

PFO2Go

LEARNER GUIDE

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, with a purpose 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.

In the summer of 2020, due to the global pandemic, PFO became PFO2Go an Online Course. The purpose of this course is still the same as PFO-live.

Getting You Ready2Go!

A word about how the course will work

We know that you have a LOT going on as you prepare for your overseas adventure, so we’ve done our best to keep this course interesting and to the point. The bulk of the course is centered around a series of keynote presentations by three passionate presenters. Between each presentation there will be a series of learning activities found in this Learner Guide that will help you to deepen your learning along the way. This Learner Guide will walk you step-by-step through PFO2Go.

The course begins with an introductory session, then takes you through four very important tracks: Culture, Third Culture Kids, Transition, and Child Safety. Between the tracks there will be a four-part Bible Study and finally, the course will end with a wellness talk, a session on risk, and a final challenge for the adventure ahead. Don’t be surprised if there are a few additional items posted in between.

To get the most out of this course, we suggest that you set aside time when you know you can give concentrated bursts of thinking and reflection to each video presentation. As you will see, the Guide gives you the length of each video presentation so you can plan your time accordingly. You should also tag on anywhere from 15 to 30 more minutes after each

individual video to respond to the reflection activities in the Guide. The Bible study sessions will assume about the same amount of time as each session reflection.

Hopefully, your hiring school has assigned an advisor to walk with you and other new staff through this course. Your advisor will work out a schedule or ways to pace the course with you. Yes, it is possible to take the course alone (the Guide will help you get through), but the learning will be more effective if it includes discussion with your advisor and possibly a cohort of other new hires. If that's not possible, you will have the opportunity to engage with other learners around the world in our PFO2Go Online Community Group.

You will use this Guide to respond to the reflection questions included with each video. Your advisor will work out how to submit your responses.

When you complete the course, you will be awarded Continuing Education Units (CEUs) by ACSI. There is more information on that at the end of the course.

Finally, when you enroll in the course, you will automatically be placed into the PFO2Go Online Community Group on the ACSI platform. This community is a place for you to dialog with fellow learners, ask questions along the way, and give feedback to how the course is going.

With that written introduction behind us, LET'S GET YOU READY2GO!

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PFO2Go Course Opening



Description: In this opening session, Tim Shuman introduces the PFO2Go course and unpacks ACSI and the big world of international Christian education that you are joining.



Video Length: 18:15 minutes

When you are ready, go to the PFO2Go course website, click on the Course Opening tab, and watch the first video. Keep this guide handy and press play.



Write down and be ready to discuss with your advisor:

1. In your own words, what is the main takeaway from the monkey and fish story? How will you apply this to your new adventure?
2. Explore:
 - a. Visit [ACSI's Find a School](#) page. Find your school and see what is listed about your school. Keep in mind, some schools are in "sensitive" areas and might not actually be viewable due to security concerns. If your school is not listed, skip to the next point.
 - b. On the Find a School website, find two random Christian schools in countries other than the USA and the country to which you will be moving. Write down something you learned about those schools.
3. Make your first post in the PFO2Go Community and introduce yourself: Name, School Name and Country, and the role you will fill.



Reflect: Romans 12:5-6 (ESV) reminds us that your gifting is needed in the body of Christ, "...we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them." You are a teacher in an international Christian school. [Read this article](#) to be reminded of the importance of your calling.



Pray: How are you praying right now as you begin this course? Ask God to speak to you in and through all the parts of this PFO2Go course.



For further learning:

- Visit [ACSI Global](#) and learn about ACSI's work in various countries and regions.
- Visit the [ACSI International School page](#) and click on the About Us link to learn our team. Click on the other links to learn more about your membership with ACSI.
- Subscribe to the [ACSI blog](#).



Bonus: Watch the ACSI feature video listed with this session about ACSI's work in Paraguay and the impact on one student's life. You don't want to miss Valeria's story.

PFO2Go Bible Study #1

Each study in PFO2Go is based on the first chapter of 1 Peter that was written to believers who find themselves scattered in new lands and among new cultures. Each study concentrates on the experience of people in transition and the issues of grief, holiness, and love. (There are no videos with the bible studies.)

Theme: Scatteredness and Implications

Read 1 Peter 1

Focus on vs. 1–2

1. When you hear the word "scattered," what comes to mind?
2. What does "scattered" mean in the context of 1 Peter 1:1–2?

Peter calls the believers “aliens” (NASB) and “exiles” (NIV). In general (not in the spiritual sense), what does it mean to be a stranger and an alien?

1. What are some of the reasons for strangers/aliens in today’s world?
2. How do you know if a person is a stranger/alien/foreigner?

