

Sharing Life Maps: Instructions for Leaders

Plan either an extended time to meet to share your Life Maps as a group or schedule out several times for each person to share theirs.

1. In advance, set a recommended time limit to share your Life Maps, about 20 minutes each. Re-affirm that everything that is shared is confidential, and won't be shared outside the group. This gives freedom for complete honesty.
2. As the leader, take the lead by sharing your story first. It's as important the people in the group know you as it is for you to know them. Be honest, as you will set the tone for the level of authenticity and honesty. All of our lives have messy parts.
3. Encourage the group not to "check out" when someone is sharing but give the person sharing their undivided attention. There's nothing more de-motivating or discouraging than to be ignored when sharing something significant. Put away the phones.
4. Affirm each person who shares for their honesty. Some people may have never experienced an environment of acceptance when sharing potentially hard things.
5. Follow up with praying for each person, thanking God for the people He's brought into their life, acknowledging His hand, even in times where it could not be seen, and for the person's worth. Be specific about details they mentioned in their story.
6. Optionally, write a note to each person after the life story sharing time, affirming their vulnerability and identifying specific ways that his/her story encouraged you.

Life Maps

Developing Your Life Map

Romans 8:28, NLT “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, and to those who are called according to His purpose.”

Have you considered how God has used significant experiences, people or events to form and develop His people? A Life Map is a visual representation of your life from birth to present. It highlights events God has used to mold and shape your character. The insights you gain through the Life Map process help you answer the questions, “Who am I, and where is the Lord leading me?” It can also help your group get to know and understand you better.

Consider the life of Abraham. His journey took him through both the lows and highs of life. They also brought him in contact with all sorts of people and places. Most importantly, you can see how these experiences helped shape his relationship with God. All of Abraham’s experiences – decisions, people, places, events, etc. - helped form and develop him.

These four steps will help you develop your Life Map so you can share it with others:

<p>Step 1:</p> <p>Reflection</p>	<p>Prayerfully consider people, places and events that have marked your life. Make a list. Be sure to use the Life Map worksheet to help you categorize your thoughts. The terms on the worksheet identify categories you should include. Ask yourself the following questions for each category:</p>			
<p>HERITAGE</p> <p>How have your family relationships influenced your life? What ethnic or geographical influences shaped your life?</p>	<p>HEROES</p> <p>What relationships significantly influenced your character or shaped your direction (positively & negatively) How? Why?</p>	<p>HIGH POINTS</p> <p>What experiences have you especially enjoyed? Why?</p>	<p>HARD TIMES</p> <p>What experiences were especially difficult or painful? Why?</p>	<p>HAND OF GOD</p> <p>When & how have you seen God’s sovereign hand at work in your life? List specific events that illustrate His work in your life.</p>
<p>Step 2:</p> <p>Analysis</p>	<p>Now that you have reflected over your life up to today and have a list of your heroes, heritage, high points, hard times and “hand of God” moments, it’s time to analyze which of these you want to put in your Life Map. While it would be nice to share everything, focus on the most significant influences and experiences in your life. Spend some time praying through what you have listed. What you choose is totally up to you. You should not plan to spend any longer than 20-25 minutes sharing your Life Map with your group.</p>			
<p>Step 3:</p> <p>Organization</p>	<p>You are now ready to synthesize this information into a logical flow of thought. How do these people, places and events fit together?</p>			
<p>Step 4:</p> <p>Presentation</p>	<p>This is where you exercise your creative powers. How will you deliver your story? What medium fits your style of communication? You could draw your map like an ancient sea journey with battles, treasures and tropical islands. You could also use a narrative story, graph, photographs or music. Be as creative as you can be to depict your life story. If you are presenting this to your group, remember to make it large enough for everyone to see and read easily.</p>			

