

# Third Culture Kid (TCK) & MK Resources

Compiled by the Barnabas MK Team

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## Things to Know about a TCK

1. They have had cross-cultural experience during their developmental years.
2. They or the people around them have moved a lot which brings a lot of hellos and goodbyes.
3. They usually are expected to repatriate to their parent's home country.
4. They often feel like a "hidden immigrant" where they like look the culture around them but think differently.
5. They experience a lot of losses—seen and unseen things and might have unresolved grief.
6. Their identity should be rooted in Christ, the rock that never changes, but they often struggle with the question "Who am I?"
7. They hate the question, "Where are you from?" Instead ask, "Where do live right now?" Or you could ask "Where did you grow up?"
8. TCKs tend to enter into relationships at a deeper level than a "typical" American because they are short on time and have said a lot of goodbyes in their lifetime.
9. TCKs might not have roots or might never want to move again; some struggle with being restless.
10. No two TCKs are the same (even in the same family); love them for who they are—how God has made them and the experiences He's given them.

## Barnabas Resources

1. Transition Seminar (<https://www.barnabas.org/member-care/events/mk-transitional-seminar>): designed for third-culture kids (TCKs) and missionary kids (MKs) who have just completed their high school experience overseas; provides helpful tools that prepare students for the transition back into life and college in North America.
2. Mu Kappa ([www.mukappa.org](http://www.mukappa.org)): a fraternal organization of MKs on college campuses across North America
3. Barnabas Website (<https://www.barnabas.org/resources/member-care-downloads>) (Families, Singles & MKs)
4. Judy Keith ([judykeith@barnabas.org](mailto:judykeith@barnabas.org)): as a Mu Kappa rep Judy focuses on college MKs in universities across the U.S.
5. Krista Milliser ([krista.milliser@barnabas.org](mailto:krista.milliser@barnabas.org)): Krista coordinates the TCK programs at TRAIN International in Joplin, Missouri. Her favorite age to work with is elementary and younger (and their parents).
6. Donna Messenger ([messengerd@barnabas.org](mailto:messengerd@barnabas.org)): as the Director of Mu Kappa, Donna works with universities and MKs in school settings; coordinates regional college MK retreats as well as directs the summer Reentry seminar
7. Darci Nealeigh ([darci.nealeigh@gmail.com](mailto:darci.nealeigh@gmail.com)): growing up as a MK in Brazil, Darci has had first hand experience with the benefits and challenges of growing up

cross-culturally and transitioning stateside as a young adult. She loves to walk alongside MKs in their life journey; her years working with MKs and their families at Oklahoma Christian University, Mission Training International and Barnabas International has equipped her to work with all ages of MKs.

8. Tammy Sharp ([tammy.sharp@barnabas.org](mailto:tammy.sharp@barnabas.org)): growing in Brazil as a MK, Tammy has an unique perspective on the blessings of growing up cross-culturally and loves to journey alongside of MKs; her years at a mission agency has equipped her to work with all ages of MKs.
9. Dave & Janet Kronbach ([jkronbach@barnabas.org](mailto:jkronbach@barnabas.org)): having worked with MKs for years, Dave and Janet have developed a GATE action plan for expat parents to help their child transition to university; email to receive the plan.
10. MK Caregiver Summit ([www.mkcaregivers.org](http://www.mkcaregivers.org)): this conference/training for MK Caregivers has been sponsored by Barnabas and is usually in the spring each year;

**The Word of God:** the verses listed below are just some initial ideas of how Biblical truth could encourage us as caregivers, MKs, their families

1. Why do MK ministry?
  - a. MKs exist! John 13:34-35 - we are commanded to love one another and "by this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
  - b. MKs have their experience as children. Mark 10:13-16 - Jesus welcomes the children that were brought to him. "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God."
2. Parents are responsible for their MKs and Fathers are important to MKs!
  - a. Exodus 12:25-27
  - b. Deuteronomy 6
  - c. Ephesians 6:4
  - d. Malachi 4:6
  - e. Mark 10:13-16
  - f. Proverbs 4:1-4
  - g. Psalm 78:5-7
3. Identity
  - a. 2 Corinthians 5:17 - if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation
  - b. Revelation 2:17 - God will give us a white stone with a new name written on it that no one knows except the one who receives it
  - c. Psalm 139: 1, 13 - the Lord has searched us and knows us; He created us in our mother's womb
4. Transition
  - a. Psalm 139:2-3, 7-10 - the Lord knows our going out & lying down; if we settle on the far of the sea his hand will guide us
  - b. Hebrews 13:8 - in the midst of changes there is one thing that is constant--Jesus!
  - c. Psalm 23 - he guides us along the right paths; his rod and staff comfort us through dark valleys
  - d. Psalm 121:8 - The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.
  - e. Hebrews 11:8-16 - God is preparing a city for us in a better country; we might feel like foreigners and strangers on earth and live in tents

