OMF International

Preparing for Short-Term Mission & Re-Entry

Name: _____

Date: _____

EP 1: Your Role in the Story of God's Glory

Old Testament Activity

Write three examples from the Old Testament of how God blessed the nations through Abraham's descendants. Hint: look for Scriptures that speak of God's honor across the nations, or where God uses the Israelites to save other people.

New Testament Activity

Write three examples from the New Testament of how God blessed the nations through Jesus.

How do you see your cross-cultural trip in blessing the nations?

6 Ways Activity

Six Ways to Join God's Work in the World

1. Pray for people to know God
2. Send and support cross-cultural workers
3. Welcome immigrants into your home
4. Go to the nations as a cross-cultural worker
5. Mobilize others to go, send, pray, and welcome
6. Learn about God's Word and God's world

As you think about each of these 6 categories of involvement in God's story, write a specific way you could practice each one throughout preparing, going or returning from your short-term trip.

1. Pray

2. Send

3. Welcome

4. Go

5. Mobilize

6. Learn

EP 2: Understanding Yourself and Your Teammates

Understanding Yourself Activity

How would you describe yourself to your teammates?

What are some of your passions and motivations?
Think about your unique personality: Do you prefer organization or a bit of messiness? Are you more task- or people-oriented? Does the project need to be done quickly or done well?

What does it look like when you feel stressed or under pressure?

What might you need from others during a stressful time?

How do you resolve conflicts?
Tip: If your teammates come from different cultures, it may be helpful to ask how their parents would try to mend a broken relationship. Some cultures talk straight to each other with words like "I'm sorry" and "I forgive you" while others use a mediator and demonstrate repentance and forgiveness in other ways (Let's have a party!)

Understanding Your Teammates Activity

What is the best way to describe your teammates?

What motivates your teammates?

What do your teammates need when they feel stressed?

How do your teammates resolve conflicts?

For Personal Reflection

What attributes of your teammates excite you?

What attributes of your teammates make you nervous?

What will be your strengths on this team?

What will be your weaknesses?

In what ways can you and your teammates complement each other's strengths

Take time to pray for unity and understanding with your host, team members, etc.

EP 3: Expectations and Flexibility

Expectations Activity

What are some specific things you would like God to teach you during this trip? How would you like to be different when you return?

What are your personal goals for this trip? How do you hope to achieve these goals? Are they in line with God's desires for you?

How are you planning to integrate this experience into your life when you return? How will it benefit your church or fellowship, your friends, your school or work and your family?

List your expectations regarding the following categories. What do you think these things will look like?

- How well you will adjust to a different culture
- Living/housing environment
- Religion/spirituality in the host culture
- People you will live and work with
- The hosts' expectations of you
- Work/rest rhythm

- Your relationship with God
- How God will use you
- Spiritual Warfare
- Other expectations

Flexibility Activity

Read the following passages and answer the reflection questions.

Mark 1:16-18 (Calling of Simon and Andrew to be fishers of men)

- What did Simon and Andrew give up to follow Jesus?
- What did their actions reflect about who Jesus is?
- What can you learn about flexibility from this passage?

Luke 10:38-42 (Mary and Martha)

- How would you characterize Martha's attitude?
- What are Martha's assumptions about being with Jesus? What are Martha's assumptions about pleasing Jesus?
- What does Jesus' answer reveal about what is important?
- How can Martha adjust to align her attitude with Jesus' response?
- What can you learn about flexibility from this passage?

Philippians 2:1-11 (Jesus)

- How did Jesus exhibit the attitude of a humble servant? How do humility and flexibility relate?

- How does having a flexible attitude honor God?

- What can you learn about flexibility from this passage?

