

# Session 3

What is Culture?

What is a Worldview?

What more do you want to learn about the culture you are going to visit?

What is Culture Shock and Reverse Culture Shock?

What does it mean to be a child-safe Missions trip?

# Culture and Worldview

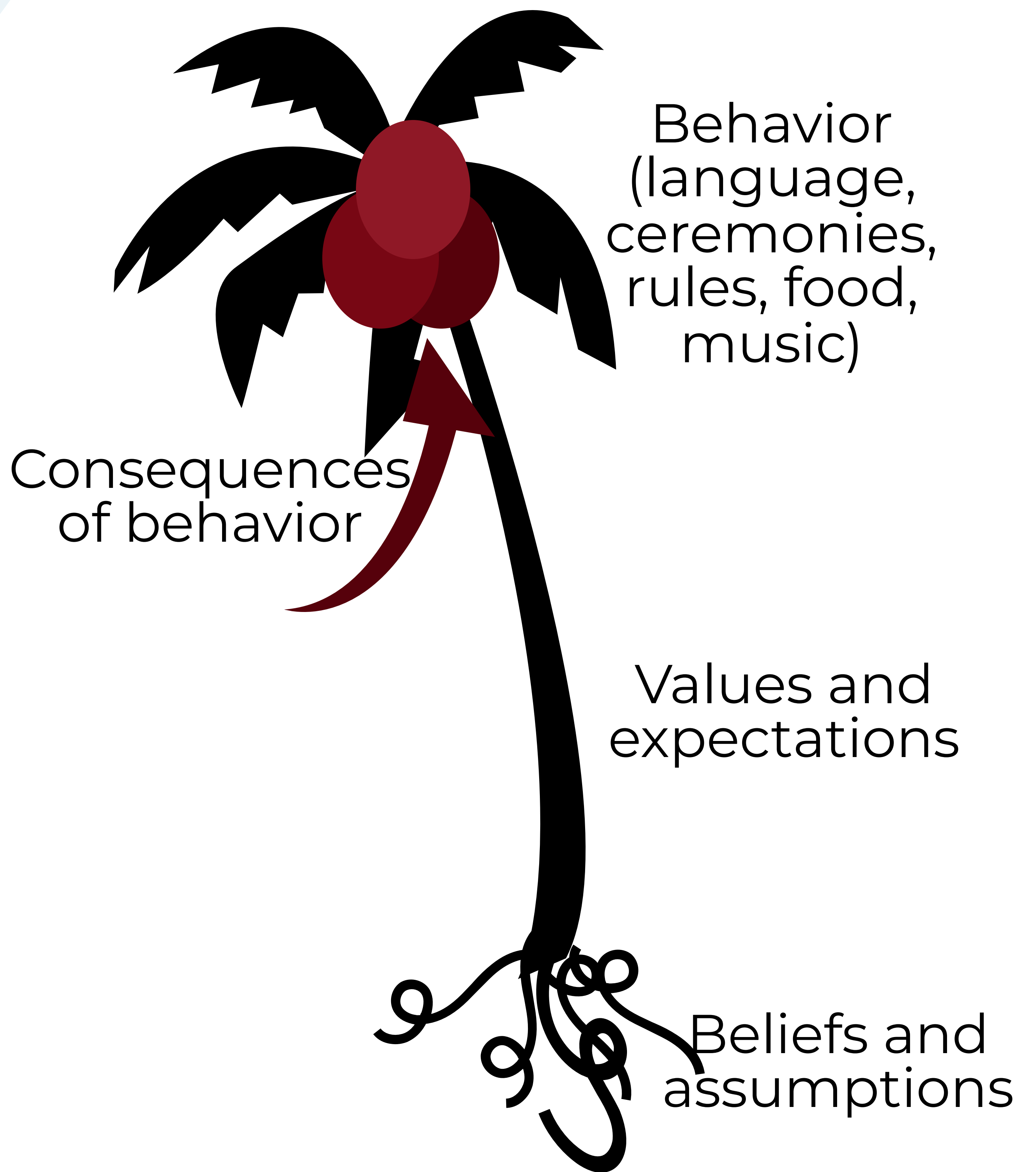
Culture is the beliefs, values, and behavior (the things that make up life) of a group of people.

Worldview is how you view the world. It is why you choose your beliefs, and how they shape your values and behavior.

