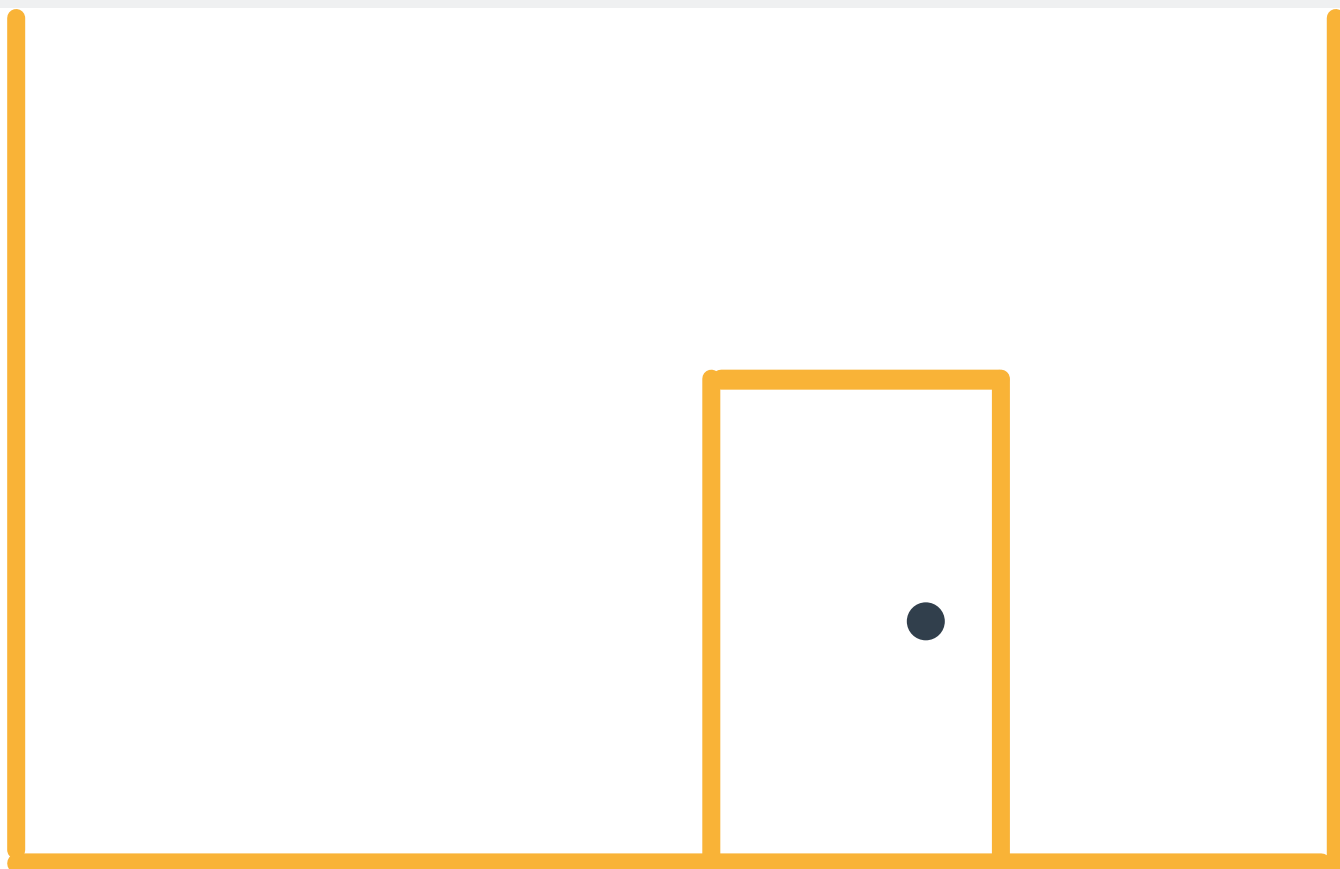


# HOUSE CHURCH RESOURCES



GATHER • PRAYER & WORSHIP • WORD • MISSION • MULTIPLICATION

# FIRST STEPS

As you start your house church, you may be wondering where to begin. Below are some helpful questions to ask yourself and first steps to take as you begin this journey.

## 1. PRAY

GOD, WHERE ARE THE CONTEXTS YOU HAVE PLACED ME IN? WHO ARE YOU ASKING ME TO DISCIPLE?

