been used to devalue and oppress people with certain hair, eyes, skin color, body shape, etc.)*

People of Color: People with darker skin such as people of African or Asian descent, Pakistanis, Latinx, Pacific Islanders, etc. *(Note: Darker skin, hair and eyes come from a higher amount of a natural pigment called melanin.)*

Ethnic Minority: People who have different ethnic, cultural or national backgrounds from those in the dominant/majority culture.

(Note: In locations like the United States and when possible and applicable, ask people if they prefer the term 'person of color' or 'ethnic minority'. Some indigenous peoples may not use either term for reasons we will add to this page soon.)

Guide Cards



INTRODUCTION

"Where am I from?" This is a profound question if we consider how we are deeply influenced by our past, our families and our day-to-day cultural experiences.

I Am From: Cultural Conversation Cards was co-created by over a dozen racially, ethnically and culturally diverse women and men.

They designed these cards to help anyone better understand their own and others' cultural journeys and experiences.

These cards help people be known, feel understood, bond with others and become more empathetic and culturally self-aware.

(over)

MINISTRY VISION

Genuine ethnic diversity and unity will be difficult to achieve without engaging people from every cultural background at every stage of their spiritual journeys.

I Am From: Cultural Conversation Cards can help us to better see, know and understand each other. This is vitally important so all people can thrive spiritually, relationally and professionally within our ministries and churches.

We pray God will use these cards to help us conform to Jesus' prayer in John 17: "I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one."

By God's grace we may better love one another and help fulfill the Great Commission.

(over)

QUICK INSTRUCTIONS

HOW TO BEGIN A CONVERSATION
To introduce the cards, say something like, "Hi, my name is _____. I believe it's important to listen to people's cultural and spiritual journeys. I have a deck of cards with topics like family and cultural values. I'd like to invite you to read and sort the cards. Then I'll ask you about them. Would you share your thoughts with me?"

HOW TO USE THE CARDS
Read the Guide Card out loud for the first topic you wish to discuss. Use it to understand the topic and know what to do. Then ask the questions on the back of the card. Continue to do this with the other topics. (Note: You can choose to listen only or share your answers to the questions as well.)

(over)

QUICK INSTRUCTIONS (CONTINUED)

WHAT TO DO AFTER THE TOPICS
After the last topic you can ask some or all five questions on the Wrap Up Card.

Even if you don't use the Wrap Up Card, always give people the opportunity to leave the conversation or change the subject before seeking to talk more.

Say something like, "Thank you for going through this with me. I enjoyed listening to you. I hope we can talk again sometime."

HOW TO TRANSITION TO THE GOSPEL
Ask the last question on the Cultural Experiences Guide Card. If spiritually open, skip the Wrap Up Card, thank them (see above), and say something like the transition on the Gospel Transition Card.

USE WITH CARE

These cards can surface painful family history and personal experiences, especially for ethnic minorities/people of color. We must listen to people's stories with empathy, respect and humility.

The following steps will help you prepare your heart and attitude before using these cards with others, especially people whom you don't know or don't know well:

1. Use these cards to reflect on your own race, ethnicity and culture, including your privileges and pains.
2. Use these cards to talk to friends who are of a different race, ethnicity or culture. Ask them to give you honest feedback.

(over)

USE WITH CARE (CONTINUED)

3. Seek to know people for who they are, not as representatives of their race, ethnicity or culture.
4. Educate yourself on the historic and current challenges ethnic minorities/ people of color experience.
5. Acknowledge others' pain and resist the temptation to try to "fix it" or share your own pain or guilt in response. Hurting people need their pain to be acknowledged with empathy and should not feel the need to comfort you.
6. Trust God to work. Let conversations go where God leads them. Love others by listening well and being a safe person.

(over)

HELPFUL TIPS

Acknowledge Pain – When someone shares their pain, acknowledge it sincerely, even if what is shared makes you feel uncomfortable. Say something like, "That's a really painful part of your family's history. I'm very sorry that happened and that it is still affecting you and your family."

When There's a Lack of Trust – If you think someone may not trust you due to painful historical realities, be vulnerable by sorting the cards and answering the questions before others do the same.

Editing the Deck – You may set aside cards which you believe would hinder an open and safe conversation. (Note: Don't remove cards to avoid discussions that may make you uncomfortable.)

