



Growing Up Among Worlds

30 Days of Prayer
for Third Culture Kids



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Introduction

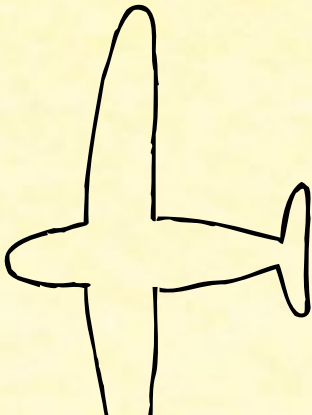
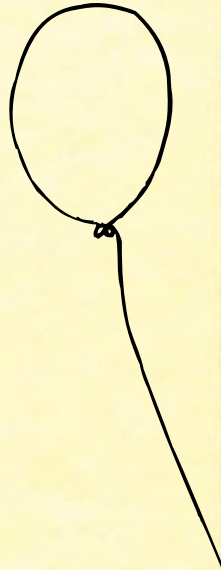
Global Nomads, Multi Cultural Kids, Third Culture Kids . . . they are the children of diplomats, missionaries, military personnel, business people, refugees, or economic migrants. These kids share the common bond of growing up in cultures that are different from their own and these experiences inadvertently affect them as they grow.

This guide will help you glimpse some of the joys and challenges that Third Culture Kids (TCKs) experience as they grow up cross-culturally while their parents play their part in sharing the gospel. It will empower you to pray for them in return.

The stories are based on the real experiences of TCKs although their names have been changed to protect their identities. You may want to use the experiences that you read about to pray specifically for TCKs and families that you know.

TCKs are valued members of the mission family. They are also vulnerable. Above all, each TCK is an individual who is created by God in his own image and who needs our prayers. Thank you for joining us in prayer for Third Culture Kids.

The OMF TCK Care team



Day 1: Who are Third Culture Kids?

Lukas is German but he has spent most of his life in the Philippines attending an international school and taking German language lessons each afternoon. Since his parents work with Chinese students, he is used to spending time with Chinese speakers at church, with local Tagalog (Filipino) speaking children in the community, and with English speakers of many nationalities at school.



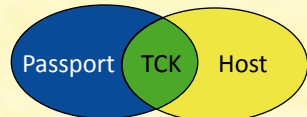
Sam was born in Zimbabwe. He grew up in Mozambique then Cambodia, and now lives in Singapore. He and his sister are the only Caucasians in their church youth group of over one hundred teenagers. Sam's education has included home-schooling, local state schools, Christian school, and international schools.



You have
searched me,
LORD, and
you know
me.

Psalms 139:1

Like most Third Culture Kids, Lukas and Sam share the experience of functioning in many cultures and languages. TCKs spend a significant part of their childhood away from their parents' passport culture, incorporating elements from several overlapping and sometimes conflicting cultures into their identity as they grow up. Their sense of relationship is often to this 'Third Culture,' the experience shared by others who have a similar background.



The impact of growing up as a TCK is usually life-long, profoundly affecting the way the individual perceives themselves and the world around them.

- *Praise God for parents who are willing to raise their children cross-culturally.*
- *Pray that TCKs will use both the benefits and challenges of their upbringing in ways that please Him and with a sense of identity and self-worth derived from a relationship with the Father.*
- *Pray that those responsible for helping TCKs will always guide the children to be who God intends them to be.*



Day 2: Starting Out

Introducing Naomi, a darling baby girl, daughter, granddaughter, and niece! Both of her parents have served on short term mission teams and have observed a number of missionary families. They are very aware of the implications of taking Naomi away from the support of their loving extended family and friends, but they are open to serving God overseas.

Young as Naomi is, her parents have thought about her schooling and hope to use a national school supplemented by homeschool. Their TCK Advisor explains that schooling options have a lasting impact on who the children become, and each option has its benefits and challenges. The choice of schooling requires as much prayer and wisdom as other ministry-related decisions. Different schooling options may be appropriate for different periods of ministry and seasons of life, or for different children in one family. Remaining open to re-evaluating options and never saying “Never!” is the challenge that Naomi’s parents face.

The TCK Advisor in their host country will help them work out a long-term education plan, factoring in home assignments and other transitions. This will help Naomi’s family make wise decisions, and help the TCK care team provide the support they need over the coming years.

Pray for:

- *Wisdom and sensitivity for the TCK Advisors who assist families before they leave their homeland.*
- *Families moving overseas for the first time, and for the host country TCK Advisors taking care of them.*
- *Wisdom for families creating educational plans and looking ahead to the long-term future of their children.*



For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother’s
womb.

Psalm 139:13



Day 3: Preparing Children for "The Big Move"



Orientation Course is a month long program for new missionaries, away from their sending country. As a part of this course, KidZone is geared to help prepare their kids to adjust to the different cultures that they will encounter.



"I loved helping with the school age children's group at KidZone. There was lots of active learning. It was great to see kids from different nationalities as they learnt to get along. Listening to the parents' testimonies was a highlight. The families are now settling in to their new countries. I am planning to get the Smiths' prayer letter now they are in Mongolia."

KidZone short-term worker



"We knew Jakob was in safe hands. During KidZone, he started to build little sentences in Swiss German and seems to understand a bit of English, too. KidZone gave him a lot of stability and comfort and he learned that Mama and Papa are always coming back after 'their work,' that is, orientation lectures. It was good for me as a mother to learn to let our baby go for a while, too. I feel much more ready for language study now."

Mother of two KidZone children



And whoever welcomes
one such child
in my name
welcomes me.

