



Hispanic Heritage Month takes place from September 15th to October 15th every year as a time to recognize and celebrate the many contributions, diverse cultures, and extensive histories of the American Latino community. Beginning in 1968, Hispanic Heritage Month was originally observed as “Hispanic Heritage Week” under President Lyndon Johnson, but it was later extended to a month during President Ronald Reagan’s term in 1988.

Since then, the month has been celebrated nationwide through festivals, art shows, conferences, community gatherings, and much more. The month also celebrates the independence days of several Latin American countries, including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua on September 15th, Mexico on September 16th, and Chile on September 18th. It also includes holidays recognizing Hispanic contributions, such as Virgin Islands-Puerto Rico Friendship Day, which is celebrated in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In the following link, you will find a two-minute video explaining the history behind Hispanic Heritage Month.

<https://www.oprahdaily.com/life/g36651645/hispanic-heritage-month-activities/>

This year we have selected the theme “The Joy of Pilgrimage” based on Psalm 84:5 (NLT). We want to thank Majors Joaquin and Gabriela Rangel, Aurora, IL Corps Officers, for preparing the sermon and devotionals!

WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINE

Call to Worship

Psalm 122 (NLT)

Invocation

O God, you have made of one blood all the people of earth, but you have also richly blessed us with a world of many languages, cultures, and traditions. I thank you today for the many contributions which Hispanic Americans have made - and continue to make - to our great country. Enable us always to learn from and appreciate each other. Make us even stronger as one nation because of our diverse gifts and experiences. Enrich our minds, bodies, and spirits, we pray, as we celebrate together on this beautiful day. Amen.

- Mitchell Lewis, A Christian pastor in Caesar's army

Welcome & Announcements

Praise and Worship:

“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty” (SB #56)

“Bless the Lord, O my soul” (SB #75)

“Come, thou fount of every blessing” (SB #830)

“Joyful, joyful, we adore thee” (SB #39)

“The Pathway of Duty” (HC #64)

“Sing for Joy” (HC #129)

“Trust and Obey” (HC #145)

“Pilgrim Walk On”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jnq5f9WboW4>

“I Am a Christian”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUY3af15ZdE>

“Graves into Gardens”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YihKbG8-X3U>

Offering

Video Testimony

“Our Pilgrimage from Venezuela to Chicago”

<https://vimeo.com/908494554/c059ca886d?share=copy>

Song

“In the Garden” (SOS #138)

Pastoral Prayer

Scripture Reading

Psalm 84

Sermon

“The Joy of Pilgrimage”
(See pages 4-9)

Song

“God Will Make a Way” (HC #65/SOS #7)
“Lord I Need You” (Bilingual. Señor, te necesito)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-B1yD3DSaWs&t=117s>

Benediction

Revelation 7: 9-12

Doxology

“We are Pilgrims”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W33k3RqV1Ws>

SERMON

**Title: “The Joy of Pilgrimage”
by Major Joaquín Rangel**

“What joy for those whose strength comes from the LORD, who have set their minds on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.” Psalm 84:5 (NLT)

Main Idea of the Sermon

Realize that in this earthly life we are only passing through. And when we come to the knowledge of Jesus, this is when we realize that we are on a spiritual journey to a heavenly place.

Celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month

As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month one more year in this country where the Lord has placed us, let us remember that, in our challenges and experiences, the Lord of destiny Himself is with us along the way.

Context of Biblical Scripture

As the son of Kohath, Kore was a Levite who served in the tabernacle (Numbers 4:1-20, 7:9, 10:21). Kohath was also a cousin of Moses and Aaron, whose father Amram was also the son of Kohath (Exodus 6:6, 18, 20; Numbers 16:1). However, Kore rebelled because he was not a priest like Aaron and his sons. The Lord punished that rebellion but showed mercy to the children of Kore. (Numbers 26:9-11) The Psalm may have been written before or after the Babylonian exile (sixth century B.C.), and is attributed to the children of Kore, and was compiled by David in the Book of Psalms.

