



# Prisca Mojica Rodriguez

## What Is in My Mouth!

Video (6:33): Prisca Mojica Rodriguez, founder, Latina Rebels, activist, *chonga mujerista*, and writer

Prisca Dorcas Mojica Rodriguez is a *chonga mujerista* from Managua, Nicaragua, currently living in Nashville, Tennessee. She is the founder of Latina Rebels, a movement (and a Facebook page), designed to help and provide a forum for Latina women. She is a writer for Philadelphia Printworks, Vivala, and a columnist/editor at *Chica* magazine. Her work is around reclaiming and upholding embodied resistance, particularly within *chonga* and *chola* subcultures.

## What Is in My Mouth!

### Preparation

Select a room or location to offer the study. Every session needs a room that has the capability to access the video via the Internet and to project the video for groups of various sizes. Check to be sure equipment is working properly. *This video can be found at [www.gcorr.org/series/vc3](http://www.gcorr.org/series/vc3).*

**Preview the video.** Be sure to make notes about what stands out for you. Think about things that she says that may be new to you or challenging to what you believe about people who live biculturally and who regularly speak more than one language. The idea of speaking more than one language may be especially challenging to those in the United States who have been reared to speak only English.

Read through the lesson plan. Prepare suggested drawing as a way of demonstrating how to illustrate a phrase or a concept. Post the covenant of care for the session.

**Gather the following materials:**

- Bible for reading the Scripture: Isaiah 58:6-12
- Listening and Looking Guide (one for each person or project on a screen)
- Pens and pencils
- Index cards
- Construction paper
- Markers, colored pencils, and crayons
- Scissors – preferably one for each student
- Blue painter’s tape

**Also prepare:**

- A picture of a “home within my mouth” as a sample for that activity
- Notes to describe the two (or more) worlds in which you live (per the activity)

## THE STUDY SESSION

**Get Started [10 minutes]**

Welcome everyone to the session; take care of housekeeping matters. Read statement of purpose (or recruit a volunteer to do so): “The General Commission on Religion and Race presents *Vital Conversations* to help start the dialogue on subjects that may sometimes be difficult to approach. We are all part of the beloved community, and we welcome perspectives that bring enlightenment and understanding.”

Recruit a volunteer to read the Scripture: Isaiah 58:6-12. Ask everyone to jot down in their notebook or on a sheet of paper (distribute paper or index cards if needed) what they hear this Scripture says that they must do and why. Explain they will be using these reflections later in the session.

Next, have a time of prayer. Invite someone to lead the group in prayer; if no one volunteers, open with a prayer of your choice. Read (and post) a covenant that you have created (or group has created) and highlight the key components: confidentiality; everyone’s voice matters; disagree with care/do not attack anyone. Invite the group to add thoughts and ideas to the covenant (especially if there are new persons).

**Show the Video [15 minutes]**

Invite the group to watch the video by sharing this introduction: Prisca Mojica Rodriguez is a *chonga mujerista*, a woman who is deeply committed to the struggle for the liberation of Latina women as a community. She is a writer, a blogger, activist, and founder of Latin Rebels. She speaks widely on the topic of being bilingual in a cultural that neither understands nor embraces gladly bicultural/bilingual people.

Distribute the Listening and Looking Guide but explain that they are not to try to answer the questions as they watch – simply review the guide as a way of focusing their attention. They may wish to jot down a phrase or a key point but to try to remain focused on what is being said. If there is time, you may show the video again and encourage members to write more reflections.

### **Use the Listening and Looking Guide [10-15 minutes]**

Individually, complete the statements or answer the questions on the guide. Encourage participants to take their time to recall and reflect upon Prisca Rodriguez's experiences and concerns, being sure to find connections with their own lives.

If the group is no larger than ten persons, share thoughts about the questions and statements from the guide as an entire group. If larger than ten, divide into smaller groups of six to seven persons. As the facilitator, pose the questions or statements one at a time and get responses before moving to the next one. (Ask each person to name only one thing; once everyone has had a turn to share then invite others who may have something else to add that is unique from what others have said to share their experience.)

### **Draw a "Home in Your Mouth" [15 minutes]**

Distribute construction paper and markers. Remind the group of Prisca Rodriguez's statement: "Imagine feeling so isolated that you begin to make a home in your own mouth and in that tongue you carry resistance to both worlds." Ask the group members to write (or draw) on the paper ways in which they take care of their soul in the midst of challenges.

### **Be prepared to share what you have created or written to help them conceptualize the activity or read this statement:**

As an African-American woman who grew up on a farm and yet spent half of my adult life in an urban area, I had to find a place first of all (could draw a park or a river) that brought the calmness of my home life back to me. I went to farmer's markets just to touch the vegetables and to catch a whiff of the earth. And I found the words to challenge those who would glorify the city life without being able to value what country living brought to everyone (i.e., the food they ate, the retreat spaces they often craved).

After everyone has had a chance to create or capture that "home," ask for two or three volunteers to share their work.

### **Reflect and Share [5-10 minutes]**

Have members review the information recorded on the guide sheet. Add additional thoughts, complete their vision, their commitment, and their social media share. Invite anyone who wishes to share their commitment to do so after a time of individual reflection.

### **Closing Meditation [10 minutes]**

Invite a participant to read aloud Isaiah 58:6-12 again. Explain that Scripture calls us to repair breaches and restore streets. Prisca Rodriguez talks about that feeling of not belonging, which can be brought on both by "outsiders" as well as a feeling that others have "overstayed their welcome." How can we acknowledge the two worlds (or several worlds in which we live) and build connections between them? Have a time of contemplation and then hear from a few persons.

Read this closing prayer (or share one of your own choosing): God of all people, God of all creation, God of the worlds in which we choose to live and are forced to live, have mercy upon us, be with us, heal us so that we may heal the land and restore hope to all people. Help us to choose the fast that honors You – to embrace those without a home (physically and internally). Help us to be like "well-watered gardens" to bring the abundant life promised to ourselves and to others. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

## Listening and Looking Guide: Prisca Mojica Rodriguez

What stands out for you from the video? (Try to name three things.):

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Prisca Rodriguez says growing up hearing her mother speak Spanish is central to her core. What do you carry with you from your mother, father, or other person who raised you with love? (Leave if this does not apply to you.)

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She says that the erasure of the indigenous is real. Describe a cultural or family practice, name, tradition, or trait or language that you feel has been “erased” from your life:

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Ms. Rodriguez says that she had to learn English to thrive. What have you had to learn or do to thrive?

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Prisca Rodriguez says that the way her name is said in Spanish by her family makes her feel safe. Think of a name/nickname that someone uses that makes you feel safe, loved:

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Cultivate a new vision: She says that she needs people to understand that Spanish is her first language. How can we demonstrate and offer acceptance for people who are bilingual and bicultural?

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Make a commitment: \_\_\_\_\_

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Tweet This/Post on your social media: \_\_\_\_\_

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