

Saying Hello to Your Friends

In a circle, make a few selections of how to say hello or welcome in different languages from the list below. Have each participant turn and greet the person next to them with one of your selections. After you have gone around the circle try another. Continue until you are ready to begin the Eucharist.

(optional) You can tell the story of the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9), when there was a confusion of languages that pulled the world apart. Now, as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit after Pentecost, God is drawing people together again from across the whole world to share the blessings of being part of Christ's body.

Here are 24 words for 'hello' or 'welcome' from around the world:

1. From Sri Lanka

In Sinhalese, people greet each other with hands together, as in prayer, and a slight bow of the upper body. They say a word that sounds like 'Are-you-bow-an'.

2. From Japan

In Japanese, the greeting sounds like 'Kon-eechi-wa', accompanied by a polite bow.

3. From Eritrea

To greet someone, hold them by the right hand and gently pull together, touching shoulders three times. The word to use is the Arabic word for peace, pronounced 'Salaam'.

4. From Nigeria

There are a variety of different tribal greetings. Here are some: Kedu; No (a short 'o' sound) and Kubay-obway. Such greetings are usually accompanied by 'hand and thumb' shakes, with the other hand on the heart to emphasise sincerity, or under the elbow of the person being greeted.

5. From Uganda

Again there are a variety of tribal greetings: Agandi; Ku-tu-midde nyo; Kuthie

6. From South Africa

'Sabona' is a Zulu 'hello', usually accompanied by an ordinary handshake, then a 'thumb and hand' shake, then the ends of the fingers interlocked, the thumbs rubbing each other.

7. From New Zealand

'Tehi Mauria', in the Maori language, means 'I greet you' (literally, 'I salute the breath of life in you'). It is traditionally accompanied by rubbing noses.

8. From Venezuela

'Bendicion' (pronounced Ben-dís-ee-on) means 'a blessing, please'. The customary reply is 'Dios te bendiga' (pronounced Dee-os tay ben-dee-ga), which means 'God bless you'.

9. From Albania

'Mira dita' means 'good morning/day'.

10. From Lebanon

'Ahlan, ahlan', usually said with one hand close to your heart, means 'Greetings, peace to you'.

11. From Egypt

‘Zal-ak’ (pronounced Zeye-ak) means ‘Welcome/hello’.

12. From Nepal

‘Namaste’ is used in Nepal and in various forms throughout the Indian subcontinent. It means literally ‘I honour/respect you’.

13. From East Africa

‘Jambo’ is a common Swahili greeting meaning ‘Hello’

14. From China

‘Ni hao’ is a phonetic interpretation of the Chinese greeting, whose roots lie in a phrase meaning ‘Have you eaten yet?’

15. From Romania

‘Domnul ajouta’ means literally ‘The Lord be your helper’. Romanians also use ‘Buna’, which is a common everyday word for ‘hello’.

16. From the Arabic-speaking world

‘Sab(ah) achir’ is a phonetic interpretation of the Arabic greeting meaning ‘Peace be with you’. The Arabic for ‘Welcome to you’ is pronounced ‘Marhaban bik’, with a ‘breathed’ ‘h’, as if you were breathing on a mirror to polish it.

17. From Pakistan

‘Salaam Ji’, a greeting heard particularly among Pakistani Christians, means ‘God’s peace with you’.

18. From Wales

‘Sut mae’ (pronounced ‘Shu-my’) is a greeting from South Wales.

19. From north India

‘Sasrikal’ is a phonetic interpretation of ‘Welcome’ from north India.

20. From south India

‘Vanakkam’ is a phonetic interpretation of ‘Welcome’ from south India.

21. From Bangladesh

‘Sharkotom’ is a phonetic interpretation of the Bengali for ‘Welcome’.

22. From Afghanistan

‘Khubistin’ is a phonetic interpretation of the word for ‘Welcome’ from central Asia.

23. From southern Sudan

The first person says ‘Sene’ (pronounced ‘senay’) and the reply is ‘ay’ (pronounced as a long drawn-out ‘a’ sound). The person who began then says ‘Mokino’ and the reply this time is ‘oh’, a long drawn-out ‘o’ sound. It is a greeting from the Zande tribe of southern Sudan.

24. From Zambia

‘Gogogoi’ is a greeting from Zambia

As a follow-up to this activity, particularly if it is being used in a church service, you might like to ‘share the peace’ with each other using languages from around the world. The Christian message to the world is one of peace with God through Jesus Christ. Here are seven words for peace from different parts of the world:

25. From Romania

'Pace' (pronounced 'pa-chay') - along with a hug and kisses on each cheek. (For the shy, maybe 'air kisses' will do.)

26. From India

'Shanti', with hands in a prayer position and a simple bow.

27. From the Middle East

'Salaam', with a bow and one hand on the heart.

28. From China

'Wa', with hands folded across the chest and a deep bow.

29. From East Africa

'Amani', with a 'hand-thumb' handshake.

30. From Russia

'Mir', with a great bear hug.

Found on the website: <http://www.barnabasinchurches.org.uk/speaking-in-tongues/>