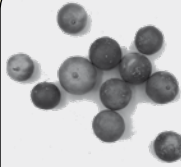
Matthew 18:5

Pray for:

- *A steadfast spirit for the short term workers and volunteers, that they may provide a loving, secure atmosphere for the children.*
- *Cultural sensitivity and creativity for those who plan orientation programs to help children make positive transitions to new countries.*
- *Children and teens moving overseas for the first time. Pray that they will be open to new relationships and the plans God has for them.*

Day 4: Where is Home?

"So where is home for you, Sam?" The eleven year old boy paused for just a moment, enjoying the bright rays of the morning sunshine as they reflected on the foaming waves in the path of the ferry making its way across the bay.



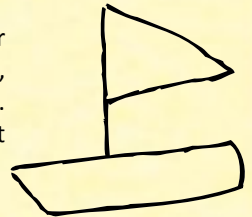
Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
If I make my bed in the depths,
you are there.

Psalms 139:7-8

While eavesdropping on this conversation between grandfather and grandson, Sam's mother couldn't help smiling to herself. Born in Zimbabwe, then living in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, the UK, and now Cambodia (with holidays in Australia thrown in), how would her son answer that question?

Sam's reply? "Heaven, Grandpa."

It would be true to say that most TCKs struggle to give an answer to where home is! No one place really feels like home, sometimes least of all the passport country of Mom or Dad. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that heaven is at the top of the list for many TCKs.



Pray for TCKs to experience:

- *Security in the love of their parents for them.*
- *The assurance of God's presence with them wherever they are and whatever they are going through.*
- *Comfort in the certainty that there will be no more goodbyes in heaven!*



Day 5: Stability in the Midst of Change

One missionary couple was asked, "How have you helped your children manage multiple moves?" Here is their reply:

- ✓ "Keeping family life centered on the Lord, starting with breakfast, a daily Bible reading and prayers together and finishing with a shared evening meal followed by prayers together before bed.
- ✓ Moving with a sense of God's purpose – helping the children understand why each move is happening and see themselves as integral to the mission of our family. Children are not "baggage," but pilgrims on a journey with their parents. We pray for them, as they do for us.
- ✓ Keeping some family traditions going, wherever we are in the world! Friday night is family night – time for a movie and supper in front of the TV. Some things never change!
- ✓ Not being afraid to talk through the confusion, grief and anger as well as excitement and novelty of growing up cross-culturally.

Thankfully, through the grace of God, our children have flourished 'on the far side of the sea, as His right hand holds them fast.'"



... if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

Psalms 139:9–10



Pray for:

- *Missionary parents as they work at maintaining a sense of stability for their children.*



- *Spiritual openness in TCKs, that they will be able to talk with their parents and with God about the ups and downs of their life.*
- *A TCK that you know. Pray today that he or she will feel held safe and secure in God's hands.*



Day 6: To the Ends of the Earth

"It took three days of driving on bumpy roads over high mountain passes to reach the places God has put on our hearts. We spent four nights sleeping in a tent and I wondered how 14-month-old Sara would cope. Thankfully, she was the one who slept best, even when all our bedding was soaked by heavy rainfall!

We visited a dear friend who has tuberculosis, and his uncle with leprosy. Their simple home was filthy, and everyone wanted to hold and kiss Sara. Thoughts about what illness and grime I was exposing my daughter to crossed my mind, but, as I witnessed the joy and love she was giving these needy people, I was reminded of who my daughter belongs to first. Praise God that she was completely healthy throughout our travels!



As I think about living here, I must bring all my fears and concerns about the health and safety of my children to the feet of Jesus. God did such a good job of looking after me as a young TCK, I know without a doubt that I can trust Him with my own kids even with the challenges of life in the mountains."

Missionary mother who is also an adult TCK

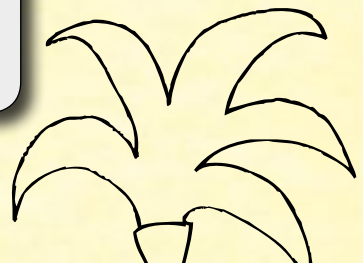
Pray for:

- *TCKs who are learning to show love and care to others.*
- *God's wisdom in assessing the risks involved in ministry locations for families.*
- *God's peace to garrison the hearts of parents and TCKs.*



I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,
that my salvation may reach to the ends of
the earth.

Isaiah 49:6b



Day 7: Bilingual or Multilingual?

"My parents tried to give me Chinese reading and writing lessons but, like many Chinese kids living outside their passport country, I tried everything to avoid these. That naturally led to my substandard Cantonese reading and writing skills, which I regret to this day. I am very grateful for my parents' decision to keep speaking Cantonese in the family even though we used English in our international schools. When I met up with relatives, they would joke about how weird my Cantonese sounded. Some just didn't understand why I didn't even have this basic Chinese education, expecting me to read, write, and speak fluently."

Young adult TCK from Asian country



Some families have difficult choices to make. It is essential for children to keep speaking their heritage language (mother tongue) - sometimes more than one - for their own identity. To make friends in the community, they may need the host language. English is the language of many international schools. How many languages (and which ones) is it reasonable to expect children to learn? How can parents maintain their heritage language with no other speakers around? Planning and perseverance on the part of parents and long-term effort on the part of TCKs are needed.

Pray for:

- *TCKs, that they will have motivation and skill in learning the language and culture of the host country.*
- *Families who are investing time and energy in keeping up children's heritage languages.*
- *TCKs, that they will forge strong friendships in their host country and passport country.*

Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely.