Let’s take a look at another passage that has to do with being aliens scattered in the world. Read Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16.

1. How are we as believers like other strangers and aliens in today’s world?
2. How will living outside your passport country as a believer clarify who you are and whose you are?

Personal Reflection

We’ve heard these passages before, but now, suddenly they’re not just about Peter and his friends. They’re about us—you and me—as we obey God’s call on our lives and move overseas. We are about to experience being aliens and strangers, scattered people in the world, in a new way. What does that require of me?

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

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?

Culture Track Session 2 – Understanding Culture



Description: In this session, Jerry will literally give us the official definition of culture. And then in typical Jones fashion he is going to break it down so we can understand and remember it better.



Video length: 15:33 minutes

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



Write down and be ready to discuss with your advisor:

“An integrated system of learned behavior patterns that are characteristic of the members of any given society. Culture refers to the total way of life of particular groups of people. It includes everything that a group of people thinks, says, does, and makes—its systems of attitudes and feelings. Culture is learned and transmitted from generation to generation.” - Robert Kohl

1. At minute 2:30, Jerry asks you to write down the words that jump out at you from Robert Kohl’s definition of culture (given above).
2. Try to answer Jerry’s question, “What is culture?”, but remember what Jerry said, culture connects to everything—so keep it brief.
3. The iceberg model is useful because it informs us of how little we know about another culture. There is so much going on below the surface of any culture. What was Gold Nugget number 3?
4. Complete the fifth grader’s definition of culture: “Culture is the _____ of the group.”
5. Why is it so hard to finish this sentence, “People from my country are....”?
6. “People from (name another country) are....” might be an easier sentence to complete based upon stereotypes, but why are just a few words never enough to describe another country’s culture?



Reflect: How can Peter’s words in I Peter 2 set your heart aright as you think about entering your new culture? “Friends, this world is not your home, so don’t make yourselves cozy in it. Don’t indulge your ego at the expense of your soul. Live an exemplary life among the natives so that your actions will refute their prejudices. Then they’ll be won over to God’s side and be there to join in the celebration when he arrives. Make the Master proud of you by being good citizens.” I Peter 2:11-13 (The Message)



Pray: What prayer is on your heart after this session?



For further learning:

- Google images of “Robert Kohl’s Iceberg Cultural Model” Take a look at several versions.
- Here is an [interesting video](#) that applies the same cultural iceberg to organizational culture.
- This blog post, [Twelve Aspects of Culture that Can Impede Communications](#), is an excellent overview of the challenge of communicating across cultures.
- Check out another [expert definition of culture](#) by Geert Hofstede. You will learn about Hofstede in the next culture session.
- What this [humorous Seinfeld clip](#) on the issue of handshake guidelines. These things are actually quite important around the world.

Culture Track Session 3 – Who are They?



Description: In this session, Jerry gets our hearts and minds ready to enter a new culture. He gives us tips and concepts that will take us from afar and to near, from simple stereotypes to really knowing.



Video length: 14:55 minutes

When you are ready, go to the PFO2Go course website, click on the Culture Track tab, and watch Session 3. Keep this guide handy and press play.



Write down and be ready to discuss with your advisor:

1. Geert Hofstede and his team did research about countries around six cultural dimensions. List the six dimensions here.
2. Do what Jerry suggested and go to [Hofstede-insights.com](https://hofstede-insights.com), scroll down to the Country Comparison Tool. Type in the country in which you are living now (hopefully your cultural home) and then the one to which you are going. List the top two areas of difference between your home country and the other country. While considering those top differences, what might you need to spend some time thinking about as you approach your new country? Any concerns?
3. The research of Polish anthropologist Alicja Iwanska gives us a way to see how some cultures view humans in three categories: scenery (far), machinery (near), people (close). The point here is to have a mindset that will help move you ever closer to people by building relationships. How will you do this? How will you answer the question, “Who are They?”



Reflect: Read [Philippians 2:5-11](#) and notice the great cultural chasm that Jesus crossed (from very far to near) to reach and save the lost. If he did that for you, is there anything preventing you from making every effort to know and love the people you will meet in the culture you are entering?



Pray: How would you express your gratitude to Jesus for reaching across the cultural boundaries for you? And how will you trust him for the days ahead?



For further learning:

- For a one page overview of Hofstede’s six dimensions [visit this page](#) (excuse the spelling errors).
- If you really want to go deep, visit [this YouTube channel](#) to hear Geert Hofstede himself talk about five of the six dimensions (Restraint and Indulgence was added later).

