
CULTURE & FAITH

Opening Prayer

Introduction, emphasizing the inextricability of faith and culture, the uniqueness of the American situation with regard to the Orthodox faith, the challenges of culture (the possibility of losing it in “the melting pot” as opposed to maintaining it in “the mosaic”, the division it can cause), and the richness of culture.

Rounds at Tables (small group discussions), during which the facilitator should place pens and feedback forms (note cards work well) on the seats in which everyone began.

- You may be an Eastern Orthodox Christian, or an Oriental Orthodox Christian, or you yourself might not be an Orthodox Christian at all! But we all have an “Orthodox story”, whether that’s our own or it’s a story about our encounters and experiences with Orthodox Churches or people. So from your perspective, what does it mean to be Orthodox? (large group question)
- What do you love most about the particular culture of your Orthodox Church?
- What are some of the ways that culture can cause division?
- What are celebrations like in the culture of your Orthodox Church?
- How do you invite others into the culture of your Orthodox Church?
- How can your Orthodox Church maintain its culture—and be a stone in the American mosaic rather than disintegrating into the American melting pot?

Reports and Theological Reflection, summarizing table discussions. Begin the concluding reflections by reminding people that this is a very sensitive subject for many people and often one of the “third rail” issues that the Church doesn’t want to touch. Culture runs very deep and is a significant factor in many people’s identity. So it’s really important that we always look at it as a gift and approach our conversations about it with love, and with open minds and open hearts. The facilitator should invite the group to generate other questions, based on his/her presentation and building on the others. Mention the evaluation cards before the prayer.

Closing Prayer

Evaluation
