

Learning the Story of your City/Community:

Just as you have a story, every city and community have a story. Understanding the story of your community will help develop your spiritual sight and open your eyes to where God is working (who is contending for shalom and the renewal of your city) and where the “gospel gaps” are present.

Research: Go online and look at resources that may help you learn about the history of your city. Each city has its own unique story, but try to focus on the larger metropolitan area you are living in. You can visit your city’s website/find videos or old tv shows. Learn as much as you can in 30 minutes.

City Walk: This exercise is to give you a practical experience of **Seeing** and **Immersing** in the peacemaking framework. Take a couple hours and walk down the closest downtown area to where you live or work (done together in facilitated labs).

The goal is to listen and gain understanding of your context. Feel free to talk and interact with people as you ask the questions below. Explain that you are seeking to learn the needs and assets of your community/city.

1. What kind of people do you see? Who don’t you see?
2. What languages do you hear?
3. What story does the street art and murals tell?
4. What are the historical markers?
5. What kinds of businesses are there? What businesses are missing? Which ones are anchors (have been there for over 50 years).
6. Where do you see evidence of God’s kingdom being expressed or sign-posts of hope? (churches, nonprofits, social services, shelters, etc.).
7. What are the class/race or cultural boundaries that exist in your area?
8. As you walk, where are the “gospel gaps” or evidence of brokenness?
9. Where are the hungry, thirsty, naked, sick or lonely?
10. If you live and work in the city, where would you have the opportunity to regularly rub shoulders with the least among you?

Write down your observations or share as you walk with others then debrief a bit.

1. Who or what stood out to you?
2. When were you uncomfortable? Why do you think?
3. What did you learn?
4. What did you notice for the first time?