RELATIONAL MAPPING

B.L.E.S.S. PRAYER

*These refer to resources provided in this booklet that provide practical ways for you to engage with these first steps.*

## 2. ENGAGE

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO ENGAGE WITH THESE PEOPLE, IN THESE CONTEXTS IN A COMPELLING WAY?

PRAYER WALK

B.L.E.S.S. RHYTHMS

## 3. INVITE

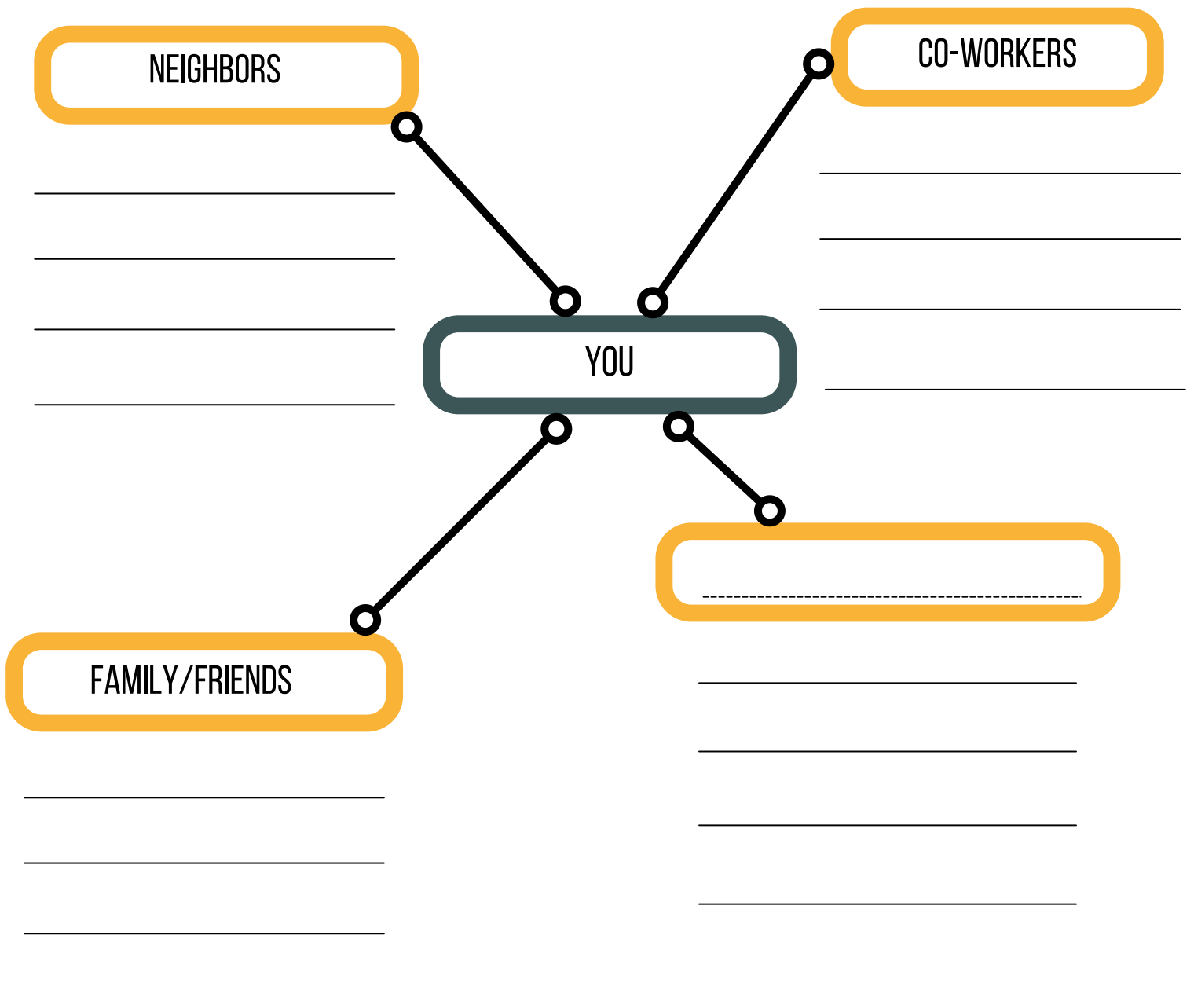
WHO ARE THE PEOPLE THAT ARE RECEPTIVE TO RELATIONSHIP AND SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION THAT I COULD INVITE TO HOUSE CHURCH?

