

# Taco Theology: Echo Park Immigration Center's Impact in Los Angeles

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[www.epicla.org](http://www.epicla.org)

Taco Theology is a framework developed by Rev. Dr. Josh Lopez-Reyes' doctoral project. It is a simple but powerful structure to care for the whole person—body and spirit—at the same time. In the Bible, Jesus didn't just teach; he fed people and shared meals.

**Taco Theology** = caring for the *whole person* (body + spirit). At the **Echo Park Immigration Center (EPIC)**, every program integrates:

- Food (physical needs)
- Community (belonging)
- Faith in action (spiritual care)

Jesus fed people and shared meals—so do we.

**The Reality in Los Angeles** Immigrant families are facing three major challenges:

## 1. Economic & Housing Instability

- Lost wages, reduced hours
- Overcrowded or unsafe housing

## 2. Fear, Stress & Isolation

- Anxiety from enforcement
- Trauma, especially for young people
- Withdrawal from public life

## 3. Legal Uncertainty

- Unclear immigration status
- Difficulty planning for the future

## EPIC's Response: Taco Theology in Action

### 1. Lo Cotidiano (The Everyday)

Meeting immediate needs:

- Food distribution
- Meals at every gathering
- Transitional housing → Builds stability and dignity

### 2. Radically Hospitable Community

Creating spaces of belonging:

- Shared meals
- Small groups & gatherings
- Early Methodist class meetings best practices → Reduces isolation and restores trust

### 3. Jesús= Jesus with an Accent

Affirming dignity and building power:

- Faith rooted in immigrant experience
- Know Your Rights workshops
- Relational accompaniment → Strengthens identity, confidence, and agency

**The Impact...** Food is the starting point—but not the goal.

Sharing a meal leads to:

- Stronger relationships
- Improved mental health
- Spiritual growth
- Emerging community leaders

**Bottom Line** Taco Theology is how EPIC:

- Feeds people *physically and spiritually*
- Builds *community and belonging*
- Advances *justice and long-term stability*

→ We're not just meeting needs—we're building a more hopeful future for immigrant families in Los Angeles.