



Third Culture Kids

Children of the mission partners may attend the GIC with their parents. Ministering to them during this time is important. Here are some thoughts and tips to help you as you plan.

1. They are “regular kids.” Like all kids, they have their own personality, giftings, and struggles. Let them be free to be themselves without the expectation to be “super spiritual” simply because their parents are missionaries. TIP: Don’t pressure kids to be a part of the presentations that their parents give. If they want to be a part, allow room for that. But if they want to stay in the background, make sure to communicate that that is perfectly okay!
2. Understand that these kids have gone through a lot of transition. Their “passport country” is no longer fully their home; the country in which they live will feel like home. TIP: Don’t ask if they are happy to be “home.” Visiting your church may feel like a trip to them, not home.
3. Even if their parents grew up in your church, the children may still feel like a guest in your church. Communicate that you are excited for their visit and have been looking forward to their arrival. TIP: Create a welcome basket or travel basket appropriate for the age and gender of the TCKs in the family.
4. Traveling can be hard for any age of person, but it can be especially difficult for children and teens. Allow time for rest and alone time, but also offer fun excursions if possible. TIP: Don’t insist that TCK’s engage in every activity in which their parents are involved. If there is a fun adventure for the kids, ask the family if it is of interest to them, and then set up the details for the excursion.
5. TCKs are on their own unique journey. TIP: Questions tend to go to the parents during talking time, which is completely natural and expected. But take time to ask TCKs about their life as well.
6. What’s “normal” for you may not be “normal” for them. TIP: Don’t assume that the traditional snacks that are popular with your kids or teens will be popular with them. Asking their parents ahead what they like and having it available would be a wonderful way to show hospitality.
7. Don’t underestimate unscheduled play time. TIP: Allow time for church kids/teens to play/hang out with TCKs. The children may need some help with points of connection. Providing games, balls, or an icebreaker game will go a long way to help form relationships.