EP 4: Crossing Cultures

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

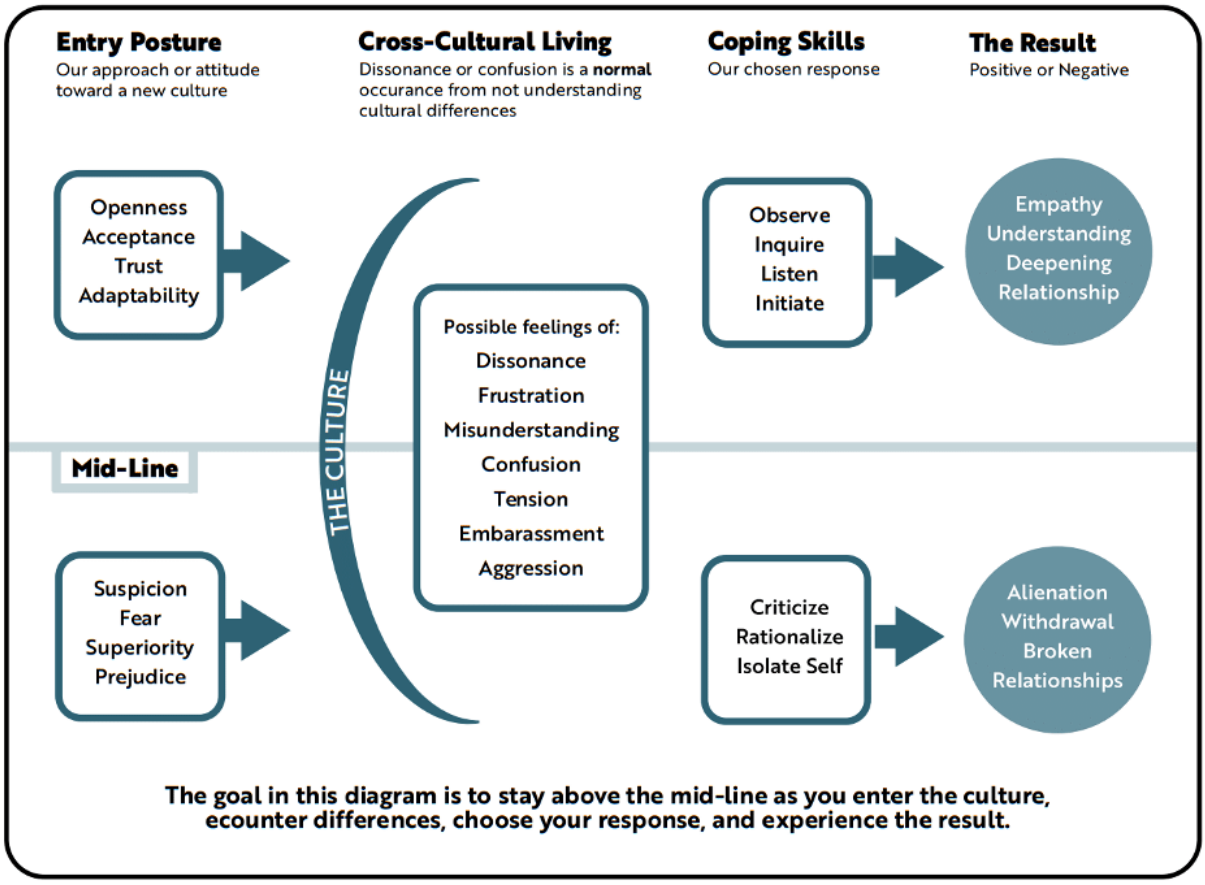
- Why does Paul cross cultures? What are his motivations?

- What does the host culture gain when you adapt to their way of life?

- What does God gain from Christians crossing cultures?

- What are you hoping to gain from crossing cultures?

Entry Posture Activity



- Where are you on the Entry Posture diagram as you prepare for your trip?

- What might you need to change or surrender in order to respond well to the inevitable cross-cultural stress?

Learning and Action

"If our impression of another culture is that it 'makes no sense' then we can be sure that we are not making sense to them either. The solution is to become a learner."
~ Dr. Paul Hieber

- What are some ways you can maintain the posture of a learner?

- Who can help you learn and reflect in the new culture?

For Further Study

- Cultural Intelligence by David Livermore
- Ministering Cross-Culturally by Sherwood Lingenfelter
- Cross Cultural Connections by Duane Elme

EP 5: Spiritual Warfare

What comes to mind when you read the words: “Spiritual Warfare”?

Take some time to read and pray through **Ephesians 6:10-20.**

- Whose armor does Paul instruct believers to “put on”?

- How do these pieces of armor help you to “stand against the devil’s schemes”?

