

Building Relationships with our Undocumented Neighbors

We are fortunate to have been able to start to develop relationships with our community members, and we are always learning how to do this work better. Please follow these guidelines, and if you have any questions, contact someone on the Shared Sanctuary Ministry Team.

- Consider why this issue is important to you. You need to have more than good intentions; this has to be for justice.
- Watch the language that you use: Never use the term “illegal.” We believe that no human can be illegal. Use the term undocumented. Be consistent and brave and teach others.
- Learn more about white supremacy culture (see attached for a great resource), and pay particular attention to the following characteristics: sense of urgency, quantity over quality, worship of the written word, and there’s only one way. Be aware that we are all “swimming in the water” as Rev. Christina taught us, and that awareness means we can do better.
- Understand the importance of language justice. We will be creating more opportunities to have programs and events translated in Spanish, which means events may take longer and there may be times when you don’t know what is being said. This is uncomfortable, but it helps to remember that this is typical for people who don’t speak English well.
- Use your privilege. Believe people of color when they say racism happened. Speak up for them when it’s appropriate. Give them space at your table. Google “using white privilege in antiracism work” to learn more.

What we need from an ally. An immigrant perspective.

By Norys Pina. Unidos por Un Futuro Mejor. November 2018

Be vocal on your role as an ally: To be a good ally, you have to be vocal and active on your role as an ally. Allyship is pointless- ineffective- if no one knows about it. ***Being vocal in your role is what helps bring change. Wear your ally hat all the time.***

Standing in solidarity with those who are oppressed means providing support and meeting needs, ***but never taking over the narrative.*** We don't need allies to save us or speak for us, but to work with us.

Human rights movements depend on allies. In order for immigrants to get their rights, other citizens need to come out as their supporters, in order to create spaces for those affected.

Be of service, not self-serving: We have to have more than good intentions. ***Being an ally is ALL about justice.*** Not about making the ally feel good, perhaps having a big emotional experience that validates privilege than actually helping those affected.

An ally rises up to meet a need of the community. Is not about increasing your cultural knowledge and capital, is about disrupting beliefs and systems of oppression.

There is a phenomenon called “the savior complex” somebody described it as supporting brutal policies in the morning, founding charities in the afternoon, and receiving awards in the evening”. Remember it is NOT about the ally, it is about the betterment of our communities.

Be informed. As an ally, you need to be informed: Can you answer these questions?: How can you keep your immigrant friends safe? What makes an immigrant undocumented? What are the main concerns of the undocumented immigrants in your community? What resources do we have available to support our immigrants in this community?

Asking immigrant communities for help is a great way to learn more but we are NOT responsible for teaching you. Build your own foundation of understanding first. ***Do your own research to be a well informed ally.***

Think of intersectionality: "Immigrant" is just one part of a person's identity. Many immigrants also identify as LGBTQ, people of color, women, Muslim and more. As a result, our experiences can vary greatly, even though conversations around immigration in the U.S. often focus on Mexican immigrants and the Latino experience.

A good ally needs to be conscious of these tendencies, and consider the impact of intersectional identities in the fight for equality.

Use your privilege: As an ally, ***you have a lot of privilege that both documented and undocumented immigrants do not have.*** It's important to use this privilege to provide spaces for them, helping to amplify their voices. When undocumented immigrants protest and lobby politicians, for example, they risk their lives and homes. As someone born in the U.S., or even a documented immigrant, you can do the same and risk much less.

Allies are individuals who understand & acknowledge their access & privilege and use this sometimes at a risk or cost to help end injustice.

Sit back, reflect, understand, empathize, ACT

