First Meetings

Three different sets of discipleship cycles you can use for your first meetings with Latino students on your campus.

Topics included: Beginnings | Family | Purpose

Written by Steve Tamayo
A Note to Leaders

Make a meaningful connection

Every year, thousands of Latino students land on campuses all across the United States. Some of them are coming to campus for the first time. Others transferred this semester. Still others have been on campus for months and years. All of them matter to God.

Will these students meet Jesus? Will they connect with meaningful Christian community on campus?

We have become convinced that a small amount of extra attention at the right moments can significantly impact the spiritual growth of Latinos on campus. Extra attention can make the difference between a student occasionally attending or becoming a committed member of the community. Extra attention can help a student deepen their relationship with Jesus. Extra attention can push a student to apply the spiritual experiences they’re having in your fellowship to every area of their life: their academic life, their family, and even their vocation.

What are we talking about here? What does “extra attention” look like? It can be one-on-one or in a group. It can be a few weeks or their entire college career. It can be a significant part of your ministry or something you do on the side. This resource will give you a jumping off point no matter what “extra attention” looks like for you.

God is fully prepared to do a powerful work in the lives of Latino students on your campus, a work that will have a transformative impact not only on their lives but also on your campus, in the Latino community and in the world. God is prepared to do a powerful work. Will you join him?

Warmly,

Steve Tamayo
Latino Fellowship (LaFe)
InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA
The Missional Discipleship Cycle

Each Meeting Follows the Missional Discipleship Cycle

Every meeting will involve going through this cycle together.

You’ll start by HEARING each other’s stories and key stories from the Bible. You’ll be paying special attention for Opportunities to Connect and Ways that God’s at Work. Don’t rush through this.

Then you’ll move to ACTIVE RESPONSE, where you’ll participate in an activity, sometimes as a group together and sometimes on your own during the following week. These activities will vary from week-to-week and will include Reading, Praying, Planning, or Reflecting.

Finally, you’ll DEBRIEF AND INTERPRET by doing one of the following: Sharing, Checking, or Discussing.

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1 Please read the “Start Something New” manual to understand the model more. Available here: https://store.intervarsity.org/start-something-new.html
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How does this passage speak into our lives?

Jesus the Immigrant

This part of the narrative of Jesus shares about the exile of the Holy Family to Egypt and then to Nazareth. Jesus was fleeing violence and became an exile in Egypt. As U.S. Latinos, our own history has an immigrant journey in it as well. Whether it was you, your parents, or maybe grandparents, many Latinos have a story of having to leave their home country to live in another. How has this impacted your view of yourself or your identity over your life?

Galilee -- Land of Mestisaje

When Jesus moved to Nazareth, it was to a district called Galilee. Galilean Jews were seen as less than the Jews from Jerusalem. Father Virgilio Elizondo would call the Galilean Jesus a “meztisaje” or a mixed culture. In many ways, living as a bicultural Latino in America can feel like a similar experience to Jesus’ experience as a Galilean. Why do you think God would choose to have the Savior of the world to be born on the margins of the Jewish society rather than at the center of power? What does this communicate about the kind of God we serve? How does living as a bicultural Latino influence how you view the world?

The Slaughtering of Holy Innocents

This passage also includes the slaughtering of innocent children by King Herod. These children are often considered by Catholic believers to be the first martyrs of the church. These children were vulnerable and unable to defend themselves against the power and authority of their time. Who are the vulnerable people in our midst today? In what ways could we be advocates for those people and treat them with the dignity of being made in God’s imag

Cycle B

Family

Sharing about and blessing our families as we learn from the story of Joseph.
Leaders, welcome to Week 1 of the LaFe First Meetings Study! Use these Leaders’ Guides to help you prepare for leading each meeting.

Both you and the person/people you’re meeting with have family roots. Your families may be sources of joy or pain, pride or shame, comfort or tension. But our family backgrounds form and shape us.

“Familia” is vitally important in Latino culture. Until you know our families (or at least know some of our family story), you don’t know us. Learning about a student’s family is essential to making a meaningful connection with them. This set of discipleship cycles is designed to spark conversations around families and to explore how faith and family intersect.