- For something really interesting, visit [Alicja Iwanska's](#) Wikipedia page and read her life story. She personally navigated several challenging cultures and languages.
- If you want to get into Jerry's head on the scenery-machinery-people concept, [read his blog post here](#) and then think through questions you can develop now for conversations later.

Culture Track Session 4 – Who are We?



Description: In this final session on culture, we wrap things up by looking at ourselves. Entering any new culture, whether it is a new country or even a new group, can have uncomfortable aspects simply based upon where you come from and the culture you grew up in. It can produce surprising joys but sometimes it can produce conflicts. This session will give you a way of navigating that entry successfully.



Video length: 17:18 minutes

When you are ready, go to the PFO2Go course website, click on the Culture Track tab, and watch Session 4. Keep this guide handy and press play.



Write down and be ready to discuss with your advisor:

1. Take the Cultural Compass Survey now. Write to PFO@acsi.org to request your access code and then go [to this page](#) and take the survey.

“The purpose of the Culture Compass is to make you aware of potential cultural pitfalls and to increase your effectiveness in dealing with those being born and raised in other countries.” - Culture Compass

Once you have your personalized results, write down at least two things that you learned about yourself and the culture of people you selected. What are things that might be challenges ahead of which to be aware?

2. Jerry mentions five concepts and questions that will help you think through who you are versus the personality of the country or, perhaps more importantly, the group that you will be joining (your school colleagues). Now is a good time to reach out to your advisor and ask questions about the personality of the team and culture you are joining. List a few questions you would like to ask your school advisor.
3. Jerry ends this session with four tips: Frustration is your friend. Grief is good. Ignorance should be embraced. And, Fear comes in flavors. Of those four, which one do you think most applies to you? What will you do about it when it happens?
4. Ok. Let’s ask the question some of you are thinking. Why do you think Jerry Jones has a painting of various international electrical outlets on the wall behind him?



Reflect: James 1:5 is a good verse to pray through as we conclude the culture track. “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.” (NIV)



Pray: Now that the Culture Track is concluded, what is on your heart now that you are bringing to the Lord of all nations, peoples, and cultures?



For further learning:

- Have some fun and watch banking giant HSBC's Culture Ads on YouTube. [Here is a collection of them](#) (excuse the quality of the video as these are a bit old).
- This [video looks at McDonald's menus](#) from 14 countries around the world. It shows McDonald's mastery of culture and openness to change.
- This 15-minute TEDx Talk, [Navigating Global Complexity](#) presents another fascinating look at culture, international changes in the world, and why it's so important that we understand the culture issue. Near minute 10:00, the speaker gives a fantastic example of Hofstede's culture differences by looking at Holland and China saying, "They were meant to clash!" He ends by mentioning the important impact teachers can have on students preparing for an increasingly complex and multicultural world.



Bonus: Watch the inspiring video listed with this session for a big picture view of the work of ACSI Global in national Christian schools around the world.

This is how ACSI defines national and international schools....

- "National" Christian schools are those located outside of the U.S. and primarily focus on serving the indigenous population, following the curriculum guidelines of that particular country.
- "International" Christian schools are those located outside of the U.S. serving the expatriate community and oftentimes, a portion of the host country population. Frequently, instruction is in English with a Western-style curriculum.

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.

TCK Track Session 1 – Introduction and Flipsides

A few notes before we start the TCK track

In this TCK track, Michèle Phoenix takes us on a journey of discovery into the world of Third Culture Kids. The four upcoming sessions will help you get ready to minister effectively to TCKs—in the classroom, the boarding house, the sports field, or even in your own home.

Throughout her video series, Michèle will give you the opportunity to do some personal processing indicated as “Points to Ponder.” Keep your pause button handy.

You’ll also notice that Michèle occasionally refers to something called “Adults of Influence.” That’s you—whatever your role in the lives of TCKs will be. If you’re a parent of TCKs, receive this instruction through that grid. If you’re an educator, administrator, residential staff, or in any way part of a community in which TCKs live, consider the “Points to Ponder” in light of the interactions you will have with the young people in your care.

Finally, you will hear the term “MK” in these sessions. MK, or missionary kid, is one of the subsets of Third Culture Kids. In the world of international Christian schools, there are some schools that are referred to as MK schools—schools that focus primarily on that particular group of TCKs. Some of you taking this course are headed to some of those MK schools around the world.



Description: In this first session, Michèle introduces this complex group of young people by taking us through a series of interesting benefits and challenges (“Flipsides”) that TCKs possess. Happy learning!



