



LIFE MAP: SHARING YOUR STORY

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SHARING LIFE MAPS

Life Maps are a great way to get to know each other, specifically as it relates to loving others and being known. Below are five ways to help your group get the most out of your Life Maps:

1. Plan either a whole meeting time to share your Life Maps as a group or schedule out each person to share their Life Map over several weeks.
2. In advance, set a recommended time limit to share your Life Maps, about 10-15 minutes each, with an additional few minutes for Q&A. Write down questions as you go, but wait until the end to ask them.
3. Don't "check out" when someone else is sharing but give them your undivided attention. There's nothing more unmotivating or discouraging than to be ignored when sharing something significant. Put electronics away.
4. Affirm each person who shares for their honesty. Some people may have never experienced an environment of acceptance when sharing potentially hard things. This is a safe place.
5. After each person shares their story, pray for them. Thank God for the people He's brought into their life and acknowledge His hand, even in times where it could not be seen. Be specific about details they mentioned in their story.

DEVELOPING YOUR LIFE MAP

Have you considered how God uses significant experiences, people, and events to form and develop His people? A Life Map is a visual representation of your life from birth to present day. 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 question, “Who am I, and where is the Lord leading me?” It can also help your Life Group get to know and understand you better. These four steps will help you develop your Life Map so you can share it with others:

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:

- 1. Heritage:** How have your family relationships influenced your life? What ethnic or geographical influences shaped your life?
- 2. Heroes:** What relationships significantly influenced your character or shaped your direction positively & negatively? How? Why?
- 3. High Points:** What experiences have you especially enjoyed? Felt closest to God? Why?
- 4. Hard Times:** What experiences were especially difficult or painful? Felt furthest from God? Why?
- 5. 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 plan to spend no longer than 10-15 minutes sharing your Life Map with your small 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 also use a narrative story, graph, photographs or music, but be as creative as you can be to depict your life story. If you are presenting this to your small group, remember to make it large enough for everyone to see and read easily.

LIFE MAP WORKSHEET

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