# RELATIONAL MAPPING

Whether you realize it or not, God has placed you in specific contexts (e.g. your neighborhood, workplace, school, sports team, etc) for a specific purpose.

The Relational Mapping exercise looks at these contexts in which God has placed you, and helps you identify the people he might be asking you to build relationship with and disciple.

Once you've completed this exercise, a great next step is to take some of these names and pray for them using the B.L.E.S.S. Prayer (next page).



# B.L.E.S.S. PRAYER

The B.L.E.S.S. prayer is a tool that you can use individually or with your house church to regularly pray for and bless those who don't know Jesus in the contexts that God has placed you.

## Instructions:

Choose 5 people you are in relationship with who don't know Jesus and write their names below\*:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Now that you've identified these people, use the B.L.E.S.S. acrostic below to guide your prayers for them.

- B - Body** (health, protection, strength)
- L - Labor** (reward, security, provision)
- E - Emotional** (joy, peace, hope)
- S - Social** (love, relationships, family/friends)
- S - Spiritual** (salvation, faith, grace)

\*If you struggle to think of anyone you know who isn't a Christ follower, pray for opportunities and ways to engage with those who don't know Jesus in the contexts God has placed you.

"PRAYER MOVEMENTS PRECEDE HOUSE CHURCH MOVEMENTS"

# PRAYER WALK

In order for us to engage in the mission of making and multiplying disciples in a compelling way, we first have to understand the culture of the contexts that God has placed us in and the perspectives of the people he is asking us to disciple.

## Instructions:

Pick a context where God has placed you or your HC in this season e.g. your neighborhood, workplace, coffee shop, etc. Take some time to prayerfully walk around that location and ask yourself the following questions:

- What are the challenges and pain that exist in this place?
  - Who are those in need? What does good news sound like to them?
  - What idols are worshipped? What do people care about most?
  - Where are the places that people are congregating? How can we be present there?
- Where are the celebrations? How can we affirm and join in?
  - What provokes/frustrates you? Where do you see God already at work?
  - What do you sense Holy Spirit is saying to us/you in all this?

Take note of what stands out to you during your prayer walk. If you meet anyone as you are walking around, make yourself available to chat. Pay attention if Holy Spirit prompts you to pray for or serve them in any way.

Afterward, discuss your thoughts and experience with your house church. Allow the answers to these questions direct you as you discern how God is asking you to engage in the contexts that he has placed you.

# B.L.E.S.S. RHYTHMS

Our mission to go and make disciples of all the nations (Matt 28:18-20) finds its roots in the original mission to go and be a blessing to others (Gen 12:1-3). This means that blessing others and seeing people come to know, love, and serve Jesus are linked together.

The B.L.E.S.S. rhythms described below are a practical and accessible way for you and your house church to engage in mission of making disciples in the everyday moments of life.



## **B - Begin with prayer**

Pray for people by name in the places where God has planted you. Ask God for opportunities to get to know people who don't know Jesus.



## **L - Listen**

Instead of talking, focus on asking questions, listening well and learning about others' stories. (See "4H's of Listening")



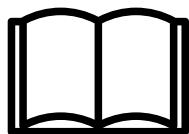
## **E - Eat**

Invite those people you have been praying for and listening to, to share a meal or grab a coffee.



## **S - Serve**

As you build relationships, pay attention to any practical needs that come up and offer to help.



## **S - Share your story**

Look for opportunities to share what a difference Jesus has made in your life. Don't feel like you have to tell your life story all at once. Think "bite-size" stories.

# 4H'S OF LISTENING

Building relationships with people who don't know Jesus is central to the mission of making and multiplying disciples.

Initiating conversations with our neighbors, co-workers or others in the contexts that God has placed us is a great place to start. Yet this can often create anxiety, and may feel intimidating. We can find ourselves worried about what to say or how to fill the awkward silences that come up during our conversations.

Begin by simply asking questions and listening well. Jesus did this all the time when interacting with people. Asking questions is a great way to get to know people who God has asked you to build relationship with and takes the pressure off of always having something interesting to say.

Here are a few simple questions that can help you engage in these conversations:

1. **HISTORY.** What is your story?
2. **HEART.** What do you love to do?
3. **HOPES.** What are your dreams?
4. **HURTS.** How are you doing with...?

Notice that each question takes the conversation a little bit deeper. Know that you don't need to ask all four questions every time you have a conversation with someone. Pick one and see where it takes you.