Understanding your own culture, its strengths and weaknesses, will help understand someone else's culture, when you travel.

As Christians, our worldview is to be set by God and His Word. You can study history and see healthy/unhealthy cultures by how they hold to or reject truth.

What are Satan's strategies to destroy culture?  
Revelation 20:3, 7-8  
2 Corinthians 4:4  
1 Timothy 4:1



## Growing Healthy Cultures

**LIE** Lies a culture holds to be true

**T** Truth the culture embraces  
*Principles of the Development Ethic*

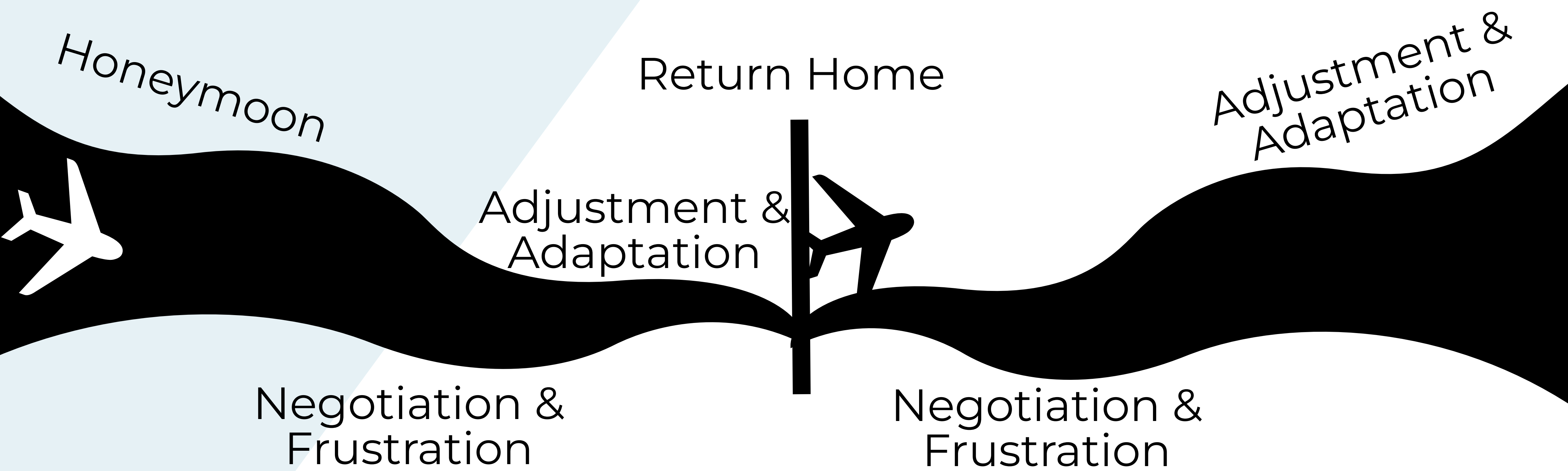


# What to Learn about the Country you are Visiting

We want to make sure that you feel prepared (at least a little bit). If you do not feel knowledgeable about any of the following subjects, please Google, study, and ask your team leader to learn more!

- Know about **the specific geological area** (history, culture, food).
- Know if/where **English** is spoken, and how that may be challenging.
- Know about **time** differences (what “being late” is)
- Know about **personal space** (is cheek kissing common? Do they often stand closer than where you're from?)
- Know about common negative **American stereotypes** (loud, busy, messy, smelly) and prove them wrong.
- Know about **transportation** (bumpy roads, motorcycles...)
- Know about typical **food** (what is/is not available, manners)
- Know about **body gestures** (often thumbs up is good, while the “ok” sign is off limits)
- Know about **dressing** appropriately (no short shorts, no muscle shirts, or sloppy dressing)
- Know about not drinking the **tap water**: bring a water bottle everywhere!
- Know about being **clean** (in warm climates, take at least one shower every day!) Wash your hands before eating. Be extra clean. Freshen up before you go anywhere.
- Know about **toilet paper**. (In Brazil, there is no toilet paper in the toilets.
- Know about **money** (don't show it off, plan ahead how much money you want exchanged, check your bank to see if you can use your card internationally)
- Know about **electronics**. Most places will need adapters to fit the plugs into the wall. Some places (like Brazil) also need converters to convert the 220 voltage to the more common 110. CHECK all products before plugging them in to see if they are able to adapt/convert. Be careful with Apple products, and try to stay away from bringing hair dryers all together if the voltage is different.
- Know about making **promises** to local people you meet (DON'T DO IT! Talk to your team leader about ways to help!)
- Know about **good conduct** (please don't be rude or do anything you would not do in front of your grandmother. refrain from alcohol/tobacco/drugs/dirty jokes/complaining)
- Other:

# Culture Shock



Coming or Going by Rachel Ferguson

*"Who are YOU?"* Said the Caterpillar.