Psalm 139:4



Day 8: Medical Evacuation

"Mum was so sick, she had to go into hospital. Dad went with Mum. When Dad was not at the hospital, some 'aunties' (other missionaries) stayed with Mum because, when sick people go to hospital here, the family needs to send someone to nurse the person.

The doctors said that Mum had to go to a different country to get better. There were nurses in that hospital to look after patients so Dad did not need to stay with Mum. We went to the other country, too. Dad was very tired so one of the 'aunties' looked after us.

Then Dad became very sick and had to go into hospital. Our grandparents flew to join us. Both of my brothers became sick. I was scared that I would become sick, too.

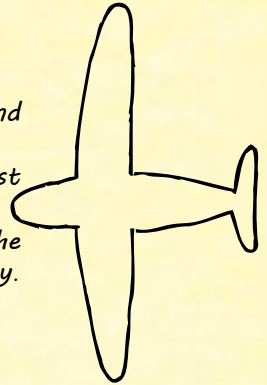
I was glad when Mum and Dad came out of hospital. We could not go back to the country where we live because Mum and Dad had to rest a lot before they could work again. Mum and Dad slept a lot. My brothers got better quickly and then we had some treats like going to the zoo. I didn't like it when Mum and Dad were sick but I am glad they got better in the bigger hospital."



A young TCK

Pray for:

- *Parents, that they will trust in God's protection and share this trust with their children.*
- *Wisdom for parents as they take precautions against illness and dangers.*
- *Medical personnel who need to make decisions about the treatment of TCKs locally, in country, or out of country.*



But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.

Psalms 5:11

Day 9: Unwelcome Visitors

"Burglars took the opportunity on Sunday morning while we were at church to break into the house. Some cash was taken (including funds for our ministry) and our son Joshua's precious coin collection. We are thankful they did not take the computer or other electronics, or our travel documents.

Initially, the children seemed to be taking things in their stride, but this morning their Mom noticed they are quite unsettled, and unable to concentrate. We had to sit with Joshua and Esther to talk things over and pray with them. Pray that Joshua will be able to forgive these burglars for taking his things. Esther feels uncomfortable that our home has been intruded upon, and feels bad about the loss of the ministry money – but is thankful that it was not an 'in-your-face' armed robbery and that everyone is safe."

Missionary father's letter to prayer partners



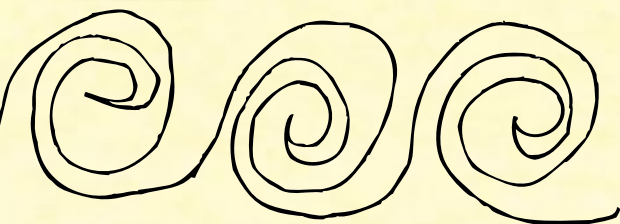
Keep me safe,
my God, for
in you I take
refuge.

Psalms 16:1

Frightening or traumatic experiences are not unique to TCKs. However, some TCKs live with the likelihood of burglary, threats to personal safety, the possibility of widespread unrest and war, or the risk of periodic natural disasters in a way that peers in their passport countries may not encounter. Being in a cross-cultural situation may make them feel even more vulnerable.

Pray for:

- *TCKs whose precious items have been stolen or damaged, a loss that can come very hard on top of many other goodbyes.*
- *Parents of TCKs, that they will support their children and re-establish normal routines after trouble strikes.*
- *The availability of professionals to support families in times of crisis.*



Day 10: Celebrations Away from Home

"I was so disappointed I would have to spend Chinese New Year alone in South Africa. Amazingly, I got my first 紅包 *hongbao* (red packet with monetary gift) before I came, I woke up to my roomies shouting "Happy Chinese New Year," someone from home prepared barbeque pork, and a teammate from HK brought mooncakes which we shared with the group. I was allocated to a room with a Swiss-Malaysian girl who understood Cantonese. By the end of the day, most of my group knew how to say 新年快樂 *xin nian kuai le* (Happy New Year). My family continued to show me their love by phone. This might just have turned out to be one of my best Chinese New Years!"

Young adult TCK on a short-term mission experience trip

A birthday spent at a boarding school. Christmas or Thanksgiving spent away from grandparents for the first time. Being unable to attend a family wedding at home. These can be difficult times for TCKs and their families and homesickness can hit hard when loved ones miss being together the most.

Pray for:

- *TCKs on birthdays, at Christmas, and on special holidays, that God will bring comfort for those missing family and friends, and provide special ways to celebrate.*
- *Spiritual discernment and sensitivity for TCKs and their families as they get involved in the celebrations of their host culture.*
- *Families to find creative ways to connect across the miles.*



They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

Psalm 145:7



Day 11: Grief and Loss

"Paul was an outstanding Christian young man. He was a strong student and a keen sportsman. It was my privilege to coach him on the school soccer team. He was a real team player.



One Tuesday, Paul and other students and staff were playing basketball in the school gym. During a break, Paul began to experience dizziness. Moments later, he collapsed onto the gym floor, his breathing and pulse stopping. Both staff and students acted quickly to administer CPR and get him to hospital. Unfortunately, Paul did not regain consciousness and died in hospital an hour later.

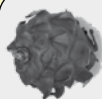
Difficult times belong not only to individuals, but also to groups, communities, and nations, arousing fear and insecurity. This tragic event had a deep impact on students and staff alike, with many questions raised about death and bereavement in the hours and days following Paul's death."

A teacher at Paul's school

The death of a loved one is a traumatic experience for anyone and is not unique to TCKs. However, the experience can be more devastating for those who are far from their family and friends. Sometimes, good local medical facilities may be lacking. This may lead parents or those close to the one who died to take on an unjustified sense of responsibility.

