

My Adventure in God's World



Re-Entry Project Book

Primary School Students

Claudia Smith



Welcome to the Re-Entry Project Book



Dear Parent

This Re-Entry Project Book is written for you to do with your child before returning to your passport country from the mission field. For younger children they will need help and supervision with cutting and sticking and general encouragement as to what to do. Older children that can read and write will need less supervision dependant upon their abilities.

The Re-Entry Project Book is designed to be printed and then more pages added - so the project can be as big or small as you want it to be. The most important thing is that it's something that your child enjoys doing and helps to make re-entry a positive part of their Adventure in God's World!

Re-entry brings up many thoughts and feelings. Will my child/ren be okay? Will I be okay? How will the family cope? It is not an easy time but with preparation, open, honest and positive communication re-entry can be a soft rather than a crash landing. Of course every one and every child is different and we all cope in different ways but the process of re-entry does have some key stages. It's important to have a good goodbye and to take time to talk together about the highs and lows of living on the mission field. Acknowledging feelings aids in normalising them so don't be afraid to talk about sad feelings. It's good to talk about the friendships your child has made and any sadness they may feel about leaving. It is also helpful to look positively but realistically to the future - another new adventure in God's World!

Saying Goodbye: We all say goodbye in different ways but the important thing is to actually say goodbye. Whether you like a big farewell or prefer a smaller send off, goodbyes are important. They mark the close of one chapter in life and the beginning of another. Children need that goodbye time too. It doesn't need to be elaborate but children should be given the opportunity to say their fond farewells too - to their special friends, special places and anything else that needs a goodbye - perhaps even to toys that have to be left behind.

Acknowledge Feelings: It's important to acknowledge your child's feelings whether they are sad, angry, happy or excited. Sharing your own feelings appropriately is also helpful, as it can be a way of saying, 'we're in this together'. It's important though to talk positively, as this can create positive feelings about the future. This doesn't mean you are ignoring the difficult feelings but rather putting them into perspective.

Naturally it can be a challenge to talk positively if you are feeling uncertain about the future or if you're struggling with the idea of returning to your passport country. It's helpful to be aware of your feelings as children can pick up on things. Take time to work through your own feelings about re-entry, this will enable you to be more supportive to your child. It's okay to share some of your sadness and uncertainty but balance this with talking to your child about trusting God and God being with us wherever we go.

Communication, a positive attitude and keeping some familiar routines can all help to make the re-entry process a positive experience for everyone - though in all fairness it is never easy and would be unrealistic to say it's going to be. Remember though it is a process, a journey, so those feelings of being unsettled will pass in time.



It is helpful prior to re-entry, to make time to explain to your child what the plan is when you get back to your passport country or new home. Share with them where you'll be living and who they might meet. You could ask people your child hasn't seen in a long time or perhaps it is even their first meeting, to send photos of what they look like. The same could be said for new places your child will encounter, especially your new home. Have a think about what would be helpful to your child, a photo of their new school, Sunday school group or even the local shops - these can be helpful in the orientation process when your child gets back, especially if they have never been there before or have few memories.

Of course depending on the age of your child, will depend on how much information they can understand, how much is helpful for them to know and even how much information they want. Some children will have lots of questions: when? why? who? what? Others may be happy to just go with the flow - you know your child, so you can pitch your chat accordingly.

Finally before you leave, take care to pack at least one your child's treasured possession either in their hand luggage or in a clearly marked box. Knowing teddy is being transported safely can bring comfort and reassurance. This is particularly important if you have had to leave things behind. Again it's not easy but often necessary due to cost, space or perhaps things (e.g. clothes) are really not needed e.g. due to different weather.

I hope this project book will aid you to support your child in the first stages of re-entry. There is of course a lot of re-settling to go through as a family as you make the transition back into life off the mission field. Transition can be chaotic at the best of times and with children it has added challenges but you really can be a rock of stability for your child as they adjust to their new life. Remember though, although re-entry can be a daunting time 'You' can give your child so much of what they need by just being there, listening, giving cuddles and keeping some of the routines they had on the mission field - bedtime stories, prayers, Friday night movie night etc. For more advice I thoroughly recommend both books listed below.

God Bless you and give your family a soft landing on your re-entry.

Claudia Smith



Photo needed: *You need photos to stick in for this activity*



Colouring Time: *You'll need either crayons or coloured pencils for this activity.*



Cutting and Sticking: *You'll need scissors and glue for this activity.*

It maybe helpful to cut out pictures your child wants to use, before you start.



Contents & Guidelines for Parents



God Made Me

(Page 7) Seeing photos can open up discussion about how your child has changed over the time you have been on the field. You could talk about physical changes but also changes that people can't see - things they have learnt, experiences they have had, new friendships they have made etc...

God Made My Family

(Page 8) Talk about how everyone in the family has changed but also how people in your passport country have changed - family and friends will have changed too. People will look different e.g. grandparents may have gone grey or lost hair; people maybe fatter or thinner. It can be helpful to talk about how things maybe different to what we remember and that is okay ☺ You can explain that sometimes it is not easy, it might make us feel confused or strange at first but in time things will settle. Be age appropriate, older primary children will be more aware of their feelings than younger children but it is always good to talk, as it creates positive open communication - just remember to keep things simple.

God Made the World 1

(Page 9) Talk about the things your child has enjoyed whilst living on the mission field. This can lead to talk about talking about things they will miss when they leave. It is helpful to acknowledge sad feelings, feelings of loss and share some of what you will miss too! This can help to normalise feelings and help your child to know they are not alone. Think about when you will say goodbye to important and special places - it can be as simple as saying 'This is the last time we will come here. Goodbye..... We will miss you.'