This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, *"I--I hardly know, sir, just at present-- at least I know who I WAS when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then."*

*"What do you mean by that?"* Said the Caterpillar sternly. *"Explain yourself!"*

*"I can't explain MYSELF, I'm afraid, sir"* said Alice, *"because I'm not myself, you see."* –Lewis Carroll

*"Voce quer frutas?"* The wrinkled hand of the elderly woman held a pineapple towards me. I smiled and moved on quickly, as unsure of what I wanted as I was of what she had said.

*"Smile and nod"* I thought to myself, *"smile and nod."* Finding yourself in a new place can be scary. The anxiety and feelings that you encounter has been labeled "Culture shock," with three phases: **honeymoon, negotiation, and adjustment.**

Sitting on the cool tile floor eating fresh pineapple, I waved my hands energetically and sprayed pineapple juice on Emanuel: "I just cannot get over the beauty. I can't get over the feeling that each day is an adventure because I have no clue what is going on. I have this idea that I will learn something new every minute if only my brain could contain it."

The honeymoon stage is everything from pre-experience excitement to delight with novelty. Differences are seen in a romantic light, exotic and fascinating. *"You speak Engliss?"* asked a dark, curly haired stranger as he leaned in to kiss me on my left cheek and then my right. "Y-yes" I replied shyly, unsure of what was culturally correct to do next. Some friends I made in Brazil asked me to teach them English. My credentials? I was a native speaker. Thirty people showed up, most of whom I had never seen before. I cleared my throat, pulled my sweaty palms out of my pockets, and began: "My name is Rachel, what is your name?"

*"Toto, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore"* –Dorothy, *Wizard of Oz*

I sighed, and waited. What could I do? The only one home was the maid, who didn't speak English. I rested against the tile wall and tried to figure out the best solution. There was no toilet paper, I didn't know the word for "Toilet paper" in Portuguese, and I needed toilet paper. I could try yelling "papel of toilet!" and hope the maid would get the idea.

In the negotiation stage, things that used to be beautiful are now irritating. All you want is (fill in the blank), and it always stays just out of reach. This stage can have mood swings and can lead to depression or withdrawal from the new culture. The Brazilian wind whipped through my hair as I held down the paper and wrote quickly, "I am so far away from American culture and thinking, surrounded by different everything—it makes me wonder who I am. I have no expectations to live up to. No one here knows who I am, what I stand for, and what I believe. It is like a blank piece of paper, and I have no idea what I want to write on it."

But I adjusted. *"What was it like?"* Emanuel asked, as we dug into the meat filled pancakes. "It was hard because coming here I was the extra person added to the mix, instead of making up part of the mix. I had to learn to be like icing on the cake: the icing has to form to the mold of the cake, trying to fill in the cracks and help out where it can." By the time of adjustment, you have developed new routines, and things, in a different sense, feel "normal." You begin to either understand the new culture, or understand that you don't understand it yet, and that is okay.

# Culture Shock

“Not all who wander are lost” J. R. R. Tolkien

“It is so weird, Emanuel—it is like nothing is real. Being back, my thoughts flake off and float down to the floor. What is mine? What is me? I am stumbling through life. Not half bad, but not all there. And no one else knows me well enough to know I am not here. Not here really. I am living outside myself.”

Emanuel finished his shake and nodded, understandingly. The same three stages can be seen in returning home after being gone. In some, it is noticed even stronger than while in another country. Reverse culture shock is worse for many people because they are not expecting it. They expect things to be different in a new place, but not where they grew up. All your old “normals” feel strange.