Pray for:

- *Strength for TCKs during times when loved ones are dying.*
- *Counselors, caring adults, and peers to be alongside TCKs in times of heartbreak when death strikes unexpectedly.*



God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble.

Psalm 46:1

Day 12: Kids with Attitude

“‘Thank you!’ I hear those magical words as many as three dozen times a day. Who is saying, ‘Thank you’ with such enthusiasm and regularity? Keep your seats...you might be surprised! Middle school students. These much maligned 11 to 14 year olds that everybody seems afraid to teach.

Are they thanking me for some special treat? No, they routinely say ‘Thank you’ as they leave my classroom, just thanking me for teaching them about Newton’s first law of motion, or for looking at a live fish’s tail through the microscope to see the blood cells moving through the tiny arteries.

The great middle school students at this international Christian school have made this year one of my most satisfying and joyous since I began teaching. They come from five different continents, and in all shapes and sizes and colors. Some are ‘missionary kids’ whilst some are kids of multinational company executives, or with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Not all are believers, but all come with a terrific attitude. Yes, they are middle school students with an attitude...the right kind of attitude.”

A middle school teacher



Pray for:

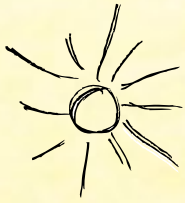
- *God to provide Christian personnel who are willing to invest in the lives of TCKs, at international schools.*
- *TCKs, teachers, and staff to create God-honoring school communities.*



In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:5





Day 13: Christian International Schooling

"One of the greatest joys in working in a Christian School is the opportunity to openly teach Biblical truth and incorporate prayer into daily activity. Let me take you to a typical classroom in my school.

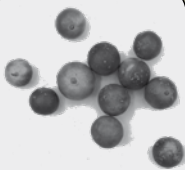


It is 7.30 a.m. and the children have just walked in. The teacher asks if anybody would like to begin the day in prayer and at least 5 or 6 hands immediately shoot into the air offering to pray. Older children often take turns in preparing and leading a short devotional talk. More extended prayer times with these older children will cover diverse requests, many concerning their parents' ministry.

Bible teaching forms an important part of the curriculum. My students certainly keep me on my toes in this, with questions ranging from the theories and theology of how Jesus will come again, to what is a miracle, and have you ever seen one?

Through such discussions and class prayer times, you quickly appreciate the unique spiritual upbringing missionary children have. They may have accompanied their parents on evangelistic trips, given their testimony in front of hundreds, and witnessed miracles. Many have seen God working and speaking in powerful ways in response to their prayers."

Missionary teacher in a Christian international school



I have hidden
your word in
my heart that
I might not sin
against you.

Psalms 119:11

Pray for:

- *TCKs being educated in Christian schools, that they will make the faith of their parents and teachers their own.*
- *Teachers skilled in developing and delivering curriculum for international settings.*
- *Administrators, nurses, librarians, facility managers, board members, and others, that they will be called to serve in Christian schools for TCKs.*

Day 14: National Schooling

James and Joanna enjoy living cross-culturally and they have settled well in their new home area. They started picking up Thai at kindergarten when they arrived, with structured lessons in large formal classes. They quickly picked up the language, which will be an asset to them for years to come. Their closest friends are their Thai classmates.

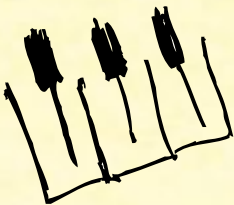
They know they are different from them, but this is not a problem. One difference is that James and Joanna have to tackle home school materials during the afternoon to prepare for school in their passport country. This can be a struggle, but their mother perseveres since she believes it is very important.



For James and Joanna, their future schooling is uncertain. The local school is a fantastic doorway into a new culture and language but it also brings teaching styles, values, and expectations that are at odds with family values. Growing language requirements and homework loads as they progress will make it difficult to go beyond primary school in the national system. However, for now, mastering Thai characters and learning the piano are enough.

Pray for:

- *Discernment for TCKs attending national schools where the values may be in conflict with their biblical and family values.*
- *Perseverance for TCKs who need extra schooling to prepare for their passport country education system.*
- *Parents building relationships with staff in the national school.*



Trust in the Lord
with all your
heart and lean
not on your own
understanding.

Proverbs 3:5

Day 15: Home Schooling



"It was all quiet in the guest home lounge and I looked forward to discussing Mark and Peter's educational progress with their mom. She was enjoying the demands of home schooling two very different sons but was looking for a sounding board for her curriculum ideas for the new school year.



Elsewhere in the building, her older son was enjoying a practical science activity with seven 'classmates' and her younger one was enjoying some musical fun with his small class of 5 to 7 year-olds.

Science, music, art, games, worship together, outings, and choosing clubs are just some of the cooperative activities offered at a 'home school week.' TCKs have a precious time of learning together to supplement individual studies covered at home. Parents, too, enjoy

gathering resources, sharing ideas, and having a little time to themselves away from the daily pressure of being both teacher and parent. Teachers who can come for as little as two weeks bring their creative skills to encourage teamwork. Teachers, parents, and children all take something new away."

Home school week Coordinator

Pray for:

- *More teachers to be willing to use their skills to help TCKs broaden their learning experiences.*
- *Home school weeks to be a time of equipping and encouragement for TCKs and their parents.*
- *Friendships forged during home school weeks, that they would enable TCKs to develop a sense of belonging to a wider community and to the Lord.*

Your laws endure to this day, for all things serve you.

