

## What to say and do: Quick hints on building friendships with newcomers to the UK

Many newcomers to the UK find it to be a cold, uninviting place. By showing warmth, understanding, and friendship to them, we can demonstrate God's love to them in a very tangible way. It's much easier than we think, and brings real blessing to us too!

### What do we say?

We need to overcome our 'English reserve' and take the first step. They are the visitors and we are their hosts. They are out of their normal culture and context. At the start everything is strange. However, most international visitors expect 'hosts' to talk with them and will usually respond warmly to the interest we show in them. Welcome them: "You are welcome, it is great to have you here!"

Get to know how to pronounce and write their name. Show them how to do the same with your name.

### Ask some questions to get to know them

Here are some questions you might ask – but don't bombard them! Be aware that some might be more sensitive issues:

Where are you from?

Which part of that country are you from?

Are you from a city or a village?

Do you have family?

Do you speak any other languages?

What is your favourite food?

What sports do you like?

How long have you been in this country?

Why and how did you come to this country? (clearer than "What brought you to this country?". Be aware that they may have had difficult experiences)

What is the traditional religious background in your country?

What course did you study in your country? What job did you have?

How much English had you studied before you came here?

What is the best way for you to practise English?

What types of holidays do you enjoy?

Find out about their family, home, lifestyle, hobbies and interests.

Ask and be willing to talk about a current political or historical situation in their country or in your country.

### Advice

Speak at the normal speed (don't overemphasise a key word, etc)

Speak at a normal volume

Be aware of your use of jargon and be ready to explain it

Don't speak all the time. Allow your friend to speak even if he speaks slowly.

### What do we do to build friendships?

- Invite them for a meal at your home
- Go food shopping and cook together
- Invite them to cook for you
- Meet for tea/coffee
- Go to the pub
- Have pizza together
- Go out for dessert
- Go for a walk
- Visit places of local interest
- Go to the cinema, or to a concert, art gallery or museum together
- Invite them to your home to watch a movie or TV event
- Invite them to your birthday or Christmas celebration
- Play a sport together
- Play cards or board games with them and a group of friends
- Attend an activity they are involved in
- Send a note, card or little gift
- Take a photo together
- Ask for their help with something

### "Do what you like doing... and invite a friend!"

For more resources on welcoming newcomers to the UK

visit: [www.friendsinternational.org.uk](http://www.friendsinternational.org.uk)

email: [info@friendsinternational.org.uk](mailto:info@friendsinternational.org.uk)