5. Grief and Loss
  - a. Hebrews 4:14-16 - Jesus can sympathize with our weaknesses (MK life) because he was tempted too; we can find mercy and grace to help in time of need
  - b. Psalm 137 - the Israelites left their home and wondered how they could sing the Lord's song in a foreign land; it's ok to weep!
6. Relationships
  - a. Hebrews 13:5 - in the midst of making new friends and saying goodbye, MKs have someone who says "I will never leave you nor forsake you."
  - b. Proverbs 18:24 - and a friend who will stick closer than a brother
7. Importance of Story
  - a. Joshua 4:19-24 - a reminder to remember our "story" (by using stones or markers) to give testimony to others that the hand of the Lord is mighty and that we may fear the Lord our God forever
  - b. Psalm 66:16 - reminder to come and hear all that God has done for the soul of MKs
8. TCKs in the Bible
  - a. Jesus!
  - b. Ruth
  - c. Daniel
  - d. Joseph

### **Books about MKs (for parents, caregivers, teachers . . . )**

1. Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds by David C Pollock, Ruth E Van Reken, Michael Pollock; the "Bible" that explains the TCK experience
2. Misunderstood: the Impact of Growing up Overseas in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century by Tanya Crossman
3. The Global Nomad's Guide to University Transition by Tina Quick
4. Belonging Everywhere and Nowhere: Insights into Counseling the Globally Minded by Lois Bushong
5. Raising Resilient MKs: Resources for Caregivers, Parents and Teachers by Joyce Bowers, editor
6. Too Small to Ignore by Wess Stafford
7. The Family in Mission: Understanding and Caring for Those Who Serve by Leslie A. Andrews, General Editor
8. Burn Up or Splash Down: surviving the culture shock of re-entry by Marion Knell
9. Families on the Move: Growing up overseas - and loving it! by Marion Knell

**Books for MKs:** the books have age-appropriate codes; P is for preschool, E for elementary, M for middle school, H for high school, C for College, A for Adult

Note: the Third Culture Kids book is also recommended for MKs in high school or older

1. Swirly by Sara Saunders; an excellent book to describe what it means to be a TCK and that Jesus is also a TCK! P, E, M, H
2. I have to be Perfect (And Other Parsonage Heresies) by Timothy L Sanford; this is a manual of the lies MKs might have grown up with and how to find their way back to the truth. H, C, A

3. One Thing Never Changes by Shawn Strannigan; This story about a family's move (written from a Christian perspective) includes activities and parental suggestions for helping young children prepare for a move. P
4. Goodbye, House by Robin Ballard; A girl says goodbye to each room in her house and remembers special events there. This book could be used to help children implement RAFT. P, E
5. When Africa Was Home by Karen L. Williams; A preschooler's perspective of reentry. Returning to New York when his father's job finishes, he longs for the familiar ways of living in Africa. He articulates many of the things older children feel but are often unwilling to express. P, E
6. Ira Says Goodbye by Bernard Weber; Ira's best friend is moving. Follow Ira's struggle with his friend who idealizes the location. The story illustrates a negative example how to tell a child about a move. On a more positive note, it demonstrates how to say goodbye and gives some hope for maintaining a long-distance relationship. E, M
7. Tear Soup: A Recipe for Healing after Loss by Pat Schwiebert and Chuck DeKlyen; this book on grief is rich with wisdom and recommendations on dealing with loss. E, M, H, C, A
8. A Bad Case of Stripes by David Shannon; Camilla struggles with her identity and what others think of her. This book is a story of her journey through what others expect from her and her true identity. P, E, M
9. With by Skye Jethani; Using prepositions--*under, over, from, for* and *with*, Skye explains faulty reasonings in how people relate to God and gives a refreshing look at how we should be in relationship *with* him. This book is eye-opening for MKs who think they understand how to relate to God but are struggling in that relationship. H, C, A
10. A Monster Calls by Patrick Ness; A tree monster shows up after midnight to haunt Conor who is going through the grief process of a mother dying of cancer. This monster is looking for truth - which can only come from Conor and his true feelings. M, H, C
11. The Keeping Quilt by Patricia Polacco; The author has written and illustrated a book about her family's precious heirloom quilt. Good story to remind parents that family traditions and special treasures can help children/teens have a bit of continuity in the midst of so much transition. P, E
12. Stellaluna by Janell Cannon; Baby bat, Stellaluna, is separated from her mother and raised in a nest of baby birds. She adjusts to their ways but never quite fits until she meets fellow bats & finds she's "normal." Her adopted bird siblings can't do what she can, but although they are both different and the same, they stay connected. Though not a TCK book, it could have applications for expat kids, growing up between two different ways of life.