Psalms 119:91



Day 16: Home School Consultants

"It was a busy morning. Over 60 TCKs had been sitting standardized tests in various hotel function rooms so their parents would have an indication of how well their children were progressing educationally in comparison to peers in their passport culture. A full program of workshops lay ahead to encourage and equip those parents whose ministry included home schooling their own children.

A parent stopped me in the hotel lobby, 'Thank you for your advice at last year's conference about my son's reading. We went ahead with what you suggested and it has made such a difference.' In the few opportunities for cross-cultural workers to come together to be encouraged as they teach their own children, there are many families looking for listening ears and educational input. I confess that I didn't even remember the ideas that I had given, but, whatever it was, it had made a difference."

*Educational consultant at an annual
Family Education conference*



Pray for:

- *Those who work as educational advisors, that they would be discerning listeners and give insightful and informed input.*
- *Organizations and networks that exist to serve cross-cultural workers with advice and resources, such as Services in Asia for Family Education, SHARE, and Anchor Education.*
- *TCKs who spend a lot of time in isolated situations, that they are able to build social networks and enjoy the company of other children.*



The lips of
the righteous
nourish many.

Proverbs 10:21



Day 17: A Home Away From Home



'Loving and discipling the kids of those loving and discipling Asia.' This vision statement is how those working in the OMF Boarding Home Program in Chiang Mai, Thailand, see their ministry. They support missionaries serving in Asia by providing a loving and caring home away from home for children.

"... we have 9 kids attending two different schools. So far, we have been extremely busy with all the beginning things: we have attended 3 Parent-Teacher orientations, watched futsal games, had our own dorm orientations,



took part in a dorm party with other boarding homes, took our kids to a waterfall for an outing, interviewed three families as their kids started the new year, took a student to the airport to travel to Bangkok for a visa, did lots of house maintenance (like changing door handles, fixing the water system, painting), planned a chores roster, had family devotions, held a birthday party, helped with homework, trained a new dorm assistant,

corresponded with future dorm assistants and dorm parents who will replace us...



But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.

Joshua 24:15b

We are grateful for a 21-year-old guy who is working with us as our dorm assistant. He is a great help and the kids really like him."

From a boarding home parent's prayer letter

Pray for:

- *God to provide committed and caring boarding home parents and assistants so children can attend appropriate schools.*
- *Strong relational skills, stamina, and spiritual discernment for boarding staff.*
- *Good and open communication between children, parents, and boarding home staff.*

Day 18: 'The Highlight of My Year'

"Conference has always been the highlight of my year. As teens, we had fun discovering more about our country together in the Amazing Race, learned to serve in a drug rehab school, and became inseparable teammates during our night mountain hikes. The input constantly challenged me to reflect on my personal journey with God, and opened my horizon to the needs of the world. I treasure most friendships forged with fellow TCKs. We shared our inner struggles and learned to grow in Christ together. Through this time, we all felt part of the greater missionary family." *A young adult TCK*

The mission or agency conference is an opportunity for workers to meet together and enjoy fellowship with colleagues from similar situations. For those who work in isolated ministry locations, this may be the only chance to meet together, worship freely, and enjoy Christian input. The children also enjoy the chance to build lasting friendships with other TCKs in the mission family. Short-term volunteers and teams who join these events to help with programs for children and teens are a tremendous blessing.

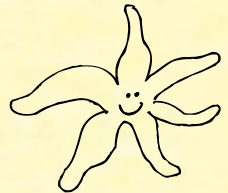
Pray for:

- *Workers who are willing to come and serve by helping with children's programs at agency conferences.*
- *Short-term teams as they plan and prepare Bible-themed, action-packed, age-appropriate TCK programs.*
- *TCKs who are forging friendships, that they will be strengthened in faith, and feel part of their agency family.*



Remember
Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 2:8a



Day 19: Jehovah Jireh



"Katy had one great love – soft toys. Everybody gave them to her, and every bit of her pocket money was spent adding to her vast family. In a second-hand shop, she felt compelled to rescue any lonely looking soft toy.



As we were leaving our very first mission conference, Katy couldn't find teddy. We searched everywhere but eventually had to leave without him. We made it known someone important was missing. It wasn't long before a parcel arrived from our head office with a carefully packed teddy inside. A good start to Katy's relationship with our mission family!

God confirmed that our family was to move to Asia. For Katy, that included her 200 soft toys. A retired missionary gave us a chest. Katy packed and squeezed and squeezed and what a miracle: EVERY soft toy fit in. The nearly life size dog had to bend his neck rather sharply for the few weeks at sea but survived. The whole fluffy family arrived safely in Asia and Katy still has them today.

We look back and see how God took care of Katy, and the things that mattered so much to her, in such a gentle and kind way."

Parent of a TCK

Pray that TCKs will:

- *Discover God as their Jehovah Jireh and store up many instances of His provision.*
- *Learn to be good stewards of their money, time, and energy, and, out of this, live generously.*



Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?
Yet not one of them will fall to the
ground outside your Father's care. . . So
don't be afraid; you are worth more than
many sparrows..



Matthew 10:29, 31

Day 20: Links with Home Churches

“Dear Sunday School,

Our school is called ‘Hope International School.’ Cambodia is very different from home. Roads are very bumpy. Houses are taller and there is no carpet on the floor. The floor is tiled so, if we drop something, it breaks easily. Food is different. But there is Kentucky Lucky Burger (not McDonald yet).

This is our househelper Boroni. She is very nice. She loves us very much. She can speak a little English. She cooks and cleans. She also looks after us when mummy and daddy learn Khmer.

