Describe Your Community

Questions to Consider

- Where are the "walls" in your context?
- Who's on the other side?
- What does belonging require?
- Who gets to define neighbor?
- What does it mean to be transformed by proximity?

community mapping

who is my neighbor

This activity helps map the people and relationships that exist in and around ministry or community settings.

It surfaces who is centered, who is peripheral, and who might be missing altogether, so that we can begin to move more intentionally toward deeper, more inclusive relationships.

Instructions

Draw Your Map

In the top, write "Your Name / Your Faith Community."
Then, moving outward, fill in each layer:

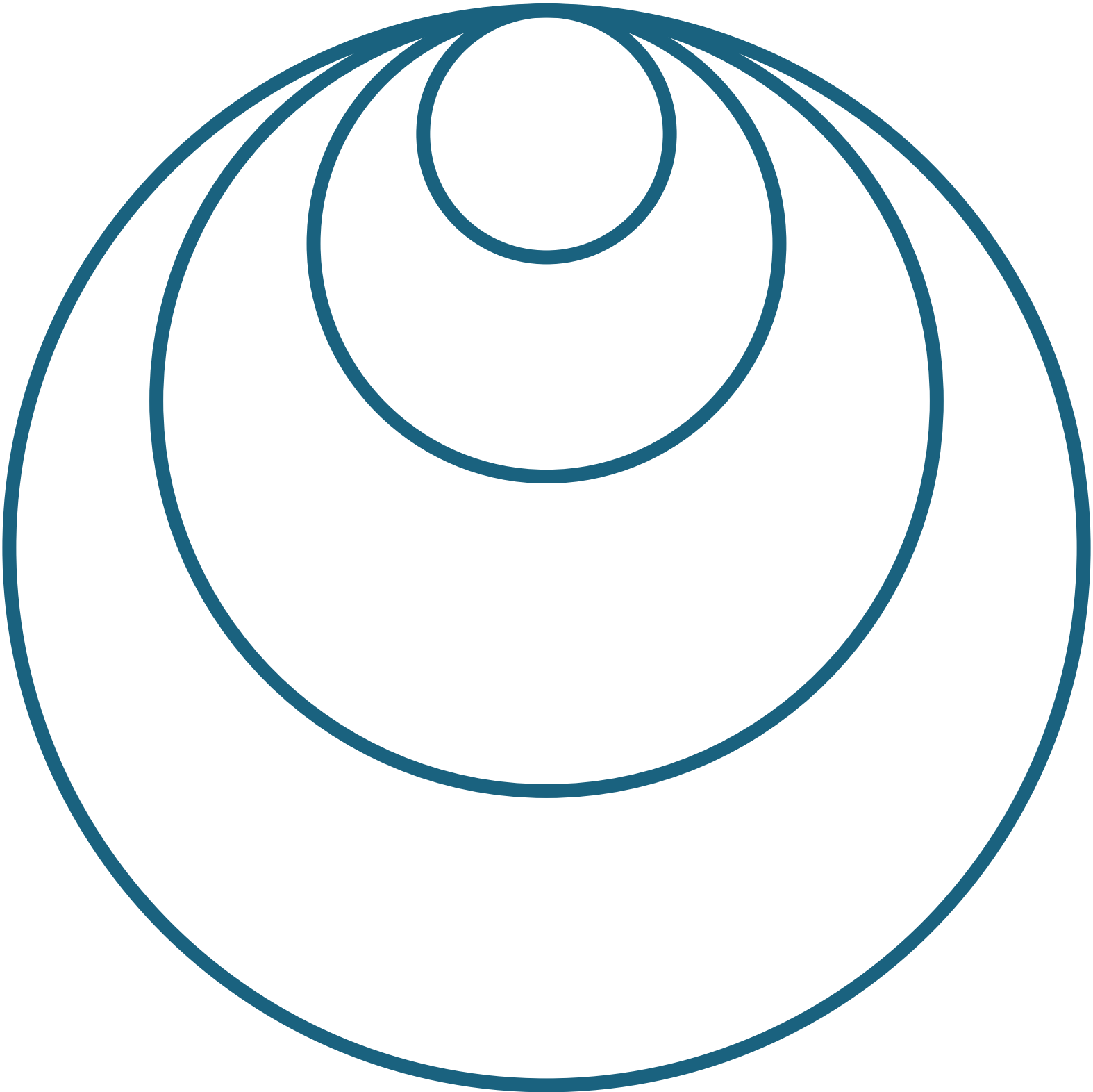
🔘 Circle 1: Core Relationships
Who is closest to your ministry?
Think: staff, volunteers, leadership, consistent members, "insiders"

🔘 Circle 2: Engaged Participants
Who shows up regularly but isn't in leadership?
Think: people who attend worship, receive services, or come to events

🔘 Circle 3: Peripheral or Undervoiced Relationships
Who is affected by your work but may not have voice or decision-making power?
Think: neighbors, support staff, service recipients, folks with lived experience

🔘 Circle 4: Absent but Impacted
Who isn't in your space but should be?
Think: youth, people without transportation, folks harmed by church history, non-English speakers

COMMUNITY NAME:_____



Questions to Consider

- What did you notice or feel as you filled in your circles?
- Where do you see strong relationship? Where is there distance?
- Who is missing, and why might that be?
- What stories are being centered, and what stories are left out?
- What would it take to move someone one circle closer?

