



JOIN US AT THE TABLE



Bridging the Racial Divide

A conversation exploring how we understand race and how we can bridge the racial divide to build the Beloved Community.

HOST GUIDE

CIVIC DINNER FORMAT



6-10 DIVERSE GUESTS



3 BIG QUESTIONS



EQUAL TIME TO SHARE



ONE VOICE AT A TIME

Thank you for hosting a Civic Dinner on Bridging the Racial Divide in partnership with The King Center.

HOW TO HOST THIS COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION

Whether you're hosting within your organization, or your friends and neighbors, follow the below steps to ensure a powerful conversation.

Your main role as host is setting a date, a time and virtual location for diverse voices to gather together and follow our simple conversation guide created for Bridging the Racial Divide.

Here are just a few things to keep in mind as a host:

- Select a date and register your dinner on cividdinners.com/theracialdivide
- Dinners can be online from your home, as long as it is a quiet space where you can hear others.
- The Host Guide includes all prompts and questions that guide the conversation so you can sit back, relax and listen as you follow the guide.
- Civic Dinners are designed to be inclusive, so try to invite diverse voices to the table to create a robust conversation.
- Remember to share photos with [@thekingcenter](https://twitter.com/thekingcenter) and [@CivicDinners](https://twitter.com/CivicDinners) using the hashtag [#bridgethedivide](https://twitter.com/bridgethedivide)



Bridging the Racial Divide



Virtual Conversation Host Checklist

CivicDinners.com/theracialdivide

You're hosting a Virtual Conversation! A virtual conversation runs the same as an in-person Civic Dinner, and allows you to connect and engage with people anywhere around the world. Follow this checklist to make sure you're all set.

BEFORE YOUR VIRTUAL CONVERSATION

- **Make a list of 10 people you'd like to attend your dinner.**
Remember, the goal is 4-8 guests but not everyone invited will attend and last minute cancellations may happen. Post in different virtual groups you belong to or tell your friends to tell their friends. This is a great opportunity to cast a wide net!
- **If you're using your own virtual room, make sure you have any helpful instructions included on your dinner page.** For example, if you're using Zoom, remind guests to download the Zoom app in advance. You can update your instructions on your dinner page at any time.
- **Log in 10 mins early to the virtual room.** Add your name to your image (virtual name tag), and check make sure your audio is working, etc.
- **Consider posting the following guidelines in the chat so that everyone can see:**
Here are some tips that will help us navigate this virtual conversation together:
 - 1) Check to make sure your sound and video are working and say hi to everyone.
 - 2) Mute yourself if you are not the one speaking to help reduce background noise.
 - 3) Update your name so that everyone knows how to address you properly.
 - 4) After you're finished speaking, call out the next speaker so that there are no awkward pauses. If that person isn't quite ready, they can say "pass"
 - 5) Get comfortable and have fun! Feel free to eat and drink during the conversation
 - 6) Stay present. Let's pretend we're around the dinner table, and do your best to stay fully engaged and not multi-task during the conversation.
- **Grab a drink or some snacks and settle in.**

DURING YOUR VIRTUAL CONVERSATION

- **As folks join the room,** ask them their name, where they are calling in from and what they're drinking (if appropriate).
- **Once everyone has joined,** welcome them and explain how to make their virtual name tags, mute themselves, and use the chat box. Ask if anyone has any questions about the technology so far. Explain how the process works, and that you'll read the prompt and the question, post the question in the chat, and ask someone to be the first to respond. Once that person is done, they should call on the next person, until all have shared. Guests always have the option to pass on a question and circle back when they're ready.
- **Remind everyone to stay present** (keeping off phones and other sites).

AT THE END OF YOUR VIRTUAL CONVERSATION

- **Take a screenshot!** Ask everyone if they're comfortable taking a photo and let those don't want to exit the meeting room first. Then tag us @cividdinners - we love to see your smiling faces and hear your stories!
- **Encourage your guests to fill out the important survey in their inbox.** It's quick! This survey helps us track all the ideas and priorities that are mentioned and compile them into larger reports. Feel free to post the link in the chat.
- **Invite everyone to host their own conversation** - either virtually or in person!

VIRTUAL FAQS

Do I have to send my guests our meeting link or other information?

- Nope. Once they sign up for your conversation, they'll automatically get an email with all the information and the meeting room link. They'll also get reminder emails, but you're welcome to send a personal email as well to make them feel more comfortable and excited

What if we get off track?

- It's normal for the conversation to veer a little, just make sure everyone is engaged and able to answer each question before moving on.
- People should feel comfortable responding to each other's answers as long as no one is dominating or cutting someone off.

How long should the conversation last?

- Depending on how many guests you have, a good length of time would be between 1 hour and 1 hour and 15 mins.

Want more facilitation tips?

- Depending on your topic of conversation, you may want to read through how to respond to challenging comments on the next page of the host guide, called host facilitation tips.



Bridging the Racial Divide



Host Facilitation Best Practices

CivicDinners.com/theracialdivide

Most Civic Dinner conversations are very low-maintenance and some of the tips below might not apply to your conversation, but we want you to feel extra prepared and have some simple facilitation tips to set you up for success!

GENERAL FACILITATION TIPS

How do you keep the conversation moving?

If 1-2 people are dominating the conversation, use your best judgment of when to kindly interrupt, and acknowledge their passion by saying something like, "Thank you so much for sharing, and given our limited time, I want to make sure we hear from others before we have to move on." Then specifically look at or call on someone else who hasn't shared yet or move on to the next question.

If the whole group got way off track and you're running out of time to answer the next question(s), you can politely say "Time check - I want to make sure we're respecting everyone's time here so if we want to put a hold in this conversation, we can finish the questions and whoever wants to stick around to finish it afterwards can."