**Preparation:**

Pray for the person/people you’re meeting with before you begin looking at the guide for the meeting. Pray for the individuals coming, for the meeting time, and for God to speak to you through your time preparing.

Reflect on your own family. What facts and stories about your family would be helpful for you to share?

Read through the Genesis 37 passage, which you’ll look at in the Active Response section. What elements of the story resonate with you?

Note: In all of our Cycles, we made reading a Bible passage the Active Response in Week 1. We did this for two reasons. We want to introduce students to the value of reading the Bible as a way of connecting with and hearing from the Lord. But we’re aware that some students have little or no experience with the Bible, so we set aside space before we read to engage in intentional, relationship-building conversation.
Hear

Prayer: Ask God to help you discover common ground and uncover how he’s at work.

Tell me about your family

Share about your family. Use some (but not all!) of the following questions as prompts to guide your sharing:

- What’s your family like?
- Who are you closest to in your family?
- What do you love about your family?
- What do you find difficult about your family?
- What do you wish would change about your family?
- What are some significant stories in the history of your family?
- How does your family relate to faith, Jesus and Christianity?
- How does your family feel about you being in college / being at this school?
- How have you seen God at work in your family?
Respond Actively

✧ Read Genesis 37:2-14, 17b-36 (2 pages)

Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan. This is the account of Jacob’s family line. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them. Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him. Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. He said to them, “Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.” His brothers said to him, “Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?” And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said. Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. “Listen,” he said, “I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, “What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?” His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind. Now his brothers had gone to graze their father’s flocks near Shechem, and Israel said to Joseph, “As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them.” “Very well,” he replied. So he said to him, “Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me.” Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron. So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them,
they plotted to kill him. “Here comes that dreamer!” they said to each other. “Come now, let’s kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we’ll see what comes of his dreams.”

When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. “Let’s not take his life,” he said. “Don’t shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don’t lay a hand on him.” Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father. So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing—and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it. As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt. Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed. So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt. When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes. He went back to his brothers and said, “The boy isn’t there! Where can I turn now?” Then they got Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. They took the ornate robe back to their father and said, “We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son’s robe.” He recognized it and said, “It is my son’s robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces.”

Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days. All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. “No,” he said, “I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave.” So his father wept for him. Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard.
Debrief and Interpret

Processing Questions

Where do you see yourself in the story?
Possible points of connection ...
Favorites and jealousy in your family.
Dreams for the future of your family.
Painful family stories and experiences.
Rejection and sorrow.
Trying to help a sibling (Reuben’s example).

What emotions do you think Joseph felt in today’s passage?
Possible answers ...
Joy (short-lived) at being favored by his father.
Confidence to speak up.
Confusion about the complicated family dynamics.
Frustration at being put in these situations (dream, reporting on brothers).
Hurt by the rejection.
Fear at being far from home.

What do you think God was doing in Joseph’s life?

Why do you think a story like this made it into the Bible?

How familiar are you with stories like this in the Bible?
Pray for your family

Our families are deeply connected to our well-being. Chaos in our families spills over into our own lives. Health in our families gets passed along to us. This is particularly true for Latino college students. But we often experience our families as being beyond our control.

God can make a tremendous difference in the lives of our family members. He can calm the chaos, heal the sickness, quiet the drama, free the addicted, and restore broken relationships. His ability to transform our families for the better goes beyond anything we can imagine.

We Latinos are well acquainted with the concept of appealing to a higher power. Parents, aunts and uncles, grandparents, pastors, teachers, priests, bosses, government authorities ... they all have some power over us and some power to help us. Even students who don’t have a lot of familiarity with prayer will have experience with appealing to a higher power.

Preparation:

Pray for the person/people you’re meeting with. Pray that God would be at work in them, giving them eyes to see how they can pray.

Read through the Genesis 50 passage. In each of our Cycles in this resource, we’ll look at the same passage of Scripture 2-3 times. We do this because we’re not just looking to share content but also to make a meaningful connection.

Note on this passage: between Genesis 37 and Genesis 50 a whole lot happens. Joseph eventually rises to a position of power in Egypt. His family immigrates to Egypt due to a famine back home. Joseph forgives them, keeps them safe, and reunites the family.

