

WR

THE WORLD RACE

Dear World Race Parent:

It is truly our honor to walk alongside each and every World Racer. We are grateful for the opportunity to minister with them and truly believe the Kingdom will come because of their efforts.

As a leadership team we recognize that parenting a World Racer can be just as much of a journey as the World Race itself and want to provide some insight into the process. Below are two sections that we feel will prove helpful in understanding the World Race:

- 1) What a parent needs to know
- 2) The methods that we use

Please read these sections and keep the end in mind as your racer walks through the next 11 months. We are grateful for your prayers and support.

What a World Race parent needs to know:

1. The world is unsafe.

The World Race staff continues to stay educated and informed of safety concerns and issues around the world by routinely reviewing “watch lists”. We compile regular feedback from our international contacts and have, on occasion, changed itineraries and race routes based on information from these sources. Changes are made with safety as our first priority even when these decisions are unpopular.

Your World Racer signed up for adventure, so we cannot stop them from pushing their personal limits of safety. They have hopped on the back of motorcycles in busy cities, bungee jumped from high cliffs in third world countries, and engaged in other activities

that may make us uneasy, but even in light of these extreme activities, we maintain a minimum level of social security. For example, there is always a mandate for them to travel together in groups. At the end of the day some risk is a normal part of the adventure and discipleship process.

2. The process is brutal.

“Initiation” is the process used for the radical discipleship we practice. In our culture, young people often cannot reflect back to define the day they became adults. In most cultures around the world there is a process put in place by tribal and family leaders to facilitate this pivotal stage of development. Our young people struggle with feelings of being illegitimate adults because there is no rite of passage. The only option they are left with is rebellion that leads to a tearing away from their parents. That tearing away may take years to mend and heal. The World Race offers a healthy option in the process of initiation:

Abandonment

Everything starts with a call to leave the old security and structure and lean into the challenge of moving into the unknown. They are asked to leave the rooms at home, their dorm, their apartments, and the comfort of current close relationships. They pack what they can in a backpack and leave on a trek around the world. Their mission is the same as Abrahams: “get out of your country, from your family, and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you” (Gen 12:1).

Brokenness

This moving from the old leads into a season of insecurity and questioning. They start the treacherous journey of leaving belief systems defined by others and pursue their own pathway of faith toward God. It is a transition and, although scary and painful, it is absolutely necessary. Their faith must become their own through trial and questioning. A wonderful Ralph Waldo Emerson quote says: “it’s not in his goals but in his transitions that man is great”.

Dependence

Brokenness leads them to find faith that is molded out of their own experiences and creates a new dependence upon God. It’s a nerve-racking time to swing from one security net to the other. But in the end, this new dependence and faith in God will serve them on the World Race and for the rest of their lives. They will find themselves saying “yes” to things that previous generations have been afraid to embrace.

Empowerment

It is this time of true dependency upon God that something incredible begins to happen. God starts answering their prayers in ways that they have never experienced before. He actually seems to challenge them to believe and ask for more, they begin to believe for and ultimately see the miraculous. John 14:12: “doing greater works” becomes their goal. Read their blogs during this time, they

will be full of the miraculous things God is doing. Their faith will blow you away and get you asking “am I believing for big things too?”.

Calling

While God is meeting them at the point of renewed faith they hear a whisper of God’s plan for their lives. Perhaps in this stage, they will sense God imparting a specific focus or “calling”. The goal of this time is to create an environment for God to speak about ministry either vocationally or subsequently. It’s a time of rediscovery and this calling may even lead them into areas differing from their education. Much of this rediscovery is done near the end of the World Race and into their first several months home.

Confirmation

The World Race is not an all-encompassing experience. After the conclusion of their journey, we begin to see clarity to the calling. We begin to see real-world applications. As they begin to layout the plan they are sensing from God, there will be a confirming sense of God’s presence apparent to those around them. This continues to be a time of discovery, so we as a World Race Staff are working on post race options that will give better direction to “calling” and “confirmation”.

