



# Listening to Our Community

## How to involve groups in creating and using community sketches or maps

If we want to engage with and support families in our community, offering them Christian care, first of all we need to be part of and get to know our local community.

Sketching where we live helps us look together at our community, listening to and talking with each other, discussing what is important to each of us, and potentially identifying things that we can do to build community. It's also a visual tool to help us pray together as a group.

### Activity

Draw a very simple sketch of just the roads and footpaths of the **local community** you want to focus on. Ideally use A3 or flip chart paper, (just one or several sheets, whatever you feel comfortable with), so that there will be space for groups to add things to it. Gather up some coloured marker pens that people can use.

Take the map along to any form of informal session, in your branches, in a church or community group, and invite people to draw on the map – briefly explain why drawing a map may help you as a group to find out, engage with and pray for your community.

Stand back and see what happens! There are no 'right' or 'wrong' things to draw! People might draw churches, schools, homes, community centres, parks, their favourite local shop, traffic lights, waste ground – anything that they are aware of.

### Reflecting together

Encourage people to look at the map and discuss what they see. What thoughts come to mind? Each group discussion will be unique, but people might comment on both what is and what is not there, on sources of support offered within the community or issues drawing the map has identified. The following questions may help to promote discussion:

- What have we drawn – and why?
- Are there things we haven't drawn? Does that tell us anything?
- What have we learnt together through drawing this map, about ourselves and our community?
- Has this map helped us identify any ways that we could explore engaging with and supporting our community?

### Using community maps as a focus of prayer

Your map offers a visual representation of your community. It could be used as a focus of prayer for any group of Christians who want to give thanks for the people who form that community, and prayerfully consider any ways God might be calling us to engage further.



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You could close the session using this prayer

*Loving Lord, we thank you for the lives  
which are represented through our illustration.  
Show us how we may share your love  
in the community you have called us to serve.  
Amen*

## Handouts and resources

The following handout summarises the points above and could be given to participants.

To try sketching a map during your session, you'll need paper (ideally A3 size), coloured pens, and 'blu tac' if you want to stick the maps up as you talk about them.



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## Sketching and using community maps

### Why draw a map?

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- Has this map helped us identify any ways that we could explore engaging with and supporting our community?
- What next steps might we take?



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## Feedback!

If you use this approach, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact us at [inspired@mothersunion.org](mailto:inspired@mothersunion.org)

**"May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father,  
who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal  
encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and  
strengthen you in every good deed and word."**

*2 Thessalonians 2:16-17*

*Inspired is a Mothers' Union initiative encouraging faith based community engagement.  
For further information please see [inspired.mothersunion.org](http://inspired.mothersunion.org)*

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