

TEAM LEADERS, READ THIS AT LEAST TWO WEEKS BEFORE YOU PLAN TO DEBRIEF

The Goal of Debriefing

There are five goals to this debriefing:

1. to give honor and glory to jc
2. to help each of your team members start to articulate some of their experience
3. To help your team members see the trip with accurate perspective
4. to help prepare them to reenter America
5. to help them bring closure to their trip

Getting Ready to Debrief

Set aside some significant time to debrief. ***Be intentional about setting this time aside or in the whirlwind of saying good-bye, packing and buying last minute souvenirs this important time will be lost.*** Depending on the number of people on your team and how vocal they are, you may need as much as 8 to 10 hours to debrief. The average team will more likely need 5 to 7 hours. It is helpful to break this time into two or three segments (i.e., 2-3 evenings or mornings). If you try to do it all at one time, many on your team will “check-out” mentally after a few hours.

Note: If your team can “get away” for a day or two to debrief, it is usually better because they don’t have appointments with students, classes, shopping, etc. to think about. This is often difficult because your team is trying to say good-bye to all their friends. You make the call and keep in mind what is best for your team.

Tell your team a week or two in advance when and where you will debrief. It will not be “convenient” for all of them, but that should give them time to adjust their plans if needed. As much as possible, help your team understand that getting away to process the trip is valuable. Cast vision for reflecting on what G has done during your trip.

Things to Consider Before You Begin Debriefing

Here are some important things to keep in mind as you debrief:

- Singing, pring and w-shipping together can be really sweet during this time. It is often a good way to open a debriefing session.
- It is a good idea to ask the Overseas Host to come for a part of the debriefing. They can provide helpful perspective and cast vision and challenge the people on your team to consider coming back longer-term (like 2 years or even career). You will need to communicate this to him or her in advance. If they cannot attend a debrief “get away,” ask them to sit down with your team at a seperate time.
- This should be a time of rejoicing over what G has done in the lives of the people you spent time with. There should also be some rejoicing over what He has done in your lives.
- There should also be some grieving over leaving your friends. This is healthy.
- Debriefing is not an exact science. You don’t have to debrief in the exact way described in this paper. Your trip has been unique, your team is unique and it will likely be appropriate to emphasize some things over others. Enter into debrief prfully.

About the Debriefing Questions

This debriefing guide is designed to be used along with the debriefing questions which you received at orientation. It is normally best to give the debriefing questions out to each person on your team about **one week before you get on the plane to fly home.** When you give out the debriefing questions, there are some guidelines you will want to give your group:

- The questions do not need to be handed in when you are done.
- The aim of answering the questions is to help each team member begin to process and talk about their trip.
- Your team members can write out their answers, put them in outline/note form, or just leave the paper blank - whatever works best for them. *However*, each person needs to have thought through each question and be ready to give **an answer when debriefing time begins.**

Using the Debriefing Questions

It will be important for you to facilitate discussion for your team over the debriefing questions. Some of your team will not speak unless you call on them specifically. Call on them. Speaking helps people process what is going on in their mind and heart.

Each question is designed to help move your team members through the mental process of grasping their time overseas and reentering America. Below is an explanation of why each question is asked (Please use these explanations as you go through these questions with your team).

1. How was the sovereign g at work in people's lives here before we ever arrived? (give examples)

Often a person on a short-term trip will not stop to contemplate what g was doing before they arrived (see Jn 4:35-38, esp. 38). Thus, their view of the work there revolves largely around his/herself. Help them see that they are simply links in the chain of His plan. Use the discussion of this question to really give him glory **for what he has done!** It is all about him!

2. What was the most exciting thing/part of our trip for you?

Let them discuss the most exciting thing as far as sp matters (i.e. fruit) as well as exciting events of the trip. Again use this time to give glory to G. Praise him for the things he has done during your trip!

This is normally a good time to talk about humorous things that have happened on the trip – laugh, rejoice and have fun.

3. What was the most challenging/hardest part of our trip for you?

Let your team express struggles and difficulties. Help them concentrate on what they learned from those struggles.

Do not let this time become a time of complaining or bashing the culture you are in. There is a cost to the work you have done, AND IT IS WORTH IT!

(Right here is a good time to talk about the funniest things that have happened on your trip. It kind of breaks things up and lets your team laugh and have some fun.)

4. How did G use you to have impact here?

The goal of this question is to help each person see their work while overseas in the light of reality.

Some may think they have done great things and want to go home and share huge (possibly exaggerated) stories. Help them see their service as **all about him!**

Some may NOT think he has used them much at all. Help them see how their father has worked through them. If you can think of examples, tell those individuals how you saw g use them. Remember, any

service to the team, word of truth shared, piece of good news communicated, act of kindness given.... came from their father and not from them! **It is all about him!**

5. What part did/does the way he used you play in the long-term work here?

This question is again meant to help them see their work in light of reality.

Hopefully, through the discussion of this question your team will gain a better grasp of the long-term vision for the work among these people.

6. How will you pr for the workers (specific ones) we will leave on the field when we go home?

One of the goals of this question is to help your team “pass the baton”. Hand off the relational work with this group of people to those on the field.

