

Bible Study Leader or Helper

International-American Fellowship Information Sheet

International Friendships, Inc.

What is the International-American Fellowship?

These small-group fellowships are part of a larger ministry seeking to meet the physical, social, and spiritual needs of international students and scholars or their families, in the context of genuine love and hospitality. These small groups meet regularly to study the Bible together; they also provide leadership training for international Christians. It is our goal to have internationals lead in as many aspects of the group as they are willing and able. Our small groups are structured to help Christian international students grow in their faith, and help non-Christians understand God's plan of salvation.

Are all the groups the same?

Each small group is designed to address particular needs. Some groups are divided into different ethnicities. Also, some are composed of only one gender or one age group. Let us know of your interests.

When and where do the groups meet?

Most groups meet every Friday evening, usually in homes. Starting times may vary from 7:30 to 8:00 p.m. Once or twice a quarter, there is a potluck when all fellowships meet together for a meal and a special program. The potlucks are usually held at the Indianola Church of Christ, 2141 Indianola Ave., near campus, and begin at 7:00. Please contact the office or visit the website (www.ifiusa.org) for dates of potlucks.

Are my children welcome at the fellowships?

Some of the groups offer childcare on the premises. Also, IFI has a special ministry just for your children, from infants to sixth-graders. We have volunteers who are dedicated to caring for and teaching your children so that you and other international parents can attend the fellowships and know that your children are in good hands. This ministry is offered from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. every Friday evening at the Indianola Church of Christ. There are 4 separate age groups, and the older children (K-6th grades) will enjoy Bible lessons, songs, and crafts. They will also have their own inter-cultural experience as they play with children from other countries! If you have questions about the Children's Ministry, please contact Rita Jones, 614-286-5719 or brianandritajones@columbus.rr.com.

Are there special requirements for volunteering with the International American Fellowship?

Since this group serves the needs of internationals, we do have some "Guidelines for Those Attending the International-American Fellowship" on the back of this sheet. We ask that you prayerfully read these guidelines to determine if you can comply with our requests. Also, all volunteers who would like to serve with the International-American Fellowship are referred to our Director, Richard Mendola, who will contact you about visiting one of our groups. Please be sure to call the Group Leader before you attend one of the Fellowships.

What are the responsibilities of the Leader? Of the Helpers?

The Leader will: 1. Coordinate the leadership team to plan Bible studies, follow up students, plan social activities, and make sure all these functions are carried out. 2. Help teach the Bible study. 3. Attend monthly leaders' meetings for Bible study leaders, for the purpose of communication, training, and encouragement. 4. Serve as the contact person for the group. 5. Attend 80% of small group meetings.

Helpers will: 1. Assist the group leader by taking responsibility in one or more of the following areas: rides, hospitality, set-up, leading the Bible discussion, planning social activities, follow-up of students. 2. Attend the majority of small group meetings.

Guidelines for Those Attending the International-American Fellowship

Because many American Christians come seeking to determine if our fellowship can be a place for serving the Lord, we have written some guidelines about how we minister and what our expectations are. If you have any questions, we invite you to ask. Also, we would like the privilege of praying for you as you seek God's will for further involvement.

1. Because we exist to serve the needs of internationals, we ask you to realize the following things:
 - a. Many students who attend our meetings are not Christians. Some are studying the Bible for the first time. We want to give them time to know who Jesus is and consider His claims in their lives. Therefore, do not ask questions such as: "Are you a Christian?" or "How long have you been a Christian?" etc.
 - b. It is easier for you to speak in English (your first language) than for them to speak in their second language (English), so...
 - Be a good listener. It is easy for Americans to end up dominating the discussion in groups unless they voluntarily hold back from answering questions and jumping in with comments. We want the international students to be encouraged to share.
 - Give them the opportunity to answer questions, even if you know the answers.
 - Speak clearly and slowly.

The first time you attend our fellowship, we ask you to observe and not participate in the small group discussion. This will allow you to see the interactions and relationship-building within the group.

2. If you come to the fellowship a second time you will be asked to attend the next available training session, if you have not already gone through our general training. Following this, you will have an opportunity to discuss your commitment level and placement in a group, as you consider whether God is calling you to serve on the Ministry Team.
3. For those who believe this ministry is where God wants them to serve, we will provide ongoing training, as well as opportunities to fellowship with others of like vision and commitment. We want to give you time to see how we operate, what we value, and where we are going. We also want to know you better: your walk of faith, your gifts, etc. We may ask to schedule a time to sit down with you and discuss your thoughts and desires.
4. Because we come from a variety of churches, we focus on the central teachings of the Bible rather than on church doctrine. Along with this, we emphasize the importance of application in one's life. We ask that you focus on these same areas also.
5. Our group is **not** a recruiting ground for inviting people to church. Only after you have taken the time to know students well should you invite them to your church. We are glad when students become involved in local churches, since different structures will meet different needs. The important thing is to have a right motive and heart – to come to the fellowship without another agenda. Your home is a better place to start ministering to students, if you want to invite them someplace outside of the meeting.
6. We are a ministry that works primarily along gender lines – man with man, and woman with woman. We ask that you do the same.

I hope this helps orient you a little as to how we operate. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask Rich Mendola, Director of IFI.

Richard Mendola, Director of International Friendships, Inc.
294-2434 or rmendola@ifusa.org

Student Website: www.ifusa.org, click on "Int'l Amer Fellowship"
Volunteer application and training dates at: www.ifipartners.org