

Session #3: Mapping Congregational Environmental Impact

Allotted time: Two hours

[Facilitation Note: Depending on how many research areas participants covered and how