

LIFE MAPS

HOW TO SHARE YOUR STORY



WHY A LIFE MAP?



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 Lifegroup get to know and understand you better. As we strive to live authentically, Life Maps helps others know our whole story.

LIFE MAP TIPS



- Each Life Map should be about 20-30 minutes each, with an additional 10 minutes for Q&A/clarification questions/etc. Write down questions as you go and wait until the end to ask them.
- Trust is key. What is said within the group stays within the group. This is a safe place, where group members can freely share everything in an environment that fosters deep confidence and trust with one another over time. If widening the circle is the most loving thing to do to help someone in a given situation, those steps of trust will be taken together as a group, as well.
- Leaders go first! Your leaders will be as honest and transparent as they can about what God has brought them through. Remember, all of our lives have messy parts.
- Please remember 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 electronics away, etc.
- Affirm each person for their honesty. Some people may have never experienced an environment of acceptance when sharing potentially hard things. This may be new or unnatural to some, so please ensure we give each person the proper support they need.
- After each person shares their story, we will better understand how to pray for them. We can thank God for the people He’s brought into their life and acknowledge His hand, even in times where it could not be seen.

HERE’S HOW WE DO IT

OPTION 1- THE FIVE H'S

STEP 1: REFLECTION

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:

- Heritage: How have your family relationships influenced your life? What ethnic or geographical influences shaped your life?
- Heroes: What relationships significantly influenced your character or shaped your direction (positively & negatively)? How? Why?
- High Points: What experiences have you especially enjoyed? Felt closest to God? Why?
- Hard Times: What experiences were especially difficult or painful? Felt furthest from God? Why?
- Hand of God: When & how have you seen God's sovereign hand at work in your life? List specific events that illustrate His work in your life?

STEP 2: ANALYSIS

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 community group.

STEP 3: ORGANIZATION

You are now ready to synthesize this information into a logical flow of thought. How do these people, places and events fit together?

STEP 4: PRESENTATION

This is where you exercise your creativity. 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 community group, remember to make it large enough for everyone to see and read easily.

OPTION 1 WORKSHEET

	Age/ Lifestage/ Location	Age/ Lifestage/ Location	Age/ Lifestage/ Location	Age/ Lifestage/ Location
<p>HERITAGE: How have your family relationships, ethnic, or geographical influences shaped your life?</p>				
<p>HEROES: What relationships influenced your character/shaped your direction (positively & negatively)? How? Why?</p>				
<p>HIGH POINTS: When did you come to know Christ? What experiences have you especially enjoyed? Felt closest to God? Why?</p>				
<p>HARD TIMES: What experiences were especially difficult or painful? Felt furthest from God?</p>				
<p>HAND OF GOD: When/how have you seen God's hand at work in your life? List specific events that illustrate His work in your life.</p>				

OPTION 2

THREE PEOPLE AND THREE EVENTS

Option 2 is a shorter, more condensed way to share your Life Map. For this option, come to your group prepared to share:

THREE PEOPLE WHO GOD USED TO SHAPE WHO YOU ARE TODAY

- Who led you to Christ or invited you to church?
- How did your parents influence you as a child or adult?
- Did you have a friend or co-worker who helped you in a difficult season?

THREE EVENTS THAT GOD USED TO SHAPE WHO YOU ARE TODAY

- What season of life was the darkest? Most joyful?
- Is there a moment you will never forget?
- If you thought your life was going to go a different direction than it did, what event made that change?