

re:View Worldview Study **Topic 07 – Engaging Culture**

(To teach this session you will need: “07_Seen_EngagingCulture” DVD, television or projector, DVD player, student handouts, and this leader’s guide. You may also wish to use “reView_07_VerseSlides.ppt” for the verses.)

NOTE: If you’re teaching the abbreviated 7-session series, this is Session 7.
If you’re teaching the extended 13-session series, this is Session 12.
Those teaching the 13-week study should save “Part B” of the teaching segment for next week.

Suggested Session Layout

Watch “Seen” Film [7:41]
Film Discussion [5:00]
Watch “Engaging Culture: Part A” Teaching Segment [9:18]
Teaching Segment Discussion [5:00]
Activity [10:00]
Watch “Engaging Culture: Part B” Teaching Segment [4:00]
(Optional, recommended for those doing the abbreviated 7-week study)
Challenge: [3:00]
Total session time [40-45 mins.]

Watch “Seen” Film [7:41]

Brief Synopsis: The grand curtain opens, and a wonderful story begins to play out before a packed house. Laughter, anger, sadness, and joy are felt by all – except the one whose life it is about. As the play continues, Darren realizes it his life before him, and unfortunately, everyone is watching. *(For further insight, be sure to watch the directorial comments before viewing the film with your students. You may also choose to show the directorial comments as part of the discussion time.)*

Film Discussion [5:00]

When does Darren realize it is his life on stage? What about Deborah?
Darren realizes it his life after he sees the car accident that killed his brother. He gets up to leave. Deborah realizes it is her life when they get to the hospital scene.

How do people in the audience respond throughout the play?
You’ll get a variety of responses here. People are watching every aspect of the play. Some are responding with applause, some are responding with tears, some are just smiling. The point of this question is that the students realize that the audience members are watching and engaged.

What is the pivotal point of the play? What caused it? How was it resolved? How did the audience respond?
The pivotal point of the play is when Darren realizes that his ENTIRE life is playing out before him, even up to current time. When he begins to see his act of indiscretion play out on the stage, he runs out and ends it via cell phone. The audience responds in a number of ways, but the point to stress with your students is that the audience members were watching and engaged.

Film Discussion (cont.)

If you had a similar opportunity to change something about your life, what would it be?
How would this change affect those that are watching?

You will get a variety of answers. The first question doesn't need to be discussed verbally. The second question can lead into the fact that we need to discern culture, and ultimately engage it. Everyone is watching culture and our lives and how they interact. The question is, "How we will respond?"

What do you think the guy at the end of the play meant when he said, "Will you be the changed or the change?"

You can either sit back and do nothing, or you can do something about it. The change in Darren's life is the exact opposite of what we saw in "Numb". You refuse to let the world change you and you in turn decide to change the world.

(Feel free to use optional handout "reView_07_SeenFilmQuestions.pdf")

Watch "Engaging Culture: Part A" Teaching Segment [9:18]

Synopsis and Outline: We can isolate ourselves from culture, be assimilated by it, or engage it with the heart and mind of Christ. What would the latter look like in our day?

- I. Christianity and Culture
- II. Three Approaches to Culture
 - a. Approach #1: Offended? Withdraw!
 - b. Approach #2: Delighted? Assimilate!
 - c. Approach #3: Distressed? Engage!
- III. Paul's Approach: 1 Corinthians 9:19

(For your reference, a teaching outline of Dr. Brown's teaching segment can be found under "reView_07_TeachingSegmentOutline_A.pdf.")

Teaching Segment Discussion [5:00]

What are the three responses we can have to culture?

- a. *Offended*
- b. *Delighted*
- c. *Distressed*

What are the three actions these responses lead to?

- a. *Offended leads to withdrawal or isolation*
- b. *Delighted leads to assimilation*
- c. *Distressed leads to engagement*

Why do many Christians choose to withdraw from culture?

Because many Christians believe that the secular world is inherently evil and interacting with it can provide strong temptation to turn away from God.

Why do many Christians choose to assimilate with culture?

Because many Christians want to "fit in." They want to show that their actions are OK because they are the same as everyone else's. Many Christians don't want to miss anything in life and are always trying to adapt their beliefs to fit the culture or to forget their Christianity at convenient times.

Teaching Segment Discussion (cont.)

What are some ways we can become aware of what's going on in culture without becoming a part of it?

This is a good question to see how creative everyone is. It is possible, for example, to know everything there is to know about popular movies, music, and television without having to watch or listen to them. Many are not worth watching and are inappropriate. The internet provides a wealth of information on movie scripts, reviews, lyrics, etc.