God Made Fun times!

(Page 10) Talk about saying goodbye to special friends. Talk about people your child would like to keep in contact with. Talk about it positively but also realistically (be age appropriate). Sometimes it can be difficult to keep in contact especially in places which have unreliable postal systems or if friends do not have a postal address. This can be sad but it's important to take time to say proper goodbyes, as children also need closure on life events.

God is with me in sad times

(Page 11) As children get older, they are more likely to feel sad about leaving as they will have built relationships with their peers - perhaps at school, at church or in the neighbourhood you live in. Younger children can also be sad but may have different ways of communicating that sadness e.g. behaviours may change; they may



become withdrawn, go off their food. Help your child to write a letter or card to friends they want to say goodbye to. Talk about their feelings about saying goodbye. Talk about God being with them and that they can talk to God anytime if they feel sad or lonely.

God Made the World 2.

(Page 12) Talk about where you will be moving to, the people they will meet (perhaps for the first time). If your child has memories of where you are moving to, talk about those things - share photos if you have them. If you visited on home leave do a bit of reminiscing. Talk about things to look forward to ☺ and the things that will be different and they may not look forward to ☹ e.g. cold weather and being inside more. Remember to err on the positive. Thinking and talking positively will create a positive attitude to re-entry.

God is With Me Everywhere.

(Page 13) Talk to your child about packing to leave. Talk about what they can take and what they will have to leave behind. This isn't easy but if you explain why - space, cost, change of weather etc children often understand much more than we expect them too. Make sure they understand that there will be space for special treasured possessions. This is very important and you'll know as a parent what toys bring comfort to your child. If toys, books or clothes do need to be left behind talk to your child about what they would like to do with them - give them to a friend, a hospital, someone at church etc. Allow your child to be part of the decision making and giving away process.

Prayers to God

(Page 14 - 15) There are lots of good reasons to pray with your child about moving to your new home. As a parent myself, one the reasons I believe prayer is really important is that it models reliance on God, trusting him in all the different situations we face in life. It also means you can remind your child that if they ever want to talk to Jesus about anything, he is always there for them - wherever they are in the world.





God Made Me.

My name is.....

I live in.....

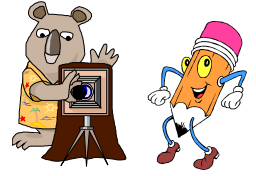
I am moving to live in

Mark where you are on the map and where you are going to live.





God Made Me.



This is a photo of me when I first arrived in
..... I was years old.

This is a photo of me now. I am years
old.





God Made My Family.



8



This is a photo of my family when we first arrived in

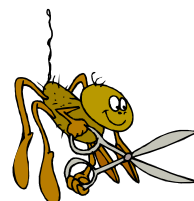
.....

This is a photo of my family now:





God Made the World 1.

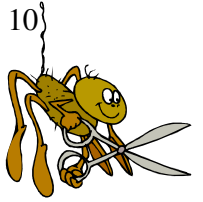


Write, draw pictures and stick things about where you are living e.g. your home, school, church, shops and favourite places.





God Made Funtimes!



Write and draw pictures about the special times, people and places you visited, the things you did and what was best about living on the mission field. Stick in photos; postcards; tickets and anything else you want to.





God is with me in sad times.



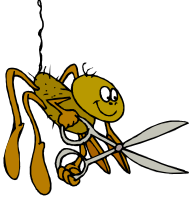
Saying goodbye is not always easy, it can make us feel sad and even cry. But when we say goodbye we can remember the good times we have had, the friends we have made and say thank you to God. We can remember special times and say thank you to our friends for being our friends.

Draw a picture or write a short story about saying goodbye.





God Made the World 2.



Write, draw pictures and stick things about where you will be moving to.





God is with me everywhere.



Write a story and or draw a picture of you packing your things ready to move. Sometime we can't fit everything into our suitcase and have to leave some things behind. Will you have to leave behind any toys, books or clothes? Who could you give these things to - a special friend or someone in need? What are the important things that you need to fit into your suitcase? Have you got a special toy that you want to take with you? Remind mum or dad to put it somewhere safe!





Prayers to God.



Here are some prayers to pray as up move to your new home. You can also write your own prayers or draw pictures to God on this page.



Safety in travel

Dear God, Please keep us safe as we travel to Be with us on our journey to our new home. Thank you. Amen.



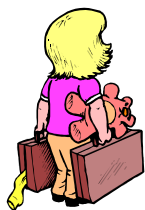
Good times

Dear God, Thank you for being with me and for all the good times I've had here. I feel but I know you will be with me everywhere I go. Thank you. Amen.



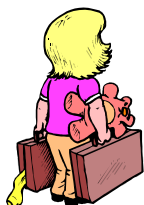
Good Sleep.

Dear God, It's my last sleep here tonight. Tomorrow we will be moving. Help me to sleep well and be ready for our journey. Thank you. Amen.



Packing My Bags.

Dear God, I've started to pack my bags for moving. I can't fit everything in, so have to leave some thing behind. It makes me feel a bit sad. Help to decide what to take and what to leave behind. Help me know who you'd like me to give things to. Help my mum and dad too, they have a lot to do. Thank you. Amen.



Time to Say Goodbye

Dear God, We're moving soon. I'm feeling a bit sad to say goodbye to my friends. Help me not to feel so sad but to remember all the good times I've had. Thank you that you love me and look after me wherever I go God. Amen.





Prayers to God.

More space for prayers



Written by
Claudia Smith

Acknowledgements

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Bibliography

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