



# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What are your dreams, questions, and ideas for welcoming people from different spiritual and religious backgrounds to the table? Below are a few thoughts and resources for our ongoing conversation. We hope you'll take them home and continue to reflect with self and others.

## QUOTATIONS

“  
Bridges don't fall from the sky or rise from the ground. People build them. Becoming the kind of person who sees [their] identity linked to building interfaith bridges starts not with knowledge or skills, but with exploring your own story and narrating your own identity.”

– **Eboo Patel, *Interfaith Leadership: A Primer***

“We can reject everything else: religion, ideology, all received wisdom. But we cannot escape the necessity of love and compassion.

This, then, is my true religion, my simple faith...

Our own heart, our own mind, is the temple.

The doctrine is compassion.

– **Dalai Lama, *Ethics for the New Millennium***

“My heart has become capable of every form:

It is a pasture for gazelles,

And a monastery for Christian monks,

And a temple for idols,

And the Pilgrims' ka'ba,

And the tablet of the Torah,

And the Book of the Koran.

I follow the religion of love:

Whatever way love's camel takes,

That is my religion, my faith.”

– **Ibn Al-Arabi, Sufi mystic, in *One River, Many Wells***

“Our innermost prayer should be that a Hindu should be a better Hindu, a Muslim a better Muslim, a Christian a better Christian.

I broaden my Hinduism by loving other religions than my own.”

– **Mahatma Gandhi in *Sacred Longings***

“The problem to be faced is: how to combine loyalty to one's own tradition with reverence for different traditions.” – **Abraham Joshua Heschel, in *No Religion Is an Island***

## QUESTIONS

For dinner conversation...

- What intrigued you about this topics? Why did you come tonight?
- Where did you grow up? Which view did you grow up with?
- What are experiences you've had with other faiths?
- If your view has changed, how did that change come about?
- What is a symbol of spirit/spirituality for you? How do you feed your spirit?
- If you had to pick a song/movie/poem/piece of art to symbolize your faith, what would it be?
- How do you experience this topic in your family/your own life?
- What do your faith tradition's values have to say about this topic of welcoming people from other religions, or people who do not identify as religious?
- When and how have new avenues of understanding opened for you?
- What questions do you have about other faiths?

### For our speakers...

- What are ways that you practice your faith that are important to you?
- How should others learn about your faith?
- What is an important faith experience from your life?
- What is your an important faith holiday for you, and why?
- What does it mean to live a life of faith in your understanding?
- How does your faith influence important decisions?
- What is it about your faith that gives you strength and solace in times of trouble?
- How do you think about the impact of pluralism on your faith?
- How do you find peace?
- Who are people in your tradition of whom you are proud?
- How has your faith shaped your views about peace, the environment, poverty, etc.?
- How does your faith help you deal with suffering, your own and of others?

### For continued reflection...

- What is exciting/surprising about the conversations we've had tonight? What is difficult?
- How have you been challenged with different (or nuanced) values and/or experiences tonight?
- What are the implications welcoming people from spiritual traditions different than your own? What might change because of this? How might you change?
- What have you found to be the best ways for people from different religious traditions to learn to appreciate and understand each other?
- Why does this topic merit our discussion? What is at stake?
- How do we re-imagine a world of our understanding each other?
- How can we use today's experience to make a difference? What are some steps we can take?
- How can we continue to listen to and learn from those of other faiths?

## SOURCES & RESOURCES

- *Beyond Tolerance: Searching for Interfaith Understanding in America* by Gustav Niebuhr
- *A New Religious America* by Diana L. Eck
- *Mapping Dialogue: Essential Tools for Social Change*, by Bojer, Rodhl, Knuth, & Magner
- *The Bridge of Stars: 365 Prayers, Blessings, and Meditations from around the World*, ed. Markus Braybrooke
- *Interfaith Leadership: A Primer*, by Eboo Patel
- *One River, Many Wells*, by Matthew Fox
- *Spiritual Literacy: Reading the Sacred in Everyday Life*, by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat
- *What the World Needs to Know about Interfaith Dialogue*, e-book on dialogue at [www.interfaithdialogue.com](http://www.interfaithdialogue.com)
- *InterActive Faith, The Essential Interreligious Community-Building Handbook*, Ed. Rev. Bud Heckman, Rori Picker Neiss
- 20,000 Dialogues: [www.20000dialogues.org](http://www.20000dialogues.org)
- Interfaith Resources: [www.interfaithresources.com/](http://www.interfaithresources.com/)
- United States Institute of Peace: [www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org)
- Diana Eck, Professor of Comparative Religion at Harvard University: [www.pluralism.org](http://www.pluralism.org)
- Beliefnet: [www.beliefnet.com](http://www.beliefnet.com)
- Interfaith Youth Core: <https://www.ifyc.org/>

### Local Resources:

- The Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council: <http://www.kcinterfaith.org/>
- Festival of Faiths: <http://festivaloffaithskc.org/> (see interfaith dialogue resource kit)
- Kansas City Interfaith Youth Alliance: <http://www.kciya.org/>
- Dialogue Institute Kansas City: <http://dialoguekc.org/>
- Cultural Crossroads: <http://www.culturalcrossroads-kc.org>
- Center for Religious Experience and Study: [www.cres.org](http://www.cres.org)
- Crescent Peace Society: <http://www.crescentpeace.org/>
- Project Equality: <http://www.projectequality.org/>
- Bill Tammeus' "Faith Matters" Blog: <http://billtammeus.typepad.com/>
- Seven Days: <http://givesevendays.org/>
- Human Spirit library collection, KC Public Library, Plaza Branch

