



JUST SAY

Hello

RESOURCE PACK
FOR CHURCHES &
SMALL GROUPS

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Thanks for Downloading This Resource!

This fantastic resource will give you loads of ideas for growing friendship and faith with international students.

Our hope, at Friends International, is that resources like this one will enable churches and student groups, across the UK and Ireland, to be able to better engage and witness to international students.

There are now 1 million students coming from around the world, to universities and language schools in the UK and Ireland, every year. To reach this huge number, partnership is essential. Therefore, we want to partner with your church or CU in this ministry. View the Take Action pages for the various ways we can do this.

As hundreds of thousands of international students arrive for this new academic year, we pray that you and your church or CU would grow in ministry to international students. We pray that this Resource Pack would help you in that growth.

God bless,
Alan

Alan Tower
National Director





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.

Although universities up and down the country are still 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

Привет

Testimony

“Studying Changes Destiny”

The Chinese often say that "studying changes destiny" and, under the influence of utilitarianism and pragmatism, I came to Sheffield in the UK for a Master's degree. Yet, under the guidance of God's goodness, I met Friends International workers Carol and Caleb.

I also had the privilege of attending the Word Alive conference. I gained a lot from that week and was deeply moved by the selflessness and honesty with which each speaker shared. To be honest, I didn't fully understand every word. But the message I heard every day was "know your identity", "he loves you forever", "you are my precious", words that awakened my long-dormant heart.

For me, growing up in a single-parent household, I always thought love was conditional. A deep sense of abandonment gripped me, especially when I couldn't get my father's affirmation even though I tried my best. As a result, I was reluctant to believe that a perfect God would love an imperfect me.

I used to think that my father's betrayal of my family had ruined my life. If God loved me, he should have made my father repent and apologise to me. But at that moment, I realised that God had watched over me since I was a child and that he was the worthiest father. The Father has given me the most radiant and dazzling love in this world.

As I found my value and security in Christ, I began to accept myself and believe that I was complete.



This is the most precious gift from my trip to the UK.

No longer did I need to prove who I was by my grades, education, social status, wealth, etc. God's unconditional love also gave me the power to forgive, so that I was released from hatred and bitterness and was truly set free.

It was as if I heard a voice inside me saying: Why am I not one of the many servants of God? It was then that I realised what it meant to be a Christian, and that I wanted to take up my cross, to follow Jesus Christ closely, and to be a blessing to more people.

I think back to Easter three years ago, when I sought advice on life planning from a gifted pastor. Instead of giving me a straight answer, he gave me a passage from the Bible (Genesis 32:22-32) and wished me to find my 'Ford of the Jabbok' soon. I didn't understand it at the time, but now I have found it.

The meaning of "Jabbok" is to empty oneself. There, Jacob emptied himself and clung to God. Thus the trajectory of his life changed from Jacob (grasping) to Israel (the Son of God). This time, he truly grasped the greatest blessing in life. No longer look at what the years have spoiled, but only at what grace has left behind. Although the road ahead may not be smooth, I now know what I have, and I have found the value and meaning of my life. This is the most precious gift from my trip to the UK.

Thank you to everyone at Word Alive, although I cannot thank you in person, I am confident that God remembers your labour. May God's grace be with you all forever and ever!

Leah

JUST SAY

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Quiz

HOW MUCH DO **YOU AND YOUR CHURCH** KNOW ABOUT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE UK AND IRELAND?

ONE

What is the total number of non-UK students studying at UK universities?

TWO

Which country sends significantly more students to the UK than any other nation, sending 104,240 students?

THREE

Which subject remains the most popular subject for international students in the UK, with 126,955 students studying it?

FOUR

Which university hosts the largest number of international students in the UK?

FIVE

How many international students are studying at universities in the Republic of Ireland?

SIX

How many international English language students are there at language schools in the UK?

SEVEN

Which UK city has the most language students coming to study English?

EIGHT

Of all current word leaders, what percentage of them have studied at some point in the UK or Ireland?

WHERE WE GET OUR STATS:

UK Universities:
www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/where-from

Irish Universities:
www.iua.ie/for-students/international-students

English Language Schools:
www.englishuk.com/facts-figures



1. 556,624
2. China
3. Business and administrative studies
4. University College London (20,170)
5. 32,000
6. 508,614
7. London
8. 17%

Welcome Ideas

GREAT IDEAS TO WELCOME AND HELP NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:

WELCOME MEAL

For many cultures around the world, nothing conveys care and welcome better than enjoying food together. It need not be elaborate: pasta and sauce or potatoes and stew or rice and curry will all go down a treat. (Chicken is the safest meat to offer a mixed crowd.)

INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH/IRISH/SCOTTISH/WELSH CULTURE

Queues, sarcasm, time keeping, talking about the weather, pub culture, attitudes to Covid safety, slang... what aspects of local culture can you introduce and explain to ease the way for students new to your part of the UK?

SURVIVING THE WEATHER

No one has weather quite like us... or houses insulated like ours either! So it's nice to offer commiserations and also tips regarding layering, raincoats vs umbrellas, hats/scarves/gloves, hot water bottles, weather apps and 3-seasons-in-a-day preparedness.

SHOPPING TRIP

Often, there are shops that are hard for international students to get to because they don't have cars. Organising a trip out to them one Saturday early in term can be a godsend.

CITY TOUR

Show students around your city, sharing a bit of history and local knowledge, and offering top tips for cafés, parks and shops. Showing them how public transport works can be so helpful too.

HOME HOSPITALITY

Most international students never see the inside of a local home or spend time with a local family, and when they do, it's a memorable occasion and a significant Christian witness. Consider signing up as local hosts through your local CU or Friends International worker.

CHURCH VISIT

Attending a church service will be a novel experience for many international students, so let them know they will be very welcome whether they are Christians or not, and reassure them that they don't need to bring anything or dress up. It's best if someone can welcome them personally and sit with them, answering their questions or discussing the sermon with them afterwards.

COVID ADAPTATIONS

If restrictions tighten again, there's Zoom, of course, but combining Zoom gatherings with meeting for walks, dropping off care packages at students' houses and outdoor pick-up points for free meals (and brief chats), all help build vital relationships.

Wellbeing

One in four international students across the UK and Ireland are suffering from mental health issues following the Covid crisis a recent survey carried out by Friends International has found.

The survey highlighted anxiety, depression and eating disorders as key areas where international students are struggling. Despite the struggle many international students have with mental health, they are less likely than British students to report it or to seek help. This is often due to cultural stigma around mental health or a distrust of medical professionals.

In response to this crisis, Friends International have launched a new video series aimed at helping international students with their wellbeing.

The videos follow the '[5 Ways to Wellbeing](#)' framework, which is a widely accepted approach and promoted by the NHS.

Each video is fun and engaging, and no more than 3 minutes. Click the images opposite to view each video.

IDEAS FOR HOW YOU CAN USE THESE VIDEOS:

1. Show to international students at an international student

café or another setting where discussion can take place.

2. Encourage students to access the videos themselves by downloading the Friends International App. The App allows them to keep informed of events and hospitality offered by local Christians. (If you or your church is an affiliate, your events will be advertised on the App.)
3. Offer to run a short well-being course for a hall of residence, international society, or language school you already have some contact with, using the videos as a springboard.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & FOLLOW-UP:

- Show "The Five Ways to Wellbeing" videos. Discuss how students feel about their own wellbeing or mental health at that point. How has culture shock affected them? How were these five steps a part of their lives in their home countries, and how are they currently experienced?
- After watching "Connect with Other People", get students to pool together all the different ways they connect with family and

friends at home, and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of remaining in close contact. How do students feel about their connections with people in their present location? What would help them connect better? (A short talk on top tips for making friends with British/Irish people may be a helpful follow-up.)

- Organising a hike, football match, aerobics session or Ceilidh would be a fun follow up to "Be Active". Similarly, you can get students to try one of the exercises suggested in "Be in the Moment" together.
- Get church members or café team members to share their best experience of "Keep Learning", whether it's knitting, Bible study or wind surfing. It's a good opportunity for someone to give their testimony or to invite interested students to a course for investigating Christianity.
- With "Give to Others", you can introduce students to local opportunities for volunteering, or ask students to share their own experiences of giving.