Whether written by the sons of Kore or King David, the Psalm begins with a praise of the place where God lives and where the one singing the song wants to be.

Introduction

Imagine for a moment your walk through this earth, through this world. You are here in the present, the Lord has helped you up to this point, Ebenezer!

Now, think immediately after that, and whether you know where you are going. I do not know where you are right now; perhaps you have already been established here many years ago; perhaps you are struggling with decisions about where to stay; perhaps you have arrived in this country recently. Wherever you are, I invite you to meditate on this phrase that Bible commentator Warren W. Wiersbe uses for a nomad: **“A wanderer is homeless; a fugitive is running from home; a stranger is far from home; a pilgrim is heading home.”**

By coming to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, our Savior, we become pilgrims and join with other companions on the road in pursuit of the heavenly homeland.

Three Points of the Sermon

1. A Deep Longing to Be in the House of God

I invite you to read this Psalm in its entirety, pausing at verses 4 and 8 where the original says “Selah.” And take a moment to let these words speak into your life. Look at this Psalm as a whole before looking at the three points.

Verse 2 (NLT) says: *“I long, yes, I faint with longing to enter the courts of the Lord. With my whole being, body and soul, I will shout joyfully to the living God.”* We notice deep feelings that consume everything we are: soul, heart, and body.

All that we are longs for all that He is! How wonderful! It is a longing for God who is vital and strong. The only reason we want to be in His courts is because it is where God dwells. David says in Psalm 26:8 (NLT) *“I love your sanctuary, Lord, the place where your glorious presence dwells.”*

Your heart and flesh sing with joy to the living God when you think about being in the presence of God. The psalmist is describing not a mere love for God, but an appetite for God! His spirit, soul, and flesh long for God.

Psalm 42:1-2 (NLT) describes it this way: *“As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God. I thirst for God, the living God. When can I go and stand before him?”*

It is my prayer this day that you “desire with all your soul” to be in the house of God. This desire is not because that place is beautiful or luxuriously decorated, but rather, because it is the place where we can find God. Not a physical place, but a spiritual place.

The wonderful truth is that we can be where He is, in all places, always and in all circumstances. The question for you this day is: do you have that longing in your heart?

2. My strength is in the Lord

Psalm 84:5 says: (NIV) *“Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.”* By visualizing the pilgrimage that the people of Israel would have to make three times a year to celebrate the festivals of the law, we have an image of the difficulties they had to endure to have the opportunity to worship the Lord.

The psalmist's heart was set on pilgrimage and the map of Jerusalem itself was written on his heart! His love for God and his home helped him make the right decisions in his life so that he would not go astray. One of the ancient Puritan writers observed that “the desires of the heart

are the best proofs of our salvation.” If you want to know if you are really a child of God, examine your desires and you will quickly discover it. There is no way to conceal our desires. What you want to do reflects your spiritual condition.

As we embark on this spiritual journey, read once again verse 5 (NLT): *“What joy for those whose strength comes from the Lord, who have set their minds on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.”* We see with spiritual eyes two things: first, is that there are other pilgrims, (v 5^a *“those whose strength comes from the Lord”*). Other brothers and sisters are on the same journey as us! May the Lord give you courage and strength knowing that there are more brothers and sisters following the Lord! It is so important to know that.

If we see it from the point of view of “other brothers and sisters on the same journey” as it relates to Psalm 122:1-2 (NLT), which says: *“I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord.’ And now here we are, standing inside your gates, O Jerusalem.”* Then this is an invitation to other pilgrims on the same path to the house of God!

The title of this psalm, “A Song for Pilgrims,” from David, should make us think about how much we must rejoice in, starting with the opportunity to go to the house of God!

