

Ten Tips to Welcome Hispanic Families in your School

Get to know the people in your community. Hispanics are a diverse group - keep in mind there are nineteen Spanish speaking countries in Latin America. Not all Hispanics in the United States are immigrants; approximately 66 percent of Hispanic in the United States were born here. There is also a difference among recent immigrants and second or third generation Hispanics; their needs and expectations are different. Definitions of time, family, relationships and etiquette can vary.

1. The best way to know the people in the community is through spending time in the places they visit. Go to Sunday Mass where the local Hispanic community worships, visit and shop in the supermarket or stores in their neighborhoods, attend events hosted by the library or other local organizations that serve the community.
2. Getting to know the people in the community, however briefly, will help to create a welcoming environment in your Catholic school. Do not avoid potential connections because you worry it doesn't seem like enough time. Short conversations can be just as impactful.
3. Translate your Catholic school's most important communications, such as open house flyers, dates of entry exams, application and registration deadlines and graduation news, into Spanish.
4. Hire a full-time or part-time bilingual staff person to help parents who are not fluent in English. It is important to ensure clear communication with the families.
5. Set your phone system to offer the choice to leave a message in Spanish by selecting an option or dialing an extension.
6. Identify parents that are known in the community and ask them to help you carry your message to other parents. Reaching out to leaders in the



- community will help promote the school and get other parents involved.
7. Get Hispanic families involved! Encourage parents to suggest ways to raise funds for the school. Invite them to plan an activity to help the school. They know what would be popular in their neighborhoods in order to attract more supporters and prospective families.
8. Learn some Spanish. Not everybody in the school may have the time or aptitude to learn a new language but ten phrases can go a long way. Most Hispanics are grateful when people try to learn some words in Spanish. Students could help you to select ten phrases that would be convenient to translate.
9. Invite the school's staff to be welcoming and mindful of the community. Inviting parents to school Mass and other activities are good opportunities to cross barriers and interact with the community.
10. Include a reading or a song in Spanish in Masses throughout the year. Have your Hispanic students share their talents in music and art for the liturgies.