Video length: 27:38 minutes

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



Write down and be ready to discuss with your advisor:

The FLIPSIDES of being a TCK	
BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
Global mindset	Confused loyalties
A 3-D understanding of the world	A painful awareness of reality
Adaptable	Lack of full belonging anywhere
Hyper-mobile	Can lead to restlessness and isolation
Independent	Selective attachment
Highly savvy in some areas	Completely inept in obvious areas

- Michèle covered a lot of ground in these TCK Flipsides. When you finish watching this session, answer at least one of the following...

- If you are a TCK yourself, is there one of these Flipsides with which you most identify? Most of them? All of them?
- If the concept of TCK is new to you, what one or two of these Flipsides fascinates you most? Are you getting excited to learn more about TCKs?
- If you are a mono-cultural person married to a TCK, what did you just learn about your spouse?
- If you are going overseas with your school age or younger children, are you beginning to see the gift that being a TCK can be? Explain.
- Points to Ponder. How can you, as an Adult of Influence, foster a context in which TCKs can celebrate the gift of living between worlds while also offering a context in which they can express the hard parts of that life.



Reflect: Matthew 19:14. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” (NIV) Your international Christian school is full of TCKs. How will you create a welcoming environment for them?



Pray: What is on your heart as you start this TCK series that you want to express to the Lord?



For further learning:

- Read this blog post: [The Most Daunting Place for a Missionary Kid](#). Excellent description of growing up between worlds.
- Consider adding the book, [Third Culture Kids 3rd Edition, Growing Up Among Worlds](#) to your library. Some refer to it as “The TCK Bible.”
- The TCK definition that Michèle read to you was developed by the late [David Pollock](#). Pollock was one of the original designers of ACSI’s PFO (PreField Orientation) training. Check out this [Wikipedia page](#) on the topic of TCKs.
- Read this single-page article [Why Third Culture Kids Make Great Employees](#)

TCK Track Session 2 – Three Cultures of Influence



Description: This session will look at three major cultural influences that shape all TCKs. Michèle will also spend a bit of time looking at the important subset of TCKs known as MKs (missionary kids) that you will meet in most international Christian schools.



Video length: 27:33 minutes

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



Write down and be ready to discuss with your advisor:

1. Points to Ponder #1 (minute 11:51). How can you, as an Adult of Influence, be aware of what the TCKs in your care are absorbing from the culture(s) around them? What do you need to look out for? What are questions and contexts that might open helpful conversations?
2. Points to Ponder #2 (minute 19:11). Regarding the “shoulds” so many TCKs and particularly MKs live under, how can you help them to acknowledge the often-unspoken pressures imposed on them? What kind of questions and conversations might be helpful? How can you help them to understand God’s view and expectations of them—and gain a deeper understanding of flaws, forgiveness, and restoration? How can you apply those to yourself?
3. Points to Ponder #3 (minute 24:33). As an Adult of Influence, how can you contribute to TCKs having a balanced opinion of their passport culture if their tendency is to see only its negative traits? If you witness “culture bashing,” how can you intervene in a helpful way?
4. Points to Ponder #4 (at the conclusion of this session). We’ve looked at how complex and multi-cultural each TCK’s “purple” is. How can you be an instrument of clarity and understanding in helping him/her to sort through the influences of each piece of their identity? What personal work do you need to do to respond wisely to cultural differences/behaviors you might find jarring?



Reflect: “Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think. Then you will learn from your own experience how his ways will really satisfy you.” Romans 12:1-2 (TLB)



Pray: What are you asking God for right now as you consider your upcoming ministry?



For further learning:

- Watch [this TEDx talk](#) by Ruth Van Reken (one of the authors of Third Culture Kids 3rd Edition) where she tells her own story of growing up as a TCK.
- Here is an extensive resource put together by Aetna (yes, Aetna, the insurance company): [The Benefits of Being a Third Culture Kid – a Reality Check.](#)

TCK Track Session 3 – Grief and Its Impact on Faith



Description: In this session Michèle covers some of the TCK “hard stuff” that comes with growing up among worlds. Your attention to this issue will prepare you for your work with TCKs.



Video length: 29:23 minutes

When you are ready, go to the PFO2Go course website, click on the TCK Track tab, and watch Session 3. Keep this guide handy and press play.



Write down and be ready to discuss with your advisor:

1. What are the griefs and losses you’ve personally experienced that still need healing?
2. If someone were to ask you about God’s role in life’s hardest hurdles, what would you answer? How would you express that in terms clear and simple enough for a child or young believer to correctly understand?
3. What should we avoid saying (even if it is truth) to someone who is intensely suffering?
4. How can Adults of Influence demonstrate and embody healthy grieving for the young people watching?
5. What are the prerequisites for entering into spiritual conversations with TCKs? What needs to be in place first in order for those interactions to be honest and well received?