There is a powerful feeling in this Psalm, whether it was this pilgrim's first visit to Jerusalem or the joy of having arrived after his long pilgrimage! This is powerful brothers and sisters... Think about your arrival at church for the first time. After the excitement of the invitation, you come to a place, to a church for the first time, to meet with the almighty God! I imagine the pilgrims starting to sing, perhaps only a few at first, but as they saw the city, after seeing the Temple, more voices full of joy joined in: *“we are, standing inside your gates.”*

Whether you are the pilgrim who has set your heart on the ways of God, or the one who joined with others in the same direction, know that there is joy, there is happiness in pilgrimage!

The second thing we can see with spiritual eyes is in v. 5b: *“who have set their minds on a pilgrimage.”*

In the next two verses, the psalmist mentions the challenges we will encounter on our pilgrimage, as well as the strength we find in our companions on the journey. Pay attention to this for it is profound brothers and sisters: When the traveler, the pilgrim knows the strength that comes from the Lord Almighty, the Living God Himself points to the journey that could have caused them danger, difficulty and fear; but also, how it can be seen in another way. What follows is powerful: this indicates that just as God is the destination, He is also part of the pilgrimage! Amen, how many say amen!

The Valley of Weeping is an expression for a difficult and painful place in life, where many times, everything seems hopeless. People who love God and trust in Him hope to go through that valley and not stay there. In fact, they receive a blessing from their experience and leave a blessing behind as well.

Returning to our celebration and the place where we are now, we face challenges that perhaps have caused us to think about giving up and throwing in the towel because of the magnitude of those challenges. It is here that the Lord reminds us that He walks with us, and that He will strengthen us when we need it.

In God's greatest plan, it is wonderful to receive a blessing, but even better, to be a blessing and transform a desert into a garden.

Have you ever thought about how you, during your situation on your own pilgrimage, been able to help guide someone else who needed it? Perhaps it was someone who came to this country for the first time, perhaps someone who needed help integrating into a new culture, or a new language. You, during your own challenges, were able to help someone in greater need. True pilgrims go from strength to strength and trust in God so that they can walk step by step and work day by day. They are people of prayer (v. 7) who remain in a relationship with the Lord amid any circumstances.

Brothers and sisters, the truth of pilgrimage is that it takes time; it should not be taken in a hurry. It is an opportunity to discover, to learn, to experiment. As our pilgrimage continues, we begin to understand more of God and more of ourselves in our relationship with Him. In fact, brothers, and sisters, we can see this as a lifelong experience.

3. The Glory of God – Our Blessings

While we pause, as the original writing suggests, in the last four verses we see several important things: the trust placed in the Lord; we see the desire to one day be in his courts than a thousand outside them. We read in v. 11b (NLT): *“The Lord will withhold no good thing from those who do what is right.”* And that is what I am going to focus on right now. Perhaps your heart anguishes as you wonder: How is it possible to see ourselves in those terms? How could God see us like this? Does this move us away from the wonderful blessings that God gives?

Here is the God who expects his people to go on a pilgrimage, to go on a journey of discovery and development. A God who is just and fair would not expect us to have learned more about life with Him than our travel experiences have so far allowed us to know. God is just and fair.

In that context of discovery and personal development, we all know when our pilgrimage began and more importantly, where we are right now.

Brothers and sisters, I hope this message impacts your life. It is the act of pilgrimage, accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior that makes us blameless!

John 14:1-4 (NLT) says: *“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. And you know the way to where I am going.”*

In this chapter, Jesus comforts his disciples, reminding them to trust in God and to trust in Him. He also informs them where and what He is going to do, promising that He would return to take them to Him. Assuming that everything is fine, He continues by saying that they already know the way He was going.

Surprisingly, in verses 5-6 (NLT) we read: *“No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me”*.

Is there not an invitation here to a pilgrimage with Jesus? Isn't there a journey to take? From here, wherever we are, towards the Father, Jesus himself invites us to take it!

By trusting the one who directs the way, we will conduct ourselves blamelessly (v. 11).

