



CHURCH ASSET MAPPING

This exercise is adapted from the ACTS Coaches Guide



INTERNAL ASSET MAPPING:

DISCOVERING OUR GIFTEDNESS IN CHRIST

PURPOSE

This Asset Mapping exercise is adapted from the ACTS process and can be used to help congregations discover the gifts and abilities God has given them to help their low-income neighbors. By the end of the exercise, participants will have:

1. Discovered the assets that they, both as individuals and as a collective body, bring to current or future ministries with the materially poor
2. Discerned new ways their gifts could be used to fulfill God's agenda for the materially poor in their community
3. Reflected on how they might engage the gifts of the materially poor, as well as other community partners, to build abundant communities

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO
THINKTANK-INC.ORG/ACTS.HTML**

PREPARATION

In order to prepare effectively for this exercise, the facilitator is encouraged to:

1. Conduct an informal learning needs assessment with the ministry leader team. After briefly describing the purpose and process of the asset mapping exercise, ask such open-ended questions as the one below. Read Chapter 4 of *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach*, by Jane Vella (2002 revised edition) for more information on learning needs assessments.

“What do you hope will be the result of the asset mapping exercise?”

2. Review the Process instructions below, including The Four Key Relationships summary, and adapt the activity to meet the learning needs identified through the learning needs assessment.
3. Gather the necessary materials, including:
 - Flip chart or butcher block paper
 - Masking tape (unless the flipchart is self-adhesive)
 - Markers (enough or one Red, Blue, and Green marker per table)
 - The Four Relationships model drawn on a large piece of flip chart paper
 - One handout of the Four Key Relationships summary per table
 - One handout of the Types of Relationship Assets per table
 - Chime, or some other favorite tool for getting people's attention
 - Enough pens and Letter to My Church handouts for everyone
 - Scribe Instructions sheets (enough for one per table)

4. Prepare the flipchart by:

- Writing one of the four relationships on separate pieces of flipchart, to include at least one of the following. For large groups, you can have multiple tables focusing on the same relationship.
 - i. God
 - ii. Self
 - iii. Others
 - iv. The Rest of Creation
- Draw 2 concentric circles beginning with the first one immediately surrounding the relationship, as it is written in the middle of the flipchart.
- Label the circles with the following terms, beginning with the space immediately outside the relationship:
 - i. Individual/Family
 - ii. Church Body



5. Set up the room to include:

- At least 4 tables with enough chairs for 4-6 participants each. Consider the ambiance and try to include elements that will make the participants feel comfortable and encourage free brainstorming.
- Place at each table:
 - i. Prepared flipchart, with at least one of each of the 4 relationships represented
 - ii. 2 differently colored markers (Red & Blue)
 - iii. Enough pens for everyone at the table
 - iv. Enough Letter to My Church worksheets for everyone at the table
 - v. 1 Scribe Instructions sheet per table
 - vi. 1 Four Key Relationships summary sheet per table
- Post the Four Relationships and Asset Mapping mental models at the front of the room

PROCESS

The Asset Mapping exercise is designed to be completed in 2 hours and can be used with groups of 20 participants and up. Once the group has been assembled and is ready to begin, facilitate the asset mapping exercise per the outline below.

The structure of this activity has been greatly influenced by the World Café model of group facilitation. A World Café conversation, “is a creative process for leading collaborative dialogue, sharing knowledge and creating possibilities.” You can find a variety of introductory videos on the World Café Method on YouTube, such as this one: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YG_6iBcyP7w.

1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW (15 MINUTES)

Introduce yourself. Depending on the size of the group, invite others to also introduce themselves. Be clear that this is a facilitated process of conversation; not a training.

Next, **introduce the concept of asset mapping**, as conceptualized by the ABCD Institute (See www.abcdinstitute.org for more information on the practice of asset mapping). Kretzman and McKnight, who popularized the term, describe its importance this way: “Every single person has capacities, abilities and gifts. Living a good life depends on whether those capacities can be used, abilities expressed and gifts given. If they are, the person will be valued, feel powerful and well-connected to the people around them. And the community around the person will be more powerful because of the contribution the person is making (2003)”. Asset Mapping is a way of making explicit the capacities, abilities and gifts of the church.

