

Mixed Ministry Table Talk for Asian American Ministries

PURPOSE AND VISION

It often feels like we as Mixed people have to choose a breakout or a room which can bring up anxiety, pain, and insecurities. In the kingdom of God however, we are fully accepted and embraced for all of who we are and aren't expected to "pick a side."

We want to offer this space in order for you as people created with more than one ethnicity to be free to be you. Not having to hide or try to fit into a mold to meet the expectations of others. Jesus understands our experience as someone who was Mixed – fully God and fully man, as well as multiethnic. Mixed ministry exists for people like us to embrace the fullness of our multiethnic identity in Jesus and to be empowered, equipped, and encouraged as Mixed students, faculty, and staff.

INTROS

Have everyone share their name, school or year in school, ethnic identity, and their favorite thing about their culture.

ICE BREAKER ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL)

Bring your own game that can be played in 5-10 minutes. Examples: cookie game (moving a cookie from forehead to mouth with no hands), human knot, rock, paper, scissor tournament, two truths and a lie, etc.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Have you given thought to reflecting on how being Mixed has impacted your life experiences? If so, what have you learned? If not, what feelings are coming up for you?
- What has brought you joy in being Mixed and what do you appreciate about being Mixed?
- What about your Mixed identity journey has been hard?
- Have you wrestled with feeling enough in your ethnic identity?
- In what ways have you noticed Jesus shepherding you through your journey as a Mixed person?

Affirming Mixed Asian Americans

Many AA communities demonstrate kingdom values, such as communal processing, servant leadership, and the mind-body connection. Take this time as an opportunity to embrace these gifts.

Community Care

We can welcome each other well by holding space in the following ways:

- **Give Space:** Take turns and try not to interrupt.
- **Go Slow:** Take care to be sensitive and hold each other's vulnerability gently by pausing in between turns. Thoughtfully take in what each person has shared.

We Love Through Food

Food can be one way we love and care for each other. Suggested icebreaker questions:

- What's one of your favorite meals you've shared with your community?
- What foods have different parts of your family introduced to each other?
- If you hosted us at your home, how would your family greet us and what would you prepare?

BREATH PRAYER EXERCISE (2–3 MINS)

Framing: “Our journeys of being Mixed are often full of beauty and brokenness. Jesus wants us to rest in him and be formed by what he says about us. How amazing would it be if the primary narrative around our identity was that we are fully loved, accepted, and enough in Christ just as we are. Let’s take time to do a breath prayer exercise as a way to let Jesus form us in our Mixed identity.”

Instructions: Start by having students close their eyes. Then have them follow the breath prayer.

Inhale...*Jesus formed me*, Exhale...*We are enough*

DEBRIEF

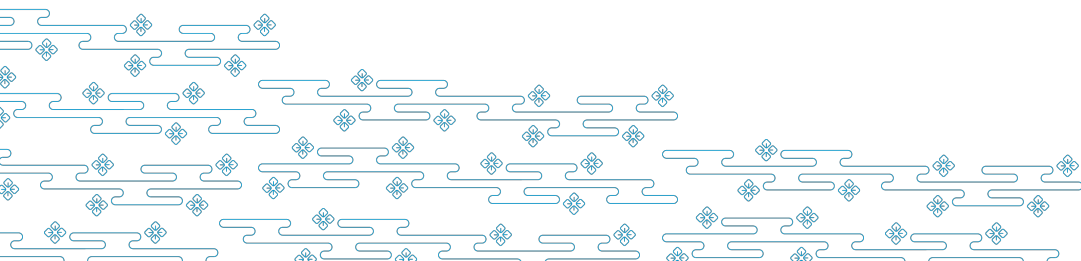
- How did you experience God?
- What surprised you from this time?
- Was there anything you learned about yourself or about God that’s worth holding on to?
- Is there a next step God might be inviting you towards?

Curated Questions

Many Asian cultures have honor/shame dynamics. How might this impact how you experience your Mixed heritage and how you feel about yourself and your Mixed body?

How can a hierarchical culture form our view of Jesus, ourselves, and others (especially in our Mixed and/or AA communities)?

Carrying mixed layers of identity might come with tension. How has and/or hasn’t each layer gotten room to “breathe” and interact?



A MIXED BLESSING

Adapted from the "Prayer of St. Patrick"

As I step forward today
may the strength of God direct me and
the wisdom of God guide me
through all my Mixed feelings.

May the ear of God hear me
and the eye of God look at me with love
in the Mixed body that God created.

May Christ hold me today
Christ with me, Christ before me
Christ all around me, and Christ in me.

Jesus the Christ, our Brown, Mixed,
Middle Eastern/North African
Savior who dwelt among us
and whose Spirit dwells in my Mixed body.

May Holy Spirit be in the heart of everyone
who thinks of me, as I think of them.
May Holy Spirit affirm me to worship and serve
through my Mixed experiences.

As I step forward today
may every step be proof of God's care
and intentionality in creating me
to receive love and care
and to be a Mixed blessing.

Best Practices for Non-Mixed Leaders

As a small group leader, your primary focus will be to provide a safe and hospitable place for students and faculty to process and debrief their conference experience. We want to create a safe space for small group members to be seen and heard. We expect students to be across the spectrum in terms of their ethnic journeys, as well.

Some best practices of leading these spaces include:

- Allow for introductions to create a hospitable environment.
- Start with yourself (name, ethnic background, what university you're connected to, favorite thing about your culture or upbringing, what you hope to learn from this time?).
- Be warm, smile, say hi to each person as they enter.
- Intentionally observing each member in the small group to discern how they are experiencing the time.
- Watch body language – look for posture, facial expressions, reactions to what is being shared.
- Frequency of sharing – who is sharing a lot; who has not shared much; make space for people by giving indirect invitations.
- Be cautious of trying to over relate your experience to the Mixed experience.
- Try not to insert your assumptions about Mixed people as they're sharing.

Contextualized Hospitality

Each community has different norms and taboos. Here are some general Asian American keys to facilitating a hospitable space.

Who's Going First? Before the conversation time begins, you might ask someone if they'd like to be the first to share (probably after you), so they have a chance to think about what they want to say.

Watch the time: Make sure everyone has space to share. Ideas: suggest that each person take a specified amount of time. Try to encourage "talkers" to draw out and affirm others. Remind the group of how much time they have together overall.

Remember that you don't have to get through the entire Table Talk! Follow Holy Spirit's leading as you evaluate what's best for this time.