This is our Cambodian friend, Linda, who lives downstairs. She always comes to play with us. She lives with her parents, grandparents, aunties and uncles, and nephew in one house!

Daddy bought a motorbike.

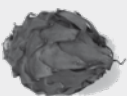
We like eating ice lolly on the hammock. We don’t like going to the market that is smelly.

Love from Naomi and Sami”

Young people from this family’s sending church raised money to decorate the girls’ bedroom when they first arrived in Cambodia.

Pray for:

- *TCKs, that they will be able to bless their home churches with insights into their lives.*
- *Churches and partner families, that they will take the initiative in reaching out to TCKs and maintaining close connections across the distances.*
- *TCKs, that they will feel the long-term love and support of home churches and individuals.*



I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel . . .

Philippians 1:3-5a

Day 21: Spiritual Protection

The face appeared in the darkness, hovered by the bed, and then disappeared. It was menacing and fierce, and unmistakably tribal. Was it real? Or just a dream? The girl didn't know. The others in her dorm were sleeping soundly and saw nothing. The face reappeared the following night and, this time, the girl was convinced it was real. She realized help and counsel were required.



Pages from a novel? No, this was the real life experience of a high school student boarding at a school while her parents were working in a tribal location translating the New Testament.

After counsel and prayer, it was determined this spiritual attack was coming at a very crucial time of the parents' ministry. Specific prayer resulted in no more recurring faces in the girl's bedroom.

Ministries are sometimes attacked through the children of those serving in missions. The devil knows only too well that attacking children can severely disrupt or even halt a ministry. Issues concerning children can be the reasons why families leave the mission field.

Pray for:

- *The spiritual protection of TCKs at every stage of their life, recognizing that they can be spiritually sensitive and vulnerable.*
- *Agencies and local churches, that they will prepare families for spiritual warfare before they go overseas and support them faithfully in prayer.*



In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone,
LORD, make me dwell in safety.

Psalms 4:8



Day 22: Lost in Translation

“‘Mom, why do they say nasty words to me?’ my son asked. ‘They’re not saying nasty words. They are speaking Japanese,’ I replied. I greeted a friend. She turned her attention to my blond three-year-old Nathan. ‘Ohayo Daigo-kun.’ He tried to hit her and she laughed. ‘Nathan, she’s just saying hello. Gomen nasai (Sorry),’ I apologised to my friend. ‘He doesn’t understand yet.’

This was a common scenario back in Japan after home assignment. Our son’s world tipped upside down. The only constant was family and even that changed with a new little brother and Dad now teaching full time.

Nothing was the same and so Nathan lashed out. We endured hours of tantrums. Would it ever end? Was there something wrong with my child? Thankfully, I discovered better and more effective ways of managing the tantrums and they eased gradually. I learned to persist in my parenting, and learned to appreciate the positives in his character.”

Mother of three TCKs

Children are resilient in the face of change, right? Well, they can be, but they all react differently. Personality type, age, the number of previous moves, family dynamics, and other factors all impact how a child will cope with a move. Parents need wisdom, perseverance and love as they help their children through the stress of transition.

Pray for:

- *TCKs who struggle to adapt to an unfamiliar culture and language.*
- *God’s help in making friends, which does not come quickly or easily for all TCKs.*
- *Parents and other adults to be sensitive to TCKs’ struggles, and to persevere in their support.*



By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept . . .
How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?

Psalm 137:1,4



Day 23: Re-entry



“Mum, please can you rub my back?’ asked our 10 year old.

‘But it is already 9.30, way past your bed time. Why are you still awake?’

‘I’m worried.’

‘About what?’

‘That I’ll never make friends here in Australia. I miss my friends back in Japan. All I want to do is go back there,’ he sobbed.

This scenario continued for more than two months after we returned for home assignment. Our eldest son didn’t adapt well to the change. He cried himself to sleep most nights and I began to wonder if he needed professional help. Eventually, school holidays came. After two weeks, he realized his new school wasn’t that bad. From then on he began to fall asleep more easily and we thanked the Lord.”

Mother of a TCK

Moving between countries is a time of vulnerability for missionary families. Parents are making their own adjustments as well as having to be supportive of their children. Many of the supports around them are gone. But God’s love and care remains.

Pray for:

- *TCKs to rest in God’s care as they re-enter their passport country or enter it for the first time.*
- *Understanding from the extended family, home churches, schools, agencies, and friends.*
- *TCK Advisors and others who assist returning families to have the necessary understanding, willingness to listen, and wisdom in supporting TCKs.*

The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

Psalm 121:8



Day 24: ReKonnnecting TCKs

reconnect

TCKs aged 6-12 at a Re-Entry Camp

"ReKonnnect is brilliant, fantastic, fun, great for adjusting into different cultures! We did drama, craft, indoor and outdoor games, outings, and even bargaining in the 'night market.' We are not on our own or strange!"

"It was so great to have some older teens as young leaders in our dorm."

"I do love England after all. I still miss my friends in Africa but I discovered other children speak other languages and have friends in their special country too."



Parents

"How good to be with a group of like minded children and adults, who understood what they (TCKs) were going through."

"Since coming back, Rebecca has been reluctant to talk about Asia but being at camp has made her more open. I am so grateful."



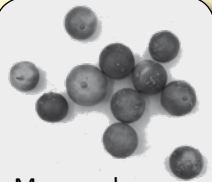
"Both enjoyed their Window on the World spot. This was the first time they could give their own presentation on their experience abroad. They received invaluable encouragement afterwards."

Leader

"We looked at the lives of Naomi and Ruth—one was 'going home,' the other was 'leaving home.' We considered the ups and downs in their lives, the challenges of packing up, saying goodbyes and moving on. The discussions were thought provoking."