Nine Inch Nails (Trent Reznor) sings, "Your God is dead and no one cares / If there's a hell, I'll see you there." Give an example of how Christians could respond to this by being offended, by assimilating, and by engaging the culture.

Get students to think through the three approaches. It is easy to be offended by these lyrics and not want to have anything to do with Trent Reznor. On the other hand, many Christians enjoy Nine Inch Nails and say, "It's just a song, and Trent Reznor is entitled to his own views." To engage this song, however, requires that we see Trent Reznor through the eyes of Christ and find our hearts broken for him. If you know much about his other works, you see that he is obsessed with God; an odd obsession for someone who claimed to be atheist.

Activity [10:00]

This activity will help students identify and explain the three traditional responses of Christians to the culture. Divide into small groups of 4-6 and appoint a leader to record the answers of the group. Although three sample scenarios are provided below, you should come up with three or four more that are relevant to your students.

If you think it will engage your students, this exercise can also be done with random teams of people, having each of them role play the character and each of the three responses. This works extremely well if you come up with at least one or two extreme scenarios that can be slightly humorous. Just make sure the exercise stays on track.

Here are three sample scenarios:

"The tattoo and piercing guy"

A guy that has multiple tattoos and body piercing walks into [local hangout]. He comes over and sits at a table nearby. Somehow over the course of discussion, he mentions that he just got a brand new piercing.

- 1) What would the *offended* Christian do?

Moves to different table and avoids the place in the future.

- 2) What would the *assimilated* Christian do?

Begins to compare piercings and doesn't mention he is a Christian.

- 3) What would the *engaging* Christian do?

Either begins to compare piercing and DOES eventually mention he is a Christian, or engages him in another way.

Activity (cont.)

“Girl all alone at lunch”

While eating lunch with your friends you notice a girl sitting alone at lunch. Your friends start to joke about her.

- 1) What would the *offended* Christian do?
Wouldn't even be sitting with people who would joke like that.
- 2) What would the *assimilated* Christian do?
Laugh right along with his/her friends.
- 4) What would the *engaging* Christian do?
Kindly rebuke friends and perhaps go sit with the girl instead of friends.

“Kids hanging out at mall”

You are on your way to watch a movie at the mall. There are the usual kids hanging out there. You recognize a group of them.

- 1) What would the *offended* Christian do?
Hurriedly makes it inside the movie theatre. Better yet, he would have come in another way so he/she didn't have to deal with the kids.
- 2) What would the *assimilated* Christian do?
Go hang out with them for a while, catch up on any gossip, and even ask them to pass a dooby.
- 5) What would the *engaging* Christian do?
Stop and say “hi” to the kids he/she knows, ask them how everything's going. Be polite, courteous and respectful. Always looking for opportunities to engage.

Watch “Engaging Culture: Part B” Teaching Segment [4:00] (7-week study only)

Synopsis and Outline: Paul “makes himself a slave” to everyone in order that he may win them. The passages that follow describe how he tries to get into the heart and mind of people so he can build a bridge to Jesus Christ for them. How can we do this on a practical level?

- I. Putting 1 Corinthians 9:19-22 Into Practice
 - a. The Setting: Athens
 - b. Paul's Response to the Idols
- II. Lessons From Paul's Response
- IV. The People's Response to Paul's Message

(For your reference, a teaching outline of Dr. Brown's teaching segment can be found under “reView_07_TeachingSegmentOutline_B.pdf.”)

Challenge [3:00]

Have your students open their Bibles to 2 Peter 2:7-8. Have someone read it. Mention that this side note about Lot reveals his response to the sinful culture in which he lived. Notice that he was “distressed” about what he saw and heard. Ask you students, “Are we distressed when we sinful activity and destructive behavior?”

Contrast this with Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:19. Popular culture can be an excellent way of building a bridge, just like the Apostle Paul did with culture in his day.

Wrap up this week by recapping what has been learned. Mention that as funny as some of the scenarios in the activity are, we’ve all done some of the same responses as seen today. Our goal as Christians should be to engage the culture through the heart and mind of Jesus. A possible idea for closing this week is to pray in small groups for how they can use specific situations such as these to reach out to unsaved friends.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are teaching the abbreviated 7-week study, this is your last week! Spend some time recapping what has been learned over the last seven weeks and close in small group prayer. If you are teaching the extended 13-week study, we will go into detail on how Paul engaged his culture and what that means for us today in next week’s extended session (Topic 07x).

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