Reflect: “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3-4



Pray: Express to the Lord any concerns, hurts, burdens, or joys that may be on your mind right now.



For further learning:

- Visit Michèle’s website [here](#). [This page](#) is packed with different articles sorted by topic all dedicated to MKs/TCKs well-being. These could be useful to you one day.
- Michèle mentioned her friend Libby Stephens in this session. Visit [Libby’s page](#) of similar resources for additional helps.
- Interaction International has a similar [extensive set of resources found here](#).

TCK Track Session 4 – Relationships, Belonging & Influence



Description: In this final session on TCKs, Michèle walks us through how TCKs process relationships and belonging. She will also give us some tips on how we can help the TCKs in our spheres of influence navigate those same areas in healthy ways.



Video length: 22:18 minutes

When you are ready, go to the PFO2Go course website, click on the TCK Track tab, and watch Session 4. Keep this guide handy and press play.



Write down and be ready to discuss with your advisor:

1. Points to Ponder (minute 10:11). Why is it important for TCKs to understand the ways they enter into and live out relationships differently?
2. How might you, as an Adult of Influence, help them to understand the potential consequences of not adjusting their relational methods for different places and contexts?
3. Points to Ponder (comes up near minute 13:45). Imagine a conversation in which a TCK tells you that he/she doesn't feel a sense of belonging anywhere. What questions would be good to ask? What questions would allow them to reveal more of what they feel? What questions would allow you to point them (gently and without simplifying the issue) toward the benefits of "straddling?"
4. Points to Ponder (after the video session). Now that you've watched and interacted with all four sessions on TCKs, please take the time to ponder the following:
 - a. What in your own life story has parallels with some of what you've learned about TCKs—even if you are not a TCK?
 - b. How are you, as an Adult of Influence, uniquely positioned to help and mentor the MKs in your care?



Reflect: "If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up." Ecclesiastes 4:12 (NIV)



Pray: Pray for the young TCKs you know and the ones that you will work with in the future.



For further learning:

- Read this article at OMF called, [If You're a TCK You Know This About Relationships](#)

- Check out this helpful article called, [Supporting Your TCK](#)
- Do a YouTube search for “TCK Belonging” and see what happens.
- Here are a couple of good, yet random, YouTube hits: [9 Things Every Third Culture Kid Can Relate to](#) and [You Know You’re a Third Culture Kid When...](#)



Bonus: Watch the short clip included with this session webpage to discover why one national school leader founded a Christian school in her country.

PFO2Go Bible Study #3

Devotional Guide

Theme: Prepare Your Minds for Action

Read 1 Peter 1

Focus on vs. 13–16

Practically speaking, what do these concepts (from vs. 13-16) mean and what do they require of us?

1. Minds that are alert and fully sober
2. Stay focused on the hope of God's eternal purposes
3. Be obedient
4. Do not conform
5. Be holy

It is not a small task for us to do the things above whether we're at home or elsewhere. But as aliens and strangers living overseas, we're already different. We already stand out. We're already conspicuous. People watch us; they notice what we do. They will interpret some of our behaviors as consistent with national stereotypes. They may think others stem from some "religious" belief. Our challenge is to go a step further. In reality, rather than representing our passport countries or our evangelical traditions, we are representing God, our holy Father, and His Truth in all we do. What might it look like to represent God rather than my culture?

Check out I Peter 2:11-12. To appear to be different, we must be different. Moving overseas gives us a new opportunity to make new commitments but frankly, during the chaos of transition, there will not be time or energy to do this. We need to act NOW, to make decisions NOW, to become the people God wants us to be.

Personal Reflection

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will." Romans 12:1-2 (NIV). What sacrifices will you have to make to be holy? You might want to write out a prayer of commitment.

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

Transition Track Session 1 – What is Transition?



Description: The Transition Track is meant to make you aware of and prepare you for what is coming your way as you move overseas. In this first transition session, Jerry Jones, in his own unique way, will share with us how transition can be compared to puberty and how transition is more of a process than an event.



Video length: 15:57 minutes

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



Write down and be ready to discuss with your advisor:

1. Which characteristics of transition resonates with you? Give examples. **Mood Swings, Funky Brain** (Forgetfulness, etc.), **Snarfing** (Poor food choices), **Fighting with People You Don't Disagree With**, **Digital Paralysis** (Overuse of technology), **Broken Ears** (Social disconnection), **Exhaustion**, and **Weird Things Happening** (Anxiety, Stress, Uncharacteristic experiences).
2. Answer this question without giving the date on your airplane ticket and explain your response, "When are you leaving?"
3. Why is it so important to understand this sentence, "Leaving is not an _____, it's a _____."
4. Look again at Pollock's Chaos Bridge. Where do you think you are right now? How so?
5. No matter what you are feeling at this moment, what does Jerry say to you at the end of this session that should encourage you?



