



*A common witness of the Division of Overseas Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
and Wider Church Ministries, United Church of Christ*

Planning a Missionary Visit in Your Congregation

For local congregations requesting or receiving a missionary visit.

Having a missionary come to your church can be an exciting opportunity to educate the congregation about what's happening in global mission through the Global Ministries missionaries that you support. You'll learn about the country where the missionary serves and about issues facing the people of that country.

Some intentional planning makes the experience 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 Disciples Mission Fund and Our Church's Wider Mission.

Questions to ask as you prepare for a missionary visit:

- What does your congregation want to hear at this moment?
- What does your congregation want to know about the global community?
- What are your congregation's particular mission needs?
- What are the issues with which your congregation is dealing?
- What is happening in your surrounding community?
- Are you struggling with how to reach marginalized groups in the community (the poor, homeless, ethnic groups)?

Your missionary's experience in dealing with global issues may lend some insights into working with these questions. Be prepared to listen with open hearts and minds.

Some possible activities to consider planning during a missionary visit:

Be sure to give the missionary as much time as possible 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.

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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. Give ample time for the missionary to share his/her story.
4. **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.
5. **Include the missionary in worship.** Invite the missionary to do the children's sermon during worship, preach, or give a stewardship/communion meditation.
6. **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.

7. **Plan Informal gatherings at a church member's home on a weeknight or for lunch.** Large numbers are not important. Those who are interested will come.
8. **Invite the missionary to area church events, Regional/Conference committee meetings or events, citywide ministerial meetings.**
9. **Invite the missionary to meet and brainstorm with your outreach/mission committee or to pray with your prayer group.**
10. **Include the missionary in your evangelism team visits as you call on prospective members or visit those who are in jail.**
11. **Meet with these church groups:**
 - 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

What does your congregation need to provide for the missionary visit:

- Transportation from/to the nearest airport or to the next church on the missionary's schedule. Your Conference or Regional coordinator can provide you with the missionary's schedule.
- Overnight housing in a local hotel, guest house, or the home of a church member.
- Time for the missionary to 'be alone' apart from any of the host family to rest and have time to meditate and reflect.
- An invitation to nearby Disciples of Christ and United Church of Christ congregations to join you and meet the missionary.
- Meals while the missionary is with you.
- An atmosphere open to receiving the "Good News."
- World map or globe.
- If necessary, you may be asked to provide: power point projector, screen, extension cord, table to display items/photos, microphone.

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