



JUST SAY

Hello

RESOURCES PACK
FOR CHURCHES &
SMALL GROUPS

Contents

Introduction	Page 2
Testimony	Page 3
Quiz	Page 4
Bible Study	Page 5
Prayer	Page 8
Take Action	Page 13

JUST SAY

Привет





Sometimes, all you need to do is Just say "Hello".

Saying "hello" can be the beginning of an incredible adventure of meeting new people and seeing lives changed. That's why Friends International are inviting you to step out and welcome international students to the UK and Ireland by supporting the work of Friends International.

Although universities up and down the country are reeling from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, hundreds of thousands of students are now arriving in the UK and Ireland for the start of the new academic year. Since 1985 Friends International have been supporting international students by sharing our friendship and faith. At this critical time the support Friends International provides is needed more than ever. This is why we are inviting you to join in and reach out to international students with the love of Jesus; to support them, pray for them or maybe, just say "Hello".

Churches Resource Pack

To help your church or small group we've put together this Resource Pack which provides you with some fun ways to think, pray and get involved in international student ministry

We have even included a map of the UK and Ireland so you can see where there are international students near you, and ways that you can pray for students.

Please take this opportunity to get to know more about the work of Friends International and how simple it is to support international students.

It is simple just to say "hello", but it can make a huge difference to someone.

*Just
Say
"Hello"*

Testimony

JUST SAY

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I left China and went to study at Edinburgh University, in Scotland.

The process of settling into an international student's life was especially difficult: different social status, different group of people and different culture. I was overwhelmed and hardly had any social contact.

While in Edinburgh I was shocked by a phone call from my father; he said that my mother had been diagnosed with cancer and it was already in its final stage, so there was nothing they could do. I hurried to book my flight in order to see her for the last time, but she failed to wait for me. After ten days of her diagnosis, she passed away. My world collapsed.

After attending my mother's funeral in China, I was back in Edinburgh, alone and deeply depressed. That was by far the darkest time in my life. At this crucial moment, Jesus Christ sent a friend into my life. Her name is Emily, and she introduced me to a church family, and

to another great friend, Susi, from whom I learnt so much about Christianity and about faith.

I learnt from every talk with experienced Christians, whose testimonies and understanding inspired me all the time. Since then, my life changed gradually.

Reading the Bible, learning God's words, going to church and praying became a part of my life. I feel more and more that God lives in my daily life, helping me make decisions and guiding me. He can hear every prayer. I believe that what God gives me is the best I can get.

After a year of listening to His words, I decided to make a life commitment to follow Him. Even though I still have a lot that I can't fully understand, I think He teaches me every lesson I need to learn in my life.

God is almighty and God is love!



*"At this crucial moment,
Jesus Christ sent
a friend into my life"*

Quiz

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND AT LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

1. What is the total number of non-UK students studying at UK universities?
2. Which country sends significantly more students to the UK than any other nation, sending 106,530 students?
3. Which subject remains the most popular subject for international students in the UK, with 126,955 students studying it?
4. Which university hosts the largest number of international students in the UK?
5. How many international students are studying at universities in the Republic of Ireland?
6. How many international English language students are there at language schools in the UK?
7. Which UK city has the most language students coming to study English?
8. Of all current word leaders, what percentage of them have studied at some point in the UK or Ireland?

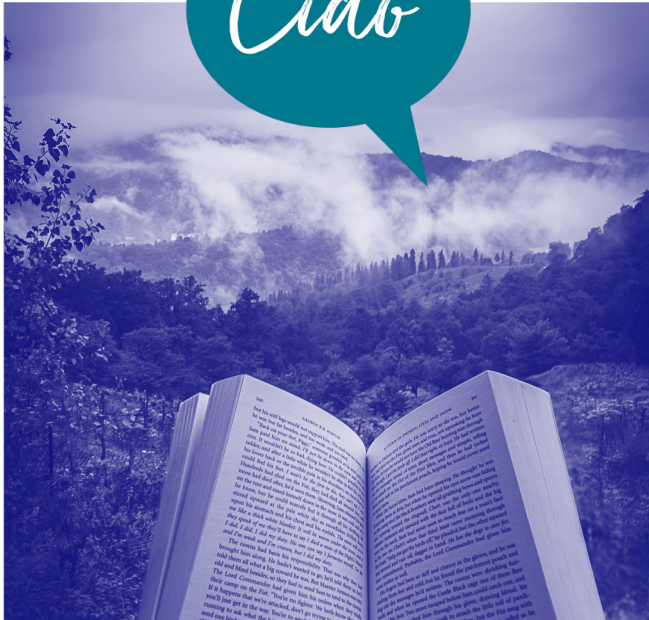
JUST SAY
Bonjour

ANSWERS
1. 458,490
2. China
3. Business and administrative studies
4. University College London
5. 28,275
6. 508,614
7. London
8. 17%

Bible Study

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Running a ministry to international students is not just another church mission program, it is possibly the most strategic and effective form of student outreach the church can do today.