If there are guests who haven't shared yet and the group hasn't noticed, say something like, "Mary, I'd love to hear what you think about it or what your experience has been."

What to do if someone says something that is completely false, fake news, or is just one side of the story?

It's great that we live in a society that allows differences of opinions, and the best way to interject or encourage people to respond in a healthy manner is to say:

- I like what you said about ___ but I'm struggling with your statement about ____.
- I can see ___ but what about ___?
- My concern with that is ____
- I think we may have different ideas on how to ____
- When I hear that, I feel ____
- I would like to understand. Can you tell me more about what you mean by ____?

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND IF SOMEONE SAYS SOMETHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY

- There may be more to this issue than you're aware of.
- We've all had different experiences that help inform our opinions.
- Don't assume people can see things from your point of view.

HOSTING AT WORK OR WITH AN ORGANIZATION

What do I do if someone mentions someone else by name who isn't at the table in a negative context?

- Given the environment, if someone mentions someone by name where others might be able to identify them, and the subject is not a known celebrity but a colleague or peer, try your best to interrupt by saying something like, "Thank you so much for sharing, but if at all possible, please refrain from mentioning personal names of other colleagues/group members who aren't present. We want to respect anyone who isn't here. You can simply replace the name with "someone" or him/her/they to allow for the story but protect the identity of the individual."

What do I do if someone tells a really traumatic story that may require professional support?

- It doesn't happen very often, but if someone feels safe to share a traumatic story or a painful experience that is an act that may be reported, here is what to do. First, do not allow or encourage a probing of more information such as who, where, what, when. Instead, as the host, interject by acknowledging the speaker's bravery for sharing, and then tell them there is an employee/organization hotline they can call to get advice on next steps. Be careful not to allow this to derail the conversation, as it's even more important to end on a positive and uplifting note if something like this is shared. The important thing is show empathy, but be careful not to probe into private matters.

What do I do if someone goes on a rant about an organization or throws out a public grievance or accusation?

- Instead of changing the conversation to focus on this one person's viewpoint, acknowledge their grievance and ask if they'd be willing to talk with you directly afterwards to see how best to resolve it, offline and after this session.



Bridging the Racial Divide



CIVIC DINNER HOST GUIDE

Host to read this intro to guests when all have arrived and are ready to begin.

Welcome and thank you for joining this Bridging the Racial Divide Civic Dinner.

The King Center is leading a series of crucial conversations in small groups to share stories and experiences around race with the intention of creating a space for people of diverse backgrounds to connect, come together and work to create actionable solutions that bridge the racial divide in America.

The King Center has partnered with Civic Dinners to help enable 1,000 dinners to occur all across the United States. Thank you for joining this courageous conversation.

The way a Civic Dinner works is super simple. We'll start with introductions, and then get into three big questions, with one voice at a time, and equal time to share. Remember that you are here to listen far more than speak. And most importantly, share from your heart, be real, and be kind. Let's begin!



6-10 GUESTS



3 BIG QUESTIONS



EQUAL TIME TO SHARE



ONE VOICE AT A TIME

HOUSE RULES:



LISTEN CAREFULLY AND INTENTLY.

Conversation is as much about listening as it is about talking. Listen and be open to hearing all points of view.

SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND, THEN TO BE UNDERSTOOD.

Setting judgments aside opens you up to learning from others and makes them feel respected and appreciated.

FIND COMMON GROUND AND APPRECIATE DIFFERENCES.

Look for a common ground you can agree on and appreciate the differences in the beliefs and opinions of others.

BE AUTHENTIC AND WELCOME THAT FROM OTHERS.

Speak authentically from your personal experience. Personal stories open our hearts.

BE PURPOSEFUL.

Notice if what you are conveying is or is not pertinent to the topic at hand.

KEEP DISCUSSIONS FOCUSED.

Be proactive in getting yourself and others back on track if needed.



Bridging the Racial Divide



CIVIC DINNERS HOST GUIDE

CivicDinners.com/theracialdivide

Introductions Share your name, where you grew up, and your first memory of understanding race.

Question #1: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "I am convinced that men hate each other because they fear each other. They fear each other because they don't know each other, and they don't know each other because they don't communicate with each other, and they don't communicate with each other because they are separated from each other..."

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Share a moment when you have gone out of your comfort zone to get to know someone of a different background, ethnicity or race. What did you learn? What surprised you?

Question #2: In the U.S. Constitution, the first amendment clearly states "the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." In the 1960's, Dr. MLK Jr. was leading peaceful protests through the streets and people were complaining that what he was doing was "wildly inappropriate." Fast forward to today, athletes and celebrities are using their visibility to peacefully protest either by marching in the streets or taking a knee during the anthem and people are complaining, claiming that its disrespecting our country.

THEN AND NOW

What are your thoughts on both past and current protests, and what is your definition of a "peaceful protest?"

Question #3: Through sharing our stories, we become aware of the pain, the loss, and injustice so many have faced. Acknowledging this pain allows us to begin the hard work of healing, action and change. So in closing, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. understood, the Beloved Community will never be mandated through policy or law. Instead, it will have to come from us, everyday citizens, taking action together, side by side.

YOUR ROLE

What is one action you can take to help bridge the racial divide?

What's next Thank you for joining us tonight! You and your dinner are part of the first national conversation. On behalf of The King Center and Civic Dinners, thank you for participating in this great discussion and sharing your stories, visions and ways to bridge the racial divide.

Next you will receive an email from Civic Dinners with links to additional resources and ideas for how you can help create the Beloved Community. Also, you'll receive an opportunity to share your feedback and your thoughts.

*Remember to take a photo of the dinner and share your experience on social media by tagging #bridgethedivide @cividdinners @thekingcenter