## **Movies**

1. Inside Out; the movie goes inside the head of eleven year old Riley as she moves to a new location. Though she may not be classified as a TCK, she experiences the emotions that are common to TCKs going through transition. P, E, M, H, C, A
2. The Road Home; Bullied for insisting he is British despite his Indian heritage, ten-year old Pico runs away from a boarding school in the Himalayas, determined to return to his home in England. As he journeys through a landscape unknown to him

- Pico encounters others who mistake him for an Indian boy, forcing him to face the painful truth that the world does not see him the way he sees himself. M, H, C, A
3. Mary Poppins; a snippet of this movie illustrates a bad goodbye (when Mary Poppins leaves the children); could be used as a discussion on how to say goodbye well
  4. Saving Mr. Banks; this movie is the backstory behind the making of Mary Poppins and emphasizes the important of "story" and that there is story behind a story. M, H, C, A
  5. Castaway; a snippet of this movie illustrates how to leave a place well by taking time to build a raft (RAFT). M, H, C, A
  6. Tarzan; this movie could lead to a discussion on identity, belonging, home--things that MKs can identify with. P, E, M, H

### **Training/Debriefing Programs for the Whole Family**

1. MTI: Mission Training International ( <https://www.mti.org/>): Mission Training International's vision is to see cross-cultural messengers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ experience effectiveness, endurance and personal vitality. MTI accomplishes this through two main programs: COMPASS and DAR.
2. CIT: Center for Intercultural Training (<https://cit-online.org/>): CIT's mission is to glorify God by preparing and equipping cross-cultural workers with the missiological, biblical, and personal tools needed for strategic and effective cross-cultural ministry.
3. TRAIN International (<https://traininternational.org/>): TRAIN International exists to help the Church and the cross-cultural worker to go prepared and stay effective.
4. CultureBound (<https://culturebound.org/>): CultureBound training for language and culture is designed to prepare you for life and work in an unfamiliar culture. You'll learn *how* to learn a language and culture, become a part of a community, and view your neighbors in a different and positive way. We teach you how to learn from the most expert people on earth — the people who already live there.

### **Activity/Workbooks**

1. Where in the World Are You Going? by Judith M. Blohm; This activity-oriented book helps children work through an international move. It includes discussion topics and practical activities the child can do with a parent or teacher. It can be used in going overseas, returning to one's home country, or in redeployment to another country. E
2. Up, Up, and Away! by Brenda Maxfield; This book guides children who are moving from one culture to another and explains the third-culture kid conception in children's language. Includes activity sheets and encourages them to see the positive aspect of a mobile life. E
3. Of Many Lands: A Journal of a Travelling Childhood by Sara Mansfield Taber; A workbook for TCKs to help them process their TCK experience and document the people, places and cultures they have experienced growing up. M, H
4. Footsteps Around the World: Relocation Tips for Teens by Beverly D. Roman; This journal for teens covers many relocation topics: feelings, journaling, timetables, money tips, new schools and friends, interviews, travel diary, arrival tips, coping with challenges, reentry, etc. A very practical tool. M, H
5. My Very Exciting, Sorta Scary, Big Move: a workbook for children moving to a new home by Lori Woodring; This workbook walks kids step by step through the entire moving process, including understanding change, strategies for managing emotions,

ways to say goodbye, taking part in a new adventure, tips for making new friends, and more. E

6. [Slurping Soup and other Confusions: true stories and activities to help third culture kids during transition](#) by Maryam Afnan Ahmad and Cherie Emigh; It is a collection of twenty-three real life stories from third culture kids. Each story is followed by a related activity.
7. [Let's Move Overseas](#) by Beverly D. Roman; This book provides activities, discussion starters, and other resources to help young children process their move and learn about their new culture. P
8. [Emotional First Aid Kit](#) by Marie Lang; This workbook kit is a resource for first-responders of emotional first aid--parents, pastoral coaches, teachers, and mentors--to use with kids who are experience large or small crises, to care for their emotions and aid in their resiliency. These creative activities are based on art therapy concepts and research in trauma revery, written with clear instructions and including supply lists.
9. [Rookies](#) by Daniel Peters; an activity workbook for families going to the mission field
10. [A Kid's Journey of Grief](#) by Susan Beeney and Jo Anne Chung; a coloring and activity book for children processing grief, especially when someone special in his or her life dies. This book gives kids a tool, like a map, to guide them through their grief journey.
11. [Setting Sail](#) by Emily Hervey; this workbook is designed to help prepare whole families for cross-cultural transition. It takes a holistic model, emphasizing not only individual needs, but also growth in the family unit.

