

FIRST MEETING AND INTRODUCTIONS



The initial meeting and introduction with the newcomers is an important step. While there is no one size fits all for how this will look like, this interaction will help bring clarity to the relationship, identifying the team as volunteers of World Relief as well as hopeful friends and community neighbors to the new family. There is also the element of the mutual agreement to the new connection and relationship.

- Consider who should be a part of the first meeting. It's best to not have too large of a group, as it can be overwhelming. Perhaps the leaders, a small segment of the group, and an interpreter if one has been secured.
- This first interaction should not be too long or technical around services and duties, but it should focus on breaking the ice and creating a good opportunity to begin getting to know each other.
- The team should first identify themselves by sharing names, church or organizational affiliation, and letting the family know that they are a group of volunteers with World Relief known as a Good Neighbor Team.
- Let the family introduce themselves. If there are US Ties present, include them in this conversation as well.
- A World Relief staff person may have already confirmed with the newcomers that they are willing to be matched with volunteers, but establishing mutuality within the GNT and newcomer relationship is critical. Asking the family permission to spend time with them is a very important way to relay that the family's desires for connection is important and necessary.
- If the family have any suggestions or questions, let them share and discuss these things openly.
- A light conversation about the team members and their life, as well as asking some questions about the family can help break the ice and develop a level of comfort that can be foundational to the growth of a mutual relationship. Prepare some simple questions beforehand and have translation tools ready if needed (Google Translate, Tarjimly, an interpreter available). These questions should not be intrusive or probe deeply into their experience as refugees as it may be traumatic, and the family may not be ready to share this information. Pay attention to the context, verbal and non-verbal cues of the newcomers.

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- Before leaving, exchange contact information and talk about the best times to be reached and method of communication (phone call, text, WhatsApp, etc.).
- If your team prepared a group photo or collage, leave that with the family and let them know that these are all the people on the team., and they will eventually be introduced to the newcomers. Referring back to the photo does help the family identify and remember the GNT members.

KEEP IN MIND

- There will be some mistakes and awkward moments, and that is okay! Don't take it too seriously, and be ready to laugh off the little mistakes and misunderstandings together.
- Think through how to introduce the rest of the team to the family.
- When you visit the family, you may experience varying levels of customary hospitality such as focusing on relational matters before jumping into business, greeting each family member, being offered food/beverages, having other guests there at the same time, etc. You can honor them by receiving a reasonable amount of the family's welcoming gesture and follow these cultural procedures.
- Create some flexibility with time and expectations, enjoy and learn from these experiences!

REMEMBER TO

Log your volunteer hours in the Volunteer Portal!