



# Creative Ways to Promote Spiritual Growth in Service Volunteers

## Before the Service Project

1. Empathy Building Activities (see **Empathy Building Activity Ideas** handout)
2. Personal Spiritual Assessment
  - Checklists – What spiritual characteristics do they need to bring with them; in what areas of spiritual growth do they need to focus; in what areas do they hope to see the most positive spiritual change
  - Journals – Provide open ended questions, encourage volunteers to find passages in scripture they believe add meaning to their upcoming service.
  - Readings – Provide short readings in books or scripture that encourage volunteers to think, debate, and assess.
  - Discussion – Use in conjunction with other methods. Realize introverts may not want to verbalize, but could have some of your deeper insights.
  - Prayers – In addition to expected prayers, encourage volunteers to pray very specific prayers about their personal needs for spiritual growth.
  - Team Building Activities – These are meant to reveal areas of need for **personal** spiritual growth (EX: fear, complaining, laziness, etc.).
  - Slogans – Encourage volunteers to create personal, positive slogans to help remind them of the areas where they want/hope/need to grow spiritually (EX: “I’ve got joy in my heart.”).

## During the Service Project

- Encourage **plenty** of sleep, healthy food, and adequate hydration. This allows volunteers to move from surviving to thriving.
- If possible, have volunteers wear shirts with their personal slogan, or place appropriate scriptures where they will be easily seen.
- Have mentors, sponsors, or team members check in with volunteers during breaks (EX: “How are you doing with your goal so far?”, “What needs to change for you to make more progress?”, etc.).
- Encourage meaningful engagement with the recipients of the service. “Seek to know” by asking appropriate, respectful, loving questions. Allow people to share their stories in their own way. Encourage both volunteers and recipients to find things they have in common.

- Create a decompression area. Try to find a quiet space volunteers can go to reflect if they become overwhelmed. Provide tissues, water, paper, pens, scriptures, and “fiddle” toys. Encourage volunteers to use area if they feel they are losing focus, need to restart their efforts, feel overwhelmed, etc.
- **Respectful** photo taking, sketching, and journaling during breaks should be encouraged. Insights may be forgotten by the end of the day, project, or mission trip.

## **After the Service Project**

It is important to remember everyone is different and will want/need different ways to process what has happened and what they learned. You may want to provide more than one option.

- Encourage thoughtful journaling by providing suggested open-ended questions.
- Create final reflection projects using volunteers’ talents. These could incorporate art, music, dance, photography, writing, etc.
- Encourage meetings with mentors, sponsors, or other volunteers to assess growth and next steps.
- Help the group brainstorm ways of continuing the spiritual growth begun during the project.
- Have volunteers develop educational materials and activities to share what they learned with others.
- Encourage volunteers to continue volunteering individually with the organization/people served.