

## **Introduction to the Christian Leadership in a Multifaith World Curriculum Designed by IFYC & CCCU**

### **Overview**

The *Christian Leadership in a Multifaith World Curriculum* explores the Christian foundation for interfaith engagement, builds students' religious literacy and gives students the tools to lead bridge-building activities in their communities. The curriculum is designed by CCCU and IFYC in partnership with Bethel University (MN) faculty Marion Larson, Amy Poppinga, and Sara Shady.

### **Overall Learning Outcomes**

As a result of participating in the curriculum, students will:

- increase their understanding of the Christian theological foundation for interfaith engagement
- deepen their own religious or philosophical commitments
- be able to articulate the importance of civic religious pluralism
- increase their religious literacy
- make connections between interfaith engagement and historical movements for racial equality
- implement one bridge-building project

### **How to Use the Curriculum with Your Students**

The curriculum is comprised of a series of online activities that can be used in sequence or as a stand-alone experience. Activities in the curriculum are intended to be accessible to students on CCCU campuses who are new to interfaith engagement. The curriculum is designed to focus on the framework and skills needed to positively engage religious diversity as a Christian in a diverse workplace and other civic spaces; instructors in pre-professional programs such as nursing, education, and social work may find the modules particularly relevant to their students.

The curriculum is made up of three modules: (1) The Christian Foundation for Interfaith Bridge-building, (2) Religious Literacy, and (3) Interfaith Cooperation and Civil Rights. Each module includes between 6-8 activities. Each activity includes an overview, learning outcomes, activity descriptions, possible student assignments, notes for instructors and a "Going Deeper" section which supports further inquiry in the area. There is also a "Taking Action" activity at the conclusion of the entire curriculum, designed to guide instructors and students as they consider ways to put their new learning into action to build bridges across diverse groups in their communities.

There is no "right" way to use the curriculum. Some instructors may choose to integrate one complete module into their course or program. Other instructors may choose to use 1-2

activities. The curriculum is designed to be adaptable. (**Note** that to be eligible for a grant from CCCU and IFYC, you must commit to using a minimum of 4 activities.) The pilot curriculum is available as a series of pdfs for (free) download. We expect that instructors could cut and paste the content from the curriculum into the learning platform of their choice (Moodle, Canvas, etc.) to use with their students.

### **Sample Audiences**

Here are some sample audiences we imagine might benefit from the curriculum and some suggested activities to fit each audience:

- **Nursing Students.** A faculty member teaching an undergraduate nursing class focused on community health may choose to use several of the activities such as *Introduction to Religious Literacy*, *Belief in Action*, or *A Fresh Look at 1 Corinthians 13* as they invite students to explore how they can best care for people from diverse religious backgrounds during an upcoming clinical placement or in their future career.
- **Social Work Students.** An instructor who oversees a community internship program for undergraduate or graduate social work students might choose to incorporate *Stories of Interfaith Engagement, Part 1 +2*, *Observing Religion Through Practice*, or *Virtues for Engaging Religious Diversity as a Christian* into their internship orientation process to prompt reflection on how to engage diverse religious beliefs while strengthening their own faith.
- **Community Engagement Student Leadership Cohort.** A staff member who runs a community engagement leadership program for students—who perhaps meet regularly for leadership training and fellowship throughout the semester while they volunteer at a local social service agency—might incorporate *A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Good Samaritan*, *Introduction to Interfaith Cooperation*, or activities in Module 3: Interfaith Cooperation + Civil Rights into their ongoing meetings as they consider how to “love their neighbor” in a religiously diverse setting.
- **Student Chaplains or Office of Spiritual Life Interns.** A chaplain or staff member in the Office of Spiritual Life might use *Exploring a Biblical Foundation for Interfaith Engagement*, *“But What About...?”: Big Questions That Arise in Interfaith Engagement*, or *Walking In Another’s Shoes*, to prompt conversation with student chaplains or a student leadership team as they examine what discipleship and mission look like in a multifaith world.

