

# The Care and Feeding of Mission Speakers

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Hosting a guest mission speaker involves many details. Here is a checklist to help in your planning:

**Well in advance, contact the speaker and share the following information:**

- Date and time of event; how early you would like him or her to arrive
- Length of presentation
- Topic you want addressed (be as specific as possible)
- If you plan for a question-and-answer period
- Goals for the event -- share your purpose for the meeting
- Information or arrangements about transportation:
  - which airport to fly in and out of
  - distance or time from airport to meeting site
  - estimate of departure time
  - arrangements for transportation to and from the airport, if needed
  - directions to meeting location if the guest is driving
  - appropriate dress: casual, formal, native costume, etc.
- When you last hosted an International Ministries (IM) speaker and who

**Housing arrangements:**

- If housing will be provided in a private home, ask if the speaker has allergies (pets, plants, etc.)
- Ask if any special accommodations are needed
- Arrange for a private room, if possible, especially if the speaker is making several presentations

**Ask the speaker about:**

- Equipment needs: microphone, podium, newsprint, markers, DVD player, projector for PowerPoint presentation, screen, etc.
- Child care, if needed
- Handouts for the meeting and who will photocopy them, etc.
- What materials from IM the speaker would like you to have on hand. Materials can be ordered by contacting IM at 610-768-2208.

**As soon as available, send to your guest speaker:**

- The schedule for the whole event where they are speaking
- Information about the audience:
  - Sunday worship, Sunday school class, Bible study, Association meeting, Women's group, etc.
  - Estimate of number expected to attend
  - Approximate age range of audience(s)
  - Relevant data about your church's (or group's) mission involvement and mission giving.

**Spell out your expectations for your guest:**

- Is the speaker expected to attend every session of a multi-session event?
- If there are times when a guest could miss a session without offending anyone, let the speaker know so he/she can plan a time of refreshment away from the group

**At the event:**

- Keep business meetings and announcements brief
- If you plan on a question-and-answer period, notify the group early in the meeting so they can think of good questions. (You have already told the speaker.) Have a question prepared to start the time -- act as a buffer for the speaker so he or she isn't coping with hidden agendas
- Use name tags to help the speaker get to know members of the group

**Role of the Host:**

- Familiarize the speaker with the facilities (restrooms, steps into a pulpit, where the speaker should sit, etc.)
- Make sure the speaker has a program, if appropriate for the event
- Escort the speaker from room to room
- Check audio/visual equipment to make sure it's working
- Introduce the guest as members arrive
- Arrange for special needs -- a glass of water, making copies of handouts, selling resources the speaker has brought, etc.
- Say "thank you" and highlight something specific that was meaningful to you
- If the speaker has driven to the speaking assignment, please provide a contribution to offset mileage expense, as this is not covered by IM.
- Honorariums are appropriate for all mission speakers.

This may sound like a lot of work...and it is! But attention to details in advance will not only help your event run more smoothly, it will also enable the mission speaker to be better prepared ... and relaxed!