



Dining with **Purpose**

Table of Contents

Participant Workbook	3
Experience 1: Kickoff & Orientation	5
Experience 2: Storytelling & Identity.....	12
Experience 3: Power, Class, and Civic Responsibility	18
Experience 4: Belonging, Othering, and Inclusion	20
Experience 5: Power Dynamics & Systems of Change.....	26
Experience 6: Retreat & Movement Building.....	30
Full Facilitation Guide	33
Session 1: Kickoff Luncheon.....	36
Session 2: Storytelling Dinner	39
Session 3: Othering and Belonging	43
Session 4: Power, Caste & Class.....	44
Session 5: Power Dynamics	47
Session 6: Closing Retreat & Action Planning	50
Credits.....	53

Participant Workbook

Program Overview

Dining with Purpose is a community-driven initiative that brings people together over a meal to build stronger social connections, exchange meaningful stories, and co-create practical solutions to local challenges. Through respectful conversations across diverse perspectives, the program empowers neighbors, donors, and community leaders to listen, learn, and take action toward a stronger, more self-reliant community.

Rooted in the belief that meaningful change begins when individuals step forward together, Dining with Purpose provides space for diverse perspectives to converge—finding common ground through shared values like faith, family, and hard work. Guided discussions and ongoing engagement encourage participants to support local solutions that reduce dependency and nurture community resilience.

This is more than just a dinner—it's a movement to empower individuals, foster connection, and ensure every voice is heard in shaping a stronger, more stable future.

How to Show Up for These Experiences

We're building this table together—your presence is essential.

Timing

Evening Gatherings (Sessions 2–5):

- Officially: 6:30–9:00 PM
- Arrive early (from 6:00 PM) to help set up, settle in, and connect.
- Stay after if you'd like to help clean up or continue the conversation.

Kickoff & Retreat (Sessions 1 & 6):

- These are daytime experiences (4.5 hours) with meals included.
- Early arrival for grounding and preparation is welcome.

What to Bring

- This workbook (print or digital)
- An open heart and a curious mind
- Optional: A story, object, or question you'd like to share

Group Culture: Shared Care and Shared Space

- We co-create, co-hold, and co-learn:
- We prepare the space, share meals, and clean up together.
- We listen generously and speak with courage.
- We learn together—not to be perfect, but to be present.

Participant Guide to the Meal Series

The Dining with Purpose series includes six guided gatherings. Each is shaped by a key theme and includes opportunities for learning, reflection, and connection. While a suggested agenda is provided, sessions are flexible and responsive to the group's needs.

Each session includes:

- Date and Time
- Location
- Overview
- Resources
- Homework
- Agenda
- Worksheets

Experience 1: Kickoff & Orientation

Theme: Welcome, Foundations, and Systems

Description: This session sets the stage for the entire series. Participants reflect on individual and shared experiences with food, money, and systems, and begin building trust through group agreements and open conversation.

Key Resources

- *Emergent Strategy* by Adrienne Maree Brown:
akpress.org/emergentstrategy.html
- *The Danger of a Single Story* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie:
ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story

Homework: Reading List + Letter to Self

Suggested Agenda

10:00 AM – Check-In & Food Memory

- Introductions paired with a meaningful food memory.
- Write a letter to your future self using the provided template.
- Why are you here?
- What do you hope to learn?
- How will you apply this in your life?
- Take Survey

10:30 AM – Welcome & Overview

- Facilitators share the Dining with Purpose goals and framework.

11:00 AM – Community Landscape & Explore Agreements

- Collaborative community mapping.
- Co-create group agreements.

12:00 PM – Lunch

12:30 PM – Financial Stress Activity

- Reflective activity exploring financial stress at personal and community levels.

1:00 PM – Reading List Reflection

- Discussion of insights from recommended readings.

1:30 PM – Closing Circle

- Share reflections and set intentions for the series.

