



Joseph Kye

My Story: Building Bridges with Music

Video (15:51): Joseph Kye, singer, composer, violinist and recording artist, currently planning an Asia tour and working on his new album, *Migrants* (title song included in video)

Joseph Kye is a singer/composer/violinist looper. Born in Korea and raised in Seattle, his music has drawn rave reviews. Drawing upon his migrant background, Kye blends indie-rock, jazz, classical, pop, and world folk to create a unique sound. Sacramento Bee wrote that he is a “single violinist and ...one mesmerizing symphony.” In 2015, he released the acclaimed album *Joseph in the Well*, and toured the United States, opening for world-renown cellist Yo-Yo Ma. His next album, *Migrants*, is slated for release in early 2017. (The title song is featured in his presentation.)

My Story: Building Bridges with Music

Preparation

Select a room or location to offer the study. Every session needs a room that has the capability to access the video via the internet and to project the video for groups of various sizes. Check to be sure the equipment is working properly. *This video can be found at www.gcorr.org/series/vc3.*

Preview the video. Read through the lesson plan. Have for display or sharing a covenant of care for the session. Considering inviting group members to read the Scripture(s).

Go to [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLUDehQpsvU) and listen to “Love Shall Overcome” by the group, The Brilliance (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLUDehQpsvU>). Make note of words or phrases that stand out for you. Be prepared to connect your reflections with those of Joseph Kye.

Gather the following materials:

- Bible for reading the Scriptures – Matthew 25:31-40 and Psalm 150
- Hymnals or music books
- Listening & Looking Guide (one for each person or project on a screen)
- Assorted candles (if allowed in your meeting space – may substitute battery-operated candles, portable instruments: toy, homemade, or professional musical instruments, including drums, tambourines, maracas, flute, violin, steel pans)
- Construction paper, assorted colors
- Pens, pencils, and markers, assorted colors
- Blue painter's tape
- Large hat (or basket) to hold slips of paper

You will also need:

- A small table to use to create an altar setting
- Cloth to cover the table – can use an assortment of fabrics
- CD player
- CD of instrumental music (jazz, gospel, hymns, or whatever speaks to you)

Prepare for the session “Pass the Hat” by typing or writing on individual slips of paper questions 2 through 5 from the Listening & Looking Guide. Make multiple copies of each question inside the hat to ensure everyone gets each question.

THE STUDY SESSION

Get Started [20 minutes]

Set up the altar with the Bible, hymnal, and a candle. Light other candles around the room. Have music playing softly as people gather. Welcome everyone to the session; take care of housekeeping matters. Read or ask someone else to read the statement of purpose: “The General Commission on Religion and Race presents Vital Conversations to help start the dialogue on subjects that may sometimes be difficult to approach. We are all part of the beloved community, and we welcome perspectives that bring enlightenment and understanding.”

Introduce the video presenter (and explain that you'll show the video later in the session than in previous meetings): Joseph Kye was born in Korea and came to the United States with his parents when he was six years old. He began taking violin lessons in elementary school. He is a classically trained musician who has a passion for music of all kinds, including blues and socially conscious hip-hop. His desire for the church is to create spaces where various music traditions are embraced and there is room for “diverse expression of emotion” through music.

Begin the study session by asking participants to connect with music in their lives. Using the markers and construction paper, ask participants to help create a “musical band” by each writing (or drawing) on the paper an instrument that they play or whose sound they love. (Ask members to write or draw only one instrument per sheet of paper. For those who play multiple instruments, ask them to use additional sheets.)

Place the words on the wall and allow people to revel in the talent that exists in their group. Introduce yourself and briefly explain why you have accepted the role of facilitator for this session, your musical connections, and the visions you have for the time together.

Read aloud –or ask someone to read – Psalm 150. Ask the group to respond to the Word by sharing briefly what they hear and feel when they hear this psalm. Ask them how it connects with their worship experiences. Invite someone to lead the group in prayer; if no one volunteers, open with a prayer of your choice.

Review and post the group’s covenant, and highlight the key components: confidentiality; everyone’s voice matters; disagree with care and do not attack anyone. Invite the group to add thoughts and ideas to the covenant.

Distribute the Listening & Looking Guide. Explain that this is a resource to help them capture thoughts and ideas from the video presentation as well as a place to make note of visions they have for ministry. Allow group members to scan the questions to help focus the viewing and listening process.

Play the Video [20 minutes]

Encourage participants to jot down short notes on their guide but as much as possible remain attentive to listening to and experiencing the presentation. Say that at the conclusion of the video, there will be 5-10 minutes for the group to add more information and answer questions on their Listening & Looking Guide. Also, tell the group that there will be opportunities to add more information to the sheet and to reflect upon their notes.

To begin viewing the video, direct group members to set aside their pen and paper and pick up and hold any musical instrument they have brought or may be available to them. Play the first part of the video, having participants connected with their instrument while listening to the song.

Pause the video just before Joseph Kye begins to speak and direct group to the first questions on the Listening & Looking Guide: What did you feel as you listened to the music? What comes to mind as you watch and listen to Mr. Kye?

Pass the Hat – group reflection [20 minutes]

Play the remainder of the video and have the group complete making notes on their Listening & Looking Guide. Have the next four questions (name a song, when have you felt a “disconnect” with worship, etc.) written on slips of paper and in a hat (or basket).

Ask each person to pull from the hat. Once everyone has selected a slip of paper, call on members to answer the question they have chosen. Invite everyone who has selected the first question “Name a song...” to answer before calling on those who have the question “When have you felt a disconnect...”. If time permits, allow anyone who wishes to share their response to the final question: “What do you expect most from worship music?”

Reflect and Share [10 minutes]

Allow time for members to reflect on what has been shared in the group. Allow time for them to add additional notes on their guide and to complete their vision, their commitment, and draft their social media share.

Altar Call [10 minutes]

Have the video cued to Mr. Kye's singing: "You Are Part of Me." Give group members an index card and ask if they will also write their commitment on that card to use in the closing worship. Play the song "Love Shall Overcome" by The Brilliance (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLUDehQpsvU>). Ask members to reflect on feeling evoked by the song as they prepared for the lesson and now, as the lesson closes.

Begin to play Mr. Kye's song and invite the group to come and place their cards, on which they have written their commitment, on the altar and join in singing the song.

Closing Prayer [3 minutes]

Offer this prayer (or ask a volunteer to pray):

Lord, how can we get there? How can we get to the place where everyone hears their music, everyone finds their solace, everyone finds in our churches the freedom to rejoice and worship God? God send us musicians whose love for you and all God's people allow us to find room for introspection and vulnerability. You have called us to create community, to be one with another. Make us willing, make us able. Amen.

Listening & Looking Guide: Joseph Kye

What did you feel as you listened to the music; what came to mind as you watched Joseph Kye interact with the music?

Name a song or types of music that bring you joy, comfort and energy:

When have you felt a “disconnect” with a worship experience; what was missing for you?

Recall a time when worship brought you joy and comfort; what was happening at that time?

Overall, what do you expect most from worship music?

Joseph Kye references a song “Love Shall Overcome” by The Brilliance, which includes the line, “When all we see is in equality, love shall overcome.” Imagine your faith community singing this song in strange and strained times. How would this song be received or embraced?

Cultivate a new vision: Joseph Kye talks about some churches not “leaving room” for diverse expressions of emotion. What do you dream for worship that would make it beneficial for a wider audience?

Make a commitment: _____

Tweet This/Post on your social media: _____

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