

101 ways to prepare TCKs for Home Assignment

(in no particular order)

- Show them photos of where you'll be staying so they'll know what to expect
- Talk about how different it will be to go in cold sea or see snow at Christmas
- Warn them about the bullying, indiscipline and swearing they may encounter if they're going into school
- Make sure they know you don't expect them to feel at home
- Help your kids understand that Christians in your 'home' country may think and behave differently from those on the field, possibly in ways that may not appear 'Christian' to them – such as drinking alcohol, smoking or using vulgar language
- Take with you some of their favourite treats for when they're feeling homesick
- Pray with them about their hopes and fears
- Tell them they might not be able to go around barefoot and get them used to wearing the sort of shoes they will need
- Book tickets for them to go to their favourite sport, music, theatre or cinema
- Skype with relatives so they're not complete strangers when you arrive
- Teach them to play the same games as their cousins so they can play together easily when they're together
- Have a friend make a video of church, shooting from a child's head height so they know what to expect
- Leave warm clothes with a friend who can meet you at the airport so their first experience of the country isn't freezing.
- Research the most popular music for their age group so that can be prepared for what other kids listen to
- Tell them you'll be able to spend more time with them – and then make sure you do!
- Make sure they can have mobile phones to keep in touch with their friends back home
- Warn them they have to sit in child seats in cars rather than bounce around in the back of a pickup
- Book them in to reconnect camps so they have something to look forward to
- Know the warning signs of how they behave when they are stressed or overtired so you can tell quickly if things are getting too much for them
- Take time to tell them about food, drink and sweets that are different
- Tell them they don't have to dress in national costume/sing a song/give a testimony if they don't want to
- Take them to culturally significant places so they can learn about your culture
- Watch popular television shows online or get DVDs to they know what other kids are talking about when they arrive
- Teach them some of the local slang and accents so they're ready to understand other kids living near them
- Teach them how to play seasonal games like conkers or making snowmen

- If they are going into school, help them find out what clothes they should wear, music they should listen to and TV they should watch so that they don't get laughed at
- Make sure they don't enjoy themselves so much they don't want to go back home again!
- Don't assume your kids know how to use everyday things like buses, cashpoints, or oyster cards