Then, **discuss how the practice of asset mapping will specifically be used** as a means of identifying the gifts that exist within the church, specifically the gifts that can be used to serve the materially poor in our community. As image-bearers of God, our unique, experiences, passions, skills, knowledge, and natural abilities can be used to transform our world. Collectively, these gifts can be expressed through groups we may be a part of, or programs, such as Sunday school groups, book studies, financial literacy programs, and more. Finally, the church, as a body, is gifted with collective financial and human potential, and also as an institution with access to building space, equipment, and more.

For this exercise, these assets will be expressed with respect to the Four Key Relationships described in *When Helping Hurts*. **Refer to the four relationships model** on the wall and in the handouts. Have volunteers read a summary of each relationship. Discuss ways that we can see A) the brokenness of sin in these relationships and B) ways that Christ is bringing redemption in those relationships. When God created us, He intended for all four of these relationships to be healthy and working properly to bear His image. However, because of the Fall, these relationships got messed up. Each of us, no matter how much money we have, experiences brokenness in our relationships with God, self, others, and the rest of creation.

2. ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS (55 MIN)

Ask each of the **groups to work at their tables**. They have been assigned one of the four relationships. Their task is to **list all of the assets the church has** that can help people who are poor with that particular relationship. Ask the question: “What resources or assets do we have that could help restore someone to living as God intended in this relationship?” Have the tables designate one person to act as the Scribe for the group. Point out that there is an instruction sheet for the group’s Scribe. Allow 20 minutes for this portion of the activity. To help them identify the full range of assets that reside in the congregation, or are connected to the church, they are to organize their gifts according to the concentric circles of (1) Individual and family assets of congregants, and (2) collective assets, like the programs and corporate gifts of the church as a whole.

To stimulate the conversation at the various tables, **provide examples**. For instance, if someone owns a landscaping business, they could provide a job with income to help someone support himself and restore his relationship to the rest of creation. Or your church may have a counseling ministry that could provide support to a couple experiencing marital problems and assist in mending their relationships with to each other. Once people grasp what is expected of them, ask them to **discuss at their table** the following questions and list their responses on the flipchart. The Scribes are to write the group’s responses to the first question in the circle labeled “Individual/Family” using a Red marker. They are to write the group’s responses to the second question in the Circle labeled “Church Body” using a Blue marker.

- What interests, passions, abilities, skills, knowledge, and availability do I personally (or my family) have that could help someone thrive in their relationship with _____?
- What collective programs, ministries, or institutional assets do we have as a church body that could encourage growth in someone’s relationship with _____?

Instruct the Scribe to remain in his seat while the rest of the group members around the table are asked to **shift to the next table over in a clockwise rotation**. The Scribe is then asked to summarize for the new group what the original group discussed. Once the Scribe has concluded the summary, then the new group will answer the same questions to stimulate additional thinking and add to what has already been discussed. Allow 15 minutes for this portion of the activity.

As time allows, repeat the above directions for a second time. Allow another 15 minutes for a final rotation of the participants. Then, ask all participants to return to their original seats. 5 minutes has been allotted in the activity for the transition points; however, more may be needed with larger groups.

Because both people and ministries are multifaceted, it is likely that any particular ministry addresses more than one relationship. For example, a small group Bible study addresses people’s relationship to God, but it also creates community, which fosters relationships with others. Instruct the scribe and participants to not get bogged down trying to determine which of the four relationships a ministry addresses. Parsing this all out isn’t the point of the exercise.

3. REFLECTION (30 MIN)

Have the Scribe first **summarize to the original group** the additional wisdom that was contributed during the subsequent 2 rotations. Then, ask the tables to take 10 minutes to **discuss among themselves** the following questions:

- What surprised you from this exercise?
- What have you learned about our church and its giftedness in Christ?
- How might this inform our interactions with our community and world?

Have each of the groups **tape their flipcharts** on the wall near the front of the room. Ask the entire group of participants to gather around the flipchart at the front of the room. Have them take 10 minutes to do a **gallery walk** to observe the gifts and assets identified by the other groups.

Bring everyone back together for a collective discussion with all of the participants. As a Facilitator, ask the following questions to start the conversation.

- How was this exercise for you? Hard? Easy? Why?
- How would this exercise have been different if we had asked you to list your needs/deficits? Why?
- What does this wall tell us about who we are as a church?
- What does this tell us about the role we might play in living out God's agenda for our community?
- What kinds of gifts and assets do you think might exist in the people our ministries serve?
- What might it look for us to engage our community's gifts and assets?

4. CONCLUSION (20 MIN)

Ask the congregation to return to their seats. Read aloud **Colossians 1:1-12**. Discuss how Paul is writing here to the collective body of the church at Colossae. In fact, much of the New Testament was written as a letter, intended to be read aloud to the corporate Body of Christ.

What kinds of things does Paul say to his brothers and sisters in Colossae?

Given the exercise today, and all the reflection and learning, take some time to reflect on this church. On the Letter to My Church handout provided, **write a letter to your church** that summarizes what the Lord has impressed upon your heart or opened your eyes to during this activity. As there is time, invite the participants to share with their neighbor what they wrote. A few of these might be read to the entire group. Then, ask the participants to write down at the bottom of the Letter to My Church handout something that they would like to commit to accomplishing after what they have learned about themselves and the collective assets of the congregation.

Conclude the exercise by thanking the participants for engaging with the material and activities. Celebrate what was learned through the process about the giftedness of the individual congregants and the church as a body, and what that giftedness says about future opportunities for church ministry. As time allows, ask the participants to line up in front of the room and take a picture of the group to document the good work that has been accomplished.

SCRIBE INSTRUCTIONS

As Scribe, your role is to:

- Ask questions to prompt discussion
- Document the main ideas that immerge from the discussion

When prompted by the Workshop Facilitator, ask the members at your table the following questions. As people respond, document what they have to say using the markers and paper provided.

“What interests, passions, abilities, skills, knowledge, and availability do I personally (or my family) have that could help someone thrive in their relationship with _____?”

“What collective programs, ministries, or institutional assets do we have as a church body that could encourage growth in someone’s relationship with _____?”

The Workshop Facilitator will ask tables to rotate counter-clockwise. You, however, will stay and summarize the discussion to the new table members. Following the summary, repeat the process.

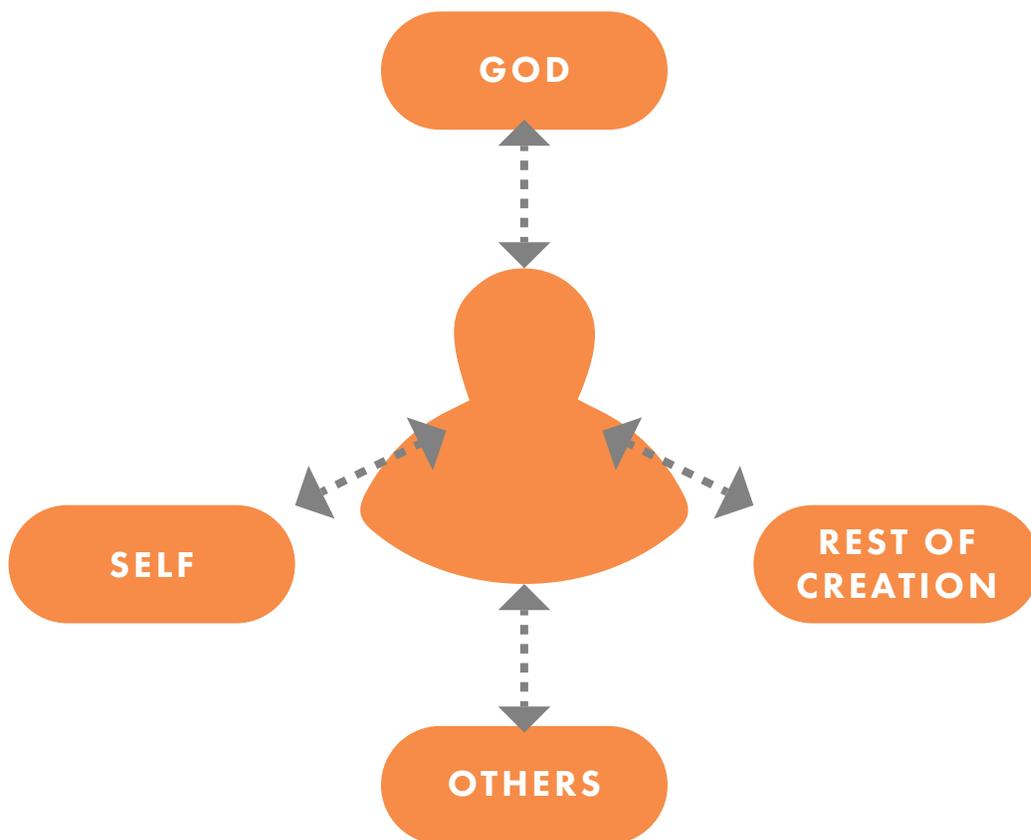
When prompted by the Workshop Facilitator, help lead a discussion at your table using the following set of questions.

