

## Conversation Starters

As much as possible, avoid asking questions that require a “yes” or “no” answer. Instead, utilize the “who, what, when, where, and how” of good conversation. Avoid, however, sounding like a talk show host or an interrogator. Having more than one student with you can enhance the conversation and experience, especially if the students are from different countries. See also the “Art of Listening” on page 19.

### **Geography**

Where is your city? Ask for a description of his or her home, city, climate, etc. What are some of the most interesting places you have visited? What would you like to see while you are in America?

### **Languages**

What languages do you speak? How long have you been studying English? How would I greet you if I were in your country? Explain American slang and jokes.

### **Education**

What are some differences between your educational system and ours? What degrees (subjects for study) are most popular or valuable in your country? What degree are you pursuing here? How long do you expect to study here?

### **Food**

How do you like American food? What is your favorite food? How is it prepared? Would you like to use my kitchen to cook sometime? Where do you usually eat, in your apartment or out? What is a typical breakfast, lunch and dinner in your country? Does the family eat together most of the time?

### **Shelter**

Describe the appearance of a typical home in your country. Which is usually the largest room in the residence? Do you have extended families living together or nearby?

### **Transportation**

How do you get to school or work? Do people travel much from town to town? Is it customary for a family to go somewhere for a vacation? How much does it cost to use a taxi?

### **Socializing and Dating**

How do young men and women in your culture get to know each other? Do you and your friends go out in groups or as couples? At what age do most couples marry? If you are planning to serve a meal at 7:30 p.m., at what time do you ask your guests to arrive? If a friend invites you to a party which begins at 8:00 p.m., at what time will you plan to arrive?

### **Family**

May I see some pictures of your family? Where did you grow up—in the city or in the country? Who does most of the cooking and housework? Tell me about your parents’ daily lives. In your culture, how does the husband help in caring for the children? At what age do children start school? How many hours per day? How are children disciplined for disobedience? What is the average number of children in a family?

### **Driving**

What are the differences between driving here and at home? Do most people drive in your country? What kind of cars is most common?

### **Spiritual**

Please tell me something about your religion that is important to you. What are your worship centers like? What do you know about the Christian faith? What is your concept or belief about God? What is your perception of religion in this country?