The 5 Ways to Wellbeing

INTRO

INTRODUCTION TO
THE 5 STEPS



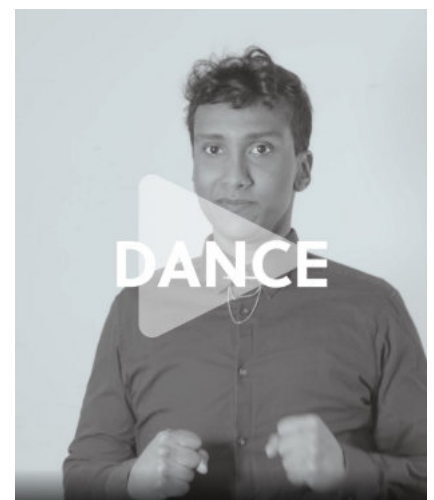
ONE

CONNECT WITH
OTHER PEOPLE



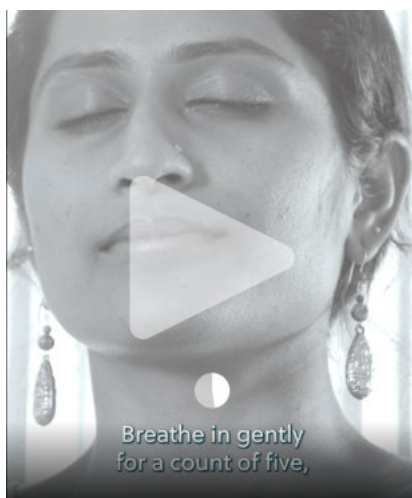
TWO

BE PHYSICALLY
ACTIVE



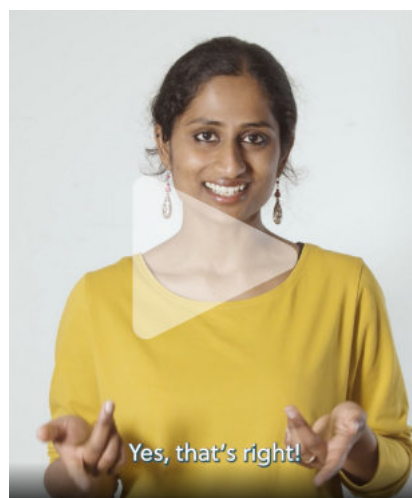
THREE

BE IN THE
MOMENT



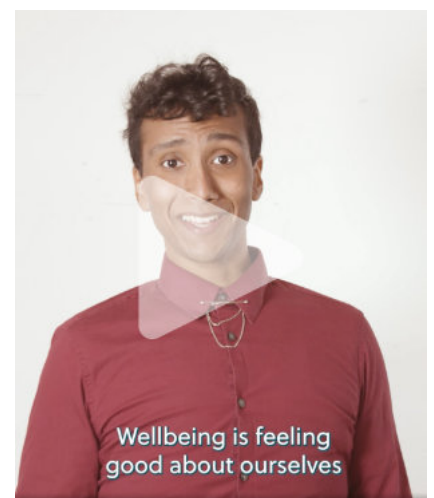
FOUR

KEEP LEARNING



FIVE

GIVE TO OTHERS



Bible Study

JUST SAY

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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?



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 church's 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. Some 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

- Please pray for student mental wellbeing. We have seen an increasing number of students who are struggling and need support. Pray that staff and churches would know how to offer help in these circumstances.
- 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 in Cardiff. They have found the last year very difficult being away from family and friends. Pray that this new term would bring freedom to interact without fear of the Coronavirus.*
- *The Friends International Bible Study using Zoom has been a huge encouragement. Please pray that the it would continue to be well attended.*

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 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

BECOME AN AFFILIATE

The Affiliates Network offers resources, training and networking to those who have a passion for serving and reaching international students.

Anyone involved with internationals through their local church or university would benefit greatly. This includes church leaders, international student workers, church interns, globe café team leaders and keen volunteers, as well as ISM workers based outside the UK and Ireland.

The Affiliates Network connects these individuals with Friends International staff and each other, enabling them to enjoy mutual benefits. All affiliates are welcome to the conferences and training events available to staff.

Find out more:

friendsinternational.uk/affiliates



Take Action



Donate

Friends International connects with over 10,000 international students each year. We can only do this because of your generous donations.

[Donate Now](#)



Stay Connected

We want you to be inspired by stories of changed lives and to learn about our new initiatives.

[Connect Now](#)



Pray

Your prayers are deeply valued and are vital to seeing more students growing friendship and faith through the work of Friends International.

[Pray Now](#)



Hello



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