

Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) Hospitality Code

Taken from p. 7 of the IHN "*Guide for Volunteer Hosts*"

- **It is nice to hear your name**, so learn the names of our guests, too.
- **Labeling people created invisible barriers.** Remember that guests are guests, not "the homeless." Labeling – whether spoken or printed on a posted sign – creates divisions and can foster an "us" and "them" syndrome.
- **Personal questions can be tough to answer**, so don't put guests in awkward positions by asking personal questions. If guests need to talk, give them the chance, but don't pry.
- **We all like to keep some things to ourselves.** All information about guests is confidential. Don't discuss guests' situations with other people.
- **Everyone can use a little privacy.** Our churches and synagogues become temporary homes for our guests. Knock before entering a guest's room.
- **Sometimes we need to spend time alone.** Respect guests' needs for quiet times alone or with family.
- **We all have bad days.** Depression, sadness and hopelessness may come. Allow guests the space to deal with their emotions. Be prepared to forgive outbreaks, without judging guests ungrateful.
- **We understand and care for our children.** Allow guests to do the same. Avoid contradicting guests' instructions to their children. Always ask parents' permission before giving things to children.
- **Parents need a break.** Offer to tutor, play with and plan activities for interested children while parents take a break.
- **Adults guests should be treated like adults.** Although our guests are in situations that may make them temporarily dependent on others, remember that they are adults who are capable of making their own decisions.