# The Quick and Simple Congregational Asset-Mapping Experience

THE PERSONAL ASSET STARTER gives you a taste of asset mapping at an individual level. The power of asset mapping builds as we relate to each other in small groups and in a larger community. What does doing asset mapping with other people look and feel like?

With the help of other asset-building leaders, I have developed a sample asset-building process that enables groups of people to experience asset mapping together. The process evolved out of many consultations with congregations and other groups. It is fast and easy. It is also the single most inspiring group process I have ever witnessed.

The Quick and Simple Congregational Asset-Mapping Experience is something you can try with a group of people in about an hour. You can facilitate this process yourself, using the following instructions as a guide.

Read through the next few pages to get a picture of *what* asset mapping is like with other people.

Even better, use this guide right away to try out the Quick and Simple Experience with a group in your congregation or community. It is actually easier and more powerful to experience asset mapping than to talk about it! Learning by doing is part of what asset mapping is all about.

# An Overview

## How Long Will This Take?
As little as an hour. If you have more time, you can use that too.

## Who Can Do This?
Any group in your congregation, from 6 people to 600 (or more).

## What groups will you try asset mapping with?
- The whole congregation
- Church board
- Planning committee
- Youth group
- Women's group
- Men's group
- Bible study group
- Ecumenical project
- Stewardship team
- Bowling team

It could be you will start with one and end up involving many groups as asset mapping catches on.

## What Will We Do Exactly?
Basically you'll do three things:
1. *Recognize Your Assets.* Look at your half-full cup to identify many of your congregation's assets and strengths.
2. *Connect the Dots.* Link some of these assets together to brainstorm *actions* that you can take to get things done.
3. *Vote with Your Feet.* Make an instant work plan by allowing participants to choose the action they would most like to take part in.

## Not Just an Exercise. More Like Learning by Doing.
You'll learn asset mapping by trying this. But the Quick and Simple Experience is not just a learning exercise. It's real and productive work for you and your congregation.

You will end up with specific, tangible actions that you can take to get things done. You will have people with the energy to act on those ideas!

## What Will You Need?
- Paper (15-20 half-sheets per person)
- Thin markers
- Tape
- Clear wall space

# 1.  Recognize Your Assets

*Spend up to 20 minutes on this.*

God has given us all gifts, that we can call strengths or assets. We start by recognizing and listing these assets.

Look at your half-full cup. The easiest, simplest, and fastest way to do this is to use the Reminder List of Basic Assets. Think about the five types of assets that you have:

> **Reminder List of Basic Assets**
> - Physical assets
> - Individual assets
> - Associations
> - Institutions
> - Economic assets

Remember, too, that the church is the people, and the people are the church. Your congregation has assets. As an individual, you have assets. Your individual assets are part of the mix. In asset mapping, we talk about both congregational and individual assets, equally and together.

> **Each person writes down assets they think of:**
> - Sit in small groups of four to eight people. Hand out the half-sheets of paper and the markers.
> - Each person will generate a stack of assets by writing on these papers. Write each asset on a new sheet of paper. (Do not write a list of assets on one sheet.) Write in LARGE BLOCK LETTERS that everyone else can read from a distance.
> - Write down specific assets in three of the four categories from the reminder list.
> - Read your assets out loud to everyone in the group you are in.
> - Tape the papers on the wall, in any order.

# 1. **Recognize Your Assets** (continued)

You are not trying to summarize the assets of your congregation. Nor can you expect to catalog all of your assets. The idea is to recognize and list assets that might be useful. You will want to dig deeper to remind yourself of assets you may have overlooked. Take two or three rounds, listing several assets in each category.

## Thought Provokers

Use thought-provoking questions like these to jog your thinking about your assets. If time is limited, you do not need to cover all of the five types of Basic Assets. Try to recognize specific assets of a few types.

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**Choose three or more types of assets to work on.**

*Physical assets*
- What are two or three physical assets of your congregation?
- What are other physical assets of your congregation that you would not have thought of at first? Think creatively! Be specific.

*Individual assets*
- What are one or two things you can do with your hands?
- What is something no one in church knows you care about?
- Name a few talents and skills of other people at your table.

*Associations*
- What groups of people do you connect with in your community? They can be inside or outside of the congregation.

*Institutions*
- What institutions have something in common with your congregation?

*Economic assets*
- What does your congregation spend money on?

*Dig deeper*
- What signs have you seen lately of God's grace in the world?

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BE SPECIFIC
Not "the building" but "100 seats in the sanctuary."


BE CREATIVE
The most useful assets are often the weirdest or funniest ones.

# 2. Connect the Dots

*Spend up to 20 minutes on this.*

Development is creating a new link between two or more existing assets.

**Forming Action Ideas from Assets**
- Gather with your group by the wall and look over your assets.
- Think about God's will for your congregation, the gifts God has given you, and the actions you can take by using these gifts.
- As a group, brainstorm actions that connect two or more of these assets to accomplish God's will.

**Contributing to Your Team**
- Cluster the sheets of paper with the assets you have connected.
- Tell the others in your group what action you are thinking of.
- Other people can add assets to your cluster or start a new cluster. As you are clustering assets, talk to each other about the actions you might develop.

**Naming Actions**
- You want to end up with a few (two to six) clusters of assets representing particular actions you've discovered through brainstorming. Give each action a short name. Write that name down on another sheet and post it with the asset cluster.

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**Action 1—
cluster of assets**

**Action 2—
cluster of assets**

**Action 3—
cluster of assets**

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# 2. **Connect the Dots** (continued)

DO NOT put assets into categories based on similarity.

It is a common instinct to find likeness, but it can stop you from acting.

DO connect diverse assets to brainstorm ACTIONS.

> **Think about actions like:**
> - Project
> - Event
> - Performance
> - Campaign
> - Protest
> - Celebration
> - Demonstration
> - Making, growing, or fixing things

As you work together, feel free to write down more assets.

The same asset can be used more than once. Just write it down again on another sheet of paper.

# 3.  Vote with Your Feet

*This should take less than 10 minutes.*

**Follow Your Heart**
- Listen to each group report on the actions they have discovered through brainstorming.
- Decide which of these actions you would most like to take part in yourself.
- Go stand next to that action.

You get an instant work plan
- The job before you
- The people with you, who have an interest in the same idea
- The assets you can connect to get things done

Now look around. What do you notice?

# Learning by Doing

*Questions to Consider and Discuss*

Spend about 10 minutes on this.

**Impressions**
- Looking around the room at people standing by the assets clustered into actions on the wall, what do you observe?
- Did anything surprise you in the experience?

**Sensing the power of faith in community**
- How did it feel to write down your assets?
- How did it feel to connect the dots?
- How did it feel when you voted with your feet?

**Recognizing results**
- When you connected the dots, what kinds of actions emerged?
- Taken together, what would these actions accomplish?
- What have you accomplished already?

**Thinking about open-sum dynamics**
- How much faith is there in the world? If I get more faith, does it come out of your supply? Or does your faith strengthen mine, and my faith increase yours, and our faith grow on others?
- How many assets are there in our community? If we connect the dots, do we use up our assets? Do we create new assets to use more and more?

**Using and sharing asset mapping**
- Can you apply what you did to your daily life or to congregational life?
- Could you facilitate the Quick and Simple Congregational Asset-Mapping Experience with others?

| Abundance |
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| Affinity |
|:---:|

| Release |
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