

DEBRIEFING YOUR TRIP & SHARING YOUR STORY



Research shows that the lasting impact of a mission, service or learning trip is only as good as the follow-up students experience back home. Use this guide to celebrate and debrief your experience with your group. You can also utilize any number of resources at youthworks.com/aftertrip.

CELEBRATING

Celebrate your trip and the experiences and insights received from it. Invite parents, trip sponsors and members of your community to celebrate through sharing stories and pictures with them.

One way you can celebrate through a picture party where everyone brings pictures from the trip and displays them (in a digital presentation or physical pictures). Another way to celebrate is to invite individuals from your group to share in front of your church, school or organization their personal experience on the trip.

A lasting way to celebrate and honor the trip is to make a trip scrapbook. Give each participant a page or 2 to add in pictures and write their stories. Keep this scrapbook in a common place so everyone in the group can look through it in the days, months and years after the trip.

DEBRIEFING

Taking time to debrief any experience as a group will increase the value of the experience and help stretch what everyone learned beyond the trip, finding practical ways to bring the experience home in a way that impacts your community.

You can host one big debriefing event for your group one week or month after the trip. You could alternatively host multiple smaller debriefing opportunities in the weeks and months after the trip. This guide is created as a one-time session that would take about an hour and a half. Feel free to break it up into smaller sessions if that's what works best for your group.

FACILITATOR SESSION PREP

- Invite 3-5 participants to share their 2-Minute Story and a picture from their trip with the large group. Share page 4 of this document with them.
- Choose and prepare small group facilitators (enough for small groups of about five participants each). Share pages 5-6 of this document with facilitators.
- Make 2 posters - 1 with the heading "What We Learned" and 1 with the heading "Continuing the Journey". Gather Post-it notes (3-5 per person) and pens / markers (1 per person).
- Plan how you will project pictures for your whole group to see.
- Create a slideshow of pictures from the trip.

STUDENTS & LEADERS SESSION PREP

- Optional: Use the questions on page 4 as journaling prompts.
- Use the instructions and questions on page 4 to prepare your 2-Minute Story. (You can invite all participants in your group to do this or just those chosen to share with the large group.)
- If selected, provide one picture to show while sharing their 2-Minute Story.
- Send pictures to whoever is making the slideshow.

DEBRIEFING SESSION OUTLINE

Welcome (5 minutes)

- Thank the group for coming. Share the purposes of this session: to unpack the trip experience (what it was all about) and to talk about ways to continue the journey (what's next for our group).

2-Minute Stories (10 minutes)

- Invite the 5 participants to each share their 2-Minute Story.
 - As they share, project their picture from the trip.

Small Group Debriefing – What Happened (30 minutes)

- Divide participants into groups of 5 or so students. Assign a facilitator to each group.
 - The facilitator should use pages 5 and 6 of this document to lead the small group discussion.

Reflection (10 minutes)

- Invite everyone to reflect on what they learned during their trip for the next few minutes.
 - Encourage them to write those things down on Post-it notes and put those Post-its on the “What We Learned” poster if they are willing.
 - If applicable, remind the group about specific big picture themes or topics or events from the trip to jog their memories.
 - As people are reflecting and writing on their Post-its, play reflective music in the background.

Looking Ahead (10 minutes)

- Invite everyone to think about how they can continue to learn about the topics they started learning about on the trip and how they can continue or start to act out what you're learning as individuals and as a group.
 - Encourage them to write those things down on Post-it notes and put those Post-its on the “Continuing the Journey” poster if they are willing.
 - Give some big-picture ideas: Where can we serve or volunteer in our community? Who can we partner with already serving the community in specific areas?
 - As people are reflecting and writing on their Post-its, play reflective music in the background.

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Large Group Discussion (15-20 minutes)

- Invite participants to share what they wrote on their “Continuing the Journey” Post-its.
 - As individuals share, tease out as a group which ideas resonate with the group. Are there topics that multiple people mentioned? How can you as a group bring those ideas to life?
 - Ideas: doing a book or video study on a topic or topics that multiple people want to learn more about, partnering with a local organization or ministry through volunteering or raising funds/supplies
 - As the facilitator, take notes on what students share that can become future conversations or studies.

Slideshow & Closing (5 minutes)

- Summarize this brainstorming session and what’s up next – how will you / the group decide and announce next steps?
- End by enjoying the slide show of pictures everyone shared. Celebrate the experience you had together!

Share Your Story

Although your trip is over, God is still moving in and through you! Think about how this experience has changed you.

How has it changed...

....your understanding of God?

...your understanding or yourself?

...your understanding of others?

What have you learned about serving?

What are some things you can do to keep fresh in your mind what you learned and experienced during your trip?

A 2-MINUTE STORY

You will likely be asked by someone in your life, "How was your trip?" While these people often are genuinely interested in hearing about your trip, they typically aren't expecting an hour-long play-by-play of each day of your trip. Challenge yourself to come up with a 2-minute story that captures one meaningful moment and/or something you learned during the trip.

Use these questions to guide you:

- What did you learn from people in the community?
- Who did you meet? How can you share your experience with them in a way that honors and respects their story?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What did you learn about God?
- How are you a different person now compared to when you first signed up for this trip?
- What do you want to do differently now that you've had this experience?
- When you think of your trip, what is one "snapshot" that comes to mind?

Small Group Discussion

FACILITATOR NOTES

Use this guide to lead your group in conversation. You'll have 30 minutes for this time (unless your leader tells you otherwise).

Your role is to ask questions and listen. You don't need to have all the answers, be any kind of expert, or even do most of the talking!

Let students take the lead. Listen to what comes up in discussion and ask follow-up questions to keep the conversation going and encourage students to go deeper. Some examples of follow-up questions:

- What do you think about that?
- How did that affect you?
- How are you dealing with / responding to that now?
- What did you sense God doing in you?
- What stood out to you about....?
- Does anyone else feel that way?
- Did anyone else notice that? Notice something different?

Just as you should not do all the talking, no one student should do all the talking. Draw out quiet students who are reluctant to share by asking them direct questions or asking a question for everyone to answer in turn.

- The goal is to *encourage* students to share, not *force* anyone to do something they're not comfortable with.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Introductions (5-10 minutes)

- If necessary, introduce yourself and what you do.
- Invite everyone to introduce themselves and share a fun fact (you can give them a prompt or let them choose their fun fact).
- Set expectations for this time. Everyone should feel free to share their thoughts and feelings in a way that is always respectful and kind. Let one person share at a time. When someone is speaking, everyone else is listening.
 - Add any additional expectations your group should hear.

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Team Processing (5 minutes)

- What was it like going on this trip with your group?
- What did you appreciate about going through this experience with these people?
- What was difficult about going on the trip with the group?
- What did you learn about yourself from the group or through working with the group?
- What will you really miss about being with your group on the trip?

Ministry Reflection (5 minutes)

- What did you learn about ministry and/or service?
- Who or what made the biggest impact on you during the trip?
- What surprised you about being in that community?
- What thoughts or questions do you have that have stuck with you since the trip?
- How do you think this experience has changed or will change you?

Coming Home Reflection (5 minutes)

- What was it like coming back home after your trip?
- Since the trip, what have you enjoyed most about being back in your home and community?
- Since the trip, what has gotten on your nerves about being back in your home and community?
- How will you personally continue learning about things that sparked your interest during the trip?
- What will you do differently now that you've had this experience?
- Who can support you moving forward?

Closing (5 minutes)

- Is there anything else you want to share with the group?
- Close in prayer.