Take some time to pray for your own family before you pray with the person/people you’re meeting with.
Hear the Word

**Read Genesis 50:15-21**

When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?” So they sent word to Joseph, saying, “Your father left these instructions before he died: ‘This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.’ Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father.” When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. “We are your slaves,” they said.

But Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.” And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

**Discussion Questions:**

- What sticks out to you from these verses?
- Who are the main characters?
- What emotions do you think the main characters felt?
- What do you think Joseph’s brothers expected to happen when their father passed away?
- What role did faith have in Joseph’s response to his brothers?
- Where do you see God at work in your family?
- Where would you like God to do in your family?
Respond Actively

✧ Pray for your family

Here are two pieces of good news ...

**God has the power to bless your family.** No amount of foolishness, hardship, brokenness, or pain can derail God’s power to work all things for good. Praying would be of little use if God didn’t have the power to make a difference.

**God wants to bless your family.** There’s never been a family that God hasn’t loved. He isn’t looking to punish your family and he hasn’t given up on your family. Part of the reason he placed you in your family was to bless your family.

Will you ask God to bless your family?

Take a 5 minutes to pray for your family.

Try to set 5 minutes aside to pray every day between now and the next time you meet.

Take a few minutes now to pray.

We all have different experiences with prayer. If you feel comfortable praying without any guidance, go for it! If you’d like a prayer to pray, try this one which is based off of this week’s study:

Father in heaven,

Like Joseph, I know that I can’t stand in the place of God. That place is reserved for you alone. Would you please be at work in my family? You know what needs to be done for us to experience your good purposes of us. Please bring reconciliation, salvation and provision to my family.

I pray this trusting in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.
# Debrief and Interpret

## Processing Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What was it like to pray for your family?</th>
<th>What’s your family experience with prayer?</th>
<th>How do you feel about tackling this prayer exercise?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What did you enjoy about the exercise?</td>
<td>What was your first experience with prayer?</td>
<td>When and where do you think you’ll take the time to pray?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What did you find difficult about the exercise?</td>
<td>What would you like God to do for your family as you pray?</td>
<td>How can I help you pray for your family?</td>
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Week 3

Bless your family

God placed each of us in our families to be a blessing to our families. LaFe is filled with stories of people who found ways to bless their families. Some supported parents through financial, emotional or health challenges. Others lovingly mentored younger siblings. We’ve seen people show extra respect to aunts and uncles, confront grandparents over areas of brokenness, and push cousins to seek forgiveness. These stories are beautiful.

Each of our families are unique. And the ways we decide to bless our families need to match the unique shape and situation of each of our families. Though God’s universal desire is that we would be a blessing, we’re left with the freedom and responsibility to match our actions to specific contexts. Do what’s right for you and your family.

We’ve often found that when one person in a family makes an adjustment toward blessing, God uses this to unleash a cascade of health, healing and holiness throughout the family. But it takes courage and faith to make the first move. As one LaFe leader recently confessed: “I believed God was powerful enough to change anyone’s family, except mine. But I also believed he called me to do something.” We’re excited for you to discover what God has for you to do.

Preparation:

Pray for the person/people you’re meeting with and ask the Lord to open their eyes to at least one specific way they can bless their family.

Think about your own family. How can the Lord use you to bless them? Don’t ask the person/people you’re meeting with to do something you aren’t prepared to do too.

Since this is the last week of Cycle B | Family, come up with a plan for how you’d like to stay connected with this student. You can continue on with another Cycle from this resource, use a resource from p. 54, or transition to a less formal relationship.
Hear the Word

Read Genesis 50:15-21

When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?” So they sent word to Joseph, saying, “Your father left these instructions before he died: ‘This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.’ Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father.” When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. “We are your slaves,” they said.

But Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.” And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

Discussion Questions:

What sticks out to you from these verses today?

How did Joseph bless his brothers and their families?

How did God shape Joseph’s decision to bless his brothers and their families?

What do you think it would have felt like for Joseph’s brothers to receive forgiveness, reassurance, kindness and provision from Joseph?

