

THE ONKENS

18 years ago

18 years ago I (Heidi) met Kate and Kelly during a training to prepare missionaries to serve overseas. A special community formed that summer, so it was rich to reconnect with them during a debrief we participated in last month.

Over the years, they have served with Cru in Spain, Ireland, Greece and now are moving back to Ireland.

Reconnecting with them reminded me of how deeply grateful I am for the 21 years I have been a full-time staff with Cru, and the privilege it is to serve with brothers and sisters throughout the world. The years haven't been easy but it has been where I have gotten to know my Maker and Lover of my Soul in deeper ways. The transition back to the U.S. has been difficult to me (a big part of my heart is still in France), but I can trust Him who has been so, so faithful. And, so so good to me.



Dave and I with Kelly and Kate

Faithful Servants of the Lord



The group of Cru missionaries at the International Debriefing

Imagine sitting around a table with 10 missionaries from countries where less than 2% of the countries' populations walk with Jesus and trading stories late into the night.

That's what I got to do a few weeks ago while at a debriefing for people like us, who left parts of our hearts in another country where not a lot of people have heard the sweet, freeing truths about Jesus.

The ten of us talked late into the night, sharing glorious stories of God inspired creative access ministries like coffee shops and fitness gyms in some of the most closed countries in the world. We relived the traumas of living through earthquakes and terrorist attacks. We laughed about hilarious attempts of recreating holiday traditions, and stood in awe at how French children eat in courses at tiny tables in their school "cafeterias." Some shared the reason they never hung pictures on the wall was because of the continual limbo they lived in, not knowing if their visas would be renewed or not. We ached over believers and seekers left behind and trust God to continue to do the work, without us.

I felt so known, though I had never met most of the men and women who sat around that simple table. Our stories and experiences were honored, without being novel. We understood the pain of leaving a place and people whom we loved very much, even though we understood it was God calling and timing that brought us back to the United States. It was an abundant gift to sit with these fellow Christ-followers and process the immense transition we are experiencing in moving back to the U.S. or to another country. It also felt like a foretaste of heaven where we'll have ample time to share endless God stories and learn about how He continued to call people to Himself.

Onken Family Prayer Calendar November 2024



Left: A little blurry but our kids have gotten super into cars. We sat out one night during our retreat on a busy street and watched the cool cars go by.



Right: Chloe did a lego building class at the library. Of course she was the fastest one!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
					A few days off after 2 conferences/trainings!	Jesus would be our greatest love
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Thank God for the students in Toulouse who are gathering to learn more about Him	For the Christian teachers at our kids' school last year, to be able to pray for their colleagues & share the hope of Christ.	Thank the Lord that he is King of Kings and Lord of Lords no matter what happens here on earth.	For our dear friends who are seeking specialized medical treatment for their son....	...that the dr. would correctly identify the causes of his auto-immune disorder.	Homeschool co-op day. Pray the kids make some friendships. Lots of friends have moved away recently	Kids' soccer: It's a great community time for us with lots of other parents we know. Pray for meaningful conversations
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
We are cat sitting. Pray the kids have a ton of fun with it. They love cats	We are homeschooling again this school year. Pray we find good processes, materials & rhythms that help us all thrive	Department meeting. Pray for wisdom and clear direction for our leadership in the department of Staff Care	Chloe has occupational therapy for writing. Pray she can be relaxed as she does it	Dave's processing group with other staff guys. Pray for heart level growth	Dave is needing elbow surgery. It's minor but pray for a good surgeon and some nerve relief	Heidi and I would laugh easily, have fun together, rest well and seek God together through all the transitions
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Pray for pastors and their families in Orlando to find joy and strength in the Lord and love the work they are doing	For all the kids in our neighborhood. Our home is often the gathering place for the neighborhood...	...kids. Pray our home is welcoming, safe and Christ-honoring	For the new team we will join. That the team is unified, God loving and that we...	...integrate well into it. Pray we are able to live out of our identity in Christ instead of...	...trying to impress or show how competent we are. That we would also enjoy them	God would give us an opportunity to invite our newly married neighbors over for dessert
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Pray some of our neighbors would come to church with us!	Heidi and Lexie are doing weekly one on one times. Pray for depth	Visiting friends for Thanksgiving that Heidi served with in France...	...back in 2003! Pray for thankful hearts and deep friendship	Thanksgiving! Thank you Lord for saving us!	May the God of HOPE fill our hearts with the joy of knowing Him.	Safe travels back to Orlando