

Sign up to meet new students

(in chronological order):

- Airport pick up
- Temporary housing
- Welcome picnic
- Welcome party
- India Independence day
- Hocking Hills trip
- IFI Diwali party
- Thanksgiving holiday hosting
- Christmas holiday hosting
- IFI Holi party
- Easter holiday hosting
- Be available to move furniture
- Be available for teaching how to drive

Questions to get to know students:

- Name: how do you pronounce your name?
- Does your name have a meaning
- What are you studying?
- 4Fs - Food, Family Festivals, Favorite things to do
- Who is in your family?
- What is your favorite type of food or something you want to try (take them to a restaurant like or cook it with them)
- What kind of holidays or festivals do you celebrate
- Feel free to ask if they celebrate Diwali or Holi
- What do you like to do for fun (offer to do that with them another day)

Once you know your friend, feel free to ask about religion; Indian students are typically okay talking about religion:

- Are you from a Hindu home?
- Is your family devoted to a particular deity?
- How does your family practice their Hinduism (or Jainism, Sikhism, etc)?
- How is your family doing?
- What types of goals do you have for your time in USA?
- What can I pray for you?

Define yourself when using words below:

- Resurrection - "After Yeshu died on the cross, he came back to life in the same body, three days later."
- Sin -

Avoid Insider language

- Awana
- Homily
- "say grace"
- Church / Church "service"

Avoid the terms & topics below

- Convert & converted. Instead, my friends sometimes say they have given their devotion to Yeshu. OR Yeshu has changed my heart.
- “Christian” use instead, “follow Yeshu”
- “Missionary”

Generally avoid the topics below

- Caste
- Poverty in India
- Corruption in India
- Idols
- “millions of Gods”
- Specific character issues like your past addictions or divorce

Avoid competition of religion

Christianity vs Hinduism

It's not about going to church vs temple

Focus on them knowing Jesus

Do not put down their gods or way of worship. Rather, tell stories from the Bible:

- Do not put down their god or way of worship. Don't argue with your student about why it's wrong.
- Pray for Holy Spirit to open your student's eyes to it.
- Pray God give you an open door for sharing of Bible story about Jesus where He addresses it. Ex when Jesus talks to woman at the well about where we can pray. When sharing don't point out differences. Focus all on Jesus. Let Holy Spirit guide them to see difference.
- Ask clarifying questions that get them thinking. Can you explain why this god did this? How do you feel about that reason? Dont argue with friend's explanation, just ask questions to get your friend thinking and questioning

Don't throw baby out with bath water

Our approach is just one approach, we are eager to keep as much of Hinduism as possible without sacrificing the truth of the bible and the uniqueness of the gospel:

- dance
- sanskrit words
- cultural rituals
- holidays
- respect of Indian historical events or people (we can agree there are some historical places and people referenced in Hindu Scripture but that does not mean we have to agree to believe those people as god)

Show them the freedom they can have in following Jesus. Why?

Jesus never wanted to start a western religion AND because it will help your student in the long term to reach their family and community

Yeshu satsang

Purpose: to be a Greek to a Greek or in this case Indian to an Indian; be all things to all men so we can win some

- To show Hindu background friends they can learn and worship Jesus without giving up their culture.
- To break stereotypes Hindus have on what it means to follow Jesus
- Break the barrier that Christianity is a western religion.

How?

Smell, musical instruments in worship, clothing, language used for worship and food all based around Hindu/Indian culture.

Teachings contextualized so can relate to Hindu background student ex Acts 17 with Paul in Athens

Inviting to church

- Do not pressure
- Explain what they will experience
- Explain afterwards that this is what it looks like to follow Jesus in American culture. Explain Yeshu never showed any preferences toward any culture. It may look different according to their culture. Invite them to join Yeshu satsang with you to experience.

Pluralism - It is very typical for Hindus to say all religions are the same. Be ready!

- Don't get discouraged if they do not accept Gospel immediately or don't accept Jesus as only god immediately
- Pray about where they are in their relationship with Jesus. Help them know and fall in love with Jesus before expecting a life commitment from them. Imagine it being like marriage. Would you have said Yes to marriage the second you met someone? Or would you feel more comfortable saying Yes once you got to know them?
- Do not shy away from what Bible says but also be discerning on when to be blunt
- Pray how God wants you to answer: multiple ways to answer

Multiple ways to answer:

- Try to keep your answers short. If they are interested you can add more.

- I often agree that religions are so often the same. All religions seek purity, honesty, pleasing God, turning away from sins, etcetera. I like to point out that the *founder* of the religions are different. Yeshu came as a real person of history. He lived a life of service and self sacrifice. He lived perfectly and without sin (paap). His sacrifice on the cross is unique and totally different than the founder of any other religion.
- Similarly, I often agree that religions are the same. All religions seek purity, honesty, pleasing God, turning away from sins, etcetera. I like to point out that we all fall short of the perfect religious ideals. When we fall short (as we all do) Yeshu has the unique provision. He came so that we have *forgiveness* and fresh start to living in the power He promised those who follow Him.
- In my close relationships, I challenge my friends. Are you really okay with all religions? Do you really think they are all paths to God? You know some religions have built in discrimination? Some religions over the years have had terrible components like human sacrifice and temple slavery? You are not really okay with all religions are you?
- I try to avoid blatant refutation of their assertions. Instead, I can ask them what they think Jesus means when He says, "I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me".

Have they had a chance to fall in love with Jesus before we ask them to commit to a life long commitment?

When they bring up hard questions:

- Focus on Jesus as much as can at first and then answer questions that are specific barriers getting in the way of acceptance
- Pray about is this an actual barrier or rabbit trail?
- Pray about what are their actual barriers and ask God to overcome it and how you can help
- It's ok to say you don't know. That can be an opportunity to find out answers with them

Resources

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Danny Walker:

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Book: Engaging with Hindus by Robin Thomson UK

Seminar: Love Your Neighbor (9hrs) through Naya Jeevan ministry by Cathy Douglass