



Video Session #2: Reaching Out **Showing Hospitality to International Students**

As you begin

Give everyone in the group a chance to share about their week – Did any international students or foreign visitors cross their paths? If so, where and when did that happen?

If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go? What would you miss most about being away from home?

Count to five in as many languages as you can. Extra Credit: introduce yourself in a foreign language! Did anyone study a foreign language in high school or college? If so, what language was it and how successful were you at learning it? Can you speak any of it now?

If someone was able to prepare an international dish or pick one up on the way to the study group, how was it different from the food you normally eat? What did you think of it?

Did anyone in the group find out if there are any international students or international student organizations in your area? If not, can someone look that up now? Does the college or organization have a schedule of “meet and greets” for the students? Is someone willing to call or email to find out how to get involved?

Watch the video

Time: 19:37

Trainer: Greg Swinney—Crossroads International
Student Ministries

Post video quick quiz

Several ideas were suggested in the video of ways to show kindness towards international students. List as many of these that you can remember.

What are some of the holidays or events mentioned in the video that would be good opportunities for international students to join you or your family? Can you think of others?

If one of your children or friends moved to a foreign country, what would you want to send them to remind them of home? How would you feel if a family there made them feel welcome and involved them with their family?

Several people from American families shared a little of their story. Which story tugged at your heart? Why?

Talk it over

Imagine you were showing someone the best of your city, where would you take them? What would you do?

What would you say was the most “home grown” local event? What best depicts U.S. culture in your town?

Don't feel you must entertain elaborately. Students appreciate anything that is done nicely for them. Generally, they don't like to be considered as special guests but prefer to fit into the regular routine. What are some routine things that would make them feel like part of your family?

Digging deeper

“We were assigned a student from the Middle East by our local university international office. I will be honest, when I first saw where he was from, my heart skipped a few beats. I had my share of fears in regards to those from the Middle East. Still, I was excited to meet our new student.

We have developed a very special relationship with our student. He has been to our home multiple times for dinner, to surprise us with fun gifts, to play games, and just to hang out. Over Christmas he and a friend went with us to celebrate with our family and to learn some of our traditions. He seems to fit perfectly with our family, maybe because he is from a large family and we have seven children! We are a large, loud, and energetic family which often is mind blowing to some, but he thinks we are normal!

He has become a part of our family. Our kids refer to him as their brother, I call him “son,” and he calls me “mom.” He proudly introduces us to his friends as his family.

There are things for which I will be forever grateful for. Our student has shown us how important family is, what it means to be very hospitable, and what it means to give someone else your very best. He loves our children in such an amazing way.”

- Alice from Missouri

What caused Alice's change of heart?

What does it take for people to overcome their fears about people they don't understand? How would you feel if you were assigned an international student from Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, or Ethiopia?

What do you think it would take for you to overcome your fears?

Rise up for next week

Have the group download a page with a phrase in a number of languages (Omniglot.com has a lot including, "Stop the world, I want to get off!" and "My hovercraft is full of eels"). Pick a few to try to learn. Ask about them next week.

Bring another food to try next week. If dinners are too much, try a dessert or finger food. For example, Baklava and Gelato can often be purchased in the frozen food section of your grocery store. How about a sushi sampler?

You heard in the video, *"Every family has everything you need to begin showing hospitality towards international students."* What does your family have that would show an international student God's love in a fresh and new way?

If you haven't done so already, have someone in the group look up the contact phone number or email of the international student services of the local college.

Who in your group is willing to "adopt" an international student into their family? When will they begin this adventure? Please join together and pray for that individual or family and for the student that will soon join them.



Taking action

In your opinion, why does international student ministry fit into a global perspective of world missions?

If your church or campus ministry does not have a ministry to international students, you can be instrumental in starting one. Check to see if you can partner with a local ministry. If not, present the idea to your church's leadership.

If you are involved in a campus ministry, ask the student leadership team to begin thinking about ideas to welcome international students. Are you a student at a Christian college? Consider a

spring break mission trip to a nearby university to host events for international students. Being close to a college or even a boarding high school offers so many opportunities to reach out.

The local college or university may not have a friendship family program. Perhaps your group could create a similar program that would match students with a family that would like to be friends throughout the school year. Most universities are open to this idea and are waiting for volunteers to step up and get something started.

Consider prayer walking around your local campus. Ask the Lord to make you especially aware of students from foreign countries, events on campus, and gathering places for international students.

What gentle nudge is the Lord giving you through this study?

Our Commitment

Let's open our doors. Let's set another place at the table. Buy an extra gift or ticket for a guest. Beginning with you and me, let's share our lives with the international guests that are waiting for an invitation.

Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40)

Praying together

Ask the Lord to prepare your heart as you seek to establish a new relationship with an international student.

Pray for the international students on the campus near you, that they would find American families...Christian families to learn about the amazing love that God has for them. Pray for your church family—that they might think of ways as a body of believers to make international students feel welcome in their city, their community, and their church.

"We have enjoyed being a Friendship Family for international students for many years. Over 30 nations have shared a meal with us in our small home. We've learned about their culture, and they have become part of our family."

- Orlin & Kay in Nebraska

Practical ways to engage international students

Airport pickup when arriving in the U.S.

“Welcome to the U.S.” party

English conversation partners

A small “welcome bag” with candy, toiletries, map of the city, popcorn, and a bottle of water

Fall Break trip to the zoo or a nearby museum

Thanksgiving meal with Friendship Families

Christmas Party/Fourth of July Picnic and Fireworks/ Labor Day Picnic

Graduation reception for students leaving for home

Celebrate birthdays together

Build a snowman - some have never seen snow before!

What else?

Final thought



The president and cabinet members of Iran and where they attended college in the U.S.

Imagine how different our world might be if we would have extended a hand of friendship to these men while they were students in the U.S.

For additional resources or to apply for a grant, please visit the website: www.theriseproject.com.

Further questions or comments? Contact Greg Swinney, the trainer for this segment at greg@theriseproject.com.