

Go Deeper - Session 1

(Extension Activity)

Creating a Discipleship 'Map'

Although seeing life with God as a journey isn't the only way to describe Christian discipleship, it can be a helpful way – there are many spiritual and literal journeys in the Bible. In fact, one name for the early Christians was 'followers of the Way' (e.g., Acts 9.2, 22.4). Reflecting on the journey of discipleship and our own Christian journeys can also be an important source of:

- **Gratitude** - for what God has done for us in our lives so far
- **Honest reflection** - on regrets, painful experience or learning from the past
- **Encouragement** in the present and **hope** for the future, knowing that God is always 'doing a new thing'

Each of these are important in growth in discipleship.

In this activity you are invited to create a map or picture. You can draw it onto a sheet of paper or create a 3D model if you're feeling particularly creative! No artistic skill is required, but equally, you can make your map as beautiful as you like.

Start with a short time of prayer or silence to gather your thoughts. Work on your own to create your map, and then share it with others.

Draw a **map** which represents your own understanding of a life of Christian discipleship, as if you were explaining it to a new Christian. This map isn't about your own unique spiritual journey (that comes in the next session!) – it's about your own basic picture of the discipleship journey which all Christians are called into.

Your map is likely to include the following (label each feature to help others read it too):

- A starting point (what is the starting point for us as Christians?)
- A destination (who, or what, is our ultimate aim or destination?)
- A path or route (what sort of a route/path is the life of discipleship? Is it straight or twisty? Rough or smooth? What sort of landscape does it go through?)
- Signposts (what sorts of way-markers are on the journey? Who or what are they?)
- Other people on the journey (who walks with us? Who are we following? Who is following in our footsteps?)

- A quest or purpose (what is the purpose of the journey? How could you draw or make that?)
- What are our supplies, food or equipment for the journey - i.e., the things that will help us and sustain us? How could you draw those on a map?
- What are the obstacles, challenges and – yes – dangers on the way? How will you represent those?

(If you're not feeling that creative, you can simply jot down some answers to the questions above).

When done, share your map with another group member and discuss...

- What are the similarities between your maps?
- What are the differences?
- Having compared maps with someone else, is there anything missing, or anything else important about Christian discipleship which you want to add?
- How do your maps compare to the ways New Testament writers describe life with God?

This reflective activity aims to help you surface your 'discipleship concept' – your core convictions about our Christian journey, its shape, purpose and destination. Within your group there will be a lot of similarity, but probably also some differences which reflect your own Christian understanding, background or church tradition. Recognising our own convictions and assumptions is important before we begin seeking to enable others in discipleship.

You may want to keep looking back at what you've created over the course of this journey together. You might want to add to your map as you learn more together.