However, “passing the baton” does not mean that you are out of the race. It just means you are not the one out front doing the running. During the discussion of this question **communicate to your team that there is a heightened level of responsibility in their lives now.** They have seen, heard and experienced some things living in a new culture and among a group of people with little access to good news. Thus, they cannot just graduate from this trip and go on with life as if things are just like they have always been. SPUR THEM ON TO CONTINUE TO BE INVOLVED IN THAT LAND (i.e. be faithful to maintain the relationships you have made, send letters, etc.) AND IN REACHING THE NATIONS BY GOING, GIVING, PRING, ETC.

7. In what ways do you view America differently after being here for _____ weeks?

Now it is time to shift gears and help your team reenter America.

If this is their first time out of the U.S., it may shake their worldview a bit. They should be able to identify some things they appreciate more about America and some things they are not so proud of as well.

8. In what ways do you view yourself differently?

Hopefully there will have been some life changing things going on in each person on your team. If not, there may be something wrong.

Help them grasp the things they have learned. Usually living in a new culture will bring out some ugliness in our lives that needs to be dealt with.

It may also bring about some good things like gratitude, an attitude of simplicity (not materialistic), greater desire for pr, etc. Try not to let them go home without thinking through the things they have learned.

9. Which of those ways are healthy and need to be held on to? Which are unhealthy and need to be let go of?

Help your team decipher changes that need to be made in their lives.

Caution them against the sin of criticalness. Challenge them to be catalysts for change rather than complainers or criticizers.

10. What kind of “Welcome Home” do you expect to receive when we get back? (i.e. people waiting for you and questions they will ask)

Often those who go have expectations of a big party waiting for them at the airport with ALL the people who have pr’d for them. Then they get home and few people show up to welcome them home.

Warn them that this big welcome home will likely not be the case.

Help them lower their expectations. If there is a big party, let it be a surprise not something expected. That way if there is no party they won’t be crushed.

11. When you get home how will you answer the question, “How was your trip overseas?”

30 second answer -

2 minute answer -

30 minute answer -

“How was your trip?” is an inadequate question to ask someone after they have given several weeks of their life doing what you have done. It is extremely hard to answer, yet it is what most people will ask you. Some of the people will ask this question just to be nice. They may not even really want to know the answer. Yet, some will be genuinely interested; they just don't know what kinds of questions to ask.

A good way to deal with this is to come up with about 3 different answers about your time overseas.

- a 30 second answer for those who don't really seem interested. You might put something a bit surprising in this answer to see if the one asking might have enough curiosity to probe a little further. Be creative.

- a 2 minute answer for those who are a bit more interested and want to listen to your answer.

- a 30 minute answer for those who want to hear stories, see your pictures and really relate to what you went through and what it is like. This answer could be much longer than 30 minutes.

12. Write down a few goals for when you return to the States. How would you like G to use your time overseas in the States?

(On the airplane ride back home, start to consider these questions. “How can I share the gospel effectively at home? How can I cultivate relationships that are gospel centered and deep? How can I cultivate a heart of compassion and humility in my home church and ministry?”)

Just as you and your team had some goals and hopes for how G would use you overseas, help your team to start thinking toward how G could use your experience overseas for His kingdom once you have all returned home. Once you return home, your trip is something to steward well. Transitioning back to the States will likely hold many challenges of its own, so help your team start thinking towards how they can implement positive habits and things they have learned during the trip at home.

13. What will you take with you to remind you of the people and place you have been learning about these last several weeks? (pictures? souvenirs?)

Bring back reminders of G's faithfulness on your trip and in the place you have spent time. Cultivating connections with the people and place can help integrate some of your experiences into life in the States. We often see G tell his people to remember what he did and set up monuments as reminders. You can all benefit from placing reminders in your lives of what G has done and what He is doing. (A bilingual Bible, a piece of local clothing, pictures)

Lastly, challenge each person to replace himself/herself on the team next year. In other words, mobilize someone to go on the next team!! Challenge them to cast vision and ask their friends to pray about going for the glory of j.

Final note: please ask your team not to do any interviews (local newspaper, magazine or TV) about their trip unless they talk with OneLink about it first. Thank you, and good job!

Debriefing Questions (Get your journal out)

1. How was the sovereign G at work in people's lives here before we ever arrived? (give examples)
2. What was the most exciting thing/part of our trip for you?
3. What was the most challenging/hardest part of our trip for you?
4. How did G use you to have impact here?
5. What part did/does the way he used you play in the long-term work here?
6. How will you pr for the workers (specific ones) we will leave on the field when we go home?
7. In what ways do you view America differently after being here for _____ weeks?
8. In what ways do you view yourself differently?
9. Which of those ways are healthy and need to be held on to? Which are unhealthy and need to be let go of?
10. What kind of "Welcome Home" do you expect to receive when we get back? (i.e. people waiting for you and questions they will ask)
11. When you get home, how will you answer the question, "How was your summer?"
 - 30 second answer –
 - 2 minute answer –
 - 30 minute answer –
12. Write down a few goals for when you return to the States. How would you like G to use your time overseas in the States?

(On the airplane ride back home, start to consider these questions. "How can I share the gospel effectively at home? How can I cultivate relationships that are gospel centered and deep? How can I cultivate a heart of compassion and humility in my home church and ministry?")

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