Pray for:

- Strong networks that can organize appropriate re-entry events for TCK children, teens, and young adults.
- TCKs, that they will find safe places to talk about the ups and downs of their TCK experience.



May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.

Ruth 2:12b

Day 25: Saying Goodbye



"We will soon need to book return tickets to Asia. That will be only 3 tickets this time. Sarah and Simon will continue with their studies in North America and, we are praying, will get good summer jobs. It will mean for us a wrenching goodbye to them, and to our parents. It gets really difficult to swallow and the page gets a little blurry just writing those words. We've been praying that God would show us if we should stay home. So far, we still feel this sense of responsibility and a pull to go back and complete the commitment we started in Asia.

In some ways, we'd love to hear God say, "It's time to stay home for now," but, until He does, we have to trust Him to make up the difference for us not being here.

The International School has a place for my wife on the teaching staff. I will be sharing International mobilization ministries with two other men. We prayed for years for partners in the work and here they are. Jesus, we trust you."

*Father of TCKs
who is also an adult TCK*

Pray for:

- *Courage for families willing to face goodbyes, which do not get easier as the years go by.*
- *Wisdom for families to know when it is time to return to a passport country to support their TCKs.*
- *Extended family to take the time and energy to maintain relationships with young adult TCKs, and help the TCK to feel 'at home' in their passport country.*



"Truly I tell you," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much . . ."

Mark 10:29-30



Day 26: Too High a Price?

Many TCKs and their parents have experienced separation for lengthy periods over long distances. The pain of separation may have been very great for both parents and children. Today, parents and organizations have a greater awareness of the issues surrounding family separation and of the help available. In addition, the revolution in communications has transformed intercontinental relationships. However, some TCKs and parents in later life have not been able to come to a place of acceptance of their experiences.



Parents share...

"It is THE sacrifice that still feels like over-sacrifice."
"I still struggle with guilt. Did we do the right thing?"
"We could see that tears were falling in his heart – and still are..."
"I didn't realize how badly things were going wrong for her."
"As I stood with the other parents, the agony of the moment overwhelmed me..."



Adult TCKs share...

"How can I find a place to call home when my heart so wants to be somewhere else all the time? Who am I?"
"I've been so hurt – I don't know how or who to trust."
"God is a demanding taskmaster – I do not want anything to do with him."
"My parents don't understand..."

Pray for:

- *The parents of TCKs who sorrow over the emotional and spiritual pain of their children, struggling with unresolved grief and anger from their childhood experiences.*
- *TCKs who are alienated and in pain and who may resent God and the organization – that God's grace and love would break through.*
- *God to provide supporting churches, friends, and caregivers who will listen to TCKs with compassion and understanding.*



Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD.

Psalm 130:1



Day 27: Identity

"I came back to my passport country at age 15. Words fail to describe that move – I lost my whole world and everything associated with it, and felt my whole life was hopeless. But God never changed and He never left me. He knew what I was going through and I believe that, when I lay in bed and cried, He was there with His arms around me.

God offers me an amazing gift as a TCK: to grasp that there is nowhere on this earth that is my final 'home.' There is nowhere I will ever fully 'fit,' because I am made to be in God's presence in heaven. This isn't an excuse to not deal with the hurt and grief and loneliness, but it brings me so much hope and peace and JOY!

Some days, I still feel the hurt brought about by that move but I know Jesus is transforming me. As I watch in wonder, He is slowly unwinding the knotted mass of grief. It is worth the pain, to see the glory for Himself, and beauty in me, that He brings from all those experiences. It has made me who I am, a beautiful and unique person, treasured by my creator and Lord."

A young adult TCK

Pray for:

- *Each TCK to find his or her identity and belonging in the family of God.*
- *TCKs to experience God's transformation of events in their lives so they reach their potential.*



I will give you hidden treasures, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name.

Isaiah 45:3

Day 28: Milestones

"In the past few months, I have experienced several major milestones. I turned eighteen and graduated from high school, leaving behind a group of friends that gave me a sense of 'home' for the first time in my life. I got my first paycheck (very satisfying, as small as the pay was). I applied to university, and reflected much on my life, past and future. I was confirmed as a Christian declaring my faith as my PERSONAL identity."

A young adult TCK

Major transitions and milestones in a young person's life may be more poignant for TCKs in a country that is not home, where goodbyes are more frequent and often more permanent.

"God blessed my brother's wedding with a beautiful natural setting, on a mountain overlooking the distant ocean. My new sister graciously asked me to be a part of her bridal party (otherwise known as the unpaid work crew!), which was a special honor. Both bride and groom were able to weave in notes of their personal histories with Africa and Asia reflected in the food and décor. It was a thankful tribute to the story God has been weaving in their lives as single TCKs and now together as one."

A young adult TCK

Pray for young adult TCKs:

- *That they will make God-honoring decisions in the important areas of their lives.*
- *That they will find wise mentors who provide a safe place to work through issues.*
- *That they will be able to stay connected to family who may be far away.*



In all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:6



Day 29: Reflections

"On graduation from university, I started to reflect on the loss I experienced as a child, leaving my parents for boarding school at the age of six. I felt reluctant to grow up and transition to adult life. I had to go through a process of grieving all those past losses and adjust to a new perspective in which I accepted loss as part of my life.



But I was afraid to let go of the past. I thought I would lose everything that was of value to me. I wrote a list of what I was afraid of losing: the love of old friends, memories of precious people and places, and the foundation of my relationship with God. Then God gently revealed to me that these are the very things we are able to take with us.

