

Session 6 (Re-entry Class 1)

How are you?

How is re-entry going?

How and where will you share your story?

Getting Back into Things

How are you? It is okay to be great, or horrible, or not even sure how you are. Here are some things to think about:

- Self-Concept – Any life changing experience can cause you to re-evaluate who you are in light of the experience. Questions about the meaning of life and its direction may be part of the process. You may decide you never want to go outside your home country again. You may decide there is a call on your life to minister outside the home country. What have you learned about yourself from this trip?
- Values – You can return home feeling differently about material possessions, family life, culture, politics, and more. This can cause you to be disillusioned and impatient with people and loved ones at home. Pray that the Lord will do a work in their heart instead of trying to change them yourself. What values may have changed from your trip?
- Expectations – You may feel a bit like a stranger in your own country. You may have expected your family and friends to be as excited as you are about your experience. Realize that many will not be able to understand what you have been through. Guard yourself from becoming resentful toward family, friends, and Christians in your home country. What expectations have you had to face and give to God?
- Sense of Loss – You may experience a sense of loss over the newfound friends and places you have been. Your everyday life back home is not the same as being continually used by God overseas. How can you give yourself closure and work what you have learned into everyday life?

One of the reasons you went on this trip should have been because of a desire to change the world and yourself. This desire to change the world and yourself shouldn't end when you return "home." How you handle re-entry will to a great extent determine if you are going to continue to be affected and have an effect.

Hebrews 11:8-13 "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going....For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God...These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

Your overseas experience may lead to you being a stranger in your own homeland – which is exactly what the Bible says we are to be. Too often we are too comfortable here. Opening your eyes to the reality of your "homeland" can be a huge step to helping you to conform to the image of Christ instead of to the image of those around you, making yourself uncomfortable in your own skin. Your identity should be in being a citizen of heaven, not a geographical location on earth.

- Have realistic expectations. You've changed and they've changed, and many things have happened while you have been gone (called the Narnia affect)
- People may respond negatively to you because they are resentful or ashamed of not going themselves (less than 10% of people who are called actually go)
- Your priorities have changed because of your experience. When you share the most important things that have happened to you, many people will respond with the most important things that have happened to them. Understand and listen. Don't make the mistake of committing an appeal to the 'worse problems' fallacy, just because you have seen terrible suffering does not negate all other problems from being valid
- Have a support system in place and people to talk to
- Get balanced sleep, meals, and exercise as soon as you return
- Ask for and set up opportunities to present what you did. Become a storyteller and tell your story well
- Develop realistic applications of the trip for yourself. Avoid being unreasonable on yourself by telling yourself that you will remember every child and pray for all of them individually for all their needs. Think through some reasonable ways of integrating your experiences into your daily routine at home.
- From your trip, choose one person or ministry to advocate for (worldrenewal.org/represent-others)

Sharing Your Story

- Draw a picture, write a poem about, or find another outlet to create something that symbolizes the most important (3-5) things that God taught you on the trip. Memorize them.
- Pick your favorite (5-10) pictures from the trip, and put them in order from most to least important: what does this reveal?
- Be prepared to give various responses that match the person's degree of interest/time available:
 - a. A brief blip of your trip for those who might only want to break the ice by asking how your trip went. (This is like giving them the poster of an upcoming movie)
 - b. An overview that is a couple of minutes for those people who are a little more interested in your trip. (This is like giving them the trailer to the movie)
 - c. A Ten to fifteen minute review of what happened and how it changed you for those who really want to know. (This is like giving them the movie experience- which still isn't the whole thing)

Be ready to answer these questions:

- GOD: What did you learn about God's mission in the world? How did you see God at work? How has your relationship with God changed as a result of this trip?
- OTHERS: What did you learn about your team and about team ministry? Name some people who really touched your life during this experience. What did you learn from them?
- FUTURE: What changes (if any) will you make in your life based on what God taught you?
- GRATITUDE: What are you most thankful for? How can you thank those you visited? How can you thank those who sent you?

When you share:

- Have some pictures/short video to show
- If you brought back gifts--give it to them personally
- Share one or two minute testimonies/stories about how you saw God at work during the trip
- Tell what you are going to be doing now because of this trip, and how they can get involved

CLASS 6 HOMEWORK

1. Hopefully you journaled or expressed your feelings in a helpful way during the trip. Make sure to gather your pre-trip thoughts (homework 5) with those thoughts and look over them.

2. Now that you have been home for a bit, how are you feeling? Add to your pre-trip and during trip reflections. What do you miss most about where you were? What are you thankful for now that you are back home?

3. What are some of the Scripture passages that stuck out to you pre, during, and post trip during devotions? Consider memorizing them.

4. The **Assimilator** slides back into home culture, putting all they learned in a box in a back closet. The **Alienator** is critical of the home culture and comparing everything to their trip, often imposing their new ideas on those around them. The **Integrator** understands there are differences, realizes how they themselves have changed, and works to incorporate their new learning into their everyday life. How can you be an integrator?

Sharing my Story Plan:

Letter to Myself, After the Trip: