

BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS ACROSS CULTURES

How Do You Get Started Offering Friendship to International Students?

- The loving friendship we offer is not limited to any one age group or life status
- Look to God: Ask Him to direct your steps, ask Him for Divine appointments
- Where will you meet these students?: You can meet them on your college or university campus, nearby apartment complexes, the grocery store, out for a walk, at bus stops
- Find out what local ministry organizations are doing on campus and join them
- Talk with college administrators in the international office

Offer Genuine Hospitality

- “The friendly reception and treatment of guests and strangers” -Webster
- Modeled throughout the Bible
- Hospitality is different than entertainment, it doesn’t require a perfect home or an elaborate meal, it seeks to minister to others, and is offered with humility
- Look for ways to include students in your daily life
- Students will have different interests and needs, find things you will both enjoy
- Though your cultures may be very different, don’t stress over making a mistake
- Trust will increase as students sense that you care for them
- Even students who come from the same culture and practice the same religion may believe quite differently, so approach each student as a unique individual

Churches

- It does not matter how big or small your church is, there are many ways to get involved
- Seek God and pray for His leading and Divine appointments
- Look for ways to come alongside students with genuine love and hospitality
 - Do a bit of research to find out what is already being offered to students
 - Cast a vision to your congregation
 - Offer a practical service to students
 - Bible discussions for students who are seekers or already arrive as believers

International Student Ministry:

- Is a gift from God, not just a gift to the students as we care for them, but it’s a gift to us
 - It is an arm of discipleship for the church, a chance to grow in our ability to love the world as Jesus did
 - Imagine what would happen to our churches if every believer spent a couple of years learning to love the nations
 - Share your lives and your beliefs with students and seek to understand theirs
 - Walls between people can come down and deeper understanding can be gained by open, honest dialogue better than by respectful silence
 - It does not all depend on us! God is communicating His love to students in many ways
 - It is a joy to answer the questions of students that do not know anything about the character and nature of God because no one had ever told them
 - The Holy Spirit is often at work in ways we can’t even imagine
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