Interfaith Philadelphia advances mutual trust, understanding, and cooperation among faith communities, in order to work together for the common good of the region. Thank you for being a part of that vision by extending hospitality to a diverse group of visitors.

PRE-VISIT / PREPARATION

❖ Select religious leaders and community members – especially young adults – to meet with the group
  • Even if group is participating in a regularly scheduled community service/program, it’s important to have specific leaders/members identified to greet and interact with the group, and a specific time to do that
  • Give consideration to members who might best articulate your community’s tradition and practice to young adults, and answer questions knowledgeably, clearly and respectfully
❖ With Interfaith Philadelphia Event Coordinator, confirm logistics and timing
❖ Once details are confirmed, publicize the visit to the larger community

VISIT / TIPS FOR HOSTING

Overall Considerations & Sensitivities

❖ Please keep the following suggestions/sensitivities in mind throughout the visit: • Think about what would be most helpful to you if you were visiting a community/tradition unfamiliar to you
  • Assume the group as a whole knows little, if anything, about your tradition (they may, but better to assume they don’t)
  • Don’t pretend to speak for your whole religious tradition; use “I language”
  • Consider that someone in the group may self-identify as atheist/agnostic or come from a tradition that has a different understanding of the divine.
  • Consider that someone in the group may self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender
  • Consider that the group may be diverse when raising issues that may be “charged” (e.g. gender roles, sexuality, politics)
    o Such issues are by no means inappropriate – and may even be useful – for interfaith dialogue, but keep in mind that these are sometimes better addressed in the context
of more established, ongoing relationships
  o Be prepared to address questions/reactions from students in ways that are respectful
    of their perspective

Welcome/Orientation

❖ Have religious leader(s)/member(s) ready to welcome the group as they arrive •
  Make sure whoever is speaking is loud enough for the whole group to hear
  • Clarify how religious leaders should be addressed (e.g. title or first name?)
  • Name tags are recommended; the group will come with name tags as well
  • Point out location of bathrooms and designated prayer space as relevant

❖ Review any expectations regarding religious practice/norms (e.g. head coverings, prayer posturing)
  as necessary, and any “courtesy” requests (e.g. photos allowed or not, note-taking allowed or not)

❖ Prior to the worship experience (or other program), provide a brief overview of the community (e.g.
  history, demographics, identity within broader religious tradition, current programming, social
  engagement, etc.)

During Visit

❖ If possible and appropriate, allow time for the group to observe sacred space first – especially if the
  group will not be participating in a regular service/program

❖ If group is participating in a regular service/program, review general suggestions for group and
  individual observation vs. participation (i.e. when it’s appropriate to participate or not) •
  Consider how students might observe and not participate
  • Be sure to formally welcome group as part of service/program
  • If possible and appropriate during the service/program, allow time for brief explanation of
    what's happening

❖ Avoid lengthy presentations/lectures and allow plenty of time for questions throughout the visit
  (and/or at a designated time for questions, preferably after any service/program); the more
  interactive, the better for college students

Conclusion

❖ Thank the group for coming

POST-VISIT / EVALUATION

❖ Please “collect” responses from religious leader(s) and community member(s) about the visit; the
  Event Coordinator will have a formal evaluation form we’ll ask you to complete

❖ Event Coordinator will be in touch afterwards to evaluate the visit with you, identifying any areas of
  concern, suggestions for future visits, etc.

Gateway is a program run by Interfaith Philadelphia. Please contact Asheq Fazlullah for more
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