

GET TO KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY!



GROUP ACTIVITIES HANDOUT

COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING SESSIONS, PARTS 1 AND 2

GOALS

- To get to know everyone's favourite places around your church.
- To go on a tour of your community.
- To learn about homelessness in your community.
- To learn about what your community is doing or can do to help.

MATERIALS

- Flip chart paper
- White sheets of paper
- Markers
- Masking tape
- Statistics of homeless youth and adults in your area
- List of resources for homeless youth and adults in your area

TO GET READY FOR PART 1

Ask the group to think of their favourite places around the Church. If any participant is not familiar with the community, you can recommend them to explore around the community sometime before the session or to look at Google Maps.

SESSION PART 1 — *What do you know about this community?*

1. Pick an icebreaker game suitable for your group.
2. Have everyone in the group sit down and take turns introducing themselves. You can ask them to introduce their name and one of their favourite places in your community where they like to spend time.
3. Hand out a piece of paper and marker to each participant. Ask them to:
 - Draw a map of the community including the church and all the things that are significant to them around it.
 - Write or draw their favourite, nostalgic, or cool places that are found around the church.

The goal for each person is to have a physical list or representation of their positive experiences in the community in which the church resides. If some youth are not that familiar with the community and the church has open Wi-Fi, you can ask them to write down places that calls their attention on Google Maps.

4. Come back as a group after giving the participants enough time. Encourage participants to take turns to share the places on their lists or maps. Meanwhile, the facilitator should:
 - Doodle a map of your church and places that can be found around the church on flip chart paper or,
 - Make a list of the places that are found around the church on flip chart paper. Types of places around the church can be, but are not limited to be:
 - Natural: water, wildlife, etc.
 - Built: apartment buildings, houses, bridges, highways, roads, etc.
 - Economic: businesses around the church like coffee shops, grocery stores, and shopping centres.
 - Public: hospitals, schools, community centres, governmental offices, etc.
 - Social: where people usually meet in the community.

This map or list can be displayed on a wall of the youth room later!

TO GET READY FOR PART 2

1. If you did a map on session 1 part 4, display it somewhere in the youth room where it is easily seen. Title it "Our Community." If you did a list on session 1 part 4, make a quick map doodle from the list to display.
2. Ask the youth to brainstorm resources that they have access to in the community around the church (i.e. a youth group at the library or programs at a nearby community centre).
3. Facilitators, please search and list:
 - Statistics for homeless youth and adults in your area.
 - Resources available to people who are homeless in the community your church resides in.

SESSION PART 2 — *Exploring your community*

1. Icebreaker of your choice.
2. Present the map.
3. Ask the group to take turns sharing any resources that are found in the community and that they have access to. For example, if they've been involved in any programs in the community. Resources may include a day camp at a community centre when they were younger or any experience in programs in the area.
4. List the youth resources on flip chart paper and tape the paper to a wall. Participants can then take a picture of the resources for themselves or their friends.
5. As a group, go outside and take a tour of all the places found in the map! Come back to the youth room and discuss how each felt about it.
6. Have flip chart paper ready and answer these questions in a group:
 - Have you seen any people who are homeless around your community? Facilitators, you may give homelessness statistics for your area here.
 - If yes, where were they? Did you notice how they were treated?
 - Are there places where people who are homeless usually hang out or sleep at in the community? Facilitators, please point out any shelters, soup kitchens, Out of the Cold programs, or any resources available to homeless youth and adults in your area.
 - Are there any resources around the community for homeless adults or homeless youth? Facilitators, please list resources.

CLOSING

Questions moving forward:

- Is there anything you realized you didn't know before? If yes, great! What did you learn?
- Is there anything you would like to learn more about?
- As a group, is there a project or activity you would like to do to address homelessness in your area (remember, nothing is too big or too small. No act of kindness is ever wasted!)? Brainstorm ideas and make plans to achieve this goal later on! *Examples: volunteering at a local shelter, raising money or goods for a local organization, collecting information and teaching organization about homelessness in the area, and many more ideas!*

CLOSING PRAYER

*Embracing Creator,
You grace each of us with equal measure in your love.
Let us learn to love our neighbours more deeply,
So that we can create peaceful and just communities.
Inspire us to use our creative energies
To build the structures we need
to overcome the obstacles
of intolerance and indifference.
May Jesus provide us the example needed
and send the Spirit to warm our hearts for the journey.
Amen.*

Adapted from Being Neighbour: The Catechism and Social Justice