



On your marks

The children in our groups are part of schools that are increasingly being encouraged to make positive connections globally to broaden their curriculum through international school links. Our Christian family is a worldwide family, and a way into exploring this can begin with learning some of the ways to greet and welcome different people groups. What follows is a simple activity using a selection of words for 'hello' from a variety of countries worldwide.

Get set

The leader should first spend some time becoming familiar with the list of greetings before introducing them to the children.

It can be turned into a game, in which two versions of each greeting are written on card and then all be jumbled up. These can now be secretly selected by the children, who then have to find their partner, who has the same greeting, by going up to the others and using their greeting. A follow-up activity with this material would be to create a class welcome poster using these various world greetings.

What do the various greeting tell us about what is important to people around the world? Ask around your group for more world greetings that you could add to the list and the poster.

Go!

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'. Also: Ohayo gozai-mass (or just 'Ohayo') means 'good morning'. Kom-ban wa means 'good evening'.
3. From Eritrea: To greet someone, hold each other by the right hand and gently pull together, touching shoulders three times. The word to use would be the Arabic word for peace, pronounced 'Salaam'.
4. From Nigeria: There are a variety of different tribal greetings. Here are some: Kedu = hello; No (= short 'o') = hello; Kubay-obway = hello. 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 = hello; Ku-tu-midde nyo = greetings, how are you? Kuthie = hello
6. From South Africa: Sabona = a Zulu hello, usually accompanied by an ordinary handshake, then a thumb- and hand-shake, then the ends of the finger interlocked, the thumbs rubbing each other; Goeiemore (pronounced Hoi-amora) = hello (in Afrikaans); Dumela = hello (in Sotho)



7. From New Zealand: 'Tehi Mauria', which means 'I greet you' - literally it means 'I salute the breath of life in you'. It is traditionally accompanied by rubbing noses!
8. From Venezuela: 'Bendicion' - pronounced Bendíseeon - which means 'a blessing please'. The customary reply is 'Dios te bendiga' - pronounced Dios tay bendeega - which means 'God bless you'.
9. From Albania: 'Mira dita', which means 'good morning/day'.
10. From Lebanon: Ahlan, ahlan - usually said with one hand on your heart - and which means 'greetings, peace to you'.
11. From Egypt: 'Zal-ak' - pronounced Zeye-ak - which means 'welcome/hello'.
12. From Nepal: 'Namaste', which is used in Nepal and in various forms throughout the Indian subcontinent. It means literally 'I honour/respect you'.
13. From East Africa: 'Jambo' - a common Swahili greeting meaning 'Hello'
14. From China: 'Ni hao ma' - a phonetic interpretation of the Chinese greeting, whose roots lie in a phrase meaning 'Have you eaten yet'?
15. From Romania: 'Domnul ajouta' - a Romanian greeting meaning literally 'The Lord be your helper'. They also use 'Buna', which is a common everyday word for hello.
16. From the Arabic-speaking world: 'Sab(ah) achir' - a phonetic interpretation of the Arabic greeting meaning 'peace be with you'. There is also the Arabic for 'welcome to you', which is pronounced 'Marhaban bik', with a 'breathed' 'h', such as when you might breathe onto a mirror to polish it.
17. From Pakistan: 'Salaam Ji'—a greeting heard particularly among Pakistani Christians meaning 'God's peace **with you**'.
18. From Wales: 'Sut mae' - pronounced 'Shu-my' - a greeting from south Wales
19. From north India: 'Sasrikal' - a phonetic interpretation of 'welcome' from north India
20. From south India: 'Vanakkam' - a phonetic interpretation of 'welcome' from south India
21. From Bangladesh: 'Sharkotom' - a phonetic interpretation of the Bengali for 'welcome'
22. From Afghanistan: 'Khubistin' - a phonetic interpretation of the word for 'welcome' from central Asia
23. From southern Sudan: '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 - a greeting from Zambia