

Mixed Ministry Table Talk for Black Campus 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?

VALIDATING OUR MIXED BLACK IDENTITY

There is beauty in the diversity of the African diaspora. There are Black people on the continent and everywhere around the globe. No matter how we identify and present to other people, we are Black enough. There is space for us in all the varying experiences of our community. We are a valuable part of this blessed family.

YOU ARE BLACK ENOUGH

Since Black people can be African, Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Latino/a, and Mixed (biracial/multiethnic), and from every culture and country in the world, our diaspora has always been one of inclusion, not exclusion. Even the United States' "one-drop rule," used to enslave more people, has been redeemed by our community because we know the importance of family and heritage. No matter how we look or act, no matter where we grew up, if we have Black ancestry, we belong!

SETTING THE VIBE

Black folks love to tell stories, have fun, and ask the question: "Who all gone be there?" We value space for telling stories with loud laughter and lots of fun. Our people's perseverance in difficult circumstances shapes our very real joy.

- What games do you and your family/community like to play together?
- What story gets told every time by a family member? The one you could repeat verbatim? If not at family reunions, is there a story you like to tell a lot at gatherings?
- It's said that "Black folks' culture is the culture!" When you think of how the majority culture has appropriated from us, who could we study to learn more? Examples: inventor George Washington Carver, businesswoman Madam CJ Walker, baseball player Satchel Paige, etc.?



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

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

- 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

- As you’ve listened and shared, what are the ways you’ve resonated with the thoughts, experiences, and stories of your fellow Black Mixed people? How have they differed from your own?
- As Mixed people, we can often feel in-between—never quite existing in one identity or another. What gifts do you think your Mixed Black identity has given you?



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.

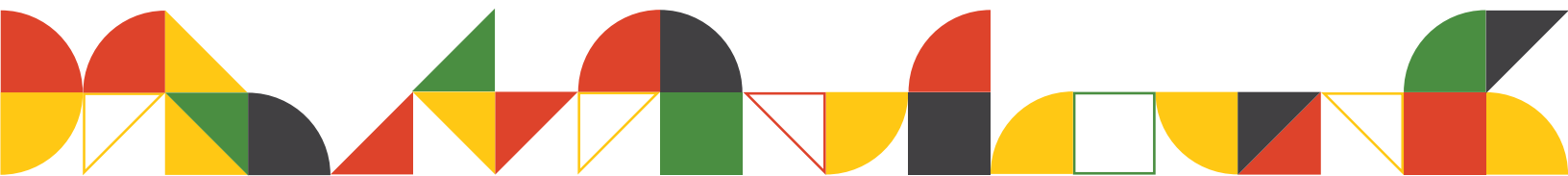
May the ear of God hear me
and the eye of God look at me with love
in the Mixed body that God created.

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 keys to facilitating a hospitable space for Mixed Black folks:

Respect of elders and tradition is very important. Black culture honors those that have gone before, so be prepared to lead in a different way if you have older Black folks (or even just more experienced Black people) in your group. Non-Black people (even those with Black family & friends), especially with a lighter skin tone, need to be very open-minded and laid back in their leadership.

Colorism is a real issue. Even within the Black community, colorism can create distrust, judgment, and controversy on all sides. This is especially true for Mixed Black folks if they don't have as much melanin. Being lighter-skinned has a lot of privilege, but it can also bring pain if someone feels like they aren't enough to be Black. Things like albinism and vitiligo can also play a part in how Black folks see themselves and interact with others. Be aware and gracious as you lead.

Blackness is not a monolith. As you prepare to lead Mixed Black people in your small group, it is important to recognize that Black is not a monolith of people who are primarily African American descendants of slaves. There is a rich diversity of people, ethnicities, and cultures in the broader Black culture, so be prepared to encounter many different backgrounds, upbringings, perspectives, etc. within your small group.

Yes We Can! Pushing for change is an important part of the Black experience. "Causing Good Trouble" means being resilient and working to see progress. So don't take pushback personally, and don't immediately move to smooth things over if two group members disagree. Make space for Mixed Black folks to have viewpoints that might seem to contradict. Assume the best of your small group members that they are being thoughtful with these complex issues.

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.

