

CONVERSATION

STARTERS

The First Meeting

In most cases, a World Relief representative will attend the first meeting between you and the family you will be working with as a volunteer. The following is an example of a first meeting, which should last approximately one hour.

- Just prior to your meeting, review any information you may have about the person you are about to meet.
- At the beginning of your meeting, introduce yourself and get to know each other by asking questions or discussing some information about each other and your families. Be sure to ask how to pronounce their name/s and practice repeating it several times until you can say it correctly. Remember that awkward moments and silence are a normal part of the first meeting. As time goes on, these periods of silence will decrease.
- Since conversation can be slow in the beginning, check out “Conversation Starters” for a few sample open-ended questions you might use to get the discussion moving. Bring along pictures of your family members. You could also bring an atlas or map to show home countries. You may wish to show the country from which you or your ancestors came to America. This would demonstrate that you, too, have roots in another place.
- During your meeting, talk about ideas for activities that you might do together.
- Before leaving, make sure that you can reach each other by phone. Also, clearly state your understanding of when you will meet next.
- For example: “I will come to visit you here at your apartment next Saturday at 10:00 in the morning. Will you be there?”

Conversation Starters

Here are a few questions which can be used to start conversation. Asking open-ended questions, rather than simple “yes” or “no” questions, will allow everyone to share more information.

- How many people are in your family? Tell me about them. Ask to see pictures, if they are available. Share pictures of your own family.
- What was it like when you first came to the United States? What did you first see or do? What do you notice about the United States that is different from your country?
- What are some places around here you would like to see?
- What kind of work did you do at home?
- What do you think of the weather here? What is the weather like in your country?
- What kind of music do you like?
- Do you like to play/watch sports? Which sports? Who is your favorite team?
- How do people greet one another in your country?
- What are your favorite foods? What are they made of? How are they prepared? When are they eaten?
- What American foods have you tried? What American foods do you like?