



IFES

SOBREMESA



Setting the Table for
International Students

INTRODUCTION

More than 7 million students study abroad each year. Experts predict this number will keep growing for years to come.

So when you walk around your campus, who do you see? A friend? A stranger? Do you see the image of God reflected in students from every nation, every tribe, and every tongue?

In a world filled with conflict and tension, God extends his radical hospitality and love toward all people. What if your international classmates could experience that hospitality through you?

What if Christ could use you to make himself known to all people, right here, right now, and right from your very own campus?

SOBREMESA

Sobremesa is an initiative to promote friendships with international students on our campuses.

Sobremesa, which means “over the table,” describes the Spanish tradition of relaxing around the table after a satisfying meal to enjoy the sweetness of dessert and good company.

It describes a time and space where we can lay our defences down to simply enjoy one another’s presence and develop the deep relationships we all hunger for. It means taking time, unrushed and uninterrupted, to share jokes, stories, and life together.

The goal of IFES Sobremesa is to fill our table with people from every walk of life and foster the intimate friendships that are built around the table. We want to taste the sweetness of his love through stories that bring joy and laughter. We want to taste the goodness of his grace through conversations that go deep and move our hearts.

We want to sit at a table where people from every nation, every tribe, and every tongue are welcomed in the name of Jesus; a table that is made whole in its diversity; and a table that reflects the loving character of God.

The road to realise this vision is simple: as simple as a friendship, as simple as a meal.

What if every student reading this befriended one international student?

**CLICK HERE TO
WATCH THE
INTRO VIDEO**



VISION

Imagine if every international student met one friend who truly loves Jesus. Imagine if that friend was you.

Those 7 million international students scattered around the world are on nearly every campus—even yours! Though some may have been welcomed, some may have gone unnoticed, and some may have even been hurt by those not welcoming them.

But what if we were the first to welcome? When the world says *you* are a foreigner, what if we said *you* are my friend? What if the transformative power of God the creator and Jesus the Savior could be on display in us through something as simple as friendship?

Our vision for Sobremesa is to remember and celebrate the hospitality of God by extending that hospitality to international students. Through Sobremesa, we hope to reflect the character of God, to join God in his mission, and to pursue the growth of God's global church.



KNOWING GOD

Did you know that hospitality is deeply rooted in the character of God? We see this in his generosity towards the Israelites when they were sojourners in a foreign land - and again when he reached out to us while we were still sinners, adopting us as his children.

He didn't show us this hospitality to make the gospel more appealing. **He offered hospitality simply because that is who he is.** God is love. It is his nature. As children of God, we are called to reflect his character and extend the same hospitality that was once extended to us.

If every student reading this extended the love and hospitality of Jesus to one international friend, how many lives could be touched?

JOINING GOD IN HIS MISSION

God is at work in our world to make his name known! It is not a coincidence that he has brought students from all over the world, including regions where access to the gospel is limited, to our campuses.

He has called us to live out our faith and take part in his mission to share the good news.