Conclusion

As we remember once again the reason for our celebration, Hispanic Heritage Month, let us recognize that in this great nation we are an ethnic group that can impact this country. In fact, it already does so in many areas of the economy, politics, cinema, the arts, and most recently, sports. But can we say the same about the spiritual realm? Can we confess that we long with all our soul for the courts of the Lord? Do we pray to remain there all our lives, in his presence?

I firmly believe that as immigrants we came looking for the American dream, to prosper and do something good in life. While we work, we move away from the God who makes that possible, and it is not until we are in serious problems we cannot solve that we approach Him again. The challenges we face many times do not allow us to assimilate the new culture, and we continue to function as if we were where we started from and that stops our development.

A friend, a very wise pastor, shared this a few years ago on the occasion of this same celebration, he said: *“We are going to celebrate our Hispanic heritage with values of commitment, family, compassion, sacrifice, which are our cultural emblems, and that are fully and absolutely transferable to the kingdom of God.”*

I would like to remind you of the biblical commentator Warren W. Wiersbe's definition of a nomad: **“A wanderer is homeless; a fugitive is running from home; a stranger is far from home; a pilgrim is heading home.”**

Hebrews 11 lists the heroes of faith and recounts their pilgrimage of faith on this earth. Let us see what vv. 13-16 (NLT) say: *“All these people died still believing what God had promised them. They did not receive what was promised, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed it. They agreed that they were foreigners and nomads here on earth. Obviously people who say such things are looking forward to a country they can call their own. If they had longed for the country they came from, they could have gone back. But they were looking for a*

better place, a heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.”

I close with this story. The daughter of a Methodist clergyman, Helen Howarth Lemmel, never accumulated great wealth, but she wrote and worked for Christ all her life. When she was an old woman, they asked her: “Helen, how are you?” To which she replied: “I’m fine in the things that matter.” He is best known for her song:

Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in his wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace.
(Songbook #445)

This day, may we be able to reflect on our pilgrimage through this land, in this place where we are, and may we make decisions that help us long for the heavenly homeland. God bless you!

DEVOTIONALS

by Major Gabriela Rangel

The Pilgrimage of Life

John 14:5-6

When preparing for a trip, we plan in advance and consider all the details to have a pleasant experience. One of the first things we do is determine where we want to travel, how long we will be there, if a visa is required, what the means of transportation will be and some other details. Today, if you decide to drive to that destination, you just search in one of the directions apps; before they used books called “Road Atlases,” which were map books that had several regions depending on which one you bought. In most cases, it included several countries. It was fun to mark your desired stops on each page as you went through the different places. We can say that they were true adventures.

Thomas asks Jesus a question about a trip that Jesus told them about and taught them about during the three years he was with them. *“No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?”* (v. 5, NLT).

For three years, as in the “Road Atlas,” Jesus had been showing them the direction in which they should go. He had spoken to them of the place to which He would take them; and not only them, but all those to whom the disciples would carry the gospel and recognize Jesus as Lord and Savior. Like when you go around looking for direction and the direction is there in front of you, they were on the road, they had the road in front of them. *“Jesus told him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me’.”* (v.6, NLT).

Our life is a journey. We can plan and prepare for what we think we need, but that would be just wandering. However, when we follow “The Way (Jesus)” we realize that our journey is actually a pilgrimage, which has as its destination our eternal home. Our pilgrimage takes us to the Father's House. Although we make stops along the way in shady places, we know that those are not our final destination.

In my life I have lived in various places including two different countries, five states and twenty-six cities. I know there are people who have had more moves than I, but I think I have had too many! When I was little, it intimidated me and really caused me a lot of anxiety every time I realized there was a possibility of moving. I guess the anxiety was due to the unknown and lack of control in the situation. Now that I am older and involved in planning for the adventure of moving, anxiety is mixed with excitement, anticipation, and a strange mix of feelings, not necessarily bad.