## Websites/Blogs

1. [www.michelephoenix.com](http://www.michelephoenix.com); as a writer and MK, Michele has great insight into the MK life and has written numerous articles on MK topics along with several novels.
2. [www.tcktraining.com](http://www.tcktraining.com); The mission of TCKtraining.com is to prevent many of the issues that research has shown TCKs commonly face in adulthood, by helping families and organizations effectively address those challenges early on.
3. <https://www.pinterest.com/heidinindi/>; Heidi Tunberg has compiled several pinterest boards related to myriads of TCK topics.
4. [www.tckresources.com](http://www.tckresources.com); although this site is in progress, all of the resources listed have been vetted by Heidi Tunberg (MK Caregiver at Reach Global) and have a description of the resource.
5. [www.denizenmag.com](http://www.denizenmag.com); *Denizen* is an online magazine and community dedicated to people who grew up in multiple countries, international school alumni, or Third Culture Kids.
6. [www.branchor.com](http://www.branchor.com); BR Anchor Publishing's mission and vision--"Every relocation should become a positive and enriching opportunity for the entire family." This website has several helpful resources for families in transition.
7. [www.alifeoverseas.com](http://www.alifeoverseas.com); the blog collective 'A Life Overseas' provides that place of online connection for Christ-following missionaries and humanitarian aid workers living in foreign countries-- from the past, present, or future. As a team of writers who have logged years of overseas experience ourselves,they create an online space where expats of many nations come together to interact, encourage, and find a community that 'gets it'. Some of the blog is pertinent to third culture kids.

8. [www.communicatingacrossboundariesblog.com](http://www.communicatingacrossboundariesblog.com); Marilyn Gardner's blog focuses on largely cross-cultural communication with an emphasis on faith and third culture kids.
9. [www.thecultureblend.com](http://www.thecultureblend.com); this site of Jerry Jones where he blogs thought on expatting, repatting, transition and life and raising third culture kids.

## Other Resources

1. [Daraja \(www.daraja.us\)](http://www.daraja.us) The organization founded by Michael Pollock. Daraja's mission is to care for, encourage, and equip cross-culture and Third Culture young adults through advocacy, mentoring, training, discipleship, and leadership experiences so that they will engage the world abundantly and responsively for Jesus' sake. Daraja offers coaching, consulting, events and a gap semester for TCKs.
2. [Harbor Project \(https://michelephoenix.com/mk-harbor-project/\)](https://michelephoenix.com/mk-harbor-project/); The harbor project was started by Michele Phoenix as a way to link "harbors" to MKs ages 17-24 who need support as they transition to a new country. Harbors can volunteer to help with practical, basic or life-enhancing skills.
3. [Canadian MK Network \(http://canadianmk.net/\)](http://canadianmk.net/); CMKN hosts a reentry program called ReBoot in two locations in Canada. ReBoot Vision: To provide a safe place for Canadian MKs to review their life stories, be refreshed through worship and peer relationships in order to re-enter and navigate the transition to Canadian life and culture with God's grace.
4. [Interaction International \(https://www.interactionintl.org/\)](https://www.interactionintl.org/); Interaction runs a summer Transition seminar for MKs as well as an educational planning seminar for parents.
5. [Global TCK Care and Education \(www.tckcare-ed.org/\)](http://www.tckcare-ed.org/); A website created by SIL to host some of their resources and link to others. The two handbooks, College Prep and High School to Occupation, are fantastic resources to help TCKs prepare for leaving home. Handbooks located under "Schooling Options" then "After Secondary School."
6. [Post-College Retreats](#); This year will be the 6th annual post-college MK retreat--usually in October in Jones, Michigan. This retreat weekend is for adult MKs and TCKs who are in that first decade(ish) after graduating college. Contact Tammy Sharp for more information.
7. [Families in Global Transition \(https://www.figt.org/\)](https://www.figt.org/); Families in Global Transition is a welcoming forum for globally mobile individuals, families, and those working with them. They promote cross-sector connections for sharing research and developing best practices that support the growth, success and well-being of people crossing cultures around the world.
8. [Global Reunion](http://oc.edu/services/international-programs/tck/global-reunion.html) at Oklahoma Christian University; a one-week family/TCK camp ages 5 to adult; <http://oc.edu/services/international-programs/tck/global-reunion.html>
9. [International Therapist Directory \(http://internationaltherapistdirectory.com/\)](http://internationaltherapistdirectory.com/): The International Therapist Directory is an online listing of professional mental health therapists familiar with the Third Culture Kid and international expatriate experiences. With over 200 members, in more than 50 different countries, this resource lists therapists, counselors, psychologists, and psychiatrists interested in providing culturally sensitive cross-cultural treatment and care for today's international expat community.