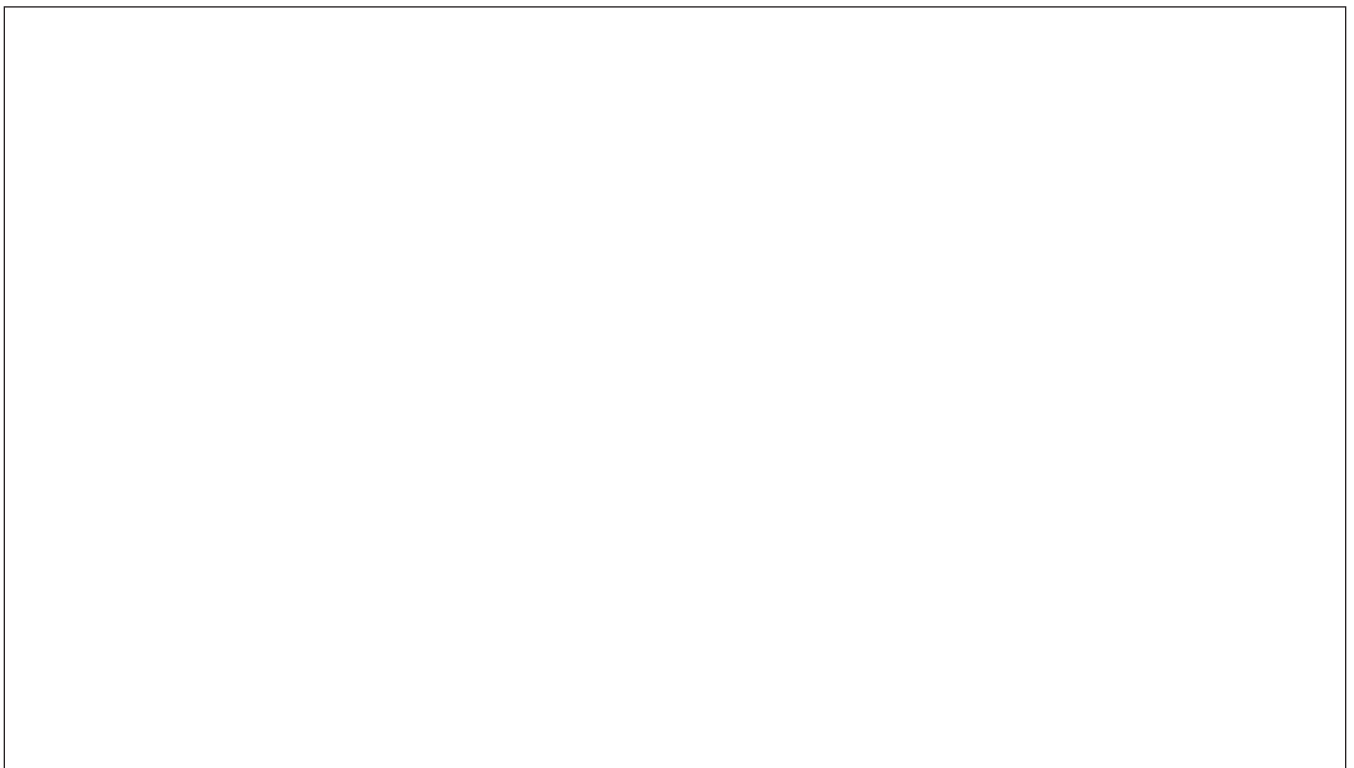
Community Agreements

Let's agree on how we want to engage. Here are a few examples from the Dining with Purpose Pilot—add or revise together.

- Honesty and the courage to express our thoughts with vulnerability.
- An agreement to communicate clearly to ensure everyone's participation.
- A belief in the genuine desire of people to offer help and foster connections.
- Dedication to maintaining a safe and secure environment.
- Commitment to confidentiality, with the understanding that what is shared here remains within these walls
- A shared desire to nurture the new relationships we have formed.

Our Group Agreements:

Doodle Box



Kickoff Letter Template

Use this space during Experience 1 to write yourself a letter. This will help you reflect on your intentions, expectations, and the impact you hope this journey will have on your life.

Letter to Myself: Why I'm Here

Dear Me,

I signed up for Dining with Purpose because. . . _____

I think I will learn. . . _____

I hope to better understand. . . _____

I want to apply what I learn by. . . _____

Before this series ends, I hope to feel. . . _____

With care,

(Sign your name and date)

Doodle Box



Reading List Worksheet

Make a list of everything you're currently reading—from books to articles, social media, headlines, manuals, etc.

My Reading List:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Reflection: What do these sources say about what's shaping your perspective?

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Financial Stress Worksheet

Reflect on your lived experience or observations of financial stress.

Prompts:

- What does financial stress look like in your life or your community?
- How does it impact choices, opportunities, and well-being?

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Experience 2: Storytelling & Identity

Theme: Personal Narrative and Connection

Description: Storytelling connects us. In this session, we share moments that have shaped who we are, listen deeply, and uncover the values, experiences, and identities that guide our paths. Personal stories foster empathy and strengthen our shared sense of belonging.

Key Resources

- *The Storytelling Animal* by Jonathan Gottschall:
[amazon.com/Storytelling-Animal-Jonathan-Gottschall/dp/0544002342](https://www.amazon.com/Storytelling-Animal-Jonathan-Gottschall/dp/0544002342)
- StoryCorps – *Listening as an Act of Love*:
onbeing.org/programs/dave-isay-listening-as-an-act-of-love/
- *Storytelling for Impact* – Megan Finnerty:
meganfinnerty.com

Homework:

- Have one Chili Questions conversation with another participant.
- Explore the Belonging or Othering stories.
- Be prepared to share an insight in the next session.

Suggested Agenda

6:00 PM – Arrival & Social Time

6:30 PM – Check-In & Reading Report-Out

Share insights from your Reading List experience.

7:00 PM – Dinner

7:30 PM – Storytelling Pair Activity

Share one Belonging and one Othering story using the provided prompts:

Belonging Prompt Examples:

- A time you felt truly welcomed in a community
- When you were fully seen and valued at work or in a social group

Othering Prompt Examples:

- A moment you felt excluded or unseen
- When you realized you didn't belong

Follow a basic arc:

- Opening: Who/Where/When
- What was normal then?
- The change or turning point
- What did you learn?

8:15 PM – Group Discussion:

1. What themes emerged across our stories?
2. How did these stories reshape your understanding of identity and belonging?
3. How can storytelling strengthen our shared work?

9:00 PM – Wrap-Up

Facilitators summarize key insights and reinforce storytelling as a foundation for empathy and advocacy.

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Storytelling Worksheet

Think of a story that shows who you are and what shaped you.

Opening (Who/Where/When):

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What was normal life like at the time?

[illegible]

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This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page, typical of notebook or legal stationery. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.

Homework | Chili Questions: A Social Conversation Game

Overview: This is a pair-based conversation activity designed to foster connection, self-reflection, and choice-based vulnerability.

- Each person chooses the level of spice they are up for engaging with — including Yogurt (mild).
- The other person selects a question from that spice level to ask them.
- Take turns asking and answering.
- At any time, anyone can interrupt with a Yogurt question to lighten the mood.
- Optional adaptation: Start with Yogurt and increase spice level with each round.

YOGURT (Mild, fun, and safe)

- What do you find beautiful?
- What are the “small” things that give you joy?
- What is the most spontaneous thing that you have ever done?
- Time freezes for everyone but you for one day. What do you do?
- Which body part do you wish you could detach and why?
- What are you passionate about?
- Share one of your most cherished childhood memories.
- Share your first most memorable encounter with another culture.
- What is something about your life now that you will miss when you are eighty?
- What does your ideal life look like?
- If you could swap places with somebody for a day, who would you choose, and why?
- What is your most irrational fear?
- What does “home” mean to you?
- What’s the worst job you ever had and why?

