

The Kitchen Table

We will begin with ourselves. One meal at home, one honest conversation, one thing you'll change.

On August 29, 2026, two hundred religious leaders met in New York for *One World: One Humanity*. They ended the day with a Call to Action of five commitments, and they asked everyone to carry those commitments home, because "a global declaration matters only if it becomes local action."

Between now and Thanksgiving, the World Council of Religious Leaders invites you to set one table each week, with each table a little wider than the last. The first table is the closest one: your own.

Why start at home

The first commitment asks us to look at our own words, teachings and habits before we look at anyone else's. At the summit, leaders said that you have to name the problems in your own house before you have any credibility naming anyone else's. Then they did it, questioning their own communities' histories in front of the whole room.

Most of what we learn about other people, we learn at a kitchen table: the jokes we laugh at, the names we use, and the people who never come up at all. That makes the kitchen table a good place to begin.

How to set the table

1. **Pick one meal this week.** It can be an ordinary weeknight dinner or a Sunday breakfast. If you live alone, call someone you love and talk over a cup of coffee.
2. **Tell people why ahead of time.** Use the invitation below so nobody feels ambushed. Keep it light.
3. **Put something in the middle of the table.** It could be a candle, a card with the first commitment written on it, or an empty chair. It's a reminder that this meal has a purpose.
4. **Talk for twenty minutes.** Use two or three of the prompts below. Listen more than you speak. No one has to confess anything.
5. **Choose one thing to change.** It might be a word you'll stop using, a joke you won't repeat, or a person or community you'll learn about. Write it down and keep it on the fridge.
6. **Tell us what you did.** Let us know where you set your table, who came, and what you chose. We're gathering every story.

Conversation prompts

- Who did we learn to be wary of growing up, and who taught us that?
- Is there a word or joke about another group that gets said in our home or circle? How would it sound to someone from that group?
- What is something our own tradition, culture or family gets wrong about other people?
- When did someone very different from us show us kindness? What did it change?
- Which community near us do we know the least about?
- What is one thing we want our children, or the next generation, to hear differently from how we heard it?
- If a neighbor from another faith ate with us tonight, what would we want them to feel?

An invitation you can send

Hi all, for dinner on [day], I'd like to try something. Faith leaders from around the world have made five promises to each other, and the first one is "We will begin with ourselves." I'd like us to spend twenty minutes at dinner talking about how we talk about other people, and each choose one small thing to change. No lectures, I promise. Just us around the table. Can you be there?

A reading for the table

Read this aloud before you start. It comes from the Call to Action that the summit's leaders made together.

"We will examine the words, teachings, institutions, and practices of our own communities first. We will reject the use of religion to justify hatred, humiliation, dehumanization, or violence, and teach that deep conviction can coexist with respect for those who believe differently. Peace begins with the courage to hold our own communities accountable."

For congregations, classrooms and groups

You can set this table with more than a household. A congregation can host a shared meal and seat people in small tables of six, with one prompt card per table. A teacher can use the prompts as a classroom circle. A workplace can try it over a brown-bag lunch. Whatever the setting, the steps stay the same: one meal, one honest conversation, and one thing each person will change.

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 where you sat, who came, and the one thing you chose. With your permission, we'll share some of the stories.

Next week, Week 2: The Neighbor's Table. We'll invite someone we've never really talked to.

Show up. Stand up. Speak up.

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Read the full Call to Action at wcorl.org/owoh-call-to-action