(over)

HELPFUL TIPS (CONTINUED)

To Go Deeper – One way to more deeply understand others is to ask them to share something about each Topic Card as they read and sort them. Say something like, "Read each card and share why each one is, is partially, or isn't true for you. Feel free to share the stories and thoughts each card brings to mind."

Using With a Group – With enough decks for each person: give everyone a set of cards and have them all discuss one topic at a time and one question at a time. With one deck: lay out a topic's cards side by side so all can see them. Each person can take a turn to move cards up (if they are true of them) and down (if they aren't true of them) as they answer each question.

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

Culture – The customs, beliefs, values, ways of communicating and preferences of a group of people. (Note: Some aspects of culture are easy to recognize like language, food, music and clothing. Other aspects of culture are difficult to recognize and understand like beliefs, values, ways of communicating and views of films.)

Ethnicity – A background common to those who share similar geographical origins, physical characteristics, history or culture.

Race – The concept of race is not biologically supported but was created to group people based solely on shared physical characteristics. (Note: Historically, the concept of race has been used to devalue and oppress people with certain hair, eyes, skin color, body shape, etc.)

(over)

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS (CONTINUED)

People of Color – People with darker skin such as people of African or Asian descent, Pakistani, Latinx, etc. (Note: Darker skin, hair and eyes come from a higher amount of a natural pigment called melanin.)

Ethnic Minority – People who have different ethnic, cultural or national backgrounds from those in the dominant/ majority culture.

(Note: In locations like the United States and when possible and applicable, ask people if they prefer the term "person of color" or "ethnic minority." Some indigenous peoples may not use either term for reasons you can learn about on our website.)

Find more important definitions at: CULTURALCONVERSATIONCARDS.COM

THANK YOU!

Thank you for your interest in these cards! We sincerely hope they will increase your cultural self-awareness, uncover more of the cultural realities around you, and help your cultural conversations be more enjoyable and significant.

I Am From: Cultural Conversation Cards was developed by Cru staff members who work with many Cru ministries and teams including: City, Culture & Mission, Destino, Epic, Mission Expansion, Multicultural Ministry Innovation (R&D), Nations and Performing Artists.

Cru is a global community who desires to journey alongside all people as they seek to discover their true purpose and the loving grace of God through Jesus Christ.

You can learn more about us at cru.org.

Ancestry Cards

ANCESTRY
GUIDE

Ancestry has both genetic and cultural aspects. We are culturally influenced by our ancestors who have passed their cultures down to us.

Sort these Ancestry cards by those which are true for you, those you don't know, and those which are not true for you.

Then answer the questions on the other side of this card.

Note: In these cards the word "here" could mean where you live, or grew up or where home is.

(over)

ANCESTRY
GUIDE

1. When you think about your family's history, what are you grateful for?
2. If you feel comfortable sharing, what bothers or grieves you when you think about your family's history?
- 3a. If known, what significant things have your ancestors passed on to you?
- 3b. If unknown, what do you wish you knew about your ancestry?

ANCESTRY

At least one of my parents or grandparents is an immigrant or refugee

ANCESTRY

My family or ancestors came here to take advantage of better opportunities

ANCESTRY

My family or ancestors came here to get away from persecution or difficulty

ANCESTRY

My ancestors believed or did things I don't agree with

ANCESTRY

I don't know where my ancestors came from

ANCESTRY

My parents were or are from different cultural backgrounds

ANCESTRY

My ancestors came here many generations ago

ANCESTRY

My family or ancestors did not choose to come here

ANCESTRY

My ancestors were the earliest inhabitants to live here

Cultural Experiences Cards

CULTURAL EXPERIENCES
GUIDE

Cultural experiences are how we experience ourselves, others, society and institutions.

Sort these Cultural Experiences by those which are true for you, are partly true for you, and are not true for you.

Then answer the questions on the other side of this card.

(over)

CULTURAL EXPERIENCES
GUIDE

1. What do you think are your culture's greatest strengths?
2. If you feel comfortable sharing, what challenging cultural experiences do you most frequently encounter?
3. What helps and what hinders you from feeling connected to your cultural background?
4. If you believe in God, do you think God created and loves you and your culture? What brought you to that perspective?

CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

I don't feel like I have a culture

CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

People sometimes assume I was not born in this country

CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

People assume things about me because of my name, appearance, accent or language they hear me speak

CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Some people are not sure what my cultural background is or they assume incorrectly

CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

I feel most comfortable when I'm around people who share my cultural experiences

CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

When I'm in a large group I feel comfortable being the only person from my cultural background

CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

There are many people from my cultural background in positions of leadership and influence

CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

People from my cultural background are often unfairly portrayed in popular books, movies or tv

CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

People from my cultural background are often main or supporting characters in popular books, movies or tv

Cultural Values Cards

CULTURAL VALUES
GUIDE

A cultural value is a belief or behavior a group of people considers to be important.

Sort these Cultural Values by those which are important to you, are somewhat important to you, and are not important to you.

Then answer the questions on the other side of this card.

©2017

CULTURAL VALUES
GUIDE

1. Which of these cultural values are most important to you? Why is that?
2. Which of these cultural values are least important to you? Why is that?
3. Are there cultural values that are important to you but aren't represented in these cards? What are they?
4. How do your cultural values influence your day-to-day choices and behaviors?

CULTURAL VALUES

Influential people being able to give power and influence to those they believe are worthy

CULTURAL VALUES

Anyone being able to achieve power and influence through hard work

CULTURAL VALUES

Being connected to our community through traditions and our shared past

CULTURAL VALUES

Allowing my plans to be interrupted in order to focus on relationships

CULTURAL VALUES

Verbally communicating in an obvious and direct way in order to avoid misunderstanding

CULTURAL VALUES

Communicating in a subtle and indirect way in order to avoid creating tension and offending others

CULTURAL VALUES

Being a good person in order to have a clean conscience and avoid feeling guilty

CULTURAL VALUES

Using my time efficiently in order to be on time and accomplish tasks

CULTURAL VALUES

Honoring my family or community and maintaining or restoring our reputation

CULTURAL VALUES

Being an independent individual who is free to walk my own path

Family Expectations Cards

FAMILY EXPECTATIONS GUIDE

Family expectations are the ways our families and home communities seek to influence us.

Sort these Family Expectations by those which are true for you, are partly true for you, and are not true for you.

Then answer the questions on the other side of this card.

(pivaf)

FAMILY EXPECTATIONS GUIDE

1. What do you most appreciate about your family's expectations and influence on you?
2. If you feel comfortable sharing, what is one family expectation you wish you could change? Why?
3. In your family, what (if any) are the cultural expectations for different genders?
4. Which family expectation affects you the most? How?

FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

I avoid talking with my family about some details of my life or topics of discussion

FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

My family wants to be involved in most aspects of my life

FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

I feel the freedom to make most life decisions without my family's approval

FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

My family wants me to follow their spiritual beliefs or practices

FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

My family is multicultural and has conflicting cultural expectations of me

FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

I am expected to care for my parents when they are old

FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

My family is proud of how I've embraced our cultural background

FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

My family expects me to send money home

FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

My family is disappointed with at least one major life decision I've made

FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

My parents have strong opinions about the kind of person I marry or they want to choose my spouse

Growing Up Cards

GROWING UP
GUIDE

We learn culture growing up just like we learn language, by everyday exposure and by being taught.

Sort these Growing Up cards by those which are true for you, are partly true for you, and are not true for you.

Then answer the questions on the other side of this card.

(over)

GROWING UP
GUIDE

1. Which card brings up a fond memory for you? What happened?
2. If you feel comfortable sharing, which card brings up a painful memory for you? What happened?
3. How have your spiritual beliefs stayed the same or changed since you were a child?

GROWING UP

I had childhood friends who introduced me to other cultures

GROWING UP

I grew up without one or both of my parents

GROWING UP

I had freedom to decide if I wanted to belong to a faith or spiritual community

GROWING UP

I was influenced by values, beliefs or traditions from multiple cultures

GROWING UP

I am adopted

GROWING UP

I grew up speaking or understanding at least two languages

GROWING UP

My current values, beliefs or traditions are different from those my family taught me

GROWING UP

I was encouraged to understand and participate in my family's cultural traditions

GROWING UP

I grew up belonging to a faith or spiritual community

GROWING UP

I grew up feeling strongly connected to my extended family