Whether this is the first or fiftieth mission trip your church has done, you (and your youth) will come home as changed people. You have had new experiences, seen new things, and hopefully, learned something more about God, yourself and the world around you. We hope that your journey doesn’t stop here but that you will take what you learned home to impact the community you live in.

DEBRIEFING
It is important to debrief your mission trip. Without time to process and debrief your trip, the return to life at home could become both frustrating and overwhelming. Debriefing your trip together as a group also helps you discover and remember the special things God taught you while you were away. Our hope is that by debriefing, your group will find practical ways to bring their trip home with them in a way that impacts their own church and community.

Debriefing can be done in a variety of ways and done either as one big event or a couple smaller ones. We have created a one-time session called “Debriefing Your Trip and Sharing Your Story” to guide you through the debriefing process. It only takes about an hour and a half, but the benefits to your group will last much longer.

CELEBRATING
It is also important to celebrate your trip and the experiences and insights received from it. Invite parents, mission trip sponsors and members of your church community to be part of the celebrating through sharing stories and pictures with them.

WAYS TO CELEBRATE/SHARE WITH THE CHURCH
- Picture party: Everyone brings their pictures and showcases them. Invite members of the church to come and see pictures and hear stories from the trip.
- With your team or the youth group, show a slideshow, eat popcorn and share stories from the trip.
- Create a mission trip bulletin board that includes pictures and stories from the trip. Place this in a hallway or common gathering space where people will be likely to see it.
- Share a short video/testimonials in front of the congregation; lead worship with songs sung on the trip.
- Host a thank you dinner or cookout for sponsors, making a meal reminiscent of your trip.
- Make a mission trip scrapbook: Each youth gets 1–2 pages to put in pictures, write down stories and share thoughts/experiences. Keep it in the youth room so everyone can look at it; share it with the congregation to invite them into the trip.
- Reunion party: Include pictures, celebration, stories and/or a time of remembrance.
WAYS TO CONTINUE WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED
We hope that your youth lives have, in some way, changed through their mission trip experience. They may even be excited to continue their service right in your own community. Tap into that excitement and zeal right away. Look for ways to make service a part of their everyday life in your own community. We have given you a few ideas but grab a few youth and brainstorm some of your own as well.

- Once a month (or more), go to a local assisted living home. Play games, sing or just visit with residents. You could turn it into an adopt-a-grandparent program by establishing consistent relationships between youth and residents.
- Make regular visits to the homes of shut-ins from your church. Help with yard work or cleaning, go shopping with/for them, watch a movie or play games together. Often shut-ins just like to have company.
- Find non-profit organizations operating in your community (shelters, soup kitchens, thrift stores, etc.) and see what kind of volunteer needs they have. Give youth options and ownership over which ministry you partner with.
- Use the ideas your youth come up with during “Debriefing Your Trip and Sharing Your Story.”