John 13:34-35 has helped me continue to love people and develop relationships despite the risk of loss. Jesus commands the disciples to love one another as a sign to others that they belong to God. If loving others is a command of God, He will take care of the consequences of obeying it."

Reflections of an adult TCK

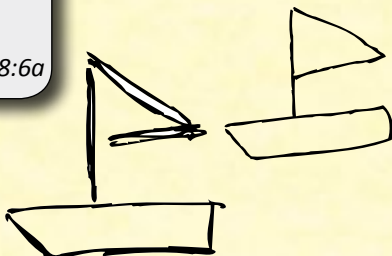


In my distress
I called to the
Lord; I cried
to my God for
help.

Psalms 18:6a

Pray for:

- *TCKs wrestling with challenging aspects of their TCK experience - loss of identity, rootlessness, loneliness, grief and anger - that they would find people and resources to help them.*
- *Parents to be able to give the emotional and spiritual support needed by their TCKs despite busy and demanding ministries.*



Day 30: Through the Eyes of TCKs

"TCKs may have watched their dad hold a dying child in a slum, gone on sleepovers with their Mom in a Buddhist household, swum with endangered dolphins in a remote tributary, or heard their parents preach and teach in a variety of languages and settings. They have seen their 'uncles' and 'aunties' love and serve people from different cultures into the kingdom of God. ['Uncle' and 'Auntie' is what TCKs often call the missionaries their parents work with.]



Relational skills are strong as TCKs can often move to deep levels of conversation easily. To the surprise of many adults, teenage TCKs are frequently able to engage at their level on world affairs, social issues, or values. They are often characterized by fearlessness, a readiness to 'seize the day,' and a willingness to try new things. Some have an increased language ability that can make the world less daunting.



Their experiences mean that TCKs often have good cultural skills, living mobile lives as global nomads. Many take international roles in business, diplomatic service, or education as well as mission. They count people from other countries among their closest friends. They are less entrenched, refusing to yield to insular thinking and behavior and holding a broad world-view."

*Father of TCKs, also an adult TCK,
and international director of a mission organization.*

- *Praise God for the richness of the lives of many TCKs; the obedience of parents to God's call has meant blessing for their children.*
- *Pray that TCKs will be able to embrace the benefits of being a TCK as they make choices about careers.*
- *Pray that many TCKs would use their experiences to be peacemakers and to play their part in growing the kingdom of God wherever they are called.*



I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

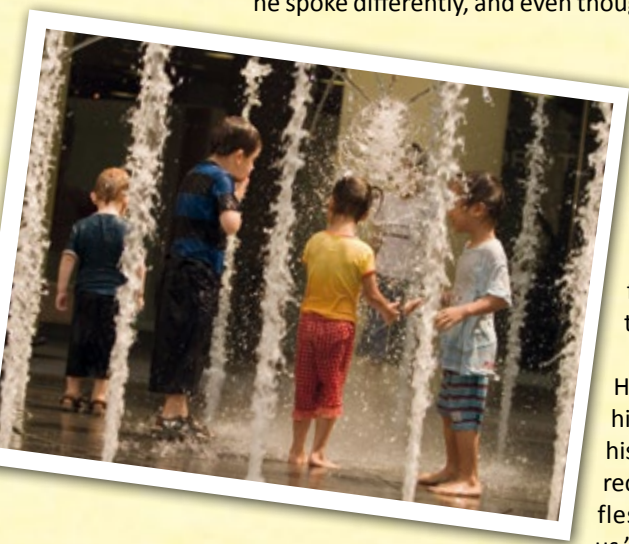
John 10:10b

My TCK Friend

"I have a friend who moved to his parents' home country when he was quite young. He's the oldest kid in his family, so most of his memories were about where he used to live — and the culture there was QUITE different, a really Christian environment.

When he moved, he experienced bullying, name-calling, and all kinds of horrible things, unknown where he'd grown up.

His younger brothers and sisters and his friends thought he was strange because all they'd ever known was their Mom and Dad's country. They thought he was odd because he did things differently, he spoke differently, and even thought in a completely different way.



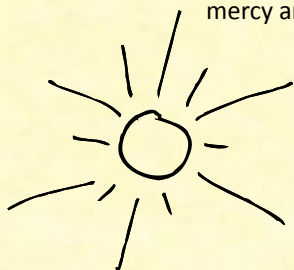
Most people didn't call him different though. They called him 'weird.'

All in all, he felt like 'home' was somewhere else entirely. He truly was a third culture kid, feeling like he belonged in two totally separate places.

Here's what someone wrote about him. 'He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. . . The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.' John 1:11, 14.

As you've probably guessed, this friend of mine is called Jesus. He experienced life as a third culture kid and, so, as Hebrews 4:15-16 puts it, is able 'to empathize with our weaknesses. . . has been tempted in every way, just as we are. . . so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.'"

An adult TCK





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GROWING UP AMONG WORLDS
30 DAYS OF PRAYER FOR THIRD CULTURE KIDS

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Global Nomads, Multi Cultural Kids, Third Culture Kids (TCKs). . . children of military personnel, diplomats, businessmen or missionaries. They may have experienced multiple transitions, and count people from other countries among their closest friends. Perhaps they have watched their dad hold a dying child in a slum, swum with river dolphins, or heard their parents speak in a variety of languages and settings.

Through stories of real experiences, this booklet will introduce you to some of the joys and challenges TCKs encounter as they grow up in multi-cultural environments for the sake of the gospel. It will help you know how to pray for them. Thank you for joining us in prayer for Third Culture Kids.

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