



ONE HEMISPHERE · ONE FUTURE

The Common Ground Conversation Guide

How to talk about the Americas as one community, at the dinner table or in a room full of people.

A field guide for neighbors. Free to use, free to share.

BEFORE YOU START

The one rule that makes this work

This is a conversation about neighbors, not politics. The moment it turns into immigration, trade, a specific government, or a political party, it stops being our conversation and becomes the same fight everyone's already having. You don't have to win anything here. You're just inviting someone to notice something true. The people of the Americas are distinct, sovereign nations, each with its own flag and borders, and they share a hemisphere, and a future.

Good neighbors keep their own homes. That's the whole idea. If a conversation ever feels like it's asking someone to give up their country or pick a side, steer back. You're not there to change a vote. You're there to widen a sense of belonging.

PART 1

Talking with people in your life

For the kitchen table, the car ride, the text thread, the friend over coffee.

Start with curiosity, not a pitch. The strongest opener isn't "I signed this thing." It's a question. "Did you know there are 35 countries in the Americas? I could probably name ten." Most people can't either, and that gap is the doorway. You're not recruiting. You're noticing something together.

Lead with what's shared, never with what divides. Family across a border. A recipe that shows up in five countries under five names. The same hope every parent has for their kids. These are unarguable. Nobody defends against the idea that they love their family or want their grandchildren to inherit something good.

Let sovereignty do the reassuring. If someone tenses up, and some will, because everything feels political now, say the quiet part out loud. "This isn't about erasing borders or merging anything. Every country stays itself. It's just that we're neighbors, and most neighbors who've never met have more in common than they think." That sentence defuses almost every objection before it grows.

If it drifts toward politics, name it and redirect. "Honestly, I'm not here to argue policy. There's enough of that. I just think we forget we're a neighborhood." You're allowed to decline the fight. Declining it is the message.

Close small. You don't need a yes to a movement. You need a moment of recognition. "We're closer than the map makes us look" is enough to plant. If they want to do something with it, the Declaration only takes a few moments at strongamericas.com.

PART 2

Hosting a small group

For a handful of friends, a community circle, a classroom, a living room.

Set the frame in the first two minutes. Open by saying what the gathering is and is not. It's a conversation about what we share as neighbors across the Americas. It's not a debate, not a political meeting, no policy, no parties. People relax when they know the rules. State them plainly and the whole room exhales.

Use openers that can't be "won." Good prompts have no right answer and no political charge:

- What's something from another country in the Americas that's quietly part of your life? (a food, a song, a word, a person)
- When you picture "the Americas," what's actually in your head, and how much of it is just your own country?
- What do you think every family across this hemisphere wants, no matter where they live?

Steer with a soft hand. If someone pulls toward a hot policy topic, you don't shut them down. You widen back out. "That's a real debate, and it's not really ours tonight. Let's stay on the part we actually agree on." Said warmly, it protects the room without embarrassing anyone.

Make sovereignty explicit, once, early. Somewhere near the top, say it directly. Every nation here is sovereign, with its own borders and its own right to govern itself, and that's exactly why being good neighbors is a choice worth making, not something forced. Hold both. The whole project holds both.

End on common ground, literally. Go around once. Each person names one thing they believe people across the Americas share. Write them down. That list, in your own room, in people's own words, is the entire point made visible.

KEEP THESE IN YOUR BACK POCKET

A few lines you can borrow

They're built to stay on message.

"Borders define our nations. Common ground defines our neighborhood."

"This asks nothing of you but goodwill toward your neighbors."

"We're closer than the map makes us look."

"You're already part of the Americas. This just makes it official."

"Good neighbors keep their own homes, and still wave across the fence."

IF YOU ONLY REMEMBER THREE THINGS

The whole guide, distilled

- 1 It's about people, not policy.** The second it becomes a political fight, you've lost the thread. Redirect, don't engage.
- 2 Sovereignty and community are not enemies.** Say so out loud. It's the line that lets people relax.
- 3 You're not winning an argument.** You're widening a sense of belonging. A moment of recognition is a complete success.

Borders define our nations.
Common ground defines our neighborhood.

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