



## Emory Conversation Project

December 4, 2025

Dear 2026 Barkley Forum for High Schools Participant,

On behalf of the Barkley Forum for Debate, Deliberation, and Dialogue, we are happy to extend a personal invitation for you to participate in a special World Café dialogue held in honor of Emory University's King Week and inspired by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s *Strength to Love* (1963). This event will be held on Sunday, January 25th, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. during the Barkley Forum for High Schools (BFHS). This conversation, aligned with the oral, reflective nature of sermons—which Dr. King mastered so profoundly—will elevate spoken word, shared stories, and collective meaning-making. Heavy appetizers will be available throughout the session.

### Why We Are Inviting You

As a participant in Speech and Debate, you exemplify curiosity, leadership, and a dedication to building your community. We would like, and it would be a privilege, to have you at the table as we examine the themes of Dr. King's message to us: the power of love rather than hate, faith in the face of fear and uncertainty, forgiveness, nonviolence, and reconciliation. We want to bring 100 students—in groups of 3 to 4—together to listen to one another carefully, ask courageous questions, and reflect on the moral atmosphere in which our speech and debate community now stands.

### Why This Dialogue Matters

Over the past decade, the Barkley Forum has developed opportunities for students to learn from one another through structured dialogue. It is a commitment that we hold dear as a core part of our mission: to embody Emory's vision of an inquiry-driven, ethically engaged, and diverse community that collaboratively seeks to make a difference in the world—one word at a time. At the same time, the Barkley Forum for High Schools (BFHS) similarly honors the long and deep traditions of forensics: dedication to pedagogy, commitment to achievement, and respect for the efforts of others. Despite continued innovation within the activity, these same values remain constant but can be further expressed with a new way to contribute to the BFHS by joining the Barkley Forum's Emory Conversation Project for the 10th Emory King Week Dialogue.

The Emory Conversation Project (ECP) insists—and they make it a personal and common goal—that change begins with conversation. Through questioning, listening, honoring difference, building teams, and creating space for vulnerability, we build the skills that contribute to stronger communities. We are pleased to be working with the National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation (NCDD), a national network that strives to unify people across divides. NCDD will acknowledge each participant for listening past differences in order to have a deeper understanding.

### How to Participate

To confirm your participation, please complete the form at the link below by January 23rd, 2026:

[BFHS 2026 World Cafe Dialogue Sign Up – Fill out form](#)

If tournament advancement prevents you from attending, we would be grateful if you could email us so we may offer your seat to a student on the waitlist.

### We Hope You'll Join Us

Your voice, your story, and your courage to listen matter. We hope you will honor us with your presence to cultivate a more reflective, compassionate, and connected BFHS community. Do not hesitate to contact [barkleyforum@emory.edu](mailto:barkleyforum@emory.edu) for any questions.

With openness and grace,

**The Emory Conversation Project**