Matthew 5:1-12

The Beatitudes

5 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up
on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples
came to him, 2 and he began to teach them.
He said:
3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4 Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
5 Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
7 Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
8 Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
9 Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of
evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your
reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were
before you.

Community mapping asks not only, "Who is here?" but "Where is the kingdom already becoming visible?"

Those Who Mourn

Where is grief present in your community?

Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness

Where are people longing for something to change?

The Merciful

Who keeps showing up with compassion?

The Peacemakers

Who is quietly building bridges?

Assume Less. Ask More.

1. What am I assuming about them?
2. What don't I actually know?
3. What question could I ask them?

From Transaction to Relationship

Ministry To		Ministry With
We assume what people need	→	We ask and listen first
Programs are designed for the community	→	Programs are co-created with the community
Volunteers are heroes or saviors	→	Everyone has gifts to offer
Needs define people	→	People are whole and complex
We offer services	→	We build relationships
Emphasis on efficiency outcomes	→	Emphasis on connection and trust
One-way giving (us to them)	→	Mutual exchange (we receive, too)
We hold all the power and control	→	We share the power and decision-making
"They should be grateful" mindset	→	"We are honored to be together" mindset
Outreach is based on fixing or saving	→	Presence is rooted in mutual transformation
Worship and community have preconditions (sobriety, behavior, dress, etc.)	→	All are welcomed as they are, without prerequisites

1. Listen Deeply and Without Agenda
   - Sit with someone's story longer than feels comfortable.
   - Let go of the need to fix or respond.
   - Treat each person as a storyteller, not a case or project.
   - "Let every person be quick to listen, slow to speak…" – James 1:19

2. Assume Less, Ask More
   - Don't decide what someone needs without them.
   - Use curiosity instead of assumptions: "What would be most helpful right now?"
   - Recognize that even the most well-intentioned assumptions can cause harm.
   - Practice: When you catch yourself labeling someone, pause and ask, "What else could be true?"

3. Create Space for Voice and Choice
   - Offer real choices, not just options within limits.
   - Invite people into leadership, storytelling, feedback, and co-creation.
   - Don't just include voices, center and amplify them.
   - People with lived experience should be shaping the ministries that claim to serve them.

4. Prioritize Dignity Over Control
   - Let people eat when they're hungry. Let them rest if they're tired.
   - Treat "rules" as tools for safety, not mechanisms of power.
   - Offer hospitality that doesn't shame or patronize.
   - Hospitality is not charity. It is kinship.

5. Stay Proximate and Open to Transformation
   - Draw near to pain, discomfort, and difference.
   - Keep showing up even when it's messy, inconvenient, or slow.
   - Let yourself be changed by the people you claim to serve.
   - "You can't transform a system from a distance. You have to be close enough to be changed by it." (adapted from Bryan Stevenson)

5 practices of radical hospitality

Someone I need to know rather than know about:

A question I need to ask rather than answer:

One place I need to show up:

One next faithful step I will take:



Guided Action Plan:

Moving Toward More Dignified and Inclusive Ministry

"What's one next faithful step I can take to expand love for neighbor in ways that are bold, faithful, and deeply connected to the Gospel?"

Step 1: Diagnose Your Default Posture

Use the "Ministry TO vs Ministry WITH" chart to reflect honestly on your current ministry mindset. Mark the column that best describes your team or context, or place yourself somewhere in between.

Reflection: Where did you mark most? What surprised or challenged you?

Step 2: Apply the Five Practices

Fill in the blanks below to reflect and plan for each of the five practices of radical hospitality.

1. Listen Deeply
   - One place I need to slow down and truly listen:
   - A person or group whose story I've overlooked:

2. Assume Less, Ask More
   - One assumption I need to challenge:
   - A better question I could ask instead:

3. Create Space for Voice and Choice
   - One decision we typically make for others that we could make with them:
   - How can we invite others to shape the work?

4. Prioritize Dignity Over Control
   - A policy, rule, or behavior we use to maintain control:
   - How could that shift to prioritize dignity?

5. Stay Proximate
   - Where am I being called to "stay close," even when it's uncomfortable?
   - How will I resist the temptation to retreat or fix?

Step 3: Your Next Faithful Step

Now, synthesize your reflections into a clear, practical commitment. What is one concrete step you will take in the next 30 days to move from ministry to to ministry with?

Who else needs to be involved in this shift?

How will you remain accountable to this shift? (e.g. follow-up, team check-in, journal, mentor)

What scares you most about this shift?

Bonus Step: Take It To Your Team

If you're part of a team, consider bringing these questions into your next meeting:

- Who gets to shape what our ministry looks like?
- How do we define success, and who defines it?
- What are we willing to let go of in order to make more space for belonging?
- What assumptions are baked into our outreach, programming, or worship?

Other Notes & Takeaways

guided action plan