General DOs and Do NOTs

- Get to know your audience before the visit. Read about their faith and traditions. Watch their church sermons on Sunday morning TV, or even visit their church in preparation for your presentation. If you have a question, ask members that you know (friends, work, the person who invited you…)

- Prepare your presentation way ahead of schedule. Have a trusted experienced scholar check it for you. Rehearse your presentation with the help of friends who would critique you and your presentation.

- Select a qualified person to accompany you. One who would observe you and the audience and be able to give you a critical analytical assessment of the presentation and how it was received.

- Make sure to leave amble time for questions and answers. If you have one hour, use 20-30 minutes for presentation. You will be amazed by the number and diverse nature of questions that you will need to address.

- Listen to the questions carefully and make sure you understand them before you start your answer. Don't elaborate too much in your answers and don't follow our tradition of "I have to convince you". Simply give your answer and move on.

- State clearly you are only a student of your religion. You are not an authority or a scholar. You are only conveying your modest understanding of your religion.

- State clearly that the references of Islam are the Quran and the Sunnah (Hadith) and you encourage those who would like to seek knowledge from their genuine sources to read them and study them. These references are in Arabic; however, English translations of the meaning are available. Remember these translations are done by humans, so it may help to check several translations to ensure that you get the picture from different angles, some of which may not be accurate. Give few examples of "ok" translations.

- State clearly you are here for the sole purpose of knowledge dissemination. You are not here to convert anyone and that you believe that conversion happens internally with Allah's Will.

- You will use "Allah" to refer to God, the Creator, and the God of Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammad. Christian and Jews have distorted the image and attributes of God and to state that we worship the "same" God is inaccurate.

- Understanding each other's views and beliefs can only enhance the chances for world peace. To the contrary, misunderstanding and stereotyping generates fanatism and hate.

- Do NOT compare beliefs or traditions across religions or engage in debates. Do not quote the Bible or use it to make a point or use it as a reference. We are not scholarly versed in their books and they can bring about counter arguments that would defeat your purpose. You are there to tell your story the way you believe in it, PERIOD.

- Do not be apologetic or defensive. Just state your beliefs with confidence and pride (not arrogance).
- Stick to the beliefs and high level issues of values, ethics, etc. Don't get hung up on rituals and details that eat up your valuable and limited time of your presentation.
- Avoid the use of "terminology" that are not acknowledged by Islam. Define any "terminology" you use. I would discourage the use of the terms "democracy", "human rights", "personal freedom", "women rights", and the likes. Some of these to them imply the rights to free expression (including insulting the Prophets), sexual freedom (including homosexuality), etc. Check the American dictionaries definitions and the religious and cultural implications of any "terminology" you try to use in the American culture.
- Avoid the use of scientific and numerical evidence and proofs.
- Do NOT answer questions that you are not 100% certain of "how to answer effectively". Give a reference and encourage people to read them.
- If you don't think you can abide by these guidelines, then: **Don't do it.** Pass it on to others who have the experience and attend to gain needed experience.

SPECIFIC POINTS TO MAKE FOR the "Christian-Muslim relations in America" event

- Start with the Quranic verse *"O mankind, We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily, the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you (with most piety). And, Allah has full knowledge and is well-acquainted (with all things)*." (From the translation of the meanings of the Qur'an 49:13)
- We are all the children of Adam and Eve
- We all share the same ship which we must sail in harmony.
- ttp://islamicity.com/mosque/arabicscript/Ayat/60/60_8.gif Use Quranic verses like: Al-Mumtahinah [60:8] *Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loveth those who are just.*
- We believe in all the prophets and messengers Allah sent to humanity to provide guidance and teach people how to coexist and live in peace.
- Prophet Mohammad complemented the messages of Moses and Jesus and talked about them with deep appreciation and great respect

- The Islamic faith acknowledges and complements the concepts and values preached and promoted by Allah's previous prophets: Moses commandments and Jesus emphasis on "love". The Islamic faith puts it all within a BALANCED, comprehensive and holistic way of life. The balance in Allah's attributes is emphasized to demonstrate to us humans how it all fits together: the Balance between His Magnificent Powers and Might, on one hand, and His Compassion, Mercy, Love, and Forgiveness on the other. He is Just. He is All-Knowing. He does it all in balance and in wisdom; a balance beyond our understanding anda wisdom beyond our comprehension. He is the only one to be praised whether one is in health or in sickness, in richness or in poverty, in times of ease or in times of hardship.

- Dissatisfaction with the American foreign policy should not be viewed as hate to the American people or resentment to Christianity.

- Fighting the oppression of Israel and the racism of Zionism should not be viewed as hate to the Jewish people or resentment to Judaism.

- At times, we need to "love your enemy" and other times, you must fight oppression. We do not hate people; we hate their wrong actions.

- We are commanded to resist oppressors even if they are Muslims:

- عن أنس رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم :انصر أخاك ظالماً أو مظلوماً، فقال: رجل يا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أنصره إذ كان مظلوماً، أفرأيت إذا كان ظالماً كيف أنصره؟! قال: تحجزه أو تمنعه من الظلم، فإن ذلك نصره.

- History tells us how much Christians and Jews living in Muslim lands enjoyed peace and prosperity… Many contributed heavily to science, art, and knowledge, which can never be the case for unprivileged people in society. *It is worthy to mention how Jews escaped to Morocco from Andalusia when it fell, and lived peacefully there*

- State clearly that it is a serious misrepresentation of Islam to judge it through the actions of some "followers". We can't judge Christianity by the actions of the KKK for example.

- In today's convolution of world politics and power manipulation, many facts are hidden and unknown. News, images, and perceptions are manipulated to portray preferred political positions rather than the bare truth and honest facts.