Emanuel stops as I unlock my car door. *“Brazilians have a word for it that you do not: ‘Saudades.’ You can’t explain it—you have to feel it. It is the longing, melancholy feeling that never fully leaves you, even when you are happy. You feel saudades when you want to be with the ones you love, but you can’t. It is when you long for something that is out of your hands, out of your control. This word, saudades, is what you have carried with you back to America.”*

I stare down the row of soy sauces at Kroger, the glass bottles blurring and my head pounding. I sink down to the dingy linoleum floor and rest my back against the aisle of cereal boxes. “Just pick up some soy sauce. Just pick it up and go.” My brain tells me, but my body refuses to comply. So many choices and so much stuff. I miss the *feira* in Brazil with fresh fruit and vegetables. I miss the two aisles that make up the entire grocery store in the rural town. I am overloaded with everything around me, all the advertisements competing for my attention. “It isn’t fair. It is not right.” I complain to my mom as I hand her the soy sauce. “We have so much, and we don’t even know it.”

*“I went a little farther,” he said. “Then still a little farther—till I had gone so far that I don’t know how I’ll ever get back.” –Paul Scott*

It is often hard to remember that things have changed while you have been away, or that your ideal of home (while gone) is not reality. Many times people don’t want to hear about your trip—and even if they do, they just don’t seem to “get it.” This can lead to the same kind of frustration as you had in the original negotiation stage. “I returned and felt like everything had changed.” I share with Emanuel. “Before my friends and I were all triangles. While there, I became a square—with even more angles—while my friends were all rounded off into circles. Now I am constantly bumping corners.”

*“The whole object of travel is not to set foot on foreign land; it is to at last to set foot on one’s own country as a foreign land.” –G.K. Chesterton*

I pause as I put on my coat to go to the art museum, and turn Emanuel reflectively, “There are some things that I can only learn in Brazil, and others I can only learn in America.” Having spent three of the past seven years in Brazil, (continuing to teach English, but now focusing on working with at-risk children), I can now talk with Emanuel in Portuguese—but we always return to English.

*“When are you coming back to Brazil?” Emanuel asks me. “I am not sure yet,” I tell him truthfully, “But I will go back. I have been through so many times of going back and forth between countries that I feel blurred sometimes, but I would not change anything. I have become my own person, a blend of two lives in two countries. Brazil and America make up who I am and are a part of me, but I am still a whole me on my own. It has taken a long time to be able to say that.”*

*“And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.” –T.S. Eliot*

**At [Faithward.org](https://www.faithward.org), they have a short term mission trip planning toolkit, with one page of "How to prepare for cross cultural mission experiences"**

Note on social media posting: It is important to be aware and careful about the pictures you take and post while on your trip. If you want something to study, just Google "White Savior Complex" and see where it takes you. World Renewal asks that before you post pictures of kids, you make sure it is ok with your team leader or a missionary on the ground. A good rule of thumb is to not post pictures of kids if you don't know their names. If you become Facebook friends with minors from your trip, please only post publically, not with private messages. The Living Stones policies are probably similar to the policies in countries other than Brazil, but it might be good to check.

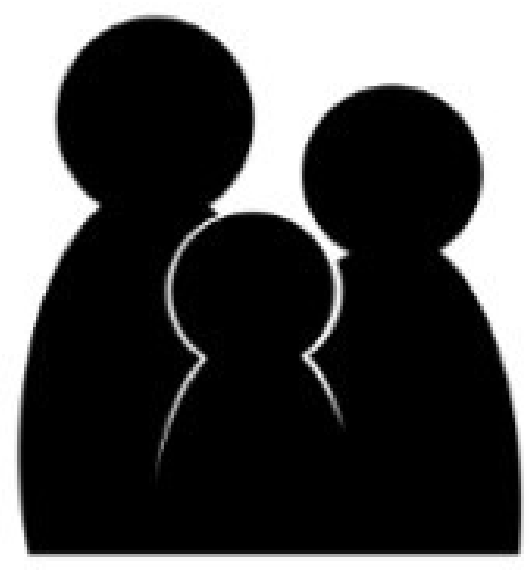
## CLASS 3 HOMEWORK

1. Read "Short-term Missions Social Media Guidelines" on [chalmers.org](http://chalmers.org). Write out a paragraph of what your guidelines will be

2. Download the free PDF "Protecting Children in Short-Term Missions" from [bettercarenetwork.org](http://bettercarenetwork.org) (it is 92 pages, and you don't have to read the whole thing)

3. Read page 70-71 of "Protecting Children in Short-Term missions" and the Living Stones Media Relations policy and Child Protection policy

4. Pray about how you can be a part of creating a child-safe missions team, and how you can encourage your teammates to do more.