Evangelist and author Roger Carswell described the opportunity international students present to the church as “...too good to miss and too strategic to ignore.”

These next few pages dive into the Bible to look at reasons why you and your church should be reaching out to international students.



Why Reach International Students?

GOD DESIRES ALL NATIONS TO KNOW HIM

Gen. 12:3; Isa. 56:7; Matt. 28:19

Throughout the Bible, we see a central theme of God's concern for the nations. God calls Abraham so that "*all peoples on earth* will be blessed through you" (Gen. 12:3). He speaks of his temple through the prophet Isaiah as "a house of prayer for all nations" (Isa. 56:7). Jesus specifically commanded his disciples – and through them, us – to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19).

Questions:

1. Why is God's heart for the nations?
2. What is God's ultimate hope for the nations of the world?
3. How can ministry to international students be part of this big plan?

GOD WELCOMES THE STRANGER

Lev. 19:33–34; Matt. 25:34–36; Eph. 2:12–13

God's heart for the nations of the world encompasses a tender concern for those who are particularly vulnerable in our societies. He commanded his ancient people: "When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt" (Lev. 19:33–34).

Jesus commends his true followers for practising the same hospitality – "Then the King will say to those on his right. 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance ... for ... I was a stranger and you invited me in'" (Matt. 25:34–36).

When we understand that we were once ourselves strangers to the God who welcomed us (Eph. 2:12–13), we are freed to practise the same generosity towards others.

Questions:

1. How might international students be 'vulnerable' members of society?
2. How can we show generosity and welcome to international students?

SO THAT WE CAN GROW IN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF GOD AND HIS WORD

Rev. 7:9; Eph. 3:18

International students provide an opportunity for the church to grow in its diversity and thus to become the multicultural, intercultural community God intends for eternity (Rev. 7:9). Through this we can gain other cultural insights into Scripture (Eph. 3:18). Members grow in their understanding of God as God of the nations. Our cultural blind spots can be removed as we start to see our church life and ourselves through others' eyes. As we're challenged by other cultural perspectives we're often forced back to biblical principles, asking ourselves 'why do we do what we do the way we do it?' and 'how can we better make our meetings and our preaching more accessible to those who come from very different contexts, or with no prior knowledge of Christianity?'

Questions:

1. Why is it important to view God as the God of the nations?
2. How would you define a cultural blindspot?
3. How can we make our church services more accessible to international visitors?

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SO THAT WE GAIN A VISION FOR WORLD MISSION

Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Chron. 16:24

Church members (including the retired and children), who may not be able to serve overseas, can play a significant role as host families, Bible study leaders or simply friends to international students. In so doing they are helped to grow and mature as believers.

When a church takes it seriously international students are greatly blessed. Take Edward for example. He is from Kenya and was resourced by a local church in the UK to become a missionary theologian, equipping other Africans for cross-cultural ministry.

Questions:

1. How would you assess your churches current vision and appetite for world mission?
2. How might this change if more church members took to international student ministry?

SO THAT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS GAIN A HIGH VIEW OF CHURCH

We have the opportunity to model church life to international students who come to faith while in the UK and Ireland. The broad, all-age community of the local church is the place where their spiritual lives should be lived out and nurtured.

The church in the student's homeland is the situation to which they will return. We want the students to return home with a healthy love and commitment to local church.

Questions:

1. Of the international students you know, what sort of church situations may they be retuning to in their home country?
2. How can you equip them to be ready for the challenges they may face?

SO THAT WE CAN BETTER LEARN ABOUT GOD'S WORLD

When we welcome international students into our churches we are enriched by the cross-cultural interaction. We learn, particularly through Christian internationals, what God is doing elsewhere for our encouragement. A Northern Irish church leader expressed it like this: "International students make you aware of the wonderful diversity of cultures in God's world and it is just very enriching in what is a very parochial inward-looking society; it opens you out in a wonderful way".

Pray:

1. Pray for your church. Pray for a real vision and passion for global mission, and for reaching international students.
2. Write the names of all the international students you know. Pray for them one-by-one.
3. Pray for the universities in your area, and for the outreach of the Christian Unions.



Prayer



PRAYER IS VITAL.
WE NEED YOU AND
YOUR CHURCH TO
PRAY FOR THE
INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS IN YOUR
AREA AND FOR THE
MINISTRY TAKING
PLACE ACROSS
THE COUNTRY.