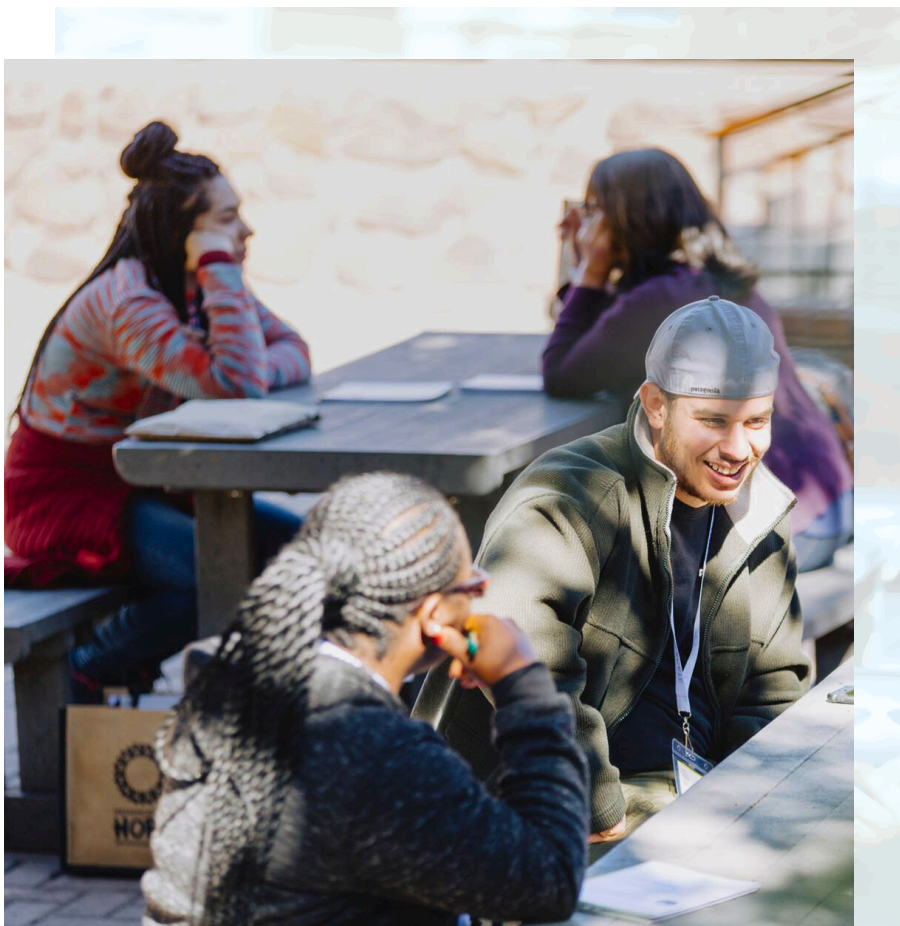
Every time we extend a welcome, every time we make a friend, every time we have a conversation about the gospel, we testify to the loving nature of God and the salvation that comes through Christ alone. In a world where fear and distrust are on the rise, this is an even more powerful statement of who God is.

GROWING GOD'S GLOBAL CHURCH

International students are a gift from God to grow his global church. What an amazing opportunity to learn about God's love for all people and experience God working in and through us!

As we build genuine cross-cultural friendships, we get the chance to taste God's creativity and experience the beautiful diversity of nations and cultures.

We get to see first-hand that God is not just God of our own communities but God of every nation, every tribe, and every tongue.



We get to witness God at work through us! As we welcome students from other countries into our fellowships, our fellowships can grow into a reflection of God's new humanity: a people of all people.

GET EQUIPPED

Learn how to engage with international students

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Do you have questions about cross-cultural communication, building genuine relationships with international students, or reading the Bible with students that have never encountered the Gospel before? You are not alone!

Sobremesa offers you a variety of resources to help you better understand how to befriend the international students around you. You are invited into a community of people seeking to take the same steps towards others.

GOD'S WORLD ON YOUR DOORSTEP

God's World on Your Doorstep is a practical booklet packed with advice on connecting cross-culturally with international students.

From praying to planning to reaching out, this free download will give you a helpful foundation to get started.



CLICK TO  DOWNLOAD

SHARE THE WELCOME VIDEO

There's one message we want to get across to international students with Sobremesa — WELCOME. You and your student group can join the movement by sharing the Sobremesa Welcome Video on your online platforms.

Create a culture of acceptance and hospitality right from the outset. Share the video across all your social media channels and send a 'welcome' message to international students near you.

CLICK TO:



DOWNLOAD



WATCH AND SHARE

BE INSPIRED

Click the links below to explore stories of how God is working among international students today.

- [Conexión Stories](#)
- [Prayerline Stories](#)
- [Word & World: *Migration through the Eyes of Faith*](#)
- [Find more at IFES International Student Ministry webpage](#)



SUPPORT ISM TODAY

Participate in the divine strategy! Reach and shape the nations through your support for international student ministry.

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