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# Media Relations Policy

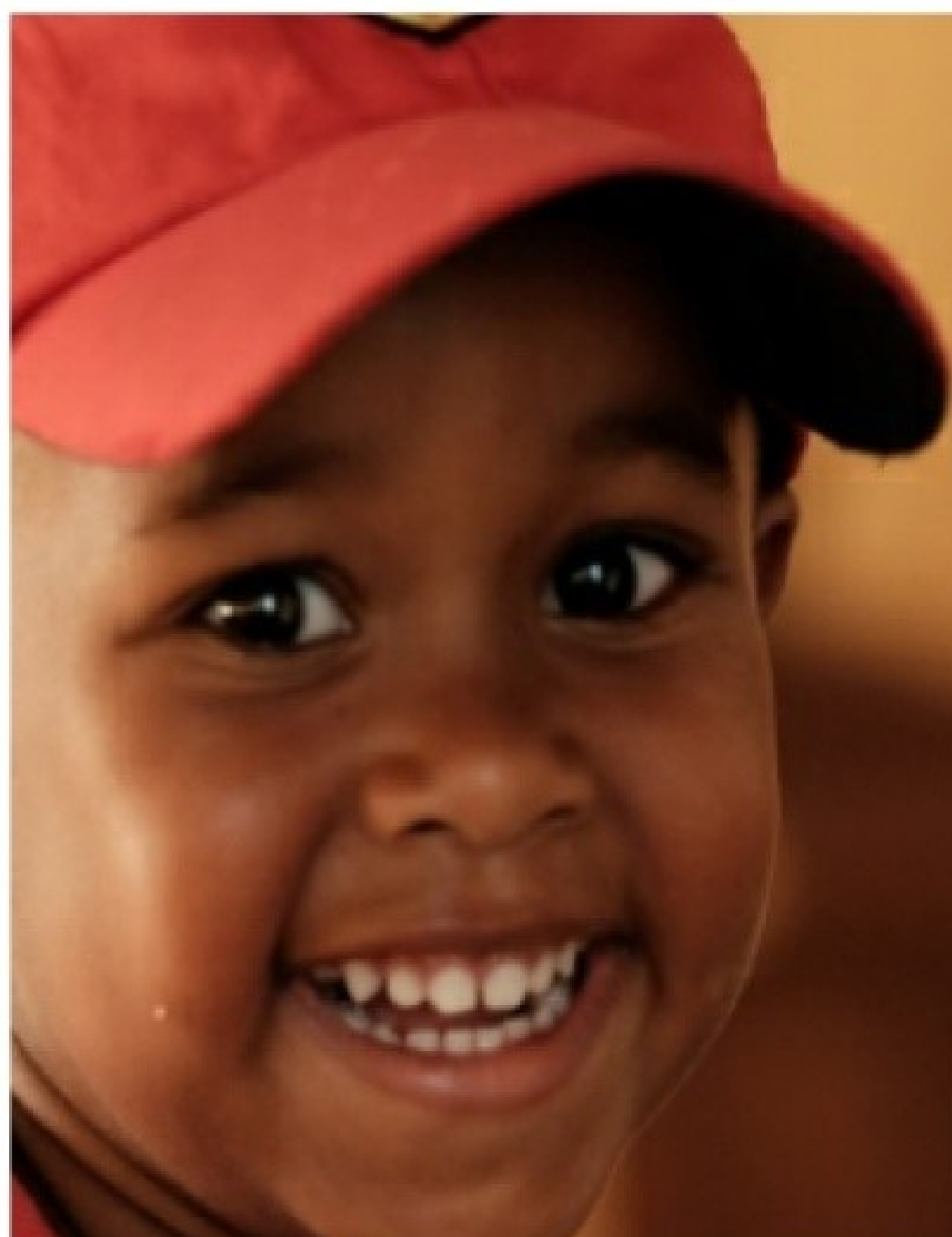
In this technological age, Living Stones has found it important to address how we present the children we serve through written and spoken stories, pictures, and video. This includes all internet and print communications to and from the Living Stones children and those involved with them, whether in the country or an international connection. **Our desire in all things is to bring glory to God through respectful, truthful, above reproach policies and procedures.**

Before any picture, written/spoken word, or video is published about Living Stones programs, children, or workers involved, take some time to make sure you are representing Living Stones respectfully, truthfully, and in love.

