

Telling Your Story

Debriefing Worksheet

Most short-term mission trips leave team members overwhelmed by the wide range of new experiences. The hectic schedule and flurry of activity make it difficult to sort through the events that God is using to initiate lasting spiritual change within us. No matter how many times one has been involved in cross-cultural ministry, careful evaluation and meditation is necessary to fully process the events experienced. The following outline is a step-by-step process that has proven effective for many short-termers.

Step 1: List below all the main events or activities that had a significant impact on your life during this trip. List them randomly as they come to your mind; maybe read your journal entries to jog your memory. Walk through each day or week.

Keep in mind that God works in unique ways and what may be significant for one team member may not be for another. Work individually without discussing your thoughts with other team members until you feel your list is complete.

Significant Moments:

Step 2: Review your list and star the top four of these experiences. Prioritize them, starting with the most significant one, and write them in the boxes below. Then, think about the basic lesson God taught you through each of your top four experiences and write about this in the boxes below. Ask: How should I BE different or what should I DO differently because of this experience?

| Key Experience | Lesson or Significance |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| #1 | |
| #2 | |
| #3 | |
| #4 | |
| Dominant Theme: | |
| One-Sentence Statement: | |

Step 3: Share your entire list with the rest of the group beginning with the top four. Take note of items you may have overlooked as others share. Pay attention to the different ways God is working in the lives of your teammates.

Step 4: Look for themes in the lessons you learned. Pray and ask God to show you what the dominant lesson may be. Is there a correlation between this theme and other things he has been teaching you even before the trip began? Write out the dominant theme.

Step 5: Write out an answer to the following question, in not more than one sentence: "I heard you went on a short-term trip. How was it?" Briefly describe the dominant theme that arises from the lessons God taught you. Be careful to focus on the theme, not the event. Be disciplined; do not go over one sentence. When someone asks a follow-up question, use your top four experiences to illustrate this theme.

Step 6: Take turns sharing your sentences with each other by answering the question, "I heard you went on a short-term trip. How was it?" As each person shares, take a minute for feedback to make sure the main lesson is communicated effectively.

Step 7: Memorize your concise response to this question. It may be the most common one you face on your return home. Every time you repeat your answer you will reinforce in your own life the central theme God is working into you.

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