



Learner Guide – Sample Pages

Dear Learner,

Welcome to the adventure of international education! Thanks for letting us be a part of your journey.

PFO2Go is designed primarily for persons about to leave the familiar surroundings of “home” to take up a new appointment at an international Christian school, usually in another country and culture than the one in which they currently reside. No matter what your upcoming role is—Teacher, Dorm Leader, School Head, IT Director, or a myriad of other roles that make schools happen—this course is for you.

Since 1987, the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) has provided PreField Orientation training to thousands of new appointees who were then scattered around the globe to engage in international Christian education. Originally, PFO was two weeks of face-to-face instruction, learning, and discipleship, all designed to help new overseas appointees...

...start their new assignment with more confidence, transition more successfully, work with TCKs more effectively, and stay longer at their international schools.

Eventually, the live training was shortened to eight days. Then in the summer of 2020, ACSI piloted PFO2Go v.2020. The purpose of this online course is still the same as PFO-live,

Getting You Ready2Go!

Culture Track Session 1 – We & They



Description: You are about to make a move to a culture that is different than your own. In this session, Jerry Jones introduces what culture is, how we all possess cultural lenses, and how we are very often unaware of those lenses.



Video Length: 15:13 minutes

When you are ready, go to the PFO2Go course website, click on the Culture Track tab, and watch Session 1. Keep this guide handy and press play.



Write down and be ready to discuss with your advisor:

1. Everyone would like to be an expert at something. When entering a new culture, why do you think it is better to aspire to stay a learner rather than aspire to be an expert?

2. What is the “dangerous” question that is better not to ask, and why do you think it’s so dangerous?

3. Take a few moments to develop three simple questions that you will ask over and over to people from different cultures.



Reflect: How might the words of James 1:19 apply when learning about another’s culture? “My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.” (NIV)



Pray: What is on your heart now as you reflect on your upcoming international adventure?



For further learning:

- Visit [Rudyard Kipling's Wikipedia page](#) and read his life story. Later in this PFO2Go course you will be learning about Third Culture Kids (TCKs) like Kipling.
- After you learn a little bit about Kipling's upbringing, find Kipling's poem, *We and They*. Read it aloud to someone or send it in an email with the words, "Look at this cool poem that describes what I (we) will be experiencing!"
- [This short video](#) is a great recitation of "The Ballad of East and West."
- Did you notice that the titles of Culture Track Sessions 1, 3 and 4 come from Kipling's poem?

PFO2Go Bible Study #2

Theme: Facing Struggles, Trials, and Obstacles

Read 1 Peter 1

Focus on vs. 6–7

What are some of the struggles, trials, and obstacles in the life of an alien/stranger/foreigner?

1. Physically?
2. Spiritually?
3. Emotionally?

Let's think about the following:

1. How do you normally respond to grief?
2. Do you and your loved ones (spouse, children, parents, siblings) grieve differently? Why does it matter?

Read James 1:2-4

James also speaks to the issue of trials in our Christian development. Being a stranger and an alien, we know that trials are inevitable, grief is inevitable, and according to James, rejoicing in the midst of it is mandatory. If this is true,

1. Why are we surprised when trials come our way?
2. How do we live with simultaneous grief and joy?

Personal Reflection

“But if I go to the east, he is not there; if I go to the west, I do not find him. When he is at work in the north, I do not see him; when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him. But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.” (Job 23:8-10) How will I prepare myself for the grief yet to come?

Be ready to discuss with your Advisor and possibly your cohort.

Transition Track Session 2 – RAFT Part 1



Description: In this session, Jerry digs into the first half of “RAFT.” While the RAFT content seems relatively simple, digging into these concepts meaningfully will have profound impact on your successful transition. Let’s get rafting.



Video length: 14:37 minutes

When you are ready, go to the PFO2Go course website, click on the Transition Track tab, and watch Session 2. Keep this guide handy and press play.



Write down and be ready to discuss with your advisor:

1. **Your Reconciliation Plan.** This one is hard, but too many people have left home without reconciling and restoring relationships. Did you know that your “issues” fly with you free—no baggage fees? This one is also important! Please find a place to be alone, take the time you need to work through this table, and create a plan to deal with reconciliation before you leave.

Who do you need to reconcile with?	How? Make a few notes. What is the issue? How are you going to approach it? What are your expectations?	When are you going to connect? Set a date and a time.

If you have already left, it’s not too late to reconcile. A video call might be really good here.

2. **Your Affirmation Plan.** You have invested in others and others have invested in you. What do you want people close to you to know before you leave?

Who do you want to affirm?	What do you want them to know? Get specific.	When will you let them know? Date and time?

Again, if you have already left, go ahead and take the time to express words of affirmation to those people in your life who need to hear from you.

As you work through the R and the A of RAFT, remember what Jerry said about *Time Economics*—you are running out of it (time). Spend it well! And P.S., don’t be afraid of tears.



Reflect: “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.” 2 Cor. 5: 18-19 (NIV)



Pray: Ask God for wisdom and courage as you work through the important yet sometimes difficult act of reconciliation.



For further learning:

- Since Dave Pollock came up with the RAFT concept, it has spread everywhere. Just Google it to see what we mean. Thankfully, it plays well in almost any context.
- This [post by Marlyn Gardner](#) gives an excellent overview of RAFT.
- And hey, what about RAFTing during a pandemic? [This blog article](#) covers that one, too. See? You have no excuse.

Unstringing the Bow



Description: In this session, Tim Shuman will unpack a stress-related setback that he experienced as a school head. He will share how he finally learned to “unstring the bow” and correct the lack of work/rest balance in his life. You will be given a set of Unstringing the Bow Practices to better ensure wholeness and joy in your new work.



Video length: 37:15 minutes
When you are ready, go to the PFO2Go course website, click on the Closing Sessions tab, and watch the Unstringing the Bow session. Keep this guide handy and press play.



Write down and be ready to discuss with your advisor:

1. Can you explain how it is possible for a Christian leader to have so little time for God? How will you avoid this problem?

2. Have you ever neglected sleep for ministry/work? How important is sleep/rest to you? How tired are you right now?

3. How prepared are you to say “No” to some good tasks? List examples. Have you asked if there are any unwritten obligations at your new school?

4. Do you have a good sense of your own healthy limits? Does your spouse agree? What happens when you cross that line?

5. What sort of “member care” is available to you at your new school or from your sending agency?

6. Is there someone that you can name right now who's praying for you? How will you stay in touch?

7. When was the last time you had a good laugh with a friend? Are you praying for a new friend right now?



Reflect: Name your personal Israel and then read, "...he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep." Psalm 121: 3-4 (NIV)



Pray: As we near the completion of this PreField Orientation course, how can you pray through the words of Psalm 121:8 "...the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore." (NIV)



For further learning:

- Read [Sleep Well for God is Awake](#).
- Spend a moment and enjoy O'Donohue's poem, [A Blessing For One Who is Exhausted](#).
- Read [Four Reasons Burnout is More Prevalent in Ministry Leadership](#)
- Do one of you need this article, [Is Self-Care Wrong for Christian Moms?](#)
- Read [The Big Impact of a Small Hobby](#) and [Worship God: Start a Hobby](#). Can you name your hobby? Will you be able to practice it in your new location?
- Visit Tim Shuman blog at www.UnstringingTheBow.com



Bonus: Watch the ACSI feature video listed with this session video to hear a head of school share the importance of Christian education in Europe, a Christian teacher share her passion to see her students walk with Jesus, and several students share their own passion to follow Christ.