Since we work with minors, **every year we get signed permission from the parents to take and use pictures/video of their children.** Living Stones (or those affiliated) will not use these resources for personal gain: any finances received through the use of these resources will be used directly for things connected to the Living Stones program. If at any time a parent, child, or worker connected with Living Stones does not feel comfortable with a picture/video being used, Living Stones (or those affiliated) will remove it.

Workers with Living Stones, or even Living Stones children often post on Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube pictures/videos of events that are going on. This is done with care and concern for all of those involved, and will be asked to stop/correct it if someone complains. Leaders in Living Stones often make presentations about Living Stones, and share stories through e-newsletters, websites, or other publications. Whenever a story is shared, only the first name of the child is used, or the name is changed. Stories shared respect the dignity of the people involved. If personal/sensitive information is shared, the child and parent are contacted and have given permission.

**Outside contact with Living Stones children:** World Help sponsors are only allowed to contact children through World Help. International sponsors directly through Living Stones are to go through the coordinators and/or director of Living Stones before making contact (personally or through social networks). Local volunteers and people interested in assisting/communicating with Living Stones children will go through the leadership of their community program.



[amobrasil99@hotmail.com](mailto:amobrasil99@hotmail.com)



Building Living Stones



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# Child Protection Policy

It is the goal of Living Stones to provide a safe environment for the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of the children we serve. We know that being a child makes them vulnerable to abuse by adults. The purpose of this policy is to make sure that the actions of any adult in the context of the work carried out by Living Stones are transparent and promote the welfare of all involved.

If any parent or young person/child has any concerns about the conduct of any member of the organization, this should be raised in the **first instance** with the pastor of the church that Living Stones is serving with. If any member of the organization becomes aware that a child is being abused by another member, parent, or child, then they are to go directly to the pastor of the church that Living Stones is serving with. If the pastor is unavailable, then the concerns are to go to the coordinators or director of Living Stones.

We are very aware and cautious about how we present the children in Living Stones to sponsors through media and personal contact (*see our media relations policy*). World Help sponsors are only allowed to contact children through World Help. Sponsors directly through Living Stones are asked to go through the coordinators and/or director of Living Stones before making contact (personally or through social networks). Local volunteers and people interested in assisting/communicating with Living Stones children will go through the leadership of their community program.

## 1. Immediate Action to Ensure Safety

- If emergency medical attention is required, the leader at the location at that time will be in charge of taking the child to the hospital or administering emergency care.
- If a child is in immediate danger, the leader at the location at that time will be in charge of getting the child to a safe place and contacting the police if necessary.

## 2. Recognition (and definition) of Abuse or Neglect

- Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.
- Emotional abuse is repeatedly rejecting children, humiliating them, or denying their worth and rights as human beings. It is causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.
- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can involve physical contact or not, such as having to watch sexually inappropriate behavior.
- Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. A persistent lack of love, stimulation, safety, nourishment, and medical attention.

## 3. What to do if Children Talk to you About Abuse or Neglect

- Listen carefully to the child. DO NOT directly question the child.
- Give the child time and attention.
- Allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed as evidence.
- Use the child's own words where possible.
- Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
- Reassure the child that: you are glad they have told you; they have not done anything wrong; what you are going to do next.
- Explain that you will need to get help to keep the child safe.
- Do NOT ask the child to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.

**4. Consulting leadership about your concern** A worker, volunteer, leader, parent, or child needs to discuss concerns they have about abuse/neglect with the proper leadership. They should go directly to the pastor at the church, or the coordinators/director of Living Stones to decide what action is necessary.

It is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused, or respond to a child wanting to talk to you. This practice can help clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action. If you are concerned about a child you must share your concerns.

Together with leadership, create an action plan. All cases of suspected child abuse should be reported to law enforcement as per local laws. Cases of child abuse should be written down and filed with the coordinators of Living Stones including the following:

- Name of the person who has the concern, position of leadership/relationship to the child
- Full name and birthday of the child and siblings and those living with the child
- The nature of the concern and foundation for it
- Opinion on the action that should be taken
- What are the needs of the child and their family—short and long term

**5. Confidentiality** The only people who will have access to the concerns and reports of the child will be their parent/guardian, appropriate government officials, and qualified leadership of the church and Living Stones program. All records will be kept in a secure place. Gossip about such issues will not be tolerated.