We have sent out enough participants now to be able to somewhat predict the locations and times that these steps will begin to manifest. It is not our intention to share a timeline with you or your racer. That is one of those areas that must remain a mystery. We believe there is an end in mind, a goal to launch our young people into the work of His Kingdom. They need to be fully released and fully empowered by Him. Scary yes, but what’s the alternative? Who is going to go in His power and might if they do not?

3. Communication should be limited.

While on the field there will be times when communication with your racer could be difficult. Internet can be scarce and slow. There will be times when we ask them to fully abandon and not be tied to Facebook, Skype and other means of communicating back home. We desire for them to move past the stage of abandonment and into empowerment, calling and confirmation, but first they may walk through times of limited communication and what may seem like silence from the field.

Racers are encouraged NOT to carry cell phones on the field. All of our leaders carry phones and are in communication weekly with our field support staff in case of emergency.

Sending Items to the Field:

There are only two things that Adventures in Missions is able to send out to the field to participants: prescription medication and credit/debit cards. If you would like to have one of these items delivered to a participant on the field, please have it to the office at least two weeks prior to the next debrief for that squad. Please send items to:

Adventures In Missions The World Race -- Participant's Name
6000 Wellspring Trail
Gainesville, GA 30506

For any other items you would like to send to the field, we recommend sending via DHL or another international shipping company. The participant will be able to receive the item from the shipping office in country.

4. Our leaders are young

We employ World Race alumni as leaders for the squads of 45-55 participants. Their role is to care for the squad, make sure the core values are practiced, and train up new leaders to replace them as squad leaders. The time frame they are on the field is 3-4 months; new squad leaders are then put into place. We choose younger leaders from the ranks who show sensitivity to the Spirit, compassion for their fellow participants, and a natural ability to influence. We start developing them in months 2-3 and they have a chance to learn directly from their squad leader for a period of 6-8 weeks. Our field support staff in the States contacts all leaders on the field weekly. There is ongoing leadership development that happens during these conversations. On a regular basis mistakes are made. It is, after all, the best leadership training. But our leaders must remain teachable or risk losing their position. You need to know that your participant is not without an appeal process. Every participant is informed of the appropriate communication structure. We will always listen to concerns and encourage open communication and respect of a chain of command.

5. He or she may be your child, but they want to become an adult.

As previously stated, the World Race is about initiating and activating a generation. We are placing a demand on them to mature and take their rightful places as heirs of His Kingdom. Even though this may be scary to them, we believe it is necessary. We have also come to believe it is ultimately what they want. They want to move from their childhood relationship into an adult peer relationship with their parents and mentors. This is the natural order of things and we should not try to impede it.

6. Each racer needs a confirmation from God about participating in the World Race.

From the beginning, we have communicated with your World Racer about who we are, what we are doing, and what we expect. This happens from the initial interview, throughout the ten days of training camp, and the one week of launch training in the field. There should never be any surprises about expectations or our resolve. We ask them from the beginning to get a confirmation from God about embarking on this pilgrimage because, through the steps of initiation, they will have opportunity to question if they have made a mistake.

Your World Racer always has the option of stopping the process and choosing to return home. This does not happen often, but it does happen. If that request is made we will make every effort to secure safe passage home. If a participant is struggling to fully engage but does not want to leave the WR, we will give opportunity for reengagement

with their team. If there is no reengagement, we will let them know our intention to end their WR experience and again make every effort to secure their safe return home.

7. You are in a position that requires you to trust.

As previously stated, your World Racer needs a word from God to go on this adventure. Ultimately, your parenting goal is to get them released from dependency upon your voice and become dependent upon His. In the same way you trusted God on the first day of school and university, you are going to have to trust God through this process. Imputed trust must be exercised toward the World Race staff. We may not always do it your way, but we are working hard to do what's right. Please pray for us.

8. Transition is hard for everyone.

The reality of the situation is that your World Racer is not sequestered for 11 months. We expect that they would continually update family, friends, mentors, churches etc. back home on a regular basis. With the limited communication ability in some areas of the world, it is likely you may get the short, condensed, and emotional updates from the field.