Reflect: Read [Psalm 73](#) with transition in mind. Notice how Asaph makes the transition in this Psalm from "But as for me, my feet had almost slipped..." in verse 2 to "Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand" in verse 23. (NIV)



Pray: Pray through, "But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds." Psalm 73:28 (NIV)



For further learning:

- Check out Jerry's blog and read his article, [Why Transition is Like Puberty](#). You might like to share this with a close friend who will be praying for you during your upcoming move.

- Dave Pollock's Chaos Bridge has undergone different iterations by others. Check out this helpful article [The Shaky Bridge of Transition](#) where the writer added a bit more detail to the challenge of transition.

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, and 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 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 those 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.

Transition Track Session 3 – RAFT Part 2



Description: In this session, Jerry digs into the second half of “RAFT”, the F of Farewell and the T of Think Destination. You will be challenged once again to make a plan for leaving well.



Video length: 13:36 minutes

When you are ready, go to the PFO2Go course website, click on the Transition Track tab, and watch Session 3. Keep this guide handy and press play.



Write down and be ready to discuss with your advisor:

1. **Your Farewell Plan.** List the people, places, pets, and possessions to which you need to bid farewell. Get those events on your calendar. If you have accompanying children, you must include them in the conversation.

People	Places	Pets	Possessions

If you have already left, you can still say farewell from a distance. Find time to get quiet and revisit those four Ps in your mind and talk/pray it through.

2. **Your Think-Ahead/Destination Plan.** Set aside time to make a list of questions that you would like to have answered about your new location. Once you have your list, share it with your advisor.

Questions	Key Person

Time economics apply to the F and the T of RAFT as well. Spend it well!

If you are already at your destination, it could be helpful to your advisor if you made a list of “I wish I had thought earlier to ask about...”



Reflect: The apostle Paul often closes his writings with wonderful words of farewell. Check out this closing for example, “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” 2 Cor. 13:14 (NIV). What similar words might you use in your farewells?



Pray: Ask God for the right words to say to people, places, pets, and possessions and the grace to look forward to the new calling on your life.

For further learning:



- [This article by Woodstock school](#) captures the importance of RAFT beautifully for their graduating class of 2020. This line is especially relevant, “It may only take days to pack our bags, but it can take much longer to work through our own transitional baggage.”
- If you can, go ahead [do what this writer says](#) about the T in RAFT and Google-street-view your school and the surrounding area. Are there videos out there of your neighborhood? Look for the best restaurants in town, etc. That’s part of thinking ahead too. PS. Not all countries allow street view on google. Check out Germany – they only have street view in a few major cities.

Transition Track Session 4 – You in Transition



Description: International transition is exciting, but it can also bring stress. This final transition session helps you prepare for the impact of transition stress and to make a plan to minimize that impact on you as an individual, a couple, or family.



Video length: 16:48 minutes

When you are ready, go to the PFO2Go course website, click on the Transition Track tab, and watch Session 4. Keep this guide handy and press play.



Write down and be ready to discuss with your advisor:

The “4 stages of Culture Shock” model shows you what so many others have gone through ahead of you. While it shows some tough times ahead (transition stress), it should give you hope knowing there is a way through it. It’s normal! With that in mind, it is important to start thinking now about how you will navigate those times of stress. Some prepared self-talk might be useful like, “I’m feeling stressed right now.... oh yeah, the PFO2Go team told me there would be times like this during my first year and this what I’m going to do about it.”

1. Let’s start with Jerry’s question. How do you respond to stress? Withdrawal? Anger? Overwork? Addiction? Something else?
2. What are the most effective ways for you to take care of yourself? Exercise? Reading? Time with friends? Quiet time? Personal devotion? Something else?
3. What is your plan for the hardest days to come?



Reflect: The apostle Paul shows us in Philippians 4:12 how he dealt with tough times in the past and those experiences instruct him in his present circumstances. “I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.” (NIV)



Pray: Ask God for wisdom in planning, grace for coming times of tension, and joy and contentment for the journey. He is going before you.



For further learning:

- This page is a [wonderful short bible study](#) on dealing with stress.
- Consider subscribing to Jerry Jones’ [CultureBlend blog](#)
- Entry Posture model is another tool that explains how to approach new cultures and new work environments. [This explanation](#) by InterVarsity is an excellent overview for entering new cultures successfully.