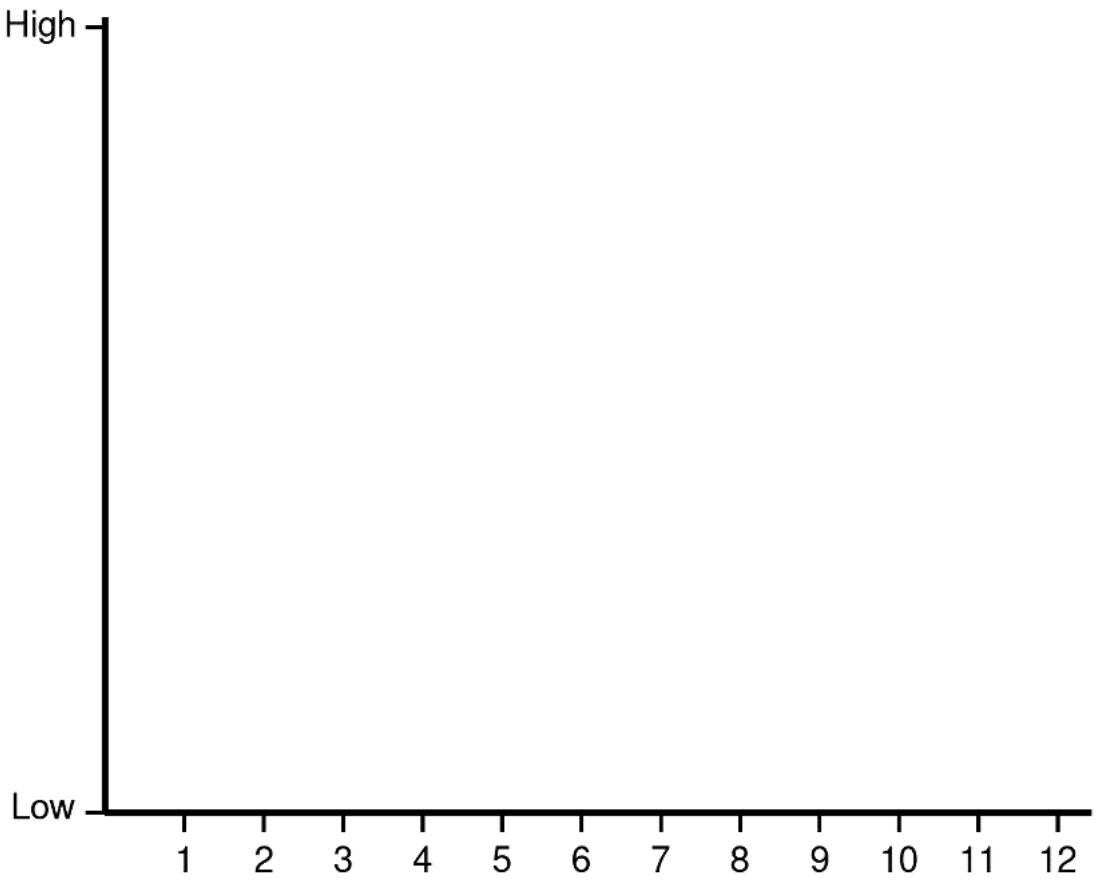
Revelation 5:5 says, “The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed.”

- How does this reality affect our posture in the spiritual battle?

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.” (**Ephesians 6:18**)

- How does prayer relate to the spiritual battle?

EP 6: What You Learned



Take five minutes to brainstorm about the most significant experiences of your trip. Try to write down at least 8-10 things. *You might include the following: meaningful conversations, something you saw, a relationship you built, a letter or e-mail you received from home, a difficult situation or conflict, a challenging or adventurous task you were given, etc.*

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Now go back through your list and answer these questions.

- What did God reveal to you about himself in these experiences?

- How did they challenge or affirm you personally?

- How did they change the way you perceive and relate to the world, your host country or a specific people group?

As you look over the major themes that God taught you throughout your trip, take time to thank him for revealing himself to you, for growing you and for changing you. Talk to God and ask him to show you how these themes relate to each other.

How is your deeper understanding of God's character creating in you a passion to be strategically involved in his love story with the world? Is God affirming to you that he wants you to invest yourself in a specific type of ministry or in a specific part of the world? Take a few minutes to write down what he is speaking to you.

EP 7: Met vs. Unmet Expectations

Review the list of expectations you wrote before your trip.

- Which ones were met in the way you thought they would be?

- Which ones were met, but in a completely different way than you anticipated?

- Which ones have been unmet, but you now realize they were unrealistic or unnecessary? Were there some expectations you were pleasantly surprised to have been unmet?

- Which of your unmet expectations have left you disappointed? Was there something within your control you could have done differently? If your unmet expectations were due to circumstances outside your control, have you talked to your team leader or staff about them? How are you dealing with your disappointment in relation to God's sovereignty?

- Do you have any unresolved conflict with yourself? With a teammate or leader? With God? What steps do you need to take to work through it?

EP 8: Re-Entry

Look once again at the Entry Posture Diagram.

- What is your posture toward re-entering your home culture?

- What kinds of dissonance (tensions, frustrations) do you expect when you return?

