



Enlarging the Circle to Welcome Everyone

RISE International Student Video Session #3 Understanding Basic Cultural Differences

As you begin

Has anyone in your group traveled to a different country or experienced a different culture? Ask them to share what cultural differences surprised them. What about different customs? Different food?

What are some things in our American culture that people from other countries might find peculiar?

Some cultures greet one another with a kiss on the cheek, others bow and some shake hands. What do you think each of these greetings represent?

Watch the video

Time: 9:50

Trainer: Greg Swinney—Crossroads International Student Ministry

Talk it over

Do you worry about offending the international student when you consider inviting him/her into your home? What concerns you the most?

Holiday traditions are different in many countries of the world. What holiday traditions or customs are part of your family that you feel an international student would really enjoy? Which ones would you think they find the most curious?

An international student asks you about “Black Friday” and the hectic commercialism of Christmas in the USA. They politely say, “Back in China, I saw on television how Americans push and shove to buy toys for their children. How is this a part of your Christmas celebration?” What would you say?

“Why do you have the custom to pray before you eat your meal?” an international students asks. What would you say?

Moving forward together

Before your next group meeting, have three people agree to give a short report on some common cultural practices of people in three different nations (suggestions: China, Kenya, South Korea, India or Brazil). They can easily do an internet search for these common practices (I.E. Greetings, entering a home, meal time, or interacting with the elderly). Have them share their findings at your next gathering.

Prayer points

Paul says, “I have made myself a slave to everyone to win as many as possible (1 Corinthians 9:19 - NIV). Pray for the Lord to give you a sensitive heart to respect the cultural practices of others while not compromising your faith.

Cultural practices often build walls between people. Pray for the Lord to tear down these walls in your relationships and foster a spirit of love and acceptance.

Heaven will be an amazing place. Cultural differences, language barriers and animosity between nations will all be gone for eternity. Thank God for His wonderful plan to bring all nations and tongues and tribes together in worship and adoration by His side (Revelation 7:9).

Check out the RISE website for more resources and inspiration concerning international students – www.theriseproject.com.

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

