



## “Go Here!”—Involving Kids in God’s Mission at Their Doorstep

In 2005, there are an estimated 720,000 international students and scholars receiving their education in the United States. In nearly every corner of our country, God is bringing students here from all over the world—60 percent are from countries within the 10/40 Window, which includes the highest percentage of non-believers.

Here are some facts about international students...

- 90 percent are not Christian;
- 80 percent never have a Christian friend;
- 80 percent will return to their homelands;
- 70 percent never have a meal in an American home; and
- 66 percent are from different countries in Asia.

International Student Ministry, Inc. (ISM, Inc.) is an LCMS mission society, in partnership with LCMS World Mission, which is challenging and helping congregations and individuals to intentionally offer international campus communities friendship, hospitality, and the Good News of Jesus Christ. Since 1992, the number of intentional LCMS ministries among international students has grown from five to 71. ISM, Inc. publishes a bi-monthly newsletter, *The Doorstep*, which is sent to more than 6,000 prayer partners throughout the world. Through its Web site, [www.isminc.org](http://www.isminc.org), ISM, Inc. provides many resources and ideas for outreach among international students as well as conferences and other involvement opportunities.

North American kids can actively be involved in God’s mission at their doorstep with some intentional help from adults. Most international students have basic English language proficiency, which makes communication possible between kids and these international guests.



These students also miss family interaction and a chance to be with children. Consider the following mission involvement ideas for including children in dynamic mission opportunities not far from home.

- Read “Go Here!—International Students in My Neighborhood,” which introduces kids to two typical international students, their backgrounds, and their experience in the United States.
- Call a nearby college or university (foreign student office) and inquire about its program for international students. Learn more about the needs of these students and how kids can be involved in reaching out to them.
- Contact your LCMS district office for information about international student ministries in your area or check the list of ministries on the ISM, Inc. Web site. Invite the volunteers or workers to tell about their work and opportunities for involvement.
- Invite an international student to your home or classroom to speak. Prepare a typical dish from his or her homeland and learn more about another culture.
- Share a holiday with an international student. Invite him or her to celebrate a birthday, national holiday, or Christian holiday with your family or class.

Contact International Student Ministry, Inc. for more information at [www.isminc.org](http://www.isminc.org), [isminc@isminc.org](mailto:isminc@isminc.org) or 715-677-4877.

### **“Go Here!”—International Students in My Neighborhood**

Hi Mission Friends! Palmer the Parrot is here to tell you about a mission trip that you can take right in your own area! Did you know that there are people from all over the world who live near you? There are more than 720,000 international students studying at colleges and universities all over the United States. I’d like to introduce you to a couple of my friends who are international students. I hope that you can make some new international friends, too!

**Palmer the Parrot: What’s your name? Where did you come from? Please tell us a little about your family. How long have been in the United States?**

**Yuhua:** Thanks Palmer! It is so good to be here with you. My name is Yuhua and I am from Kunming in the southwestern part of China. It is known as “Spring City” since it is always warm there. In my family, I just have my mother and father. My mother and I were a “mother-daughter team” in a flower shop. My dad is a policeman. I lived with them until I came to America three years ago.

**Yanick:** Hey, Palmer! My name is Yanick and my home is in Cameroon. That’s on the western side of Africa. I am the third son in my family of nine. There is my father and mother plus four bothers and two sisters. My mother stays home, and my dad is a pastor and teacher. I came here two years ago to study.



**PP: Do you ever get homesick? What do you miss the most from home?**

**Yuhua:** Of course, I miss my home and my family. But, my friends here have helped me when I have felt sad and homesick. What do I miss most? Oh, I think I would have to say I miss my friends and the times we spent in the beautiful parks in my city.

**Yanick:** I try not to think about home very often because I miss my family and friends. I really miss my mom's cooking. It is so good. Palmer, you would really enjoy the wonderful food! I also miss my church. Our music is so different than yours. We clap our hands and sing a lot. We spend the entire day at church. Each Sunday is a day to worship, but also to be with family and friends. And, to eat good food!

**PP: Do you have any hobbies? What have you enjoyed doing in America?**

**Yuhua:** Back in China, I really enjoyed doing the special Chinese writing—called calligraphy. I spent hours practicing and making, ah-h-h, I think you call them, not pictures, but posters with poems and sayings in big Chinese letters. I brought along my pens and some special paper. Maybe I could write your name in Chinese the next time I see you. I have learned to ice skate in America. It is a lot of fun. I am not very good, but I enjoy skating with my friends. I also like riding my bike. You have such beautiful scenery.

**Yanick:** I really enjoy playing soccer. When I was in high school, I played on my school's team. We were pretty good! I'm so glad to be able to play here on a regular basis. We have weekly games at the university for student teams. Next year, I may try out for the school's team.

**PP: What surprised you the most about America?**

**Yuhua:** I was most surprised by all the slang. It's so hard to understand. I think it changes everyday. Just when I know a phrase and how to use it, I hear a new one.

**Yanick:** My surprise came when I wanted to travel to another city. In America it is very hard to find public transportation like trains and buses. In my country we can travel very easily from one place to another. Here I must take a plane or have my own car.

**PP: What are you studying? Will you go back to your country when you finish your education? What type of job will you have?**

**Yuhua:** I am studying communication. I want to be an English translator back in China because lots of foreigners visit my hometown.

**Yanick:** I am in a general education program since I am still deciding my major. It will probably be either computer programming or chemistry. Someday, I will return to Cameroon, but I think I would like to work in the U.S. for a few years. The experience will be helpful. I'm still not sure what kind of job I want, maybe working with computers or doing medical research.



**PP: What can we do to make your stay here a positive one? Since I am a Christian, I would like to pray for you. What are some things that I can pray about?**

**Yuhua:** I hope you just talk to me. Because I look different and have a Chinese accent, sometimes people don't talk to me. But, I am just like you. I appreciate friends who take time to listen and share. Americans speak fast; I wish people would speak slowly so I can understand.

I'm not Christian, but have attended a campus ministry with a friend, my conversation partner. We meet once a week just to talk. She sometimes talks about Jesus and the church. I want to learn more.

**Yanick:** I agree with Yuhua that it is important for Americans to listen and share with international students. Being in a foreign country is hard. We need friends and people who are willing to help us. It was especially hard when I first came to the United States. I am so thankful for the family that met me at the airport that first day. Please invite students like me into your homes and classrooms. We can share about our life and you can help us learn about yours.

Thank you for praying for me. I'm a Christian and know that we are brothers and sisters in Jesus. Pray that international students find America a friendly place to learn, so those who don't know Jesus would have open minds and hearts to hear about Him.