One Pepper (Warm)

- Share a moment that changed your worldview.
- What is something that you wish you understood?
- Picture yourself in 20 years.
- What is the most impactful thing you did for your community?
- What do you know about love? Where did you learn it?

Two Peppers (Medium Heat)

- If you were given three things to make you happy, what would these be?
- If I really, really knew you, what would I know about you?
- Knowing what you now know, what would you advise your younger self?
- If someone made a book of your life, what would be the chapters?

Three Peppers (Spicy)

- In what ways is your family challenging?
- What long-held belief did you have that was recently changed?
- If you could travel back in time to give your parents one piece of advice on how to raise you, what would it be?
- If we lived together, what challenging aspects would I discover about you?
- What is something about yourself that bothers you? What would it take to change it?

Four Peppers (Very Spicy)

- What would you do if you weren't afraid?
- Where are you out of integrity?
- What is one thing you wish you didn't know?
- What are the things you regret the most?
- What did you learn from your parents that you wish you hadn't?
- What do you blame your parents for?
- When is the last time you remember feeling despair?
- How do you sabotage yourself?

Write Your Own

What would you like to know about others?

[illegible]

Experience 3: Power, Class, and Civic Responsibility

Theme: Power Mapping and Civic Identity

Description: Power shows up in many forms—some visible, some hidden. In this session, we reflect on class, influence, and civic responsibility, exploring how we can intentionally leverage our power to positively impact our communities.

Homework:

Answer the Three Questions:

1. What is your individual responsibility in a world where food banks are no longer needed?
2. What moment motivated you to take action in your life?
3. If you could start somewhere to end the need for food banks, where would it be—and why?

Begin identifying your personal superpower.

Suggested Agenda

6:00 PM – Arrival & Refreshments

Informal check-in.

6:30 PM – Chili Questions Share-Out

Share insights from Chili Questions conversations.

7:00 PM – Dinner with Presentation: Power & Class

Facilitators share context on different forms of power and class dynamics.

7:30 PM – Table Dialogue

Discussion prompts on power, privilege, class, and civic identity.

8:00 PM – Superpowers Introduction

Introduce the Superpowers deck/app. Begin identifying personal strengths.

8:30 PM – Reflection and Close

How will you use your superpowers to influence systems of change?

The Three Questions



What is your individual responsibility in a world where food banks are no longer needed? _____

If you could start somewhere to end the need for food banks, where would it be—and why? _____

Experience 4: Belonging, Othering, and Inclusion

Theme: Systems of Inclusion and Exclusion

Description: We all want to feel like we belong. In this session, we examine how systems include or exclude people, reflect on earlier storytelling, and explore how we can expand the circle of human concern to make space for all voices.

Homework:

- Complete the Superpowers Reflection worksheet.
- Journal: What kind of spaces do I create for others to feel seen and heard?

Suggested Agenda

6:00 PM – Arrival & Dinner

6:30 PM – Reflection Share-Out

Revisit answers to the Three Questions.

7:00 PM – Presentation & Dialogue: Belonging and Othering

- Explore how systems, institutions, and interactions influence belonging.
- What is your super power? What super powers do you need on your team?

8:00 PM – Guided Worksheet for Power Grid

- When have you felt a strong sense of belonging?
- When have you felt excluded?
- What systems shaped those moments?
- What would true inclusion look like in your world?

8:30 PM – Homework Setup

Othering and Belonging Notes _____

[illegible]

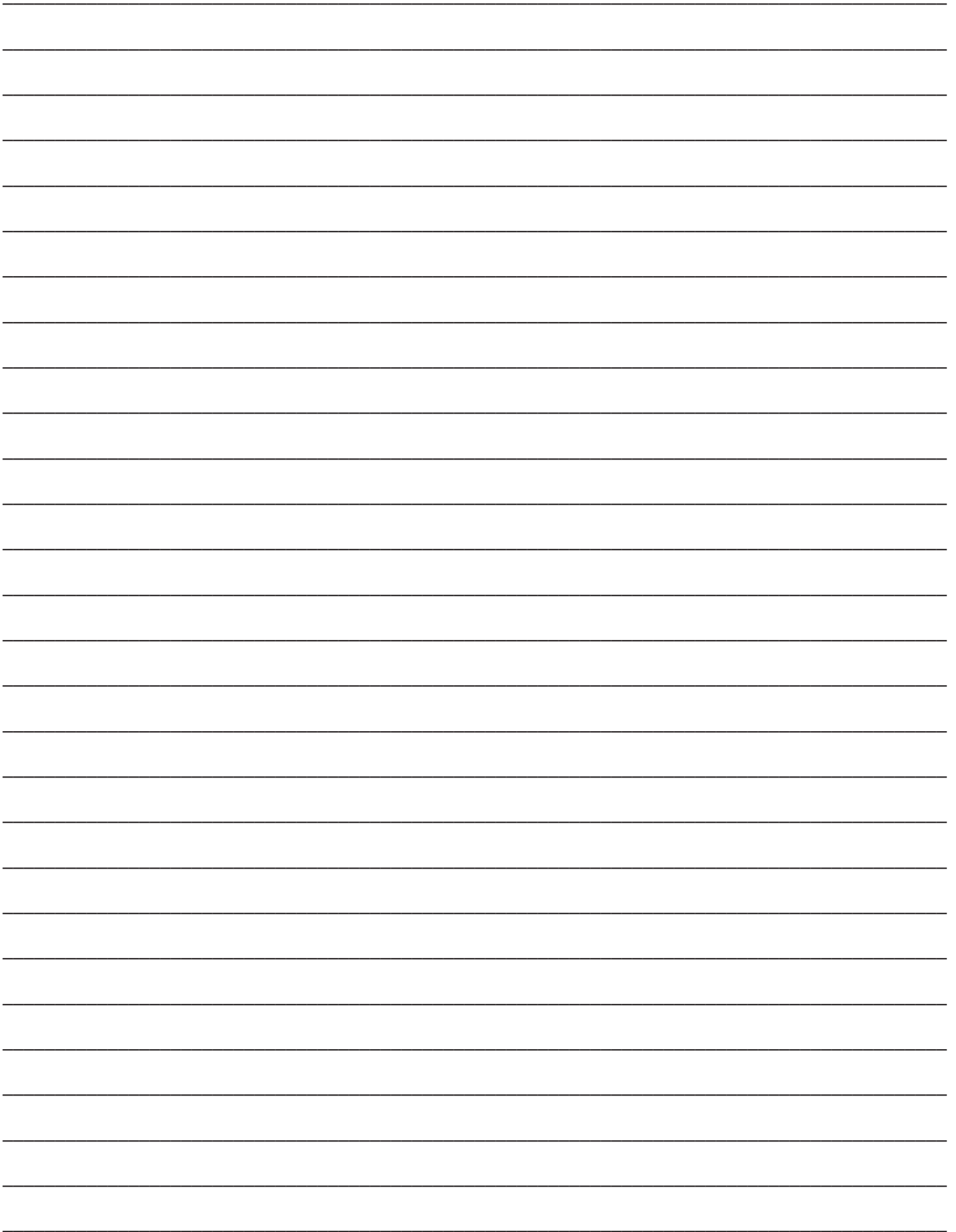
Belonging & Exclusion Worksheet

Reflect on inclusion and exclusion.

Prompts:

- When have you felt deeply included?
- When have you felt excluded or unseen?
- What would true inclusion look like?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Superpowers Reflection Worksheet

Use the Superpowers app or deck to identify your top strength.

My Superpower:

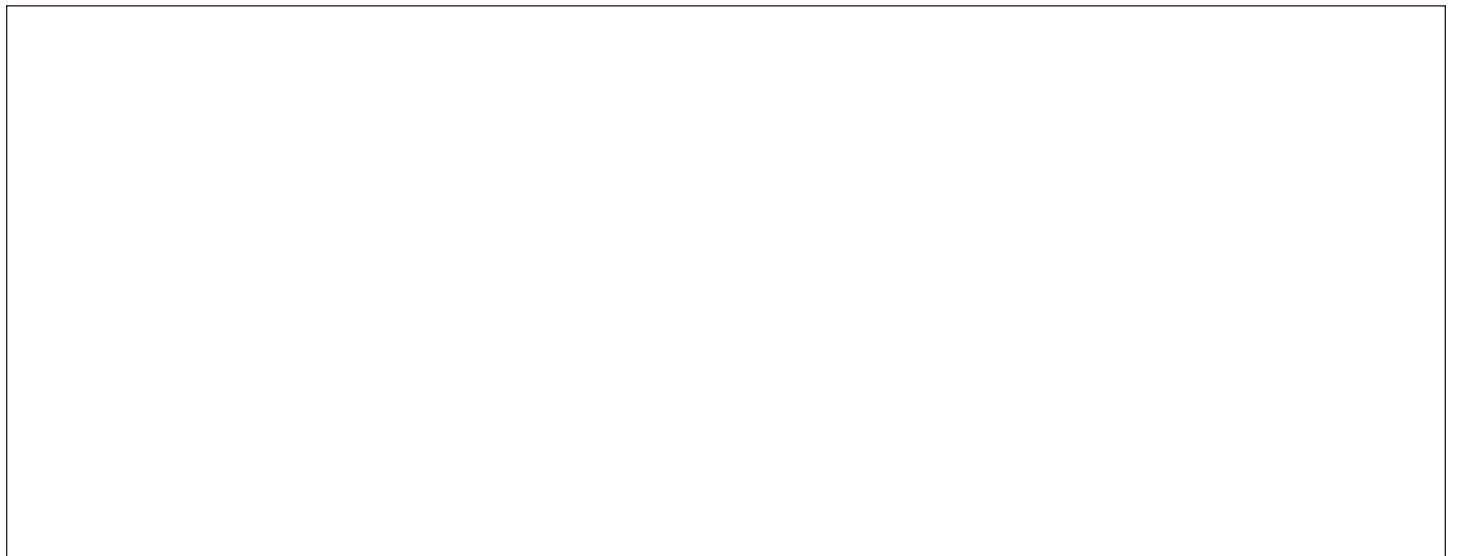
Where I use it in my life:

How it helps others:

Its shadow side:

How I can use it in this movement:

Doodle Box



Experience 5: Power Dynamics & Systems of Change

Theme: Collective Power and Advocacy

Description: In this session, we explore how collective influence shapes systems. By identifying our strengths and mapping power dynamics, we clarify how to act together to create meaningful change.

Homework:

- Complete the Advocacy Inventory worksheet.
- Journal: What issue am I most passionate about influencing—and why?
- Draft one meaningful action idea you could take.

Suggested Agenda

6:00 PM – Arrival & Check-In

Reflect on Journal about how you create a sense of belonging in your community.

6:30 PM – Superpowers Share-Out

Participants share insights from the Superpowers activity.

7:00 PM – Dinner & Power Grid Exercise

Map visible and invisible power in your community.

7:30 PM – Group Dialogue

Where do we hold influence individually and collectively?

What does shared power look like?

What role do we each play in systems of change?

8:00 PM – Homework Setup

Walk through the Advocacy Inventory worksheet.

Homework

Identify what you bring to advocacy and social change.