There are three basic reactions or ways of handling this transition time. You may experience a little of each in the process:

1. **The Assimilators** seem to slide right back into the home culture with little to no problem and appear almost to have forgotten their short-term experience. They may seem to have adjusted well, but they may have missed the greatest growth opportunity because they do not seem to be able to integrate the things they saw, learned and questioned into a new view of life and the world.
2. **The Alienators** seem to reject the home culture, although only for a short time. They may be very pessimistic and critical of the home culture, not realizing that they, too, were a part of it. They seem limited in their ability to see the range of social structures and their appropriateness for creating personal alternatives for life values. They may finally succumb to the home culture out of a need to belong somewhere. Again, this reaction does not eventually afford a re-entry characterized by growth.
3. **The lntegrator** is the one who expects the dissonance he or she experiences, although maybe not in each form it appears. They are able to identify the changes they have undergone, or are still experiencing, and do not demand immediate closure of them. They want to see their short-term experience have a lasting impact on their life and the lives of others. This means that they will grapple with how to integrate the things they saw, learned and questioned into creative alternative choices.

- Which reaction most describes you right now?

- What steps do you want to take to become an integrator?

When you step off the plane at home, whom will your family and friends meet? What changes have you undergone? How have you stayed the same? (Consider any shifts in habits, language, ambitions, preferences, values, priorities, etc.)

Physical / Material	
How have you changed?	**How are you the same?**
Relationships	
How have you changed?	**How are you the same?**
Emotions	
How have you changed?	**How are you the same?**
Global Perspective	
How have you changed?	**How are you the same?**
Spiritual	
How have you changed?	**How are you the same?**
Other	
How have you changed?	**How are you the same?**

- How do you anticipate that others will respond to the changes in you?

- What difficulties do you anticipate you may go through as you return?

- What are you most looking forward to at home?

- Who can support you as you go through re-entry adjustment?

EP 9: Sharing Your Story

The most common question short-termers hear upon return is, “How was your trip?” Some people ask this question as a formality of greeting, while others really want to know. Anticipating that people have different levels of interest can help you make friends with that question rather than despise it. One way to prepare for varying degrees of interest is to have answers of varying lengths that can be used appropriately as the question, “How was your trip?” is posed.

Think not only about how to tell your story, but also God’s story. How did God work? What did he do in/through/around you?

The Sound-bite Approach: Write a 15-second response. Focus on one story or theme. Saying something unexpected or countercultural might spark interest to hear more.

The Commercial Approach: Write a one-minute response. Invite them to a longer conversation or event to hear more. Refer to your experiences from the “What You Learned” activity.

The Interested Conversation Approach: Write a five-minute response. Of course, this response needs to anticipate the fact that in normal conversation there is dialogue.

The Invited Approach: Write an outline for a 20-minute talk and photo presentation that may be solicited from either your campus group or home church. Use lots of brief stories, principles God taught you and what you saw God doing where you were. Avoid stereotyping the people and culture in which you stayed.

EP 10: Your Role in God's Story

Your Role in God's Story Activity

Review the section **Your Role in the Story of God's Glory** to see what you wrote about the six ways to be involved in God's world (pray, send, welcome, go, mobilize, learn).

- Are there any different ways you might consider being involved in God's global work after your trip?

- What specific areas will you commit to praying about being more involved?

- What are some specific goals you would like to set?
  The next section, Integration Strategy, may help you break down goals into steps you can take over a longer period of time.

- Write a letter to yourself about the commitments you are making. Ask a trusted friend to mail it back to you in six months.

Integration Strategy Activity

How do you put your goals into action? What plans can you make for being proactive in your transition back home? Consider time for rest, seeing family and friends, reading, journal keeping, school and work commitments, etc.

- The first three days I am home I want to make sure that I …
  e.g., Check mail, laundry, sleep, see family, etc.

- The first full week I am home I want to make sure that I…
  e.g., Send a thank-you note to leader and field host, share my story with close friends, pay bills, etc.

- The first month that I am home I want to make sure that I…
  e.g., Send thank-you letter to support team, share my story with small group or church, talk to pastor about my trip, etc.

- The first three months I am home I want to make sure that I…
  e.g., Review areas of involvement from Your Role in God's Story and pick things to do, send a care package to field host, begin learning a foreign language, etc.

- Over the next year I hope to make changes and commitments in my life in the following areas:
  e.g., Give more sacrificially to Kingdom work, look into long-term opportunities, join my church's global ministry team or help start one, etc.

- Go over these commitments with someone who will pray for you and hold you accountable — team leader, pastor, etc. Write their name(s) here: