

Tips For Successful International Ministry

- Pray!
- Expect a positive experience.
- Focus first and foremost on building a relationship.
- Plan your work then work your plan. Be strategic in planning your ministry: know ahead of time what your relationship will look like. Remember this is a friendship program, not a live-in program.
- Be willing to invest time and energy in building a relationship with your new international friend.
- Establish boundaries; know ahead of time your level of involvement.
- Learn as much as possible about the person's homeland before you meet.
- Learn to pronounce the new friend's name and **use** it. Though many internationals take "American" names, it is preferable to use their given name. You may stumble but your effort to pronounce the name correctly will be greatly appreciated.
- Be sensitive to the needs of the international, i.e. companionship, transportation, conversation practice, social adjustment, etc.
- Offer practical help such as how to use public transportation, where to buy groceries, how to find a doctor, how to shop for bargains, banking/managing money, etc.
- Be a friend. Most internationals want nothing more.
- Internationals want to learn about your culture. Be prepared to share traditions, explain holidays, and include internationals in your celebrations.
- Be open to share about Christianity while being careful not to press for conversion. (1 Peter 3:15)
- Ask in advance about any dietary restrictions to avoid mealtime misunderstandings.
- Identify valuable resource and support people on whom they may call and provide contact information.

Safeguards

- Do not loan them money. This has been the downfall of many friendships.
- Do not interfere with their education. If there is a problem, listen to them, and encourage them to speak to their professors and school administrators.
- Our responsibility is to pray for them.

Conversation Tips

- Speak slowly and clearly when conversing with an international; listen carefully when they speak.
- Avoid idioms and slang as much as possible.
- Avoid contractions (Do not instead of don't; should not instead of shouldn't)

Getting to know your new international friends

Hand illustration: Five Fingers: * Family * Friends * Food * Festivals * Future

Questions to ask appropriately using these:

Who attends the festival

What do you do at the festival

When when is the festival

Where is held

Why does your culture host this festival

How do you prepare for the festival