

## When an MK Comes to Visit

*Making the most of your church's time with your MK family*

Welcoming missionaries to your church can be an exciting time both for your church family and for the missionary family. Here are some suggestions for creating a space of maximum enjoyment for all of you.

**Prepare the church family ahead of time.** Make sure that plans are in place to welcome your MK family. Use the resources provided by International Ministries to create good spaces to be together. Encourage congregation members to interact with the family in meaningful ways. Pray over the time you will share together and for the MK family.

**Give the family a guide for the day.** Assign a couple of people to act as hosts for the day the family visits, staying with them throughout the visit to make sure they know where to go. These hosts should be familiar with the congregation and church and able to answer basic questions (“Can you remind me of that person’s name? Where is the restroom? Do you know where we need to be next?”). Consider making your host someone who has children of their own that could assist in hosting duties.

**Make sure the needs of the family are taken care of.** Do they have a comfortable place to stay overnight that is suited for a family? Are their meals taken care of? Do they need help with transportation costs? Have you given them a good balance of time with the church and time to themselves?

**Be aware that MKs are just kids.** MKs come in all shapes and sizes. Some are extroverted and will happily interact with church members of all ages. Others are shy and may hang back a bit. Not all MKs will want to take part in presentations about their life overseas, but some will. Make the offer to include them as much or as little as they are comfortable with. **Use the MK conversation guide, “Questions MKs Would Love to be Asked,”** to enter into meaningful conversations with MKs who are willing to talk, and extend grace to those who aren’t.

**Remember that the missionary family doesn’t know your church culture.** It can be very disconcerting for MKs to not know simple things like when during the service people usually stand up and sit down. Consider seating your MK family a few rows back rather than at the very front, so they have an opportunity to observe church members during the service and don’t feel awkward or put on display. Seat their hosts with them so they aren’t seated alone. Make sure they understand the order of service and are aware of anything special that might be happening during the service. Allow them to ask questions if needed.

**Provide opportunities for MKs to interact with others their own age if they would like.** Invite them to a special gathering of other kids their age and prepare your church kids ahead of time with suggestions for how you can make the MK visitors feel welcome and not left out. Check with the MK parents first to see if the MKs would be open to attending.