

Go Missions to Mexico

Courtesies & Manners In Mexico

As Americans, we are generally "forward," "open," and "honest." We do not usually consider etiquette or manners to be of much value. We look at them as something plastic or surface. Not so to the Mexicans. To them, the first five minutes of "wasted conversation" are of extreme importance. In Mexico, you can deeply offend a person by not doing a simple thing such as shaking his hand when you enter or leave a room. For these reasons, we have made a short guide of proper manners to use with your friends in Mexico. The importance of this material cannot be stressed enough, as many times it will determine how well you will get along with the Mexican people.

General Guidelines

1. Chit-chat is important. Spend time with the people. Make conversation. Share about family, show pictures, etc.
2. Always shake hands with everyone. When someone comes in late, shake hands.
3. The abrazo (hug) is for special occasions and is not a bear hug (normally this is reserved for close relationships only).
4. Greet (saludar) people when you arrive or leave.
5. Try everything that you are offered to eat.
6. Manners are important. Guys, remember things like opening doors for ladies.
7. Women should be invited to have the seats and be first in line for meals, etc.
8. Be very careful to maintain a very high moral standard in front of them. They do not appreciate poor manners or an over show of affection among couples.
9. Mexicans generally look up to Americans and feel inferior to them. Show them love.
10. Do not take a lot of pictures without the people's permission. It makes you look like a tourist instead of a worker who is interested in them. Wait until you have developed relationships with them and they will be deeply honored.
11. When older people are present, offer them your seat, let them go first in line, do whatever would be appropriate to show them respect. Older people are highly respected in Mexico.
12. When greeting older people, be sure to stand up if you happen to be seated. To greet them sitting down is a sign of disrespect.

13. Do not be loud and boisterous in church. Church is highly esteemed and often people will come early to kneel and pray at the altar. If there is excessive noise, it will be looked down on.