SETTING THE TABLE · WEEK 4 OF 6

The Serving Table

We will serve together. One partner from outside your circle, one meal served or one food drive run, side by side.

On August 29, 2026, two hundred religious leaders met in New York for *One World: One Humanity* and made five commitments in a Call to Action. So far we have set a table at home, invited a neighbor, and sat down with someone who sees the world differently. This week we get up from the table and work.

The fourth table is one you set for someone else, together with people from a community that isn't your own.

Why serve together

Not doing wrong is not enough. At the summit, leaders agreed that doing no harm is only the start. The duty is to actively do good.

Some of the communities in that room already distribute food together every month, across traditions. They don't always understand each other's beliefs, but they've learned to appreciate each other by working side by side. When your hands are busy and someone else is being fed, the differences that seemed so large at the dinner table get smaller.

How to set the table

1. **Find one partner outside your circle.** Choose a congregation, school, club or community group you don't usually work with. A neighbor from week 2 might know one.
2. **Choose one simple project together.** You could serve a community meal, run a food drive, pack meal kits or deliver Thanksgiving baskets.
3. **Ask a local food bank or shelter what they need.** Let the people you're serving set the priorities.
4. **Mix the teams.** Pair people from each group at every station so nobody works only with their own.
5. **Eat together afterward.** Even a short meal or coffee turns a shift into a relationship.
6. **Plan the next one before you leave.** Pick a date, even a tentative one.
7. **Tell us what you did.** Let us know who you served with and what you learned.

Planning checklist

- **Three to four weeks out:** contact a partner group and agree on the project, date and place.
- **Three weeks out:** call a local food bank, pantry or shelter and ask what they need most and how to deliver it.
- **Two weeks out:** name one coordinator from each group, set a volunteer goal, and share one sign-up sheet.
- **One week out:** confirm supplies, food safety needs, transport and any permissions for the space.
- **The day before:** send a reminder with the time, place, what to wear and who to call.
- **On the day:** start with a short welcome and introductions, and mix the teams at every station.
- **Afterward:** thank everyone, share photos with permission, and set the next date.

Short on time before Thanksgiving? Skip the big event. Join a partner group's existing volunteer shift, or drop off a food drive you collected together.

Conversation prompts for the shift

- What first got you involved in serving others?
- What does your community teach you about helping people in need?
- What's something about your group that people outside it rarely see?
- What need in our town do you think gets overlooked?
- What could our two groups do together next?

An invitation you can send to a partner group

> *Hello [name], I'm with [your group], and we'd love to serve alongside [their group] this month. We're thinking of [a community meal / a food drive / packing meal kits] on [date] with [local food bank or shelter]. It's part of Setting the Table, a series where people are building connections before Thanksgiving. We'd like to plan it together, with volunteers from both of our groups working side by side. Would you be open to a short call?*

A reading for the table

Read this aloud before you begin. It's the commitment at the center of this week.

> *"We will serve together."*

For households, classrooms and workplaces

A family can join another family to deliver meals or drop off a grocery bag at a pantry. A classroom can run a food drive with a school across town and deliver it together. A workplace can partner with a neighboring business or nonprofit for a volunteer shift. You don't need a congregation to serve together. You just need a partner who isn't already on your team.

Tell us what you did

The Call to Action ends with a simple request: "Tell us what you intend to do. Then tell us what you did." Share your table at **wcorl.org/setting-the-table/commit**. Tell us who you served with, who you served and what you learned. With your permission, we'll share some of the stories.

Next week, Week 5: The Table of Trust. We'll turn one gathering into a table that keeps meeting.

Show up. Stand up. Speak up.

The World Council of Religious Leaders · wcorl.org · info@wcorl.org
Read the full Call to Action at wcorl.org/owoh-call-to-action