I think the difference is that since I came to the knowledge of God, I have been able to experience the security of being in His presence wherever I am. Paul's reference to dwelling in temporary tents is a good image that illustrates our temporary existence in this world and our nomadic condition. In fact, for years God arranged his presence among his people with a Tabernacle that carried his people just so they could feel the security of His presence.

The uncertainty of a changing world that takes us from one place to another causes us insecurity. Amid these circumstances, Paul reminds us that our faith is what makes us live in accordance with the promised land, the expected and longed-for home. In any place on earth, we can build a beautiful and comfortable home, but it will never resemble the one we aspire to receive from God. For now, we will continue wandering in our humanity, but not with fear or despair, but with full confidence that the land that we do not even see with our eyes, we visualize it with the eyes of faith in Christ.

As the time comes for our eternal migration at the end of our days, let us not miss the opportunity to travel with joy, and share hope with other passers-by who, like us, are passing through, but do not have the hope of eternal life. Let us travel in a way that invites others to our heavenly homeland.

The road to happiness?

Hebrews 10:19-25

There is a movie filmed in 1939 called *The Wizard of Oz*. It is a classic movie today. It tells the story of an orphan girl who lives on a farm in Kansas with her aunt and uncle and her pet Toto. Among other people in the movie is her grumpy neighbor who wants to take her dog after it bites her. After getting the little dog back and deciding to flee in search of a better place to live, a series of events put her in the middle of a tornado, and she wakes up in a strange land where she embarks on a journey along "The yellow brick road." But this time to return home.

This is a fable that allows us through imagination to observe a principle that we all experience at some point and that drives us to go on a journey in search of what we believe we need.

In her alternate reality, Dorothy meets other characters who, like her, lack something that according to them, they need to be complete: the scarecrow lacks brains; the tin man lacks heart; and the lion lacks courage. After the four friends meet and receive ruby slippers on Dorothy's feet, they begin the journey along the yellow brick road in search of what the three need and could receive from the Wizard of Oz. Along the way they meet an evil witch, flying monkeys, a good witch, and a pseudo wizard. At the end of the yellow brick road, they realize that everything is a lie, that the person they thought could help them was someone who, like them, was on his own search.

I do not know about you, but this story sounds all too familiar to me. How many times do we find ourselves searching for a better church, a better family, a better job, better land, and the list could go on. Like Dorothy, we receive instructions and advice from people who we think can bring us closer to what we want in our minds but take us further and further away from what our hearts seek and need.

In our reading today from Hebrews 10:19-25 the author presents us with a path that is open for us to enter and receive what our hearts long for. But only when the desires of our heart are submitted to the perfect will of God, and we receive the power that comes from the Holy Spirit through the redeeming blood of Jesus, who gives us free access to the Father who gives us hope, we can have the hope of the home to which we belong that is not of this world and to which we will go when our path here on earth comes to an end.

The characters in the film found that they always had what they were looking for, they just had to dare to search within themselves and make it their own. We have the promise of Jesus that we received power when the Holy Spirit came (Acts 1:8), and that we need look no further. Just keep our eyes focused on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. Hebrews 12:2.

Bittersweet Pilgrimage

2 Chronicles 36:17-21; Acts 14:21-22

It is a fact that when we have arrived at a destination and look back, we have a unique perspective of our trip that we did not have before embarking on the journey. We rarely know where we are going, what the trip will be like, and what is ahead of us.

2 Chronicles 36:17-21 shows the phenomenon of migration through exile and the return of such exiles. In this account, we can see the consequences and suffering of people who neither decided nor planned the first part of their journey. However, even though they did not plan it, and this was a consequence of the collective disobedience of the people, we see the enthusiasm of the sweet return to a land and community. It was not yet the end of the journey.

In Acts 13 and 14 we see another journey, but this time of Paul who went on a trip also prepared by the Lord, and we can also see the difficulties that Paul and his companions went through. In Acts 14:22 (NLT) we read: *“They encouraged them to continue in the faith, reminding them that we must suffer many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God.”* With these words we can understand, not that suffering brings us closer to God, but that there is a cost to obeying the God in whom we believe and trust.

