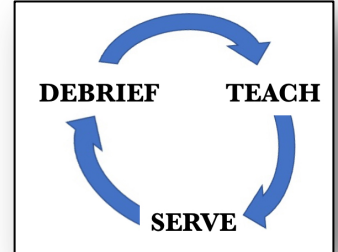


# The “Prepare, Serve, Debrief” Cycle of Lessons

*Steve Alley*

It has been proven that serving others is the most effective way to grow spiritually. It has also been proven that the most effective way to learn is by doing. Experience is the best teacher!

If we combine both of these proven techniques, we create a learning process that is almost guaranteed to produce amazing, life-changing “fruit.” This combined process includes a “prepare, serve, debrief” teaching cycle.



## **TEACH**

1. Plan for / schedule the service project for this cycle (make necessary arrangements, fill out necessary applications, etc.).
2. Present the “big picture” of the cycle to the learners. Give them the date of the service project, and an overview of the information that needs to be learned beforehand.
3. Begin the process of teaching the learners the necessary information related to the service project. It may take several class sessions to accomplish this training/preparation.
  - a. The types of people who will be encountered.
  - b. The needs of the people who will be encountered.
  - c. Being prepared for the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual challenges related to the project.
  - d. Specific scriptural principles or foundations related to the challenges of the project.
  - e. Specific warnings (if applicable).
4. If you are dealing with minors, you may need to complete the necessary legal forms for transportation, emergency care, or parental permission.
5. If you are dealing with minors, consider inviting their parents to join you in the project. There may be “pros” and “cons” to the parents’ presence, so consider this carefully.

## **SERVE**

1. Conduct the service project. This may be a large group, small group, or individual experience. All three options have significant potential.
2. As the supervisor, monitor, encourage, and support the learners as they serve.
3. Make sure that the learners have all the supplies they need to successfully carry out the service project.
4. At the end of the service project, remind the learners that there you will conduct a “debriefing” of their experiences at the next class session. Encourage them to come prepared to share their stories!
5. To add some special “spice” to the upcoming “Debrief” session, film the learners “in action” at the service project and show the video at the “Debrief” session.

## **DEBRIEF**

1. Prepare and bring some “goodies” (sweet rolls, cookies, milk, drinks, pie, etc.) to the debrief session. This needs to be an enjoyable, memorable experience!
2. On the classroom wall, whiteboard, or video screen write the statement, “We Did It!” This is a great visual reminder of the success and joy of serving together!

3. Enjoy the “goodies” as you show the video of the service project (if you filmed it), or as you hear stories of the event.
4. Encourage the learners to share their stories of the service project. Don’t make this too “regimented,” just let them talk. As the teacher, you want to make sure that there is learning taking place, so you need to “guide” the conversations toward the deep learning that took place.
5. As the learners share their stories, reward and celebrate the learners’ willingness to sacrifice themselves for the needs of others. Make this session “full” with celebrations of each of the learners as they share their stories. Don’t leave anyone out!
6. At the end of the session, summarize their experiences and highlight the learning that took place.
7. Introduce the next cycle and the next service project! Get them excited about doing this again!