Scotland

Scottish universities have a long and rich history, with four universities founded before 1600. There are only 15 universities in Scotland, but they attract a combined total of over 54,000 international students each academic year!

EDINBURGH

There are approximately 20,000 international students in Edinburgh's four universities: Edinburgh, Napier, Heriot Watt and Queen Margaret.

Pray

- Please pray for arriving students. May they not feel overwhelmed with their studies along with adjustment to a different climate and culture.
- Pray for universities in this very uncertain time. University staff are making difficult decisions about how to run their courses. Most of the Welcome Week for new students will be online.
- Let's pray that the church will be able to get in touch with many of these students to welcome them and help them adjust and for families back home concerned for them.
- Pray for Christian Unions, and church groups who are thinking of creative ways to reach out and connect with new students.

GLASGOW

Glasgow University welcomes students from 140 different countries. Internationals make up some 30% of all their students!

Pray

- Many Masters programmes have been delayed til January. Undergraduate studies started in September, but mainly online. Students face the decision of when they will move here. Please pray for the students to make wise decisions and have a peace of mind when travelling here. Pray for their mental and physical health.
- Please pray for wisdom among church leaders in how to build community in times of a pandemic. Pray for creativity in how to welcome and reach out to international students despite the social distancing measures.

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Ireland

Ireland has 8 universities with over 120,000 students. 16,700 are international students from more than 120 countries.

Friends International works in partnership with Christian Unions Ireland (CUI) across the whole island of Ireland. Together we reach and minister to international students.

DUBLIN

Dublin attracts students from all over the world with its rich culture and world class education.

Pray:

- *That the work of CUI and Friends International in Dublin would equip Christian Unions and churches to befriend and reach international students for Jesus.*
- *Pray that local CUs and Churches will discover new ways to connect with international students within an ever-changing environment, moving beyond a welcome to a relationship.*
- *Pray for more opportunities for international students to study the Bible with their Christian friends, so that the written Word would lead them to the living Word and ultimately see their lives transformed in Him.*

BELFAST

Queens University in Belfast is the ninth oldest university in the UK and considered one of the most beautiful. Well over a third of all its students are from abroad.

Pray

- *Pray that international students will be open to invitations into community, be it online or in person. Please pray against fear, anxiety and isolation.*
- *Pray for creativity and innovation in growing friendship and faith during this challenging time.*
- *In these difficult times, pray international students will discover hope, purpose and significance in Christ and come to know Jesus as their Lord and God.*

England

There are over 100 universities in England with a combined total of over 375,000 international students!

After the USA and Australia it is the most popular destination for students studying abroad.

NEWCASTLE

Newcastle University has 27,750 students - 27% of which are international.

Pray

- *Please pray that the pandemic may prompt non-Christian international students in Newcastle to seek answers to life's big questions and encounter Jesus.*

MANCHESTER

There are around 18,000 international students at the three units in Manchester.

Pray

- *Pray that international students arriving in Manchester for the new academic year will not be too fearful of the recent rise in Covid cases in the city and consequent additional restrictions.*
- *Pray that students will make use of online meetings and some small group excursions so that relationships with Friends International staff and volunteers can be established.*

BIRMINGHAM

Pray

- *Pray for students at all five of Birmingham's universities to have opportunities to meet local Christians despite Covid concerns.*
- *Three of the universities are based in the city centre with many international students commuting in and out. Pray for creative ways to engage with them.*
- *Pray for many students to sign up to the Birmingham Connection scheme, which introduces them to a local household for online and offline friendship and support.*

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Wales

Eight universities operate in Wales, all of which attract students from around the world.

CARDIFF

Cardiff University is one of the biggest in the UK, with over 33,000 students. It has some 8,500 international students.

Pray

- *Please pray for the international students that stayed in Cardiff. They have found this time very difficult being away from family and friends.*
- *The Friends International Bible Study using Zoom has been a huge encouragement. Please pray that the it would continue to be well attended.*
- *Masters students will have a far shorter term - pray we would be able to get to know the students quickly.*

