

Debriefing Suggestions

What is “debriefing” and why is it so important?

Debriefing gives students an opportunity to talk about their summer experience: to tell stories, to express joys and frustrations, to ask questions, etc. It is meant to be a time that BEGINS the process of processing. For most students, understanding and assimilating all that they have experienced will take many months. Debriefing gives the BSU director the opportunity to discover any specific things he or she might need to follow up on with the students. The BSU director should not consider debriefing a one time event, but rather the beginning of an on-going conversation with each student that will last throughout the fall, maybe even spring, semester.

What kind of event should debriefing be?

The most important thing about debriefing is that students have an opportunity to talk. It is also a good idea to ask them to bring their pictures to share—many will tell stories best using their pictures. Some ideas:

- Have a pizza dinner at the BSU.
- Have the summer missionaries over to your home for a meal.
- Have a Sunday afternoon ice cream party at the BSU.

If there are a lot of summer missionaries from your campus, it is probably a good idea to break them up into small groups for discussion.

What kinds of questions should I use to help them start talking?

Some will talk freely, others will need some encouragement. The following questions can be useful discussion starters.

1. What was the best & worst part of your missions experience?
2. What expectations did you have before you left? Were they met?
3. What did you see God do? What did you learn about God?
4. What do you think was your strongest contribution?
5. In what ways were your talents/gifts used?
6. What did you discover about other people?
7. What did you discover about yourself?
8. What has been the most difficult thing about coming home?
9. In what ways do you think you have changed?
What changes do you want to make as a result of what you experienced?
(future plans, relationships, money, time, major?)
10. How can you put what you learned on the mission field to use on campus or at home?