

Tips for welcoming people who may not speak English

1. Say 'Hello'.
2. Acknowledge people; smile, make eye contact.
3. Ask and learn people's names.
4. Speak slowly and at a normal volume.
5. Use plain English, avoid jargon and colloquialisms.
6. Don't be afraid to ask if you have been understood and to repeat what you have said, perhaps in different words.
7. Speak more than ask questions. People who are learning a language always understand more than they can say.
8. If possible try to prepare by thinking of some topics to discuss.
9. Include a friend; a 3-way conversation can be easier to keep flowing.
10. Provide information on local services and facilities and signpost people for specialist advice. Do not give specialist advice on topics such as immigration status.
11. Be friendly, be sensitive and remember that communication includes body language and gestures.
12. Add a good sense of humour, a dose of patience and a dash of humility.

EMBRACE NI

Building a Welcoming Community

EMBRACE is a group of Christians drawn from different denominations, working together to promote a positive response to people seeking asylum, migrant workers and people from minority ethnic backgrounds in N Ireland.

EMBRACE seeks to reflect gospel values, and equip the Church to fulfil its call to welcome the stranger, by providing information, training, and resource materials, and acting as a channel to assist those in need.

Thinking of Joining Us?

If you are not already a member of EMBRACE, please consider joining us. Subscriptions are £10.00 annually per person and £20.00 for groups. Please email or write to us at the address below.

Embrace Free Translation Service

Whilst we encourage welcome and conversation in English, people respond best to an invitation in their own language. To help churches reach and communicate with people who come here from different countries, EMBRACE offers a free translation service for announcing church events and activities (up to 60 words).

For more information contact us:

EMBRACE NI

48 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast BT9 6AZ

Tel: 9066 3145 (Tuesday to Thursday 10am to 3pm)

Mobile: 0796 9921 328

Email: info@embraceni.org

Web Site: www.embraceni.org



Office of the

**First Minister and
Deputy First Minister**

www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk



Embrace NI | Hear My Voice Series | Leaflet 2 | Nov 2011

Hear My Voice

Overcoming Language Barriers

In the beginning was the Word...

John 1:1

Barriers...

Pat attends a church where there are many people from different countries. He is interested in learning more about their lives and would like to know how they are coping in a new country, but is reluctant to speak to them. He's afraid that if he starts talking and asking some questions the person won't be able to understand or to give him an answer. He prefers not to embarrass anyone and stays away from 'strangers'.

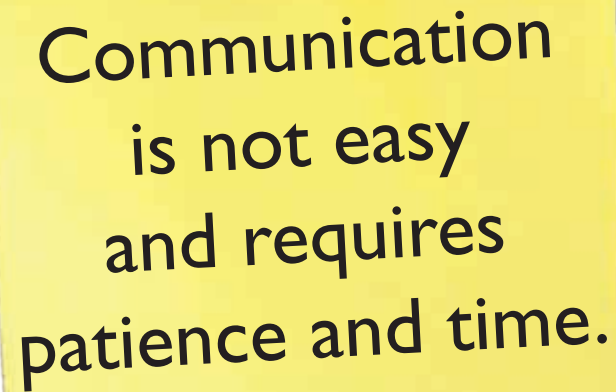
One morning two Polish mums and their children came to a Parent and Toddler group in a local church. They were very shy and spoke hardly any English. **Ann Marie**, the leader of the group started to worry about how she was going to communicate with new members of her group. She thought desperately: 'Help, I need an interpreter!'

Before leaving home, **Petras** was a teacher. When he moved to Northern Ireland he found himself working in a factory because his English was not good enough for him to get a job where he could use his qualifications. He feels bad about not being able to communicate properly and decided not to say a word in English rather than humiliate himself by making mistakes.

Laima came to Northern Ireland about four years ago with the intention of staying for good. At the beginning she was very distressed. When someone tried to speak to her in English she quickly said, 'I don't know English,' so as to prevent anyone from being embarrassed.

For newcomers, not knowing the language or not having any friends in the local community can be very difficult.

Interaction is important and it is possible. It requires some effort from all the people involved, but can be very enjoyable and life-enhancing.



Communication
is not easy
and requires
patience and time.

Overcoming barriers...

One Sunday **Pat** overcame his fear of conversation with newcomers and started to talk to one of the new members of his church. Pat discovered that talking wasn't as difficult as he had imagined it might be.

Ann Marie realised that the two Polish mums were just shy at the beginning and that their English was very good. Their children enjoyed learning new songs and being around other young children; however, Ann Marie intentionally works hard at making sure the new mums are included and welcomed by the larger group.

Petras didn't like to speak English and he found it difficult to engage in conversation. One day he met a colleague at work who crossed the barrier and encouraged Petras to speak with him. Petras really appreciated this and now has a good friend.

After four years here, **Laima** still has very basic English, but is eager to learn more; however, she is always a bit stressed-out when she has to speak English and needs a little gentle encouragement.