There are times that God sends us or allows us to travel to places we would not choose to go, but when we arrive at our destination, we can see that God had a purpose. It is not unusual to feel overwhelmed along the way, especially when the destination is uncertain, but as believers we know that even when we cannot see beyond the moment, we do know that God knows his plans for us.

There are journeys that begin bitterly, but as we go through the different experiences of refinement, that bitterness turns into the sweetness of the grace received. Only when we go through difficulties, can we see the hand of God working in us.

Joy in the Journey

Genesis 12:1-9; Philippians 3:12-21

The call of Abram is a relevant story to reflect on options for facing our personal journey. Very often we understand this theme of the day as something merely spiritual or literal. As immigrants, we can understand what a migratory journey is. Human beings have historically moved from one place to another for several reasons and for different circumstances. During the journey, we are focused on the path and what we hope to find at the end of it. Many times, we travel the path with hope for what we seek or heartbreak for what we leave behind. As in the case of Abram and his family, God called them to immigrate to places where He would take them, but once on their way, God appears to Abram and makes a promise to give that land to his descendants.

Some of us have been believers before arriving in this country and perhaps God called us to serve in some ministry in the place where he brought us. For others, perhaps we arrived escaping some type of situation and we had an encounter with God along the way. What is also true is that in many cases, this country is where God meets us and where our spiritual journey begins to make sense. As in the story of Abram, his journey lasted years before he saw the results.

Paul tells us in Philippians that our journey is one whose destination is the heavenly homeland (Philippians 4:20). The problem is that even when we know that we are just passing through and this place we are in is just a temporary stop, we spend time and energy on details that only belong to God. God, who called us and promised us, can give us the power to reach our desired and expected destination.

Maybe right now you are in the middle of a road that you do not know where it ends; perhaps you are longing for what you left behind and without a vision of what waits for you. Trust that God is faithful to his promises and has promised us a place in eternity.

HOW TO START A HISPANIC MINISTRY

The Intercultural Ministries Department released a video called “How to Start a Hispanic Ministry” in July 2021. You may not be starting a Hispanic ministry soon. Still, this resource has some useful segments that you can use as you celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month. Here are a few suggestions:

<https://youtu.be/6mQmkCjsGng>

- ✚ **History** (7:05) – We invite you to listen to the beginnings of the Hispanic ministry in the Central Territory, particularly in the Metro Division. Hear the story of Raul Guerrero (Order of the Founder) shared by his daughter, retired officer Major Yaneth Fuqua.
- ✚ **Values** (13:16) – Learn some important values about the Hispanic community, including “La Familia,” celebrations, food, and hospitality.
- ✚ **ESL** (30:44) – You may want to think about starting an ESL program. Listen to Carlos G. Moran, former ESL Director, as he gives some important insights about how to start an ESL Program.
- ✚ **Immigration** (39:01) – Listen to a part of Dr. Alexia Salvatierra and Dr. Rolando Cuellar’s presentation on immigration at the 2019 ONE Conference.
Topics include:
 - *Biblical Principles and Challenges
 - *Jesus and the refugee and orphan
 - *Positive aspects of current migration
 - *Fear and carrying the cross
 - *More and more future congregations will be multicultural
 - *The church is the answer

