

How should we prepare the youth for reentry?

Preparing your youth for coming home can be tricky. You may find that some can hardly wait to set foot on American soil, while others dread returning to life at home. Following are a few tips that might help you prepare your youth for coming home.

1. **Get your identity from who you are** (a child of God), not from what you did.
2. **Grieve your losses**, particularly the loss of relationships with the significant people you learned to love and appreciate.
3. **Maintain a regular quiet time.** You may find journaling helpful.
4. **Forgive yourself for what you may or may not have done while on outreach.** It is in forgiving that we really let go.
5. **Become involved in your congregation.** Be a servant. Reach out to people. Be willing to seek counsel from people in the church.
6. **Determine to live fully in the present** wherever you are. Hook up with people who have had similar experiences.
7. **Be as sensitive and committed** to adjusting to your home culture as you were to the culture you were ministering in.
8. **Share what you have learned selectively.** Not everyone will be interested in your stories.
9. **Accept the changed you.** One of the gifts of having lived in another culture is viewing things differently than those around us.
10. **Challenge your community**, but do it selectively and sensitively.
11. **Don't be a "special" case.** Do not expect special treatment.
12. **Thank your supporters.** Write a letter or visit with each one who supported you while you were gone.
13. **Be an advocate.** Be informed, be an intercessor, be a recruiter for others to be involved in something similar.
14. **Celebrate what you have received!** Cherish the way you have been stretched and enriched in your life.

