



PARTICIPANT GUIDE

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

1. Understand the concrete reality of the society where you serve.
2. Articulate a biblical message that is relevant and appropriate.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. – John 1:14 (NIV)

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Read Acts 17:18-28

Read Acts 14 & 17

In these two chapters, we find the text (the Gospel) being applied in a specific context. We see how Paul contextualized the Good News in different cultural situations.

- Gospel faithfulness
- The goal of seeing the people saved
- Transcultural communication
- Use of known common elements for the people
- Love demonstrated in miracles
- Rejection of personal fame
- Christ-centeredness

Session 1: Biblical Foundation

CONTEXTUALIZING THE GOOD NEWS | Acts 14 and 17

A strong church is one where Scripture is taught and lived out in appropriate ways in the local and global community.

KNOWING THE CONTEXT

- religious
- socioeconomic
- cultural
- geographical
- political, etc.

How can one know the context?

One theologian used to say we need to have the Scriptures in one hand and the newspaper in the other.

ENTERING A CULTURE

How does the congregation contribute to the knowledge of the community in which it finds itself (physical and/or digitally)?

Session 2: Tools

For you to get to know your community better, gather small groups in order to discuss the following questions/ topics. Later, have someone compile the results in a single document.

CULTURAL ASPECTS

What are some of the most important celebrations or festivities in your community or country?

How are they celebrated?

What do these celebrations represent or accomplish?

What are the most severe social problems in your community?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcoholism | <input type="checkbox"/> Neglected elderly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drug addiction | <input type="checkbox"/> Neglected children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insecurity (food or financial) | <input type="checkbox"/> Others (describe) _____ |

Who are the most recognized leaders of the community?

Why are they considered leaders?

Point out five things the community values in its leaders:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

SOCIAL ASPECTS

When you are sick, where do you go to receive help?

Do you believe in luck? Yes No

Do you think someone can control your future and improve your life? Yes No

Do you attend church regularly? Yes No

If yes, please specify *weekly, monthly, during festivities, other*:

If no, then specify why:

PERSPECTIVE REGARDING GOD

Do you believe in God? Yes No

Have you heard someone talk about Jesus Christ? Yes No

What do you know about Him?

Do you identify yourself with any religion? Yes No

Which one and why?

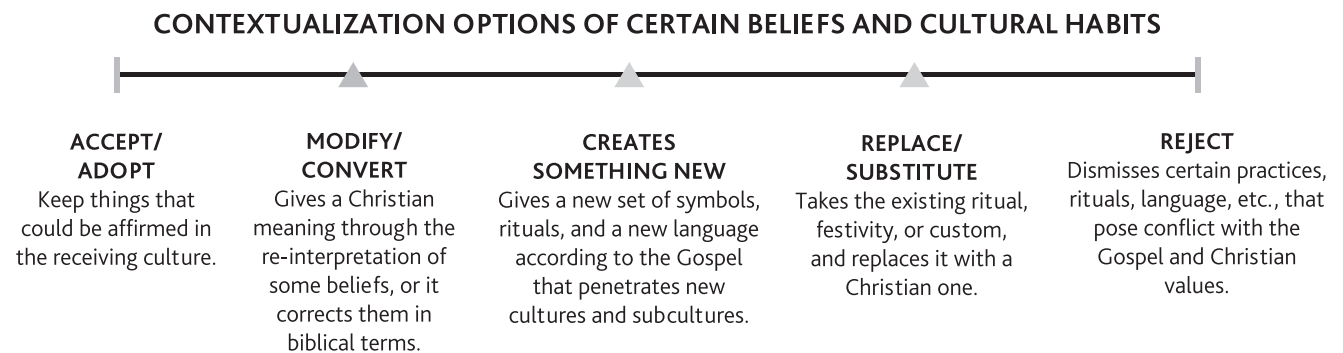
TOOL TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE CONTEXT

Communication of the Gospel involves not only verbalizing God's Good News, but also putting it into action.

We must communicate a message that has answers for people in a holistic way, a way that doesn't seek to present a religion but a person—Jesus Christ and the need to maintain a personal relationship with Him. We want to communicate and develop faith that permeates each aspect of their lives.