London

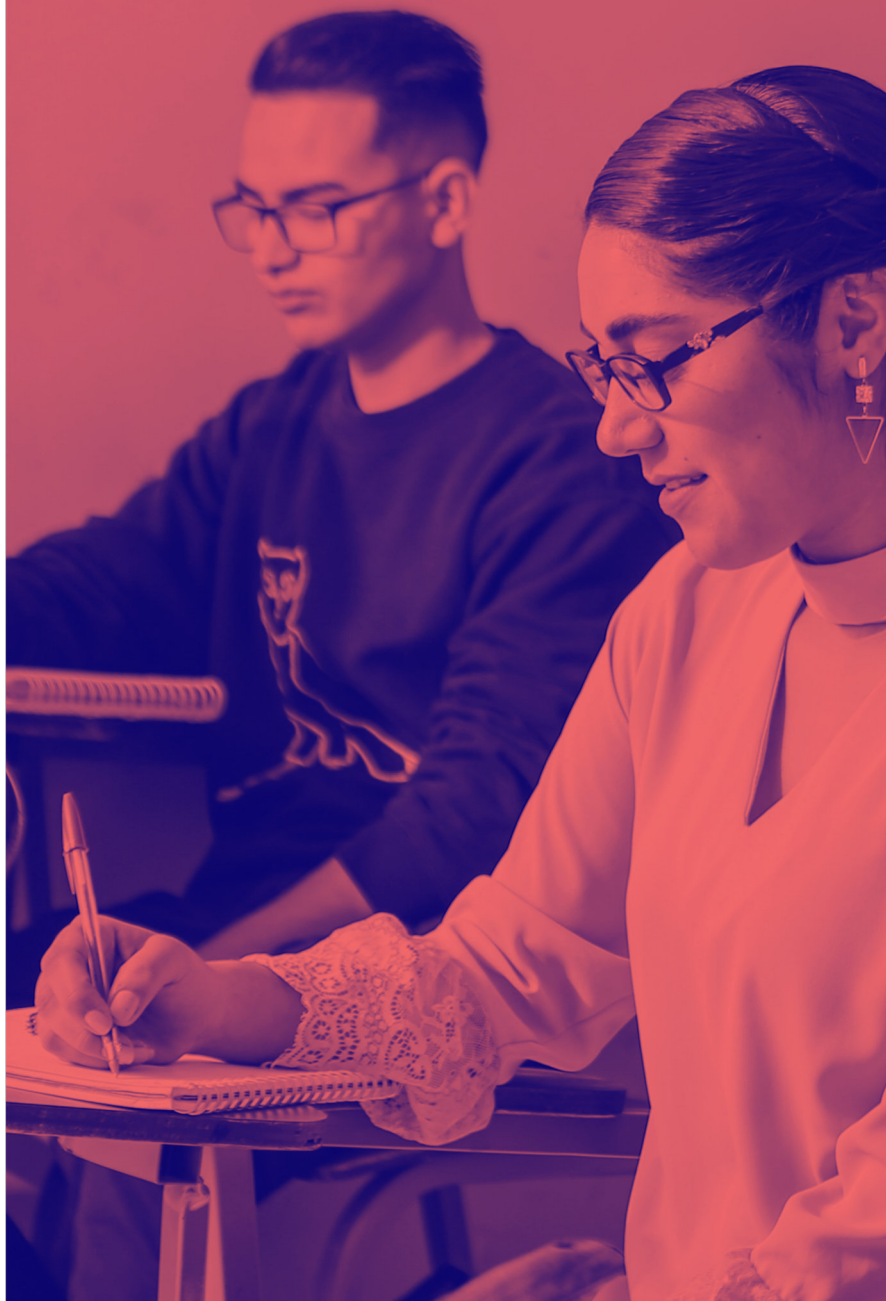
In a city of some 9 million people loneliness is an issue. However, for students coming here from abroad and with Covid restrictions - it is a now a huge mental health problem.

Pray:

- For students struggling with adapting to a new way of studying, not being able to explore life abroad in its fullness due to social distancing.
- For students who are fearful of studying in London and being out and about because of the risk of the virus spreading more easily in a crowded city with lots of people on public transport.
- It has been reported that some students are struggling to pay their fees and are turning to food-banks. Please pray for these students and for Christians to help where they can.

UK and Ireland Map Vectors by Vecteezy

Take Action



Donate

Friends International connects with over 10,000 international students each year. We can only do this because of generous donations from individuals and churches. Would you partner with Friends International so that more students will have their lives transformed?

[Donate Now](#)

Host

Last year over 500 international students were hosted by families and individuals from local churches. Hospitality can have such a profound impact on a student's time abroad, and our hosts love it too!

[Host Now](#)

Pray

Your prayers are deeply valued and are vital to seeing more students growing friendship and faith through the work of Friends International. Please use our Prayer Diary to regularly support the work in prayer.

[Pray Now](#)

A photograph of a young woman with long dark hair, smiling broadly while sitting on a swing. The image has a warm, reddish-orange tint. Overlaid on the image in a large, white, cursive script is the text "Thank You".

Thank You



JUST SAY

Hello

friends
INTERNATIONAL