You'll often find that as people share that it will lead to more opportunities to ask questions and build deeper relationships.

Take mental notes of their responses so you don't forget and can ask follow up questions next time. Also, pay attention to any ways that you can practically love and serve them in the future.

"THE FIRST ACT OF LOVE IS ALWAYS THE GIVING OF ATTENTION"  
- DALLAS WILLARD

# ICE BREAKERS

Ice breakers are simple questions or games that invite others to share about themselves in a casual and fun way.

## QUESTIONS:

You'll be amazed at what you will learn about each other through a well crafted question.

Here are a few examples that can get your house church started:

- What's the weirdest food that you've ever eaten?
- Describe your dream vacation if money was no limit
- What's the most embarrassing item of clothing you used to wear?
- If you were to sing karaoke, what would be your go-to song?
- If you had your own late night talk show, who would you invite as your first guest?
- What was the worst job you've ever had?

## GAMES:

Games are another great way to learn about people's lives, as well as create shared experiences.

- 2 Truths and Lie.
  - Share 3 interesting facts about yourself, one of which is a lie, and let others guess which is the lie
- Show and Tell
  - Before your house church comes together, ask each person to bring one item for show and tell. The item can be a hobby item, an item with a memory attached to it, an old photo, or anything else that can spark a story. After people have shared, allow time for Q&A.

# SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Arranging social activities is a great way to continue building relationships with those in your house church. They also provide a low pressure environment to invite others who may not be ready to jump into a house church straight away. Some house churches may decide to make this a monthly rhythm in place of a regular house church gathering and others might choose to do these activities in addition. Here are some ideas of what they could look like:

- Day trip to the coast
- Hike at Silver Falls
- Backyard BBQ
- Game night
- Bocce ball at Riverfront park

For more ideas, have a group discussion on what social activities others would enjoy and get some dates on the calendar:



# WORSHIP IDEAS

Often when we think of worship, we primarily think of singing songs. While this is an expression of worship, it's by no means the only expression. Read the list below for some creative ideas on how to engage in worship together as a house church:

- Look at a piece of art. Ask, "How does this painting prompt admiration for God?"
- Incorporate communion as part of your mealtime
- Hand everyone a nail. Read Matthew 27:11-65 out loud. Talk about what Jesus did on the cross. Pray together and thank Jesus for his sacrifice.
- Write a psalm. Use this outline: "God, I feel... But you are... So, I will..." Take time afterward to have people share their psalms out loud.
- Turn off all the lights and light a single candle. Read John 8:12 out loud. Talk about Jesus being the light of the world and about what it means for us to be the light of the world.
- Go on a walk together in a scenic place. Have people share what they most enjoy about what they are seeing and experiencing and direct this delight towards God in praise.
- Share a testimony of healing. After, allow others to share their desire for healing. Finish by anointing them with oil and praying for healing.

## FACILITATING DISCUSSION

Whether you are leading the sermon discussion questions or facilitating the Bible Study guide, here are some helpful tips to remember:

- Don't feel like you have to get through all of the content. Pay attention to where Holy Spirit is drawing your attention.
- Ask clarifying questions to draw out further responses.
  - What do you mean?
  - Can you explain?
  - Tell me more about that.
- Try rephrasing the question if people are having trouble understanding.
- Don't be afraid of silence. Often people need time to process.
- If someone is dominating the conversation, ask to hear from someone you haven't heard from yet
- Come back to those who get cut off
- Refrain from answering all the questions as the leader
- Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know" or "let's come back to that next week when we've had some time to look into that."

# LEADERSHIP SQUARE

The Leadership Square is a helpful tool that guides you through the stages of disciple-making. This can provide a useful framework as you apprentice future house church leaders.

## **D-1, L-1: I do, you watch.**

The disciple is being led by the leader. The leader has to be very directive.

*Eg. you ask your apprentice to pay attention to how you facilitate the sermon discussion questions. After you ask them for feedback on what they noticed.*

## **D-2, L-2: I do, you help.**

The leader does the work but invites the disciple to help where they can. The leader has to be the visionary coach.

*Eg. you encourage your apprentice to think of a question they could ask to help with discussion. You provide feedback after the discussion.*

## **D-3, L-3: You do, I help.**

The disciple steps up and the leader hands off the leadership while still helping and protecting.