My Power:

Its shadow side:

How I can use it in this movement:

My Skills:

What I'm good at:

What I've learned the hard way:

My People:

Who shares my passion:

Who can I ask for support:

My Resources:

Time I can give:

Tools or space I can offer:

Doodle Box

Experience 6: Retreat & Movement Building

Theme: Planning and Long-Term Engagement

Description: This closing session is a space to reflect, celebrate, and commit to what's next. Together, we honor what we've learned, identify our individual and collective strengths, and co-create a plan for sustained impact beyond this series.

Suggested Agenda

10:00 AM – Check-In

Opening prompt: What one word captures how you're arriving today?

10:30 AM – Group Reflection

- What have we learned?
- Visual timeline and/or quote wall activity.

11:00 AM – Small Group Inventory Share-Out

Explore shared causes, overlapping superpowers, and opportunities.

11:30 AM – Action Planning Workshop

- What is one action you are ready to take?
- Who will you do it with?
- What support do you need?

12:00 PM – Lunch

12:30 PM – Engagement Pathways Overview

- Advocacy Training
- Join the Apple Core
- Aligned Organizations
- Online Training Opportunities

1:30 PM – Closing Circle

- Each participant shares a takeaway, commitment, or next step.
- Facilitators close with gratitude and a call to remain connected.

Final Deliverables: Advocacy Inventory, Action Plan, Community Reflection

Action Planning Template

Plan a specific step you'll take after the series.

Step 1: Take Action I will:

Why this matters to me:

Deadline:

Step 2: Activate Support I will reach out to:

I will ask for:

Step 3: Build Momentum Change I want to contribute to:

How I'll stay involved:

My next milestone:

Signature:_____ **Date:**_____

Dining with Purpose: Full Facilitation Guide

Facilitator Guidance

Participant Selection

When selecting participants, aim for a balanced group with at least 50% who have lived experience with food insecurity. Prioritize diversity across race, class, religion, and political perspectives to create a space for authentic dialogue and shared learning.

Honorariums and Travel Support

To ensure equity and honor the time and contributions of all participants, Dining with Purpose provides honorariums (The Houston Food Bank honorarium was \$65/hour) and pre-scheduled Lyft rides for the 50% of participants with lived experience of food insecurity. This approach helps level the playing field, removing barriers to participation while affirming that lived experience is a vital form of expertise. By compensating participants for their time and covering transportation needs, we demonstrate that their voices matter, their stories are valuable, and their presence is essential to shaping meaningful change.

Facilitator Selection

Choose facilitators who reflect the diversity of your participant group...

Oops, Ouch, Whoa

Introduce the “Oops, Ouch, and Whoa” framework as a way to navigate moments of tension or discomfort with curiosity and care— “Oops” for when we misspeak, “Ouch” when something hurts, and “Whoa” when we need to pause and reflect. Use the Kitchen Sink Jumbo Post-it as a shared space for anonymous reflections, lingering thoughts, or anything participants want to name without saying out loud.

Meal Planning with High Regard

Ensure every participant is respected across allergies, religious traditions, and ethical food practices.

Small Group Roles

In small group work, participants will rotate through traditional roles: Note Taker, Presenter, Listener, and Speaker. The Speaker role alternates during discussion; if the Note Taker is speaking, another group member should temporarily take notes to ensure all ideas are captured.

Each session in this guide can be led by one, two, or three facilitators. Here are suggested role breakdowns:

Suggested Facilitator Roles

- Lead Facilitator: Guides overall flow and transitions between agenda items.
- Co-Facilitator: Supports timing, tracks energy, and helps facilitate breakouts or group shares.
- Support Facilitator (if available): Handles room setup, emotional check-ins, materials, and logistics.

What to Expect

- Sessions are interactive, not lectures—listen more than you speak.
- You are a guide, not an expert. The wisdom is in the room.
- Be present. The most important role of a facilitator is to create safety and trust.

Session Structure

Each session includes:

- A “Thread of Thoughtfulness” to build emotional and psychological safety
- Facilitator framing with tone guidance and grounding options
- Prep checklists to ensure readiness
- Time-based agendas with prompts and pacing
- Clearly defined session purposes

Master Planning Checklist

- Identify facilitation team and assign roles
- Confirm dates, times, and venues
- Outreach: inclusive recruitment + communication templates
- Confirm dietary needs + plan culturally respectful meals
- Order food & confirm delivery or pickup
- Room layout, signage, music, AV
- Print materials, agendas, and worksheets
- Setup toolkit (markers, visuals, name tags)
- Assign roles: Photographer, Greeter, Debrief Lead
- Post-dinner follow-up + thank-you messages
- Plan final retreat logistics + post-program engagement

Session at a Glance Template

(You may add this block at the beginning of any session if helpful.)

Session at a Glance

- Duration: [Usually 2.5–3 hours]
- Number of Facilitators: 1–3
- Core Theme: [e.g., Storytelling, Belonging, Power Dynamics, Civic Action]
- Main Activity: [e.g., Partnered story sharing]
- Emotional Tone: [e.g., Vulnerable, connective]
- Physical Setup: [e.g., Small groups or pairs]
- Materials: [List worksheets, quotes, handouts]

A structured dinner series to foster empathy, understanding, and collective action across lines of difference. Each session follows a consistent structure: Welcome, Work Session, and Homework.

Session 1: Kickoff Luncheon

Dinner Setup

- ☐ Confirm location and access
- ☐ Recheck dietary needs and meal orders
- ☐ Print dinner materials and name tags
- ☐ Room setup with intentional layout
- ☐ AV and music prep
- ☐ Facilitator huddle + grounding
- ☐ Post-it wall, visual tools ready

Notes:

THREAD OF THOUGHTFULNESS

The tone of this program is set from the very beginning—through intentional gestures of kindness and care. Consider:

- Writing short affirmations or quotes and placing one at each seat.
- Creating handwritten welcome cards for each participant.
- Collecting birthday or celebration dates to honor during the series.
- Including space in your notes to track personal details shared—such as energy drainers, wins, or concerns—to revisit later with compassion.