PROGRAM IDEAS TO CELEBRATE HISPANIC HERITAGE IN OUR CORPS OR INSTITUTIONS

- ✚ **Sunday Worship Service:** Choose a Sunday between September 15th and October 15th to have a worship service to highlight this event. Ask someone in your congregation from a Hispanic background to share his/her testimony.
- ✚ **Open Air or Open Gym:** Invite the community to learn more about the Hispanic Heritage. Prepare different stations around the Gym where people can find information about the Hispanic history, music, and healthy food preparation from different countries; play typical games of those countries, have activities for children, competitions, crafts, etc.
- ✚ **Health Fair:** Invite community groups to participate in a free health fair. Provide free health services such as eye exams, blood pressure tests, weight control, etc. Have workshops available about health information, programs, etc.
- ✚ **Recognize a Hero in the Community:** Identify a Hispanic person in your community (police, firefighter, teacher, etc.) and recognize their work in the community during your Sunday Service or at a special luncheon.
- ✚ **Watch a Movie:** Host a movie night and show a movie or a documentary that talks about Hispanic culture. Here are a few suggestions: “Under the Same Moon,” “Bella,” “Spanglish,” “Instructions Not Included,” “The Other Side of Immigration,” or “Which Way Home.”
- ✚ **Host a Citizenship or Immigration Workshop:** Contact your local World Relief or other similar agency and invite them to give a Citizenship or Immigration workshop.

USEFUL LINKS FOR NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

- ✚ **“Hispanic Heritage Month Resources”**
In this National Museum of the American Latino link, you will find virtual exhibits, educational resources, and stories of Latino achievement.
<https://latino.si.edu/learn/teaching-and-learning-resources/hispanic-heritage-month-resources>
- ✚ **“Crafts to Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month”** – In this link, you will find Hispanic heritage printable resources to use with children and crafts representing different countries like Chile, Cuba, Guatemala, and Mexico.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/05/crafts-hispanic-heritage_n_3875830.html
- ✚ **“Celebrating Latino Culture for Hispanic Heritage Month”** – In this link, you will find Hispanic heritage month activities for kids, including How to make paper fiesta flowers;

musical crafts; Hispanic heroes trading cards; interactive activities, children’s books, Hispanic inventors and more.

<http://www.modernmami.com/hispanic-heritage-month-activities-for-kids/>

- ✚ **“National Day”** – In this link, you will find useful information on celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month with a Hispanic Heritage Month Timeline, Hispanic Heritage Highlights, and Why Hispanic Heritage Month is important.

<https://nationaltoday.com/hispanic-heritage-month/>

SMALL GROUP STUDIES

- ✚ **Sacred Conversations on Race, Culture, and Reconciliation** – This 10-session discussion guide for small groups creates a safe space and invites candid conversations about race and culture.

<https://interculturalministriescentral.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2016/10/SACRED-CONVERSATIONS.pdf>

- ✚ **CULTURE 101: EMBRACING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES – ENGLISH & SPANISH**

This video, available in English and Spanish, is for those who want to develop cultural competence for intercultural and multi-ethnic ministries. The video, approximately 30 minutes long, can be used in a variety of program settings. Small group discussion questions and activities are included. The viewing guide is available.

Spanish Version: <https://vimeo.com/185958717>

English Version: <https://vimeo.com/174858793>

ARTICLES, BOOKS AND MORE

- ✚ **“Key Facts about U.S. Latinos for National Hispanic Heritage Month”**






Here are some key facts from the Pew Research Center about the U.S. Latino population by geography and by characteristics such as language use and origin group.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/09/22/key-facts-about-us-latinos-for-national-hispanic-heritage-month/>


- ✚ **“Among Latinos, Catholicism Continues to Decline”**

Catholics remain the largest religious group among Latinos in the United States, even as their share among Latino adults has steadily declined over the past decade, according to a new analysis of Pew Research Center surveys. By contrast, the share of Latinos who identify as Protestants – including evangelical Protestants – has been relatively stable, while the percentage who are religiously unaffiliated has grown substantially over the same period.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2023/04/13/among-u-s-latinos-catholicism-continues-to-decline-but-is-still-the-largest-faith/>