Bonus: Watch the short clip included with this session webpage to learn about Laci Demeter, Director of ACSI Europe, and his work serving national schools across Europe.

PFO2Go Bible Study #4

Theme: Loving One Another

Read 1 Peter 1

Focus on vs. 22

- How is living as a community of believers overseas like living in a fishbowl?
- What are the potential stresses and joys of living in the fishbowl?
- What is the role of love within this community?

Consider this definition: “Love is choosing to act on behalf of another for their good and God’s glory.” - David C. Pollock.

- Using this definition of love, what does it mean “to love one another deeply from the heart?”
- What hard or painful decisions might we need to make to live in love?
- What potential do those decisions have for dividing or unifying the body?

“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 15:5-6 (NIV)

Personal Reflection

“...be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply because love covers a multitude of sins.” 1 Peter 4:7b-8 (NIV) How will loving deeply control how I live within this new community?

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

Child Safety Track



Description: In this session, Jacki Steinkamp introduces you to the basics of child safety in your work and ministry at an international Christian school. There much more that can and should be said and learned regarding Child Safety at your international Christian school. This session is best done in consultation with your advisor and/or cohort of learners to unpack how things work at your new school.



Video length: Session 1: 5:17 and Session 2: 7:20 minutes

When you are ready, go to the PFO2Go course website, click on the Child Safety Track tab, and watch the two videos one after the other. Keep this guide handy and press play.



Write down and be ready to discuss with your advisor:

Video Session 1...

1. In what ways do teachers have power over students? *(Pause at 02:35 in Session 1 video)*
2. What two key components can help you reduce the power differential and better ensure a safe learning environment for your students?
3. What are ways that you can increase visibility and accountability? What about digital communication with students? Does your school have a policy about this? *(Pause at 04:25 in Session 1 video)*

Video Session 2...

4. What are some simple ways you can be a safe and trustworthy person for your students? *(Pause at 01:10 in Session 2 video.)*
5. List and discuss why promising confidentiality to a child could be a problem. *(Pause at 03:42 in Session 2 video.)*
6. List a few components of a child safety program you could expect at your school.
7. List three things you can do as an educator to guard yourself against accusations of harm. Think through the cultural context you'll be in.
8. List three things you can do to safeguard the children in your care. Once again, think through the cultural context. In some cultures, children do not have a voice and they're not valued. Be sure to discuss what those different cultural contexts might be at your school.



Reflect: The kingdom of God belongs to the little children. Children reflect the openness to truth we are called to follow (Mark 10:14-16). Jesus also teaches us that if we welcome a little child, we are welcoming God (Luke 9:48). How do we follow this mandate as educators?



Pray: Ask God to give you discernment and wisdom when working with children, to see and hear the subtle signals and requests for help.



For further learning:

- Find online or ask for a copy of your school's Child Safety Policies and Procedures. Read them thoroughly and be prepared to ask any questions you may have. Be sure to discuss these with your advisor so you are sure how things work at your school.
- Questions you could ask include...Does the school have a Code of Conduct? Does the school have a policy about how to proceed in a case of a disclosure or report of harm? Are there protocols for responding to situations? Is there a policy for discipline? Is there training in place for staff and students?
- Visit Dalat International School's website and check out some sample resources and videos at <https://www.dalat.org/web/re-child-protection/>
- Visit the Child Safety and Protection Network website at <https://www.cspn.org/> to learn more about a network of Christian organizations and schools working together to provide resources and training in child safety.



Bonus: Optional Bible Study

Key Scriptures:

Ephesians 6: 4 says, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children, but raise them up with loving discipline and counsel, that brings the revelation of our Lord. We have the responsibility to bring the revelation of our Father in heaven to the children under our care."

Psalms 127:3 calls children "a heritage from the Lord."

Matthew 18 demonstrates the value God places on them. Jesus had a very cruel punishment to offer adults who misguide children and cause them to stumble: Mathew 18:6 "If anyone causes one of these little ones--those who believe in me--to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea." It was a serious offense in Jesus's sight.

Sexual abuse is the enemy's scheme that destroys the very temple of God which is our body (1 Corinthians 6:19) We are all prone to the attack of the enemy, therefore we need to put on the armor of God fully and fight this battle for ourselves and for the children whom we are responsible for.

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

Reflection:

Ephesians 6:4 says that we have the responsibility to bring the revelation of God to the children under our care. In other words, we need to reflect Christ in all our relationships, especially children in this context.

