

CARE FOR YOUR MISSIONARY

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WHILE THEY'RE PREPARING TO GO

Do

Listen to their supporter ask.

Asking for financial support is possibly one of the hardest tasks of a missionary's career. Listen patiently. They're nervous. If possible, know what your answer will be and don't keep them waiting. If you can't support monthly, perhaps offer a onetime gift to help with their setup expenses.

Begin your support before they leave for the field.

Most missionaries cannot leave for their field until they are 100% supported. Beginning your support early not only allows them to see how close they are to their goal, but it also gives them healthy setup funds for when they get to the field.

Give them something special.

It is best not to give them a physical item unless they've specifically asked for it. Gift cards to a restaurant or coffee shop to help with their supporter asks are always a splendid gift. If you want to give them something really special, offer to pay the airline cost for an extra suitcase (normally around \$70-\$120, but be sure to research beforehand). This allows them to bring a whole suitcase of items that otherwise would have been left behind.

Ask

- How were you drawn to this ministry?
- How is your financial support level?
- What work will you do in (country)?
- What are you most excited about looking forward to your ministry?
- What has been the most challenging thing for you during this season of support raising?



Pray

For their calling.

That their calling remains firm during this tough season of preparation and waiting. That as they wait, they be missionaries to those around them.

For their support.

That God may provide the supporters necessary to meet their goal. That they may be courageous as they undergo the supporter ask.

For their goodbyes.

That they may be fortified in the Lord as they prepare to leave everything and everyone they've ever known.

For their preparation.

Whether it be the local language, a specific skill, theological training, or simply emotional preparation, pray that God prepare them for the ministry that lies ahead.

WHILE THEY'RE IN THE FIELD

Do

Reach out and encourage.

Follow their social media accounts or blogs. Comment and like their posts. Respond to their newsletters or send a message to let them know you are specially praying for them (not just for missions in general). Ask if they have any specific prayer requests or needs that you can meet.

Be involved. (See *As a Family*, page 8)

Involve your children in learning and interacting with your missionary. See if there is a possibility to go visit the missionary or make plans for your missionary to visit you. Tell friends and your family about their work so that when they come, they may have new potential supporters.

Be patient.

You want to help. You're rooting them on from afar. But things are slow. In their country, there may be limited internet connection or even no postal service. Planned ministry projects take time to complete, and people take years to come to Christ. Don't pressure, pray.

Ask

- What is something that you've seen God do these past few days?
- Who are your favorite people in (country)? Who are your friends?
- What new skills have you learned by living in (country)?
- What were some cultural shocks that you experienced?
- What has been your favorite part of being a missionary?
- How have you seen God change you as a result of your ministry?
- What fruit, however small, have you seen in your ministry?
- How are you resting, being filled and renewed?



Pray

For language learning.

That they may learn the language so that the gospel can be communicated well and fellowship with the locals can be established.

For cross-cultural communication.

That they may express themselves clearly and be understood within the proper cultural context. That the locals may be brave to respond honestly and openly.

For safety.

For physical safety from robberies, harassment, traffic accidents, kidnappings, and muggings.

For wisdom in ministry decisions.

It's hard to know how to best help people. When to push or when to pull back. For open and closed doors and clear peace and guidance from God.

For spiritual renewal and strength.

For time to rest and spend time in God's presence. For protection from spiritual attacks. For conviction of sin and constant reminders of the gospel.

For physical health.

That God will keep them safe and well from dangerous insects, contagious diseases, contaminated foods. For their digestive system, immune system, and every aspect of their physical health.

For emotional fortitude.

That they may love and forgive those that have offended and disappointed them. That they may trust God so as to not be overwhelmed by failures, need, or brokenness.

WHILE THEY'RE VISITING THE STATES

Do

Give them Grace.

Transitions back or even short visits to the States are hard, frustrating, and unpredictable. Give your missionary grace. They may act or speak strangely. They may need space to adjust, or someone to talk to. They are no longer the same. The States is now a whole different world for them.

Meet their needs.

Do they need a place to stay? A phone? A car? Are they trying to meet with supporters? Reach out and set up a time to talk. Are they trying to support raise? Introduce them to friends. Are they trying to rest? Say hi, drop off a meal, and give them space!

Welcome them.

Say, "Welcome back!" or "Welcome to the States!" Don't say, "Welcome home." It will most likely lead to an awkward pause and a battle of emotions for the missionary. Simply be happy to see them. Love on them. Missionaries are busting to share stories, so let them! Perhaps give them a care package of things that may not be as accessible in their field: gum, applesauce, peanut butter, candy, chocolate, or even books. A special note or card will always be delightful.

Ask

- How have you seen God work this past year?
- What has been your favorite aspect of ministry this past year?
- What has been the most challenging aspect of ministry this past year?
- What plans do you have while in the States?
- How are you creating time to find rest and renewal?
- What things are you most excited about for future ministry?



