

## MKs in the Bible

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MKs in the Bible are "**Multi-cultural Kids.**" They are Bible characters that lived in two or more cultures. Listed below are eight MKs in the Bible and some thoughts on how MKs can identify with them. Calling these Bible characters "MKs" helps present-day MKs identify with these Bible characters and draw biblical truths from their lives. There are many more "MKs" in the Bible. Encourage your MK(s) to discover some of their own.

### **ABRAHAM: The First MK, The First Call**

*MK Identity: Abraham grew up in one culture and later moved to two other cultures. MKs must deal with two or more cultures and learn how to respond to God through their adjustments.*

"Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Haran they settled there... The Lord had said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you'" (Genesis 11:31, 12:1).

Many biblical truths can be drawn from Abraham's life. (Genesis 12:25)

### **JOSEPH: Anger, Making the Most of a Situation**

*MK Identity: Joseph grew up in one culture. Against his own will he was sold into another culture. He adapted and made a success for himself. MKs sometimes feel they are in situations against their own will. Some get angry. In order to successfully adjust to new cultures, MKs must control their anger and make the most of their situation.*

His brothers plotted to murder him, but sold him into slavery instead. As a servant, he was framed and sent to prison. In prison he was forgotten. His brothers had set in motion a very difficult life for Joseph. Joseph was angry with his brothers as indicated by the way he treated them when they came to him for food. Genesis 41-50. Joseph did not let his anger overwhelm him. In Joseph's most difficult times we read that, "The Lord was with Joseph" (Genesis 39:2, 3, 21, 23). He trusted God, worked hard, God blessed him, and Pharaoh put him in charge of the country. Joseph sums up his life with these words spoken to his brothers, "Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good" (Genesis 50:19-20).

### **MOSES: Fear, Insecurity**

*MK Identity: Moses grew up in the foreign Egyptian culture, yet his mother raised him with the values of his original culture. When He was getting ready to reenter the Egyptian culture he became fearful and insecure. Moses overcame his fears and was able to deliver his people. MKs sometimes feel inadequate when entering a culture. With God's assurances and help, MKs can successfully adjust and accomplish amazing things.*

When God told Moses that He wanted him to deliver the Israelites from Egypt, Moses was very reluctant. You can see Moses' fears and insecurities in the following excerpts from his conversation with God:

- Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh...? (Exodus 3:11)
- Suppose...they ask me who sent me? (Exodus 3:13-15)
- What if they do not believe me or listen to me...? (Exodus 4:1)
- I have never been eloquent...I am slow of speech and tongue. (Exodus 4:10)
- Please send someone else to do it. (Exodus 4:13)

## **JOSHUA: Courage**

*MK Identity: Joshua grew up in his original culture, which at that time, was a subculture in Egypt. Later he led the Israelites to a third culture, and conquered it, by obeying God's word and displaying courage. MKs need to face their cross-cultural challenges with courage and a dependency on God.*

God's first words to Joshua were those of encouragement. "Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go... Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:7-9).

Joshua needed courage in facing all his challenges in conquering Canaan. (Joshua 1-24)

## **ESTHER: Meaning and Purpose**

*MK Identity: Esther grew up as an Israelite living in a foreign country, Persia. She was successful in the Persian culture and with her success came responsibility which gave purpose to her success. Although MKs don't always see meaning and purpose in being an MK. God can use their MK experience for a specific purpose. In many cases it is up to the MK to decide how to use their MK experience, as it was with Esther's choice.*

Mordicai's words to Esther at the time when she was considering whether or not to take action to save the Jews in Persia were, "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14).

## **DAVID: Loneliness**

*MK Identity: David grew up in an area where the Israelite culture existed along side the Philistine culture, so he dealt with two cultures. As a boy and teenager he tended his father's sheep herd. This was lonely work. David turned his lonely times into "alone times." During those times he learned to play the harp, shoot the sling shot, and he killed at least one lion and one bear. These experiences equipped him for his future. If MKs can learn to turn their lonely times into "alone times" with God, they can prepare for the future.*

David played the harp. (1 Samuel 16:18) "But David said to Saul, 'Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it'" (1 Samuel 17:34-35).

## **SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO: Commitment**

*MK Identity: These three young men grew up in their home culture, then were taken against their will to a foreign culture, the Babylonian culture. They faced execution by the fiery furnace because of their commitment to God. Their commitment was so strong that even if God did meet their expectation to deliver them, they still would not betray him. This is the highest level of commitment. If MKs can develop this kind of commitment, they can continue to serve God even when their expectations about the mission field are not realized.*

Here are Shadrach's, Mechach's, and Abednego's words to King Nebuchadnezzar just before he threw them into the furnace. "If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up" (Daniel 3:17-18).

## **DANIEL: Trust**

*MK Identity: Daniel was raised in his home culture, then taken to the Babylonian culture. The king was forced to throw Daniel into the lion's den because of a conspiracy by his advisers. Because Daniel did not compromise his relationship with God, but instead, maintained his trust in Him, God delivered him from the lions. Sometimes MKs may find themselves in compromising positions, but if they will maintain their trust in God, He will deliver them.*

The following are Daniel's words from the lion's den to King Darius, "Daniel answered, 'O king, live forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king.' The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God" (Daniel 6:21-23)