

Starting a ministry to international women

Questions to consider and discuss with others in your church/area:

1 Where are we meeting international women? Where could we contact them?

Eg At Toddler Groups (Mums and Toddlers groups run by your own church or elsewhere), school gate, on Sundays at church, at work, in doctors' surgery, through University channels, chaplaincy

2 Who are they?

Eg Long-term residents / short-term professional families / asylum seekers/ refugees / nannies/ au pairs / restaurant workers families / international student wives

3 Where are they from?

Are there big groups from one country? What is their religious background? What are the implications of that in terms of support/ interests?

#4 What are their needs?

Eg Friendship / language / practical advice on accessing health care, education system etc / a new community / spiritual / leisure activities...

Do they love cooking? Or shopping? Do they value education highly? Are they very sociable, or naturally shy and reserved?

#5 How might we meet some of those needs?

International Mums and toddlers group, 'Tea & chat', English Conversation group, Social group with crafts, baking or providing helpful info on cultural issues, local facilities, etc, Lunch club, Outings, Bible Study, Families activities at w/e, hospitality, home visits

6 What resources do we have?

Buildings – strategic location, cost/no cost, size, flexible space, kitchen or not

Helpers – willing, skilled, strong, different experiences/ backgrounds

Funding – from church/es, or from small charge each week

7 How can we bring Jesus into activities that are primarily social?

Use all the Christian festivals, invite Christians to present a session and share a little about their faith, Interview a Christian about their job, have a discussion that encourages conversation at deeper level, share good stories.

8 How is God leading us at the moment?

Some Top Tips:

- Ensure that communication during the session is clear to those for whom English is not their first language.
- Be sensitive to cultural/ religious issues, eg avoid having pork/ bacon if there Muslims in the group.
- Avoid loss of face at all costs! If there is some mistake/error to be pointed out, make sure it is handled with great sensitivity.
- If your group includes many Christian mums, get them on-board by providing some cross-cultural tips and the encouragement to make friends with the other internationals.
- Take every opportunity of raising faith-related topics, e.g. Christian festivals.

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