What challenges do you think Joseph might have faced as he decided whether to bless his brothers or not?
Respond Actively

✦ Bless your family

Everyone can do something to bless their family. Today, we’re going to *discern* together what our family needs and *decide* what we can do to meet those needs.

Our first step is a step of **DISCERNMENT**. Take a few minutes to sit quietly and ask the Lord to make you aware of a need in your family. Relax. Listen to him. Trust the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of your heart to see what God wants you to see. A verse of scripture may pop into your head or a particular family member may come to mind. Be open to whatever God wants to show you.

Don’t worry if what pops into your mind isn’t earth-shattering. God is the God of the ordinary as well and the spectacular. And don’t worry too much about going astray. You’ve got people who care about you and will tell you if they think your mind is playing tricks on you. And, hey, God is big enough to make himself heard when he wants to.

Take a few minutes to *Share* what came into your mind during the time of listening to the Lord. Be as honest as you can. Leaders, we’d encourage you to share first if you’re able.

Now, let’s move to the **DECISION** stage. Identify which family need you’re going to focus on.

Discuss options for how you can meet that family need. For example, if you have someone in your family who is facing a health challenge, you may consider praying daily for them and offering to go with them to doctors appointments. If you have a family member who needs encouragement, you might consider making a commitment to call them every week. If you have family who are disconnected from their faith, you could invite them to read some Bible passages with you and talk about them.

Decide on a plan. What will you do? How will you do it? When will you have it done by? How will you know you’ve done it?

God gives us the resources we need to bless our families. Will we listen to him and act in accordance with what we hear?
Debrief and Interpret

Processing Questions

How did things go with your plan to bless your family?  How were your efforts to bless your family received?  How has thinking about blessing your family impacted the way you see them?

Where did you experience success and difficulty?  What other family needs has God put on your radar?  How can I help you continue to be a blessing to your family?

How did you encounter God through this exercise?  What else do you see you can do to bless your family?  What do you see God doing in your family right now?
You can pick up the full collection of First Meetings Discipleship Cycles at the InterVarsity Store
Scriptures

We’ve included an extra section of the Scriptures you’ll look at each week so you can create extra copies for your members to use during your group meetings.
Genesis 37:2-14, 17b-36

2 This is the account of Jacob’s family line. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. 4 When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. 6 He said to them, “Listen to this dream I had: 7 We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.”

8 His brothers said to him, “Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?” And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

9 Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. “Listen,” he said, “I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.”

10 When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, “What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?” 11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

12 Now his brothers had gone to graze their father’s flocks near Shechem, 13 and Israel said to Joseph, “As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them.” “Very well,” he replied.

14 So he said to him, “Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me.” Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron.

So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. 18 But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him.
“Here comes that dreamer!” they said to each other. “Come now, let’s kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we’ll see what comes of his dreams.”

When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. “Let’s not take his life,” he said. “Don’t shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don’t lay a hand on him.” Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father.

So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing—and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt.

Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed.

So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes. He went back to his brothers and said, “The boy isn’t there! Where can I turn now?”

Then they got Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. They took the ornate robe back to their father and said, “We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son’s robe.”

He recognized it and said, “It is my son’s robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces.”

Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days. All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. “No,” he said, “I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave.” So his father wept for him.

Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard.
When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?” So they sent word to Joseph, saying, “Your father left these instructions before he died: ‘This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.’ Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father.” When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. “We are your slaves,” they said.

But Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.” And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.
Credits

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p. 8, 12 and 16 Coffee beans photo courtesy of unsplash and Daniel Rustic | https://unsplash.com/photos/MHM_al3KqlQ/download

p. 17, 18, 23 and 27 Coffee cups photo courtesy of unsplash and André Freitas | https://unsplash.com/photos/uu5PfAzu0s4/download

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p. 35, 39 and 43 Coffee table photo courtesy of unsplash and Mathieu Nicolet | https://unsplash.com/photos/ULr8dMN6yDY/download

Scripture Version


Helpful Resources

LaFe13 Audio including the quoted talks https://soundcloud.com/intervarsitylafe

Being Latino in Christ by Rev. Dr. Orlando Crespo

Santa Biblia by Justo González

The Life of Moses by Kristy Garza Robinson

Start Something New https://store.intervarsity.org/start-something-new.html