These small acts communicate that participants are seen, valued, and remembered.

FACILITATOR FRAMING

This first session is about grounding participants in purpose, building initial trust, and giving people time to settle into the space. Model curiosity, warmth, and flexibility. Remember that many participants may be meeting for the first time—set a tone of care over performance.

Consider beginning with a brief grounding practice to help everyone arrive:

Facilitator Option: “Let’s take a moment to arrive fully—feet on the floor, breath in your chest, and mind in the room. We each come from different days and experiences. Let’s pause to make space for one another.”

Also remind participants:

Everyone participates in their own way—listening deeply is a powerful form of engagement. There are no ‘right’ answers here—curiosity is more important than certainty.

Program: Dining with Purpose

Session: Kickoff Luncheon – Welcome & Landscape Level Setting

Facilitator(s): [Insert Name(s)]

Date: [Insert Date]

Location: [Insert Location]

Worksheets: Reading List Worksheet

Resources: Program Schedule, Media Release Form, Community Agreements Template

PREP CHECKLIST

- Participant name tags
- Sign-in sheet
- Food and beverage setup
- Program schedule handout
- Media release forms
- Reading List Worksheets
- Pens and notepads
- Community Agreements (poster or handout)

SESSION PURPOSE

This opening session sets the tone for the journey ahead, inviting participants to build trust, align on purpose, and begin thinking about the systems that shape our community.

10:00 AM – Check-In & Food Memories

Facilitate casual conversation around food memories. Prompt: “What’s a food memory that instantly takes you back to a time or place?”

10:30 AM – Welcome & Program Overview

Introduce facilitators, share goals of the program, review the schedule, collect media releases.

11:00 AM – Community Landscape: Understanding the Big Picture

Present systems shaping food insecurity. Facilitate discussion around systemic forces and collective response.

11:45 AM – Financial Stress Worksheet

Individual reflection, pair sharing, large group discussion.

12:00 PM – Lunch Buffet Opens

Informal discussion continues during lunch.

1:00 PM – Reading List Activity

Make reading lists, pair up, select something to read from partner’s list.

1:30 PM – Closing Reflection

Prompt: “What are you taking away from today?”

HOMEWORK

Complete Reading List Worksheet and read one item from your partner’s list.

Session 2: Storytelling Dinner

Dinner Setup

- ☐ Confirm location and access
- ☐ Recheck dietary needs and meal orders
- ☐ Print dinner materials and name tags
- ☐ Room setup with intentional layout
- ☐ AV and music prep
- ☐ Facilitator huddle + grounding
- ☐ Post-it wall, visual tools ready

Notes:

THREAD OF THOUGHTFULNESS

Continue weaving thoughtful gestures throughout the space:

- Include a new quote or affirmation card at each seat.
- If appropriate, acknowledge any birthdays or life updates.
- Consider offering an optional gratitude jar or notebook where participants can write anonymous affirmations to others.

These details foster connection and signal that every person—and every voice—matters.

FACILITATOR FRAMING

This session asks participants to share personal stories that may be vulnerable. Your job is to create a container where everyone feels safe, seen, and heard. Let silence do its work, encourage deep listening, and normalize that sharing will look different for each person.

Open with a short grounding prompt if helpful:

Facilitator Option: “Let’s all take one breath together. Release the day, and arrive as you are.”

- Normalize multiple ways of engaging:
- No one is required to share out loud.
- Invite participants to opt into prompts and choose what feels safe.
- Encourage reflection over performance—there’s no pressure to tell a ‘perfect’ story.

Center equity by saying: “We each carry different experiences and stories—none of us speaks for everyone, and all of us have something to offer. Let’s meet each other with openness and care.”

Program: Dining with Purpose

Session: Dinner 2 – Storytelling & Shared Identity

Facilitator(s): [Insert Name(s)]

Date: [Insert Date]

Location: [Insert Location]

Worksheets: Storytelling Worksheet, Three Questions Worksheet

Resources: Community Agreements, Program Schedule

PREP CHECKLIST

- Name tags
- Sign-in sheet
- Storytelling Worksheets
- Three Questions Worksheets
- Pens and notepads
- Meal setup
- Community Agreements (posted or printed)

SESSION PURPOSE

This dinner explores personal stories of belonging and exclusion to deepen empathy and humanize the diverse experiences in the room. It builds a foundation for connection and sets the stage for meaningful reflection and action in later sessions.

6:30 PM – Check-In & Welcome

Facilitators greet participants and set the tone for the evening. Invite informal conversation as participants arrive and settle in.

Suggested Prompt: “What’s one space or community where you’ve felt a strong sense of belonging—or a time you knew you didn’t belong?”

6:45 PM – Reading List Report-Out

Participants reconnect with their partners from Dinner 1 or form new pairs. Invite each to share what they read from their partner’s list and what resonated.

Facilitator Tip: Emphasize that listening is an act of respect—this is about engagement, not analysis.

Invite 1–2 participants to share their reading reflections with the whole group if time allows.

7:00 PM – Dinner Buffet Opens

Encourage participants to sit with someone new. Facilitators model curiosity and openness, weaving between tables and listening for themes.

7:30 PM – Storytelling Work Session

Framing: “Tonight we reflect on moments that shaped how we see ourselves in community. Our stories hold power—they reveal how belonging and exclusion affect us all.”