*Eg. you ask your apprentice to lead the discussion time and you will help when necessary. You provide feedback after the discussion.*

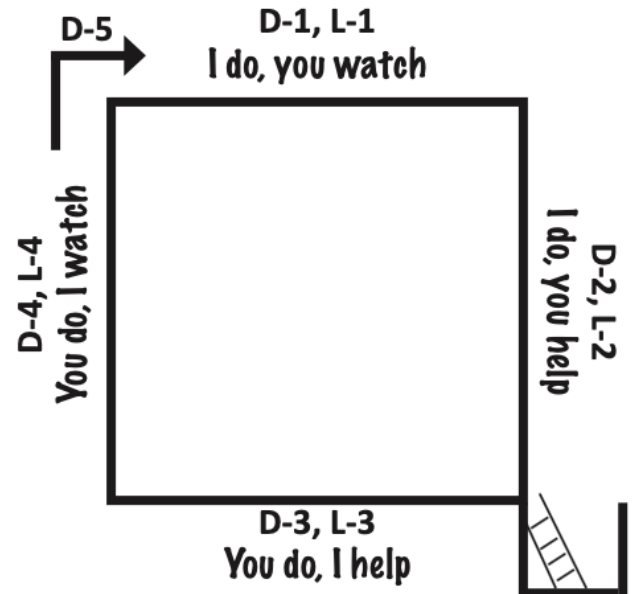
## **D-4, L-4: You do, I watch.**

This is delegation. The disciple is doing it and you are watching them do it.

*Eg. your apprentice is facilitating the discussion without relying on your help.*

**D-5:** Your disciple turns into a leader and begins to make their own disciples. This is how the Kingdom grows.

*Eg. your apprentice now models what it looks like to facilitate the sermon discussion questions to another apprentice.*



"D" - disciple, "L"-leader (disciple maker)

# MULTIPLICATION FAQ

## WHY MULTIPLY YOUR HOUSE CHURCH?

At the heart of multiplication is our vision to see Salem a city at peace with God.

As disciples of Jesus are sent out to make new disciples and house churches are multiplied, more and more people in our city will have opportunities to encounter the life and love of Jesus and receive invitations to enter his kingdom.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RELATIONSHIPS IN MY HOUSE CHURCH IF WE MULTIPLY?

One of the fears that people may have about multiplying their house church is that they will lose the friendships that they have formed with other members. When a house church multiplies, it's important to remember that it doesn't mean you have to say goodbye to those existing relationships. Even though you may not see some people in the context of house church, you have the freedom to continue to spend time together outside of house church. In fact we would encourage you to do so.

Also as your house church multiplies, we encourage you to stay connected with the new house church that is formed. We recommend having monthly or quarterly gatherings where your house church and others that have multiplied come together to connect, share stories of how God is moving and encourage one another in good works. (Heb 10:24)

## WHAT CAN IT LOOK LIKE TO MULTIPLY?

There are a few different ways that multiplication could occur in your house church.

1. You as the HC leader could pass off leadership to other apprentices in your HC and then you are sent out to plant another HC.
2. You could divide the house church in half, and ask some apprentices to take half of the people to plant a new HC while you continue leading the original HC
3. You can send out apprentices in your HC to plant their own HC.

Multiplication is not only a future event to plan for but can also be a weekly occurrence. As you apprentice those in your house church by sharing responsibility with them, future HC leaders are being multiplied.

## SHOULD I SET A DATE FOR MULTIPLICATION?

It can be hard to predict when house churches will multiply. Some house churches may be ready to multiply in 6 months. For others it may be a few years. A lot of it depends on the rate at which new disciples are being invited to join your house church, the growth of apprentices as future HC leaders, and the promptings of the Holy Spirit - all of which can vary. Because of these variables we encourage you to use discernment as you consider setting a date for multiplication.

Whatever the timeline, it's our desire that all house churches would multiply as the Holy Spirit leads. Having regular conversations about multiplication can help keep it at the forefront. It's important to remind your house church that multiplication is an essential part of the disciple-making process and the way we will move closer to seeing Salem a city at peace with God. It's also helpful to point out that each of them has the potential to lead their own house church one day as they may not see this in themselves.

## HOW WILL YOU KNOW YOU'RE HOUSE CHURCH IS READY TO MULTIPLY?

Here are some things to look out for:

- If your house church size reaches the point where it's hard to maintain a small group environment for intentional discipleship
- Promptings from Holy Spirit
- An apprentice who has shown they are capable of leading their own HC
- You may not feel ready - Jesus' disciples didn't.