-  **“What Christians can learn during Hispanic Heritage Month”** – This brief article by Giancarlo Montero gives a brief history of how this celebration started and invited Christians to celebrate with Hispanic brothers and sisters our unity in diversity.
<https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/what-christians-can-learn-during-hispanic-heritage-month/>
-  **Short immigration course online**
 Would you like to understand U.S. immigration better? Here is a five-part email minicourse by the Pew Research Center. You will receive an email every few days over the span of a couple of weeks. Each email will answer a different question about immigration: Who are U.S. immigrants? How has immigration changed the U.S.? Who are legal immigrants, and who are unauthorized ones? And more.
<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/10/16/want-to-understand-u-s-immigration-weve-got-an-email-course-for-you/>
-  **“The Story of Latino Protestants in the United States”** – by Juan Francisco Martínez begins with a description of the Diverse Latino Protestant community. Then this book examines six main periods in the history of American Latino Protestantism, paying special attention to such key issues as migration patterns, immigration policies, enculturation, and assimilation.
-  **“Welcoming the Stranger”** – Matthew Soerens & Jenny Hwang
 Immigration is one of the most complicated issues of our time. Voices on all sides argue strongly for action and change. Christians find themselves torn between the desire to uphold laws and the call to minister to the vulnerable. The authors point us toward immigration reform that is compassionate, sensible, and just, as they offer concrete ways for Christians and local churches to welcome and minister to our immigrant neighbors.
-  **“Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America”** – Juan Gonzalez
 The new immigrants have ignited a vibrant “Latin explosion” in American popular culture. But the Latino influence reaches far beyond music, sports, cuisine, or the latest magazine cover. This book features family portraits of real-life immigrant Latino pioneers, as well as sketches of the political events and social conditions that compelled them to leave their homeland and how they have transformed the nation’s cultural landscape.

PODCASTS & VIDEOS

-  **“Doing Theology in Context” with Dr. Justo González**
 In this podcast of “VOICES, Where Ya From?” Dr. González joins host Rasool Berry to discuss how our own context-and even Jesus’ context- shapes how we read, interpret, and engage with God’s Word.
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/3qwRm4Xzf8gqfowTnu8IWG>

“The Heartbeat of the Hispanic Community”

Hispanics make up nearly 20 percent of the U.S. population. They have played a key role in driving population growth in our country and in revitalizing our churches over the past decades. In this Conversation, Dr. Gus Reyes offers thoughtful and pastoral insight into this community, including generational dynamics and subsequent implications for ministry and outreach.

<https://www.nae.org/reyespodcast/>

“He Gets Us – Refugee”

He Gets Us is a new way to explore the story of Jesus’ life and teachings. This video clip presents an updated version of the story when Mary, Joseph and Jesus had to flee to Egypt because King Herod was threatening to kill Jesus.

<https://hegetsus.com/en/featured-videos/the-making-of-refugee>

“How ‘No Sabo Kids’ navigate not speaking Spanish”


A “No Sabo Kid” is a person that is not fluent in Spanish. This video clip shows how some “No Sabo Kids” are reclaiming the language in their own terms.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmbFw6bzh4Y>

“Join the Celebration” Music Video

Watch the animated music video for "Join the Celebration" - an original song that celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month through icons, artists, and heroes like Frida Kahlo, Celia Cruz, and more!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tmJmcpUDhM>

 **“La Deuda” (The Debt)** is a brand-new short film produced by Share Change – the Los Angeles-based multimedia arm of The Salvation Army’s USA Western Territory. Filmed on location in Mexico, the Spanish-language film is loosely based on Jesus’ Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, found in Matthew 18. *La Deuda* premiered in early February, with a screening on the HBO Latino channel in the USA and Bermuda. Subsequently, the film will appear on HBO streaming services, including HBO Max. The film is a coming-of-age tale, following a young boy called Victor in his quest to save the life of his beloved pet goat, Isabel. It includes English subtitles, and a companion Bible study is available for download in both Spanish and English.

<https://www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/news/inf010221>

“Which Way Home”

This Academy Award Nominee-Best Documentary Feature follows some unaccompanied children as they make the long and treacherous voyage to the U.S. border. Often traveling for months or even years at a time, these courageous and determined children each have stories of hope and resilience, disappointment, and sorrow.