Pray

For reverse culture shock.

Coming back is hard. Things change, and for your missionary, some things they see in the States may now trigger anger, guilt, or grief. Perhaps their friends have drifted away. They might feel overwhelmed and alienated in this place they once called home. They might feel anxious or be needing to mourn. Pray for peace and rest during this turbulent roller coaster of reverse culture shock.

For meetings and support raising.

That God will open doors for them to meet new supporters and touch people's hearts to become more involved. That God will give them words to be able to share about their ministry. That God will provide for their stateside expenses.

For rest.

Rest seems impossible while in the States. You're on a tight schedule. You're no longer 'home'. There are endless meetings to have. Pray that God provides time for the missionaries to rest, that he take away any guilt, and that they may be restored.

AS A FAMILY

Pray.

Teach your children how to pray for missionaries. Work through the suggested prayer requests as a family. Pray for children of missionary families.

Practice being a missionary.

Practice telling others about Jesus. If your missionary can tell others about Jesus, you can too! Ask your missionary what tools they use to share about Jesus and teach your children how they too can be missionaries with their friends.

Tell stories.

Share missionary stories with your family whether they be older missionary stories or ones your missionary sends from the field.

Learn about your missionary.

Research the country where your missionary works. What is the climate/terrain like? Look up a traditional recipe and try it out. What language do they speak? Try learning a few simple phrases.

Curriculum Integration.

Are your children learning about animals? Ask your missionary what animals they have in their country and ask for pictures. Are your children learning about science? Ask your missionary about the natural disasters they have in their country or the ecosystem. Do they have any cool pictures to share? Missionaries love to send pictures of specific things. Don't be afraid to ask!

Math fun! What is the money conversion rate in the country where your missionary is at? Practice going to a market and having to convert money. What about measurements or temperature? Does your missionary measure in meters or Celsius? What would that look like in your home?

AS A CHURCH

Include missions in children's activities.

During your Sunday school, VBS, or other children's activities, include a missionary story about a missionary that your church is supporting. Perhaps even assign children the project of interviewing and doing a report on a missionary.

Have a missionary display.

Have an easily visible display in a high-traffic location of the church which gives missionary information. This can be a map with each missionary's location, or even a place where missionary prayer cards can be available for people to take.

Make your missionary known.

Remind your congregation to pray for specific missionaries. Mention your missionaries by name every once in a while with a picture and location. Have a missionary visit or video call your children's ministry, youth group, Sunday school, or Bible study. Better yet, have a small group adopt a specific missionary to follow and pray for.

Involve your missionary.

When a missionary comes, whether for a short period or as a permanent transition, involve them in ministries. Missionaries have big hearts for ministry and have a lot of experience to offer. Ask them to visit or help lead a small group, Sunday school, or children's ministry.

Meet your missionary.

Coordinate meetings with other church members or information luncheons when a missionary is in town. Host a debrief meal with elders, pastors, or the missions committee. Encourage them to share about their ministry and ask good questions.

Do missions alongside your missionary.

Plan and send out a short-term mission team to work with your missionary. Research and discuss with your missionary the most effective way to use the short time you will be on the field. Or support and give generously for young people to go on mission trips and be exposed to missions.

RESOURCES

How to share the Gospel

<https://www.sonlife.com/blog/sharing-the-gospel/>
<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/share-the-gospel.html>
<https://www.amazon.com/Ways-Teach-Children-Share-Gospel/dp/0937282006>

Missionary care for churches

<https://threestrandpartners.org/mind-the-gaps/>
<https://www.alifeoverseas.com/4-things-you-should-know-about-reverse-culture-shock/>

Missionary mobilization

<https://threestrandpartners.org/pipeline-missionary-mobilization/>
<https://operationworld.org/>

Missions for children

<https://gospelcenteredfamily.com/blog/5-ways-to-teach-kids-about-missions>
<https://pioneers.org/worldviews-a-childrens-introduction-to-missions>

Short-term missions

<https://natalieinguatemala.com/6-ways-not-to-waste-your-short-term-mission-trip/> <https://www.amazon.com/When-Helping-Hurts-Alleviate-Yourself/dp/0802409989>

Support raising

<https://supportraisingsolutions.org/what-is-personal-support-raising-5-questions-every-donor-should-ask/#.Yyd4YHbMK5c>
<https://www.amazon.com/God-Ask-Biblical-Approach-Personal-ebook/dp/B00CIKKBX6>

ABOUT NATALIE ARAUCO

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Natalie is a missionary for Avant Ministries and has served in the rural Guatemalan village of Chivoc since 2016. She teaches English in a public school to students from 12-18 years old.

But this ministry is more than just teaching another language. Natalie uses her position to present the gospel in a place where it has never been proclaimed—right in the classroom.

Learn more at <https://natalieinguatemala.com/>