Instructions:

1. Participants begin with the Storytelling Worksheet, reflecting on a moment of belonging or other-ing. Allow 10–15 minutes for writing.
2. Then, pair up and share stories. Each person gets 6–8 minutes to speak, uninterrupted.
3. After both stories are shared, invite pairs to reflect:
 - a. What themes emerged?
 - b. What surprised you?

8:15 PM – Large Group Reflection

Bring everyone back together. Use circle or popcorn-style discussion.

Suggested Prompts:

- “What did you notice in your partner’s story that stayed with you?”
- “Did you hear something that challenged or expanded your perspective?”
- “What do these stories teach us about how belonging gets built—or broken?”

8:45 PM – Check-Out & Homework Overview

Prompt: “What are you taking with you from tonight’s experience?”

Homework Assignment: Distribute or remind participants of the **Three Questions Worksheet:**

1. What is our individual responsibility in creating a world that does not require food banks?
2. When did you decide to act, and what prompted that decision?
3. If we had to start somewhere to create a world where food banks are unnecessary, where would we begin?

Encourage thoughtful reflection and ask participants to bring their completed worksheet to the next dinner.

HOMEWORK

- Finish Storytelling Worksheet
- Complete Three Questions Worksheet and be prepared to share next session

Session 3: Othering and Belonging

Dinner Setup

- ☐ Confirm location and access
- ☐ Recheck dietary needs and meal orders
- ☐ Print dinner materials and name tags
- ☐ Room setup with intentional layout
- ☐ AV and music prep
- ☐ Facilitator huddle + grounding
- ☐ Post-it wall, visual tools ready

Notes:

THREAD OF THOUGHTFULNESS

As vulnerability deepens, so can the care we offer. Consider:

- Writing affirmations that reflect on courage and sharing—place one at each seat.
- Having a private space or object (like a stone or note box) for participants to release hard feelings or write down what they're letting go of.
- Invite a moment of silence or gentle music to open or close the session.

These gestures acknowledge that emotional labor is present—and appreciated. [Session content remains unchanged above.]

HOMEWORK

Complete Chili Questions Worksheet

Session 4: Power, Caste & Class

Dinner Setup

- ☐ Confirm location and access
- ☐ Recheck dietary needs and meal orders
- ☐ Print dinner materials and name tags
- ☐ Room setup with intentional layout
- ☐ AV and music prep
- ☐ Facilitator huddle + grounding
- ☐ Post-it wall, visual tools ready

Notes:

THREAD OF THOUGHTFULNESS

This session can bring heaviness. Thoughtfulness here means balancing challenge with care:

- Include quotes from justice leaders or change-makers at each seat.
- Offer warm beverages or grounding objects (stones, candles, textures) on tables.
- Give permission to step away or take breaks without explanation.

Modeling tenderness in the face of tension gives others permission to stay grounded and open.

FACILITATOR FRAMING

This session invites participants to begin identifying and naming the systems that shape power—both historically and in our everyday lives. Be gentle with the material. Normalize discomfort. These frameworks are new to some, lived experience for others, and emotionally charged for many.

Grounding Option: “Let’s take a moment to breathe into the complexity of this work. We are not here to judge each other. We are here to notice what’s hard, honor what’s true, and be open to learning together.”

Reminders:

- Participants may need time to process—allow for silence.
- Acknowledge the lived wisdom in the room. Don't over-rely on theory.

Program: Dining with Purpose

Session: Dinner 4 – Power, Caste & Class

Facilitator(s): [Insert Name(s)]

Date: [Insert Date]

Location: [Insert Location]

Worksheets: Superpowers Reflection, Advocacy Inventory

Resources: Caste and Class Overview, Power Mapping Template

PREP CHECKLIST

- Name tags
- Sign-in sheet
- Chili Questions Worksheets (if needed)
- Superpowers Reflection Worksheets
- Advocacy Inventory Worksheets
- Pens and notepads
- Meal setup
- Caste/Class visuals or slides (optional)

SESSION PURPOSE

To explore the roles that power, caste, and class play in shaping opportunity, identity, and community—and begin identifying personal assets for collective change.

6:00 PM – Check-In & Refreshments

Facilitators welcome participants and help create a relaxed atmosphere. Invite casual conversation.

6:30 PM – Share-Out: Chili Questions

Facilitated small group or paired conversations based on the Chili Questions Worksheet.

Suggested Prompts:

- “What made you pause?”
- “Where did you feel challenged or affirmed?”
- “What did you notice about your own assumptions?”

7:00 PM – Presentation: Power, Caste, and Class

Brief facilitator-led overview defining terms and frameworks. Offer clear definitions and examples. Keep this interactive where possible.

Facilitator Tip: Avoid jargon. Invite lived experiences. Let participants respond to the material as it lands for them.

7:30 PM – Table Discussions

Participants discuss key takeaways from the presentation in small groups.

Suggested Questions:

- “How do you see caste or class operating in your life or community?”
- “What surprised you?”
- “What feels hard to name or understand?”

8:00 PM – Superpowers Introduction

Introduce the idea of personal superpowers as assets we bring to community work. Distribute Superpowers Worksheets or show app link.

Framing: “This is not about your job title. It’s about how you move through the world—your energy, strengths, and style. We’ll use this next session to build collaborative teams.”

8:30 PM – Homework Assignment & Wrap-Up

Review how to access the Superpowers app (SYPartners, \$3) or offer a card deck. Explain that participants will bring their top superpowers to next session.

HOMEWORK

- Complete Superpowers Reflection using the app or deck
- Begin Advocacy Inventory Worksheet

Session 5: Power Dynamics

Dinner Setup

- Confirm location and access
- Recheck dietary needs and meal orders
- Print dinner materials and name tags
- Room setup with intentional layout
- AV and music prep
- Facilitator huddle + grounding
- Post-it wall, visual tools ready

Notes:

THREAD OF THOUGHTFULNESS

Energy may dip or shift in Session 5—reinvigorate through thoughtful touchpoints:

- Set the tone with energizing affirmations like “You matter” or “Your power is needed.”
- Offer a strengths wall or post-it board where participants anonymously lift up what they’ve seen in one another.
- Create a simple ritual to mark this as a turning point (e.g., light a candle, add to a shared object).

These invitations reinforce connection while honoring the emerging clarity and commitment in the room.

FACILITATOR FRAMING

This session connects personal strengths to systems change. It’s designed to help participants recognize their role in community transformation by identifying and sharing their superpowers—and mapping out opportunities to take action. Highlight mutual support and remind participants that advocacy takes many forms.

Grounding Option: “Take a breath. Reflect on a time you used your strengths to support someone else—or when someone used theirs to uplift you. This session is about collective power, not solo heroism.”

Program: Dining with Purpose

Session: Dinner 5 – Power Dynamics & Advocacy Inventory

Facilitator(s): [Insert Name(s)]

Date: [Insert Date]

Location: [Insert Location]

Worksheets: Advocacy Inventory Discussion Guide

Resources: Superpowers Card Deck/App, Advocacy Toolkit

PREP CHECKLIST

- Name tags
- Sign-in sheet
- Superpowers Reflection Worksheets
- Advocacy Inventory Worksheets
- Pens and notepads
- Meal setup
- Ben McBride Power Grid visual (optional)

SESSION PURPOSE

To bridge individual strengths and advocacy opportunities through structured group reflection, collaborative exercises, and real-world application.

6:00 PM – Check-In

Invite participants to settle in and reconnect.

6:15 PM – Share-Out: Superpowers Reflection

Invite participants to name 1–2 of their superpowers and explain how they’ve used them or seen them in action. This can be done in small groups or as a go-around circle.

7:00 PM – Superpower Problem Solving

Present a community or advocacy-based scenario. Ask participants to consider: “How might your superpowers be used to address this?” Facilitate creative brainstorming in small groups.

7:30 PM – Ben McBride Power Grid

Introduce McBride's Power Grid (personal power x institutional power). Facilitate a reflection exercise: where do you see yourself—and how might that shape your strategy?

Discussion Prompt:

"What would it look like to use your power with others—not over or in isolation?"

8:00 PM – Next Steps Discussion

Invite participants to think about the roles they want to play in collective action. Encourage realistic and collaborative framing (e.g., supporter, connector, organizer, storyteller).

8:30 PM – Closing & Homework Overview

Prompt: "What is one way you could use your power to create change in the next six months?"

HOMEWORK

- Complete the Advocacy Inventory Worksheet
- Reminder: Closing Retreat will center on your insights from this worksheet—please give it time and care

Session 6: Closing Retreat & Action Planning

Dinner Setup

- ☐ Confirm location and access
- ☐ Recheck dietary needs and meal orders
- ☐ Print dinner materials and name tags
- ☐ Room setup with intentional layout
- ☐ AV and music prep
- ☐ Facilitator huddle + grounding
- ☐ Post-it wall, visual tools ready

Notes:

THREAD OF THOUGHTFULNESS

This final session is a culmination of many shared moments. Elevate it with:

- A celebration table or board where participants can write notes of thanks or encouragement to one another.
- Small take-home tokens (bookmarks, printed quotes, seeds for planting, etc.).
- A handwritten note for each participant acknowledging their unique contribution.

Thoughtfulness at this stage sends the message: you were part of something that mattered—and you matter.

FACILITATOR FRAMING

This final session is about celebrating progress, sharing insights, and planning forward action. It's both a conclusion and a beginning. Affirm each person's growth, and frame this as an entry point to deeper collaboration and community work.

Grounding Option: "Take a breath. Look around. This is your team. You've built something meaningful—and it doesn't stop here."

Program: Dining with Purpose

Session: Retreat – Closing, Reflection & Next Steps

Facilitator(s): [Insert Name(s)]

Date: [Insert Date]

Location: [Insert Location]

Worksheets: Action Planning Template

Resources: Engagement Menu, Pathways to Involvement Sheet

PREP CHECKLIST

- Name tags
- Sign-in sheet
- Action Planning Worksheets
- Advocacy Inventory Worksheets
- Pathways to Engagement handouts
- Food and refreshments
- Pens and notepads
- Printed Community Agreements

SESSION PURPOSE

To reflect on the learning journey, connect personal commitments to long-term action, and celebrate community.

10:00 AM – Check-In

Invite participants to arrive with intention.

10:30 AM – Reflection: What We've Learned

Facilitators guide group reflection on the full series.

Prompts:

- “What surprised you?”
- “What will you carry forward?”

11:00 AM – Advocacy Inventory Discussion (Small Groups)

Participants share insights from their completed worksheets and reflect on how they want to continue engaging.

11:30 AM – Action Planning Workshop

Facilitators guide participants in filling out their personal and/or group action plans.

12:00 PM – Lunch

Casual, celebratory meal. Invite community partners or past participants if appropriate.

12:30 PM – Engagement Pathways Overview

Introduce specific ways participants can stay connected or involved—with HFB, with each other, or with aligned efforts.

1:00 PM – Collective Agreements & Next Steps

Revisit or create agreements for ongoing connection. Invite ideas for shared support.

1:30 PM – Celebration & Closing Circle

Each person is invited to share one word, one wish, or one commitment.

Prompt: “How do we want to stay connected?”

“How can we support each other’s action plans?”

Credits

Dining with Purpose

Conceived and created by David A. Brown for the Houston Food Bank

Lead Facilitator

David A. Brown

Curriculum Development

Maria Del Carmen

Facilitator & Curriculum Development

Tracie Jae

With Gratitude To

The participants of Dining with Purpose, whose stories and insights shape this work.

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