

## Preparing for a Missionary Visit

**Some intentional planning** makes the experience of a missionary visit a memorable one for all. The more people you can involve in the planning process and who carry some responsibility for the success of the event, the more you enable education of the congregation and enhance leadership skills.

Missionaries will interpret our churches' participation in God's mission, which is made possible by the Disciples Mission Fund and Our Church's Wider Mission. They are not coming as fund-raisers for their particular projects. Large numbers in attendance are not important. Those who are interested will come.

Your missionary's experience in dealing with global issues may lend some insights into the questions your congregation struggles with. Be prepared to listen with open hearts and minds. Be sure to give the missionary as much time as possible to tell their story and to meet and talk with the people of the church. Be sure to brief the missionary in advance about your plans and expectations for their visit.

### **Some possible activities to consider planning during a missionary visit:**

- Invite a missionary to accompany you to a local homeless mission, migrant camp, battered women's shelter, children's shelter, etc. When you return to the church, prepare a meal together and debrief about what you saw, experienced and felt. The missionary can make connections with his/her experience, guiding discussion and closing with worship.
- Meet with youth. Missionaries can make a great impact on youth and their thinking about the church, the world, and how they can be involved.
- Have a mission event. Serve a meal typical to the country where the missionary lives. Use Global Ministries placemats. Invite members to bring international centerpieces. Include songs in another language. Put the nation's flag on each table.
- Hold a mission fair. Have booths, each including what church school classes are studying about the country or issues faced by the people - information available from your church headquarters, the local library, newspapers or magazines. Invite the missionary to be the keynote speaker.
- Include the missionary in worship. Invite the missionary to do the children's sermon during worship, preach, or give a stewardship/communion meditation.
- Involve missionaries in Conferences, Retreats, Annual Meetings, Regional Assemblies. Invite missionaries to provide leadership on mission, human rights and community development from a Christian perspective, or lead a spiritual development retreat.
- Plan informal gatherings at a church member's home on a weeknight or for lunch.

- Invite the missionary to area church events, retirement facilities, Regional/Conference committee meetings or events, citywide ministerial meetings.
- Invite the missionary to meet and brainstorm with your outreach/mission committee and to pray with your prayer group.
- Include the missionary in your evangelism team visits as you call on prospective members or visit those who are in jail.
- Meet with these church groups/task forces:
  - church school classes
  - women's and men's fellowship groups
  - church governing board
  - youth groups, seniors' groups
  - groups addressing hunger/poverty/health/education/human rights/refugee and immigration issues

*This material is provided by Global Ministries:*

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