“What surprised you from this exercise?”

“What have you learned about our church and its giftedness?”

“How might this inform our interactions with our community?”

THANK YOU FOR ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN TODAY’S WORKSHOP AS A SCRIBE!



(Adapted from Corbett and Fikkert, 2009)

4 KEY RELATIONSHIPS

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

This is our primary relationship; the other three relationships flow out of this one. We were made to serve and give praise to our Creator through our thoughts, words, and actions. When we do this, we experience the presence of God as our Father and live in a joyful, intimate relationship with Him as His children.

RELATIONSHIP WITH SELF

People are uniquely created in the image of God and thus have inherent worth and value. While we must remember that we are not God, we have the high calling of reflecting God's being, making us superior to the rest of creation and esteeming us with God-given dignity. Amongst other things, this sense of worth and dignity implies that we should take care of ourselves, pursuing physical and mental health.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

God created us to live in loving relationship with one another. We are not islands! We are made to know one another, to love one another, and to encourage one another in a supportive community to use the gifts God has given to each of us to fulfill our callings.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REST OF CREATION

God created us to be stewards of His world. This has two dimensions. First, we should have an environmental concern, seeking to preserve and protect what God has made. Second, we are to work to unpack and develop the creation, thereby making possibilities into realities. Work is good! And God's desire is that as a result of our work we will be able to sustain ourselves with adequate food, clothing, and shelter.

A LETTER TO MY CHURCH

Dear _____:

I commit today to:

TYPES OF RELATIONSHIP ASSETS

God uses His church to restore people to the Image-Bearers He intended them to be. To be an Image Bearer is to live rightly in the Four Key Relationships that God has established for each person. Here are some examples of the types of gifts and assets God has given to some individuals/families and churches that can be used to help restore low-income people as Image Bearers. These are just a few suggestions to get you started! You may think of many more.

INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY

GOD

Personal skills, abilities, knowledge, passion, experience, & availability around issues of spiritual growth such as evangelism, discipleship, prayer, meditation, and Bible study.

SELF

Personal skills, abilities, knowledge, passion, experience, & availability around physical or emotional wellbeing. Examples might include the ability to help people to pursue a healthy diet, to exercise, or to reduce anxiety.

OTHERS

Personal skills, abilities, knowledge, passion, experience, & availability around issues of relationships with others, such as friendship, listening & communication skills, marriage counseling, etc.

REST OF CREATION

Personal skills, abilities, knowledge, passion, experience, & availability around issues connected to stewarding the created world, e.g. financial planning skills, employment opportunities, and environmental care.

CHURCH BODY

GOD

Groups or programs devoted to personal and spiritual growth, such as small groups, youth ministry, evangelism, discipleship, etc. Also, the "ordinary" activities of worship, preaching, sacraments, etc

SELF

Groups or programs devoted to ministering to physical or emotional needs, such as grief counseling, addiction recovery, exercise programs, benevolence ministries, etc.

OTHERS

Groups or programs devoted to strengthening families and interpersonal relationships, e.g. marriage counseling, conflict management seminars, singles groups, visiting the elderly, senior citizens programs, etc.

REST OF CREATION

Groups or programs that help individuals or communities with stewardship including, neighborhood clean-ups, gardening, car/home repair, jobs training, financial education, life skills training, vocational training, etc.



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