

Seven Tips to Grow in Cultural Awareness in your Church and School

1. **Invest in relationships** – The stronger the relationships that you have with your students and worshippers who are from the different cultures, the more they will naturally trust you and the gospel of Jesus that we hope to share.
2. **Celebrate ethnic and cultural holidays** – Juneteenth Celebration, Cinco De Mayo, National Indigenous People’s Day – Celebrating meaningful holidays of different communities and cultures that you minister to will show each cultural group how much you care and appreciate their heritage and their community.
3. **Offer meaningful immersion experiences** – Create opportunities for ethnic, cultural immersion experiences for your church or school. Spend time volunteering in a homeless shelter, partner with a community center in a low-income Hispanic neighborhood, and/or take mission trips to other parts of the country. Make these immersion experiences meaningful; don’t have it be a “one and done” trip. Debrief the experience as a group, create a series of sermons around these experiences, and include the experiences in your strategic planning process.
4. **Take the IDI** – The *Intercultural Developmental Inventory* helps build “cultural competence in your school or organization” and church. This assessment tool has been used by thousands of people and organizations all over the world to help them serve in cross cultural settings. It can be a great tool to measure where you are as a team or individual.
5. **Utilize professional development/workshop opportunities** – Grace in Action (GIA) and other organizations will come into your church and school to provide training in the area of Cultural Competency. These types of professional development opportunities or workshops challenge, train, and equip leaders within your teams in the area of cultural competence.
6. **Listen!** – Listen to your members, listen to the communities that you serve, and listen to God’s Word. The apostle Paul chose to be all things to all people; he wouldn’t be able to do that if he didn’t listen to the challenges of the ministries that he served. Changing our evangelism efforts, our worship services, and our member ministries is not a bad thing, especially if it means that we can reach more with the gospel. Listen for ways to improve your ministry!
7. **Apply the arts** – Movies, paintings, literature, poems, and theater are all opportunities to gain an appreciation of different cultures and their value to society. Read a new book about extreme poverty, watch a movie produced in Bollywood, visit an art gallery by a Hmong painter or photographer, and study the Tuskegee Experiments. Art is a terrific way to learn about new cultures and communities.