

# THRIVE IN A NEW PLACE:



## **Growth journaling for new missionaries**

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# Preface

The aim of this booklet is that you will not just survive, but that you will thrive in life and ministry as you launch out as a missionary in this new context. Questions are provided to help you reflect each week on your experiences and what you can learn from them. There will be ups and downs, excitements and frustrations, but God can use all of them in your life for growth.

Recording your thoughts and insights is inherently beneficial. The process can be even better if you also meet with a friend or mentor to share those thoughts.

The booklet provides questions for the first eight weeks of your mission experience. Then there are a set of general questions which you can continue to use beyond eight weeks. A self-evaluation checklist is also provided which is best done on a monthly basis to help you see patterns in your experience.

To succeed in this you will need to spend an hour or two each week to think and write. Don't get into a guilt trip if you miss a week or more, as it is never too late to return to the questions.

Be honest with yourself and with God in your journal. Your journal is not part of any assessment process. It is for entirely for your personal growth. Write it for yourself.

Now ... find a blank book to use for your journal and make a start.

# Week 1 date\_\_\_\_\_

## **Personal well-being**

What kinds of feelings have you experienced since you arrived?  
What has caused those feelings? How are you dealing with them?  
Have you experienced jet lag?

## **Spiritual life**

How are you doing spiritually?  
What has God been teaching you?  
Have you experienced any spiritual opposition?

## **Relationships**

Describe some of your current relationships.  
How are you handling relationships with friends and family back home?  
Have people here reached out to you?

## **Cultural adaptation**

How are you adapting to your new culture?  
What are some cultural things that stand out to you?  
Do you have a resource person to help answer your questions?

## **Ministry**

What do you feel you bring to your new community?  
What are your expectations of your ministry?  
What is your initial language learning strategy?

## **I'm thankful for...**

## **Prayer items...**

# Week 2 date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Personal well-being**

How is your body adjusting to your new setting?

Are you getting enough rest and exercise?

What are you learning about yourself?

## **Spiritual life**

Are you developing a routine for Bible reading, prayer and worship?

What adjustments do you need to make for this to happen?

How are you experiencing God's presence?

## **Relationships**

Are you experiencing loneliness?

How is communication with those back home?

How are things in your marriage?/ What is it like to be single in your new context?

## **Cultural adaptation**

What kinds of things are different than you expected in this culture?

What is it like to be a foreigner?

## **Ministry**

How are you able to minister right now?

Are you taking steps in language learning?

What was a significant event or insight this week?

## **I'm thankful for...**

## **Prayer items...**

# Week 3 date\_\_\_\_\_

## **Personal well-being**

What are the pressures and stresses you are experiencing?

How are you balancing spiritual life, relationships, work, and rest?

Are you finding ways to have fun or relax?

## **Spiritual life**

What are situations where you are challenged to trust God?

How are you experiencing God's love for you?

What Scriptures are an encouragement to you?

## **Relationships**

What were some significant conversations you have had?

Do you have potential mentors?

Are there areas of tension with co-workers or neighbors?

## **Cultural adaptation**

What new cultural experience did you have this week?

Have you prepared any new foods?

Are you able to understand the local greetings?

## **Ministry**

What ministry opportunities are arising for you?

Is someone helping to guide you?

Do you need to adjust your expectations of ministry?

## **I'm thankful for...**

## **Prayer items...**

# Monthly Self-Assessment date \_\_\_\_\_

[Adapted from Dennett, 1998, *Thriving in Another Culture*. Melbourne: Acorn]

<b>Physical health:</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Good</b>
1. Regular exercise	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
2. Sufficient rest	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
3. Balanced diet	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
4. Sleeping pattern	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
5. Holiday breaks	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
6. Sanitary conditions	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
7. Booster shots and malaria tabs	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
<b>Spiritual</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Good</b>
1. Faith and dependence on God	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
2. Consistent devotions	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
3. Regular Bible study	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
4. Prayer life	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
5. Handling temptation and opposition	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
6. Spiritual fellowship with others	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
7. Display the Fruit of the Spirit	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
<b>Mental</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Good</b>
1. Reading in profession/ministry	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
2. Reading in human/world affairs	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
3. Reading good literature	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
4. Pursuing hobbies	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
<b>Emotional</b>	<b>Seldom</b>	<b>Often</b>
1. Sense of joy	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
2. Sense of contentment	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
3. Sense of self-worth	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
4. Optimism	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
5. Free from loneliness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
6. Free from anxiety and fear	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
7. Free from depression	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
8. Free from resentment and unforgiveness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	

<b>Marriage and family</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Good</b>
1. Communication at soul level	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
2. Communication at spiritual level	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
3. Sexual relations	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
4. Time with spouse	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
5. Time with children	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
6. Care and discipline of children	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
7. Education of children	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
<b>Singleness</b>	<b>Difficult</b>	<b>Easy</b>
1. Living with others	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
2. Receiving affection	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
3. Handling sexual needs	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
4. Handling attitudes of others to singles	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
<b>Relationships</b>	<b>Difficult</b>	<b>Easy</b>
1. Adjusting to differences of fellow workers	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
2. Friendships with colleagues	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
3. Friendships with local people	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
4. Resolving conflicts	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
5. Forgiving offences of others	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
6. Respect & submission to leaders	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
<b>Cultural adaptation</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Good</b>
1. Ability to hear language	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
2. Ability to verbalise	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
3. Acceptance of cultural differences	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
4. Coping with foreignness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
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6. Fellowship with local Christians	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
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<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Little</b>	<b>Much</b>
1. Sense of ministry/job satisfaction	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
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# Week 4 date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Personal well-being**

Have you experienced times of loneliness or isolation?

