

Parents

Are your parents worried about your participation on a GP?

Overcoming parental objections is challenging.

Exodus 20:12 reads, “Honor your father and your mother.” Do you honor your parents by staying home?

Acts 5:29 reads, “We must obey God rather than men.” Do you dishonor your parents and go despite their objections?

Evaluate yourself. Are you assuming adult responsibilities in other areas of your life? Are you getting good grades, holding down a job, doing your own laundry, paying your bills on time, helping around the house, spending time talking to your parents about their lives and their jobs, etc.? Do you show gratitude to your parents for what they have given you? If you have shown maturity and responsibility in other areas of your life, ask your parents to trust you with this decision as well.

Most parents want the best for their children. Calmly try to discern why your parents object to your going. These are five common objections and suggested responses:

1. Your parents fear for your health and safety.

- Calmly reassure them where you can. Dangers overseas can be magnified in a parent’s mind. One mother expressed her fear that her daughter would be kidnapped while overseas. Lenore Skenazy's book [Free-Range Kids](#) reports the odds of being kidnapped by a stranger are 610,000 in 1. But the lifetime odds of dying in an automobile accident are 112 in 1 ([National Safety Council](#)). This mother allows her daughter to drive, which is actually more dangerous than being kidnapped. Fears can rage in the face of facts, but logic can be helpful to allay them.
- Provide them with as much information as you can about the place you are going. If possible, put them in touch with people who live there so they can reassure your parents.
- Promise to stay in touch. But don’t overpromise! You want to focus on being fully present in your GP, not always connected to things and people back home. Also, it may be difficult to establish reliable internet connections. Tell them you’ll write or call a couple of times during the program, but you can’t be in contact daily.
- Let them know you’ll have the appropriate immunizations. Also, if you can’t peel or cook food, you won’t eat it.

2. Your parents don’t want you to ask others for financial support.

- Ask if they are willing and able to pay your way.
- Ask if they are willing to ask others on your behalf.
- Commit to asking only your friends, not your parents' friends, to support you financially. Pray for God to provide.

3. Your parents think you should go to school or seek an internship.

- Students have gotten [academic credit](#) for participation in a Global Program.
- Talk to your director to see if that is possible.

4. Your parents may object to your going because they are not Christians and do not understand your values.

- You are burdened for others to know and love Jesus, especially your parents.
- You may need to be open to staying home...for a while...and waiting for a change of heart.
- You may need to sacrifice and love your parents by staying home. Or you may need to go anyway.
- Pray and pray some more before you decide. There is no right answer.

5. Your parents still view you as their child, regardless of what you say and how you conduct yourself.

In that case, it can be helpful to seek an adult advocate to speak to your parents on your behalf. An advocate could be:

- Another parent or family friend
- Your pastor
- Your staff worker
- Your GP director

Time is your friend.

Even if your parents object initially, they may get used to the idea as you keep communicating with them. If you prayerfully decide to go despite parental objection, seek a "parental" blessing from one or more of your advocates before you depart.