You may tend to hear more of the challenges than the victories, more of the discomfort than the growth, and more of the insecurity than the development of identity. Racers get sick, they experience conflict, they grapple with the loss of independence and they live in an environment that consistently examines their past hurts and scars. It is a process they will not find many other places because the process is messy. However, the process is necessary. It takes time, it takes pain, it takes trust. It is exactly what you may experience living half a world away from it all. Transition is a fact of life, but transition is hard. We believe running into the challenge has better results than running away. Choose to join us but count the cost.

What tools we use:

1. Rough places

If you do not already realize it, the attraction for the World Race is that the locations featured are challenging. The romanticism of Europe or the history of Asia may be intriguing, but what consistently draws racers to the program is that we go to the real places in the world where people live in real pain, in real poverty, and dire situations. The reality is that hard places are a teaching tool in and of themselves and are the best environment for change.

These environments are harsh physically, emotionally and spiritually. The disillusionment racers have with the luxurious, yet unhappy Western world is confronted when hands get dirty, emotions get charged from injustice, and hearts get sensitized. We do not run from rough places but use them.

2. Close community

An overwhelming percentage of participants come in with poor communication abilities. They have not been in safe communities where feedback (both positive and constructive) is a norm or where conflict is managed in a healthy way. We provide them a community that cannot escape itself (after all, they may be the only English-speakers in a given area on occasion). This approach reveals any arrogant self-entitlements they may hold close and provides them an immediate growth opportunity to learn humility and selflessness.

3. Honest feedback

Coaches, teachers and authorities in your Racer's life know that growth does not come void of a challenge to change. Sports coaches would fail if they did not correct and re-correct skills needed to perform at greater competency.

Subsequently, maturity does not come without feedback. The World Race employs a method for honest feedback both from peers and leaders. The goal is this: to help your racer reach their fullest potential as healthy adults. Know this: feedback is not an easy process to learn or to experience. You may be the recipient of your racer processing feedback they have received. Please do not rescue them. Just as if they were learning a sport, they will never progress unless they embrace the words they receive.

4. Trained support staff

Your racer's personal growth and immediate ministry is cushioned and surrounded by a network of support staff. The World Race staff handle everything from their financial support, to their blogging platforms, to the ministry locations in which they will serve projected three months out. Staff, who are becoming the best at what they do, are present to both promote the best experience possible and remove obstacles to growth. Staff travels to the field a minimum of two times during the course of the World Race. Their purpose is to spend 2-3 days at a time processing the experience with the racers and the teams in an effort to guide the process to the ends we have established. They bring an outside perspective and help to once more cast vision and challenge the racers.

5. The presence of God

One of the foundations of our discipleship model is that each racer would break dependency on everything but the presence of God in their lives. The journey away from the familiar is imperative to this goal: they must journey away from the guidance of family, the security of friends and the predictability of their everyday lives. They must learn to rely on their own pursuit of the things of God and not live a life where they are spoon-fed their worldview and theologies.

6. The voice of the Spirit

Throughout the World Race, each participant will be expected to learn the discipline of listening prayer. If God truly speaks and He gives us the ability to discern his voice, then a life of listening to the Spirit of God on all occasions and for every purpose is the best life possible.

Everything from living in community to a lifestyle of evangelism to braving new frontiers will be rooted in the lifestyle practice of listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit. It is a new concept to most of the racers, but has life-changing results.

7. A constant challenge to mature

The shaping and molding of identity starts from the moment of birth. However, the ownership of this “shaping and molding” changes hands to each racer when they take responsibility for their adult life. Their own growth, their own destiny, their own voice – everything is fed from this ownership being assumed. Each racer will be treated as an adult. They will be expected to make decisions as an adult, communicate like an adult, and take responsibility as an adult. The time for childhood has passed and if they are to change the world, they must change themselves. When they do, God’s Kingdom will truly come.