

## Hospitality ... is Where the Heart Is

A picture is worth a 1,000 words - *Getting Started with ISI*, videotape, 15 minutes

### Share Your Family, Home, Kitchen Table, Telephone, and Best Friend

Your Family – the whole family - kids, grandparents, aunts & uncles, nieces & nephews, etc.:

- Students are lonely for their extended family – you can adopt them into your's
- Normal family activities – birthdays, kid's sports and games, holidays, bike riding, hiking, church (except with Muslims)
- Events – travel, festivals, museums, weddings
- Ask a lot of questions about their family and home life – share photos

Your Home – the best place for your friend to experience American culture:

- Let your international friend come to it often
- After trust is established you may have your student stay overnight – explain the bed sheets, blankets, pillows and how you normally deal with the bathroom (timing, towels, door open or closed, etc.)
- Be careful about pets – many students are terrified by them, some will love them

Your Kitchen Table:

- Ask your student if he/she has any dietary restrictions (Hindu – no beef, may be vegetarian; Muslim – no pork; non-Westernized Chinese often can't drink milk or eat cheese)
- Chicken is usually safe, casseroles are not
- Raw vegetables are strange to some cultures
- Say grace – explain that it's part of American Christian culture
- Explain Americans only ask once if people want food/seconds – some cultures it is impolite to take something without being asked two or three times

Your Telephone:

- Try to call once every week or so
- Remember student hours – they are often most available after 10 pm. Be sure to let them know when is too late to call you.
- Use extra patience – the telephone only relays part of the wavelengths of human speech, slow down so they can understand you and ask your friend to slow down when on the phone as well

Your Best Friend:

- Jesus Christ is your best friend and you'd love to introduce your international friend to him
- Follow NAFSA guidelines – don't preach at your friend or belittle his/her religious beliefs
- Be honest when asking your friend to a Christian activity so that he/she can give informed consent and not feel like he/she was "trapped" into attending. "No" must be an acceptable answer.
- Ask your student about his/her religious beliefs or the beliefs of his/her parents
- Be contagious – if your life is different because of Christ's love students may ask you why you act the way you do or believe what you believe. You are free to answer those questions and tell why Christ means so much to you.

What you **DON'T** have to do:

- Be able to cook your friend's favorite ethnic food
- Be a gourmet or even a good cook – keep it simple
- Have a spotless home