- What are the weapons that the enemy might use to distort the image of God that we need to reflect while caring for children?

Matthew 18:6 Jesus says if anyone causes one of these little ones to stumble, it would be better to have a large millstone hung around their neck and be drowned.

- Discuss how sexual abuse can cause children to stumble.

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

- How may we protect ourselves and stand firm so that we can fight the battle of sexual sin on behalf of the children?

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 at your new location?
- Visit Tim Shuman's little hobby blog at www.UnstringingTheBow.com



Bonus: Watch the ACSI feature video included 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.

A Theology of Risk



Description: In September of 2002, the International Christian School (now closed) in Bouake, Côte d'Ivoire, an American boarding school for missionary children, found itself in the crossfire of a civil war. In this video, Evan and Jewel Evans tell the story of that experience and how they learned to trust God for his care.



Video length: 7:39 minutes

When you are ready, go to the PFO2Go course website, click on the Closing Sessions tab, and watch the Theology of Risk video. Keep this guide handy and press play.



Write down and be ready to discuss with your advisor:

1. At minute 1:27, Jewel tells how their family had started to develop a “Theology of Risk” in the face of escalating tensions in Côte d'Ivoire. To what conclusions have you arrived regarding the potential risks that might be facing you in your upcoming move overseas?
2. Jeremiah 42, the passage of scripture that Jewel mentions, provides us a similar story of a people under serious threat. In verse 3, we see how the people approached Jeremiah with this desperate request, “Pray that the Lord your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do.” (NIV) Now would be a good time to read the rest of the chapter to discover how God answered Jeremiah’s prayer for direction. In verses 9-11, we see several really clear and wonderful promises of God to his people. What specific promises from the Word are you hanging on to and taking with you to your new role?



Reflect: We share the Evans’ story with you because there are risks associated with serving at an international school. Things like unrest, fear, or really tough times have the potential to derail the calling on your life. Continue reading in Jeremiah 43 to see how the people responded when Jeremiah gave them a word from the Lord (warning, it wasn’t good). It is important to set your own theology of risk now, so you know how to respond when difficult times come.



Pray: Ask the Lord to show you his promises of care.



For further learning:

- Check out the Wikipedia page for the [International Christian School](#) mentioned in the risk video.
- Read this [New York Time’s article](#) and this [CNN report](#) from 2002 to learn more about what happened at ICA.

PFO2Go Closing Challenge



Description: You are about to enter a world of international children. In this closing session, Tim Shuman will close the PFO2Go course by reminding us of that scene where Jesus insisted, against the better judgment of his disciples, that the children be brought to him so he could bless them.



Video length: 17:06 minutes

When you are ready, go to the PFO2Go course website, click on the Closing Sessions tab, and watch the Closing Challenge. Keep this guide handy and press play.



Write down and be ready to discuss with your advisor:

1. Have you ever worked with a student/young person who you struggled with? How did you handle that situation?
2. What does it mean to see the students in your class, even the one or two you struggle with, the way that Jesus sees them?
3. Share a story about a young person that turned out better than you imagined it would.
4. Please share how you came to be called to join your new Christian school, including how you felt the Lord's leading in this call to overseas service.



Reflect: Where are you in this story? "Little children were brought for Jesus to lay his hands on them and pray. But the disciples scolded those who brought them. "Don't bother him," they said. But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and don't prevent them. For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." And he put his hands on their heads and blessed them before he left." Matthew 19:13-15 (TLB)



Pray: Start to pray now for the TCKs that will be in your classroom, on your dorm floor, or outside your office door. How will you welcome them to Jesus?



For further learning:

- [Watch this short scene](#) from the new TV series The Chosen that shows Jesus with the children. This [behind the scenes clip](#) is also fun.
- Read [Becoming More Christian in Christian Schools](#)
- Read [All Belong: Defining Christian Community](#)
- Dr. Robert Loe, founder and Director of [Relational Schools](#) writes and speaks on the importance of fostering positive relationships between key stakeholders in schools. He is a Christ follower and cares deeply about relationships in schools. Watch this short [Relational Teacher trailer](#) and then spend more time looking at [RS materials](#).

Course Completion Details

Congratulations on completing PFO2Go.

- By completing the course, you have earned valuable CEUs (Continuing Education Units) from ACSI. Your advisor will submit your CEU form for you.
- Just because you completed the course doesn't mean that your involvement in the PFO2Go Community Group has to end. You can continue to dialog with other learners along the way.
- Once you've completed the course, we will be sending you a survey through Community to get your feedback for improvements. Your input is valuable to us.

Blessings on your new international adventure in international Christian education.

See you somewhere in the world.

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