### **Learning Pathways**

As you make a plan for how to use the curriculum and determine which activities are the best fit for your purpose, here are some sample ‘learning pathways’ to get you started:

- **New here?**

If this is your first time incorporating a focus on religious diversity or bridge-building into your work with students... Welcome! We are glad you are here! We recommend you start with *Introduction to Interfaith Cooperation*, *Virtues for Engaging Religious Diversity as a Christian* and *Introduction to Religious Literacy* to give you and your students a solid foundation.

- **Concerned that interfaith activities will dilute your students' Christian faith?**

Often students (and parents) are worried that learning about other religious traditions will lead Christians to turn away from their faith. However, a recent longitudinal study of 3,500 nationally representative college students across the country showed that students who took part in activities that intentionally engaged religious diversity simultaneously deepened their commitment to their own religious identity.<sup>1</sup> We recommend using the activities in the Christian Foundation for Interfaith Bridge-Building module such as *Exploring a Biblical Foundation for Interfaith Engagement*, *"But What About...?": How To Navigate the Big Questions That Arise in Interfaith Engagement*, and *A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Good Samaritan* to explore the theological and scriptural basis for learning about and engaging with people from other religious backgrounds as a way to approach this question head-on.

- **Interested in skills students need to engage religious diversity in the workplace?**

Many instructors in pre-professional programs such as education, nursing or social work are eager for tools to use with their students that will help them prepare to be good teachers, nurses, or social workers in a religiously diverse setting. What do they need to know about diverse religious communities in order to serve them well? Check out the Religious Literacy module including *Introduction to Religious Literacy*, *Walking in Another's Shoes*, and *Sacred Spaces* for activities that will build your students' knowledge-base and skillset for engaging religious diversity in our multifaith world.

- **Have previous experience with engaging religious diversity and want to go deeper?**

If you have already introduced interfaith cooperation to your students, you may benefit from diving-in to activities that move beyond foundational concepts. We recommend taking a look at *A Fresh Look at 1 Corinthians 13*, *Belief in Action*, and *Stories of Interfaith Engagement, Part 1+2* to help students continue to grow in their interfaith leadership skills.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Best Practices for Interfaith Learning and Development in the First Year of College." Rockenbach, A. N., Mayhew, M. J., Correia-Harker, B. P., Dahl, L., Morin, S., & Associates. (2018). Chicago, IL: Interfaith Youth Core. [https://www.ifyc.org/sites/default/files/resources/IDEALS\\_20182.pdf](https://www.ifyc.org/sites/default/files/resources/IDEALS_20182.pdf)

## Assessment

The activities included in the curriculum are intended to be used as stand-alone educational tools and therefore we have not designed a comprehensive assessment plan for the curriculum as a whole. However, IFYC has a set of [assessment tools available on its website](#) including suggestions for qualitative and quantitative assessment practices. We encourage instructors to review these tools and create an assessment plan (perhaps a post-survey? Or journal reflections?) that helps you determine if your students are meeting the objectives of the activity or activities and that best suits your assessment needs. IFYC's pluralism and worldview engagement rubric may be particularly useful for assessing learning.

## Notes from the Curriculum Designers

**Make this your own.** Our intent is to provide instructors who are working in a variety of settings (from a community engagement office to a social work classroom) easily accessible educational tools to use with their students in a way that suits their context. We hope that as you review the outline, you will find several activities that will meet your needs and the goals you have for your engagement with students.

**Links between activities.** Throughout the curriculum, there are places where content from one activity links to content in another activity. While all of the activities are designed to be self-contained, when this is the case, we've mentioned these connections so that instructors can choose to use multiple activities together if they would like.

**Range of content and possible assignments.** The activities all follow a uniform format, but they differ in length and depth. Some activities can be accomplished in a one-hour time period, others will require more time to engage all of the videos or text included. In several of the activities, we offer a variety of possible student assignment options for you to choose from based on what will fit best with your students. We've curated these assignments based on what has worked well for us in our (in-person and online) classrooms.

**Send us your feedback!** We are eager to get your feedback on what worked for you, what could be improved, what additional tools you wish you had, etc. so that we can strengthen the curriculum for the future. Please send all feedback to Megan Johnson, [megan@ifyc.org](mailto:megan@ifyc.org).