

## What is a strategic debrief?

de•brief /dē- 'brēf/ verb

To carefully review upon completion.

A strategic debrief is a dedicated meeting for a ministry team to actively and productively reflect on the ministry's current and past activities.

### Active

- Formal meetings vs. sharing informal thoughts with one another in passing
- Structured meeting and use of debrief tools to generate focused reflection. Consider what reflections are relevant to the team.

### Productive

- Strategic debrief has a clear agenda and objective. For example:
  - What key questions need to be answered?
  - What data needs to be reviewed?
  - What goals and areas of alignment need to be measured?
- Strategic debrief generates practical reflections that can be used to inform future team decisions, goals, strategies, etc.

## What is the benefit of a strategic debrief?

Strategic debriefs are a practice that nurture Healthy Church rhythms. Consider the following benefits strategic debriefs provide.

- Intentional time for discernment and celebration for what God has done.
- Opportunity to bring together multiple perspectives/voices and foster team-based ministry.
- Dedicated space to gather information that can be informative for future ministry decisions/actions.
- Intentional time to measure what matters for the ministry.
- Assessment of alignment with [vision, mission, values, and goals](#). ➡

## Facilitating a Strategic Debrief

There are various ways to facilitate a strategic debrief. Consider the following best practices.

- Schedule a dedicated time for a team debrief that is soon after the ministry activities/event to be debriefed.
- Prepare the team for the debrief. Set expectations and agenda items, and share questions to consider in advance.
- Collect any necessary or helpful data in advance of the meeting. For example: participant surveys, ministry participation statistics, feedback comments, etc.
- Cultivate a space for learning and growth. Effective strategic debriefs allow for different perspectives, high challenge, and difficult questions.
- Record the key takeaways of the strategic debrief.
- Assess if key takeaways require further discussion or integration into future ministry decisions/activities.
- Identify next steps, as applicable.



## Debrief Tools

Here are some example tools that can be used to generate reflection during a strategic debrief meeting.



### Start-Stop-Continue-Change

**Facilitate a conversation around the ideas of start, stop, continue, and change:**

- What might we start doing based on what we experienced during this ministry activity/event?
- What should we stop doing based on what we experienced?
- What will we continue to do?
- What do we want to change for next time?



### Circle-Square-Triangle

**Invite team members to share:**

- Circle: What's still going around in your head? What questions or challenges did we encounter?
- Square: What's squared away? What did we learn?
- Triangle: What three things will we remember for next time?



### Playing card debrief

**Shuffle a deck of cards and randomly give 1-3 cards to each team member. Ask the team to share a reflection according to the suit of each card they were given.**

- Heart: What did you feel during the activity/event?
- Spade: What was discovered or cultivated during the activity/event?
- Diamond: What was especially precious to you?
- Club: What is something that we can grow next time?
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### What-So what-Now what

**Facilitate a discussion around the questions:**

- What have you/we learned?
- So, what is the significance of what you/we learned?
- Now what are you/we going to do or change going forward?

## Make sure to record key ideas! For example:

- Have a note taker for the meeting.
- Tape a poster on the wall for each questions/category, and record ideas on the appropriate poster throughout the conversation.
- Tape a poster on the wall for each question/category. Give team members 5-10 minutes for personal reflection, then invite them to record their ideas directly on the poster or on Post-it notes that they will attach to the appropriate poster. Follow this time of personal reflection and recording of ideas with a time of team discussion.

# THE ESSENTIALS:

## Strategic debriefs

Are an effective practice for ministry teams that seek to grow in intentional and focused ministry participation. They provide a dedicated time for active and productive reflection that can provide valuable insight for future ministry discernment, decisions, and actions.