We live in times as challenging as they have ever been but each crisis brings its own opportunity. We refer to these as God's *kairos* (timing) moments. We must gather the crop or it will go to waste—every worker is necessary. For too long contextualization, which takes into account culture and the special characteristics of the people we serve, has been neglected. But if we pay close attention to our community, and if we pray for our mission field, fully depending on the Holy Spirit, we will be able to discern the doors God is opening to present Jesus Christ as the community's only hope. He is the one who has the power to save and make life meaningful, in every context.

Review this graph, according to your reality.



Doctoral class with Paul Hiebert, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, February 2002.

EVALUATING THE LINK BETWEEN TEXT AND CONTEXT

The following tool uses a 1-10 scoring system, in which 1 represents complete disagreement or the lowest score and 10 represents excellence or strong agreement.

INTEGRATION BETWEEN TEXT AND CONTEXT											
1.	The church lives and practices Kingdom values in daily life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2.	The Word of God is the only guide for our church.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3.	The Word of God is used in church meetings and its services.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4.	The Bible guides us to try and solve the problems of our community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5.	Our church is conscious of the needs of our community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6.	Our church works hard at establishing relationships with the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7.	The people of our community see the church as a positive agent of change.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Session 3: Action Plan and Goals

Based on what you learned in this module, create an action plan with clear goals for you and your local church.

For Pastors:

Have you identified a leader to mentor as a future church planter? Y or N

If yes, did you meet this month? Y or N

For Review:

Did you turn in a Healthy Church Report this month? Y or N

Look at the 7 Take Your Church's Pulse (TYCP) questions for this module (Session 4) and review your overall measurements.

What are your areas of strength (scores greater than 7)? _____

What are areas for growth (scores equal to or fewer than 7)? _____

Begin to develop an action plan. An action plan for implementing today's materials into your respective ministries is important and should be a habitual process for every step forward in your ministry. Based on what you learned in this module, create an action plan with clear goals for you and your local church.

An acronym that is helpful in planning is to develop **SMART** goals:

Specific: It describes specifically what I plan to do.

Measurable: I will be able to tell whether it was done or not.

Appropriate: Is it in line with God's will?

Realistic: It considers my limitations and availability.

Time-bound: It mentions an exact time period.

Example:

- By the end of the month, I will preach a sermon on integrated faith so that people will realize that God should be a part of every portion of life.
- By the end of the year, financial giving will increase by 5% from the previous year.
- In 6 months, 12 new believers will be saved.
- By next week, we will develop a plan for small groups that will start next fall.

Coming Up: Stronger Churches Module 7

You will help your church understand what evangelization is and you will teach your church about the importance of mobilizing believers to evangelize.

NAME: _____ CHURCH NAME: _____

Healthy Church Report	MONTHLY GOAL	MONTHLY RESULT
SHARED THE VISION How many people inside and outside the church has the vision been shared with? _____		
LEADERS How many leaders has the church trained for small groups and ministry? _____		
SPIRITUAL GIFTS How many people has the church trained to use their spiritual gifts? _____		
TITHE How many people has the church asked to tithe toward the mission of the church? _____		
PRAYER How many people has your church prayed for in the community? _____		

How to Use Reports

- 1. REPORTING** - Included in each module is a tabulation sheet with ten metrics for measuring entitled *Healthy Church Report*. As the participant progresses through the modular training a new measurement is revealed on the tabulation sheet for monthly reporting. Monthly reporting is a key part of the training. This provides accountability and focus on what matters most for the training participants. If the participants know ahead of time what will be asked of them at the next module, they are more likely to do those activities that lead to the results to be reviewed.
- 2. PASTOR TRACK MENTORING** - Pastors are encouraged during the training to identify and mentor a future leader to be a church planter. Each month of the modular training the pastor is asked if a leader has been identified and if they have met for mentoring (see www.multiplicationnetwork.org/resources/ministry-toolbox/203-mentoring-workshop-2 for mentor training material). At the end of the Stronger Churches modular training: Pastors are encouraged to turn in a church planter profile report (<https://www.multiplicationnetwork.org/resources/ministry-toolbox/159-church-planter-profile>) and churches are encouraged to plant a church by sending the new leader for More Churches Modular training.