

Ideas for International Café or Open House events

An international café or open house is a great way of attracting international guests. It offers, on a regular basis, an informal setting in which guests can make friends, practise English, learn about local culture and share from their own culture. The team should seek to provide an atmosphere and activities which:

- **attract people and encourage them to keep coming back**
- **encourage interaction and the formation of friendships** (ie not just giving a performance or imparting information)
- **provide opportunity for the sharing of our Christian faith sensitively**

When choosing activities, it's important to play to the strengths and interests of the team. If they are enthusiastic about an activity it will engage be infectious! When possible, encourage international guests to contribute. This gives a shared sense of ownership.

Below is a comprehensive list of themes and activities you might use, but these will very much depend on:

- Size and location of venue
- Facilities available
- Number, age, skills and personality of team
- Guests' nationalities, personalities, age and level of English
- Size of group – some activities work best in a larger group; others are more easily adaptable

Indoor games/fun

- Table and card games (Jenga, Uno, Draughts etc)
- Board games, eg Pictionary
- Paper challenge (see what you can build from paper/sellotape)
- Indoor rounders
- Traditional party games (flap the fish [newspaper], musical chairs, balloon races, egg and spoon, etc)
- Puzzles/jigsaws
- Murder mystery
- Drama
- Magic
- Table tennis, skittles, pool

Local, British and International Culture

- English language (eg phrases, sayings etc), Manners, Greetings
- Scottish/Welsh/Irish evening (learn about national culture, language and food, etc, from people from these countries) *Many internationals think UK=England*
- What to do in [X] (leaflets from various attractions in the town/area)
- Health and transport in [X] (nearest hospitals, bus routes, etc)
- Learn about the cultures of guests/team members from around the world – (food, lifestyle, history, music, dress, etc). *Certain countries/regions work particularly well. eg: Japan (sushi), China, America, India, Africa, Italy, Latin America, etc*
- International quiz night
- Flags – an evening related to flags
- International dancing
- Games from around the world
- Language time (guests teach phrases from their language)
- National costumes (bring your own traditional clothing and explain a bit about it)
- Show and tell (bring an object from your country and explain what it is, etc)
- Wedding traditions
- American English

Food

- Say Cheese (try some traditional British cheeses)
- Food from around the world (everyone to bring a dish from their own country)
- British puddings
- Chocolate fondue
- Sandwich fillings (sweet, savoury, experiment with different combinations, and rate your favourites)
- Tea tastings
- Milk shakes/smoothies/fruit cocktails
- Ice cream party, with various toppings
- Baked potato party
- Tapas
- Pizza making
- Bread making
- Pancakes

Music

- British folk songs
- Live music
- Open mike/CD player: either bring your own instrument to play some traditional music from your country, or bring a CD from your country)
- Karaoke, Wii
- Handbell ringing

Other

- Films
- Art and crafts
- Famous places
- Poetry
- Science
- Books
- Fancy dress
- Shakespeare (try your acting skills)
- Childhoods
- Current events, eg election, royal wedding
- Origami (can get Japanese guests to demonstrate!)
- Calligraphy
- Travel

Programmes specific to the time of year

- St Patrick's/St George's/St David's/St Andrew's Day/Burns Night
- Valentines Day
- Pancakes
- Easter celebrations (the meaning of Easter; painting eggs; egg hunts, etc)
- Beach games
- Back to school (discover what life is like for kids returning to school in the UK)
- Summer sports: cricket, beach games, croquet, bowls, It's a Knockout, etc
- Football (World Cup)
- Cream tea, strawberries and cream
- BBQ
- Punting, boat trips
- Olympics
- Harvest
- Bonfire night (stories, sparklers, traditional food)
- Christmas Celebrations (the meaning of Christmas; making cards, decorations and food; music; games, etc)
- New Year Celebrations (British traditions, Chinese New Year, Iranian New Year)