



INTERACTING WITH INTERNATIONALS FOR CCC GROUPS

IN PREPARATION FOR MEETING INTERNATIONAL(S):

1. **Make sure your motive** is true, unconditional love.
2. **Read something about your guests' country(ies)** (if known) before your meeting, so that you can ask informed questions. If possible, have a map of the world so your new friends can explain where s/he lives and what his/her country is like.
3. **Pray** that God would prepare the hearts of those He has sent to your group.

DURING YOUR GATHERING:

1. **Pray to overcome any nervousness**. If you relax, this will help them, especially if it's their first time to be in an American home. They may be subdued in order to be certain they don't do anything to offend you. They also may be nervous. It helps if you smile!
2. **Take the time to learn their names** in their own language even if they have an American nickname. It is a compliment to them for you to take the time to learn their name. If necessary, write it down phonetically. Teach them your name. It may also be difficult to learn your name. Be patient. Tell them what you want to be called.
3. **Listen as well as talk**. Speak slowly (but not loudly!) and clearly as you assess the internationals' level of English. Try to draw them out by asking open ended questions (requires more than a yes or no response). Assure the international that you want to help them with English and encourage them to converse. Naturally, you will not want to correct every error, but often it is unthreatening if you just repeat what they said using correct English. (e.g. "I want to know is, where is the shopping." "You want to know where you can go shopping?")
4. **Things to talk about** - family, parents, food, home country, schooling, major, ambitions, future plans, themselves. Be sure to let them ask questions, too. (*See list of Conversation Starters*)
5. **Avoid "U.S. is best" attitude**. Be realistic and willing to listen objectively to their reactions to American life, government, customs, etc. Keep cool: In the unlikely event, they are critical of the U.S., they are not insulting you. Such discussion is their way of learning and of maintaining their own national ties.
6. **Other Topics**: They may ask personal things that are socially acceptable for their culture, but not for ours, such as your age, income, weight, family, parents, etc. In many cultures, these are socially polite questions. Don't be offended. Answer: "Okay", "Plenty", "Enough", "Fine". On the other hand, they may have reservations about answering questions that would seem very normal to us. Don't be bothered if they answer "Okay, plenty, enough, or fine!"
7. **Learn a phrase in their language**, e.g. Hello, how are you? Write it phonetically and practice it so that you can surprise them with it on your next meeting.
8. **When you serve food**: rice, chicken, vegetables, salad or stew is a safe menu. One consideration is no pork for Jews or Muslims. Some Hindus (or others) are vegetarians. For dessert, fruit or ice cream are good choices. When you pray before eating, it may be a new custom to some. Simply say, "We are Christians. It is our custom to give thanks to God before

we eat." Invite them to join in, but tell them it is ok if they don't want to. They are usually grateful if you pray for them and their families separated from them back home.

9. **Make sure they understand**. Their "yes" is not always our "yes". They sometimes say yes to please you or not to trouble you further. Especially when offering them food, they may say "no" in politeness before giving their true feeling. It is best to offer food several times.

SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS: (Internationals know that our volunteers are Christians)

1. **Your main witness** will be through the kindness and hospitality that you and your group shows. However, some internationals may ask questions that give you an opportunity to explain your faith, motives, and convictions. Be sensitive to wait for the right moments to share. **Don't try to force or manipulate the situation so you can talk about Christ.**
2. **It is important** that your offer of friendship be unconditional. Even if the internationals do not show any spiritual interest, you are sowing seeds for the future.
3. **Your testimony** will be one of your most effective tools in your sharing. Let it come up naturally as part of conversation.
4. **In spiritual discussion**, avoid arguments. You may win a point but lose their trust.
5. **Do not compare religions** unless you really know something about their religion. If they want to talk about their religion, listen respectfully and with genuine interest. Learn from them.
6. **Be careful not to use Christian jargon** when explaining Christian concepts. For example, if you say "you must be born again" to a Hindu, he may agree, but have a very different understanding of what that means. Don't assume they know the concepts of sin, sacrifice, atonement, etc., or even the basic Bible stories.
7. **If you do make a mistake**, be quick to apologize.
8. **While it is usually not best to invite internationals to church the first time you meet them**, it can be a very natural thing later if a relationship develops. Some of the internationals are Christians. If the international accepts an invitation, explain what will happen ahead of time, especially if there will be the Lord's Supper, or a collection taken. Make sure they know they don't have to participate in anything they feel uncomfortable with.

OTHER WAYS TO REACH OUT TO THE INTERNATIONALS:

1. Offer to email them pictures if you took some.
2. Connect with them on Facebook, WeChat, or another form of social media.
3. Give them an opportunity to cook their own food for you and bring it to the meeting or have you at their apartment.
4. Offer to take them grocery shopping or to the mall.
5. Pray for the internationals, their families, and their countries.