How are you sleeping?

How contented are you with yourself and your situation?

## **Spiritual life**

What areas of your character are being shaped?

What are some struggles, weaknesses or temptation you face?

What is God showing or teaching you?

## **Relationships**

How are your relationships with teammates and field leaders?

How are they helping you?

Are there children you are getting to enjoy and know?

## **Cultural adaptation**

How can you show love and kindness to the local community?

How are you progressing in your language goals?

What is a new discovery you've made about the culture?

## **Ministry**

Is there tension between what you feel called to do and what you are doing?

How are you managing this?

What's the best and worst thing that happened this week?

## **I'm thankful for...**

## **Prayer items...**



# Week 5 date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Personal well-being**

Do you feel anxious or at ease in your new home?

How is that affecting you?

What gives you pleasure and enjoyment?

## **Spiritual life**

What opposition or distractions are you experiencing?

How is your daily relationship with God?

Do you feel connected to Him?

## **Relationships**

(Married) How are your spouse and/or children doing?

Are you able to support each other?

(Single)- How are friendships developing?

Are you connecting with a family or friend?

## **Cultural adaptation**

Have you seen desperate needs?

How does that make you feel?

What is something you admire and respect in your new culture?

## **Ministry**

Describe your ministry at this time.

What is your biggest challenge in learning and using language?

Are you able to use your gifts and abilities?

## **I'm thankful for...**

## **Prayer items...**

# Week 6 date\_\_\_\_\_

## **Personal well-being**

What are you doing to care for yourself physically?

Are you feeling a loss of the identity you had previously?

What are aspects of your identity in your new community?

## **Spiritual life**

How do you sense God's presence and help?

Are you experiencing faith in and dependence on God?

What Scriptures are helping you to grow?

## **Relationships**

To what extent do you connect back home?

Do you think you are in a good place with that?

Have you experienced hurt and resentment here?

If so- how are you resolving it?

## **Cultural adaptation**

What are some ways you are connecting w/ local people?

How has your daily dress changed in your new community?

## **Ministry**

What things are you glad you can say in your new language?

Do you need help or direction in revising your language plans?

Do you have someone who can help you?

## **I'm thankful for...**

## **Prayer items...**

# Week 7 date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Personal well-being**

Are you facing a lack of discipline in any area of life?

How is your stress level?

Is it becoming destructive to you?

## **Spiritual life**

Are you expressing love for others?

Are your spiritual routines helping you to grow?

Are you living “in Christ”?

## **Relationships**

Are you being mentored?

Who are you open and authentic with?

What people is God leading you to befriend?

## **Cultural adaptation**

What are some cultural things that are hard for you to deal with?

What are you enjoying about the local culture?

## **Ministry**

Where do you feel out of your depth?

What is your motivation level for involvement in your current ministry?

What can you do to develop your ministry skills?

## **I’m thankful for...**

## **Prayer items...**

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# Week 8 date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Personal well-being**

What is encouraging to you?

What is discouraging you?

Do you feel your life is balanced?

## **Spiritual life**

What areas of temptation are you facing?

What attribute of God do you most appreciate right now?

Are you getting spiritual nourishment?

## **Relationships**

How are you doing with your leadership?

What was an encouraging interaction this week?

## **Cultural adaptation**

How is your attitude to local culture?

How does the local culture express their emotions?

Is that comfortable or challenging for you?

## **Ministry**

What are evidences of God's wisdom in placing you here?

What are you learning about the term "ministry" in this setting?

What is your favourite part of ministry?

## **I'm thankful for...**

## **Prayer items...**

# Week 9 and following

## **Personal well-being**

1. What emotions are you most aware of?
2. How is your sense of self-worth?
3. How is your physical health?
4. How are you coping with pressures and stresses?
5. Do you have a healthy life style?

## **Spiritual life**

6. What is God doing in your life at the moment?
7. How well is your daily life surrendered to Christ?
8. What spiritual disciplines are you practicing?
9. In what ways are you growing to become more like Christ?
10. What are the areas of temptation, struggle and sin in your life?

## **Relationships**

11. Are your social and relational needs being met?
12. How is your relationship with your spouse and children?
13. How is your relationship with your team members?
14. How have meetings with your mentor/ friend been helpful?

## **Cultural adaptation**

15. What are you learning about the local culture?
16. How well are you adapting to the local culture?
17. What progress have you made in learning the local language?
18. How are you connecting with your host country people?

## **Ministry**

19. What are your current ministry tasks and opportunities?
20. Are you fulfilling your responsibilities?
21. What abilities and competencies are you developing?
22. Do you feel fulfilled in your ministry?

## **Other**

23. What are the most significant experiences of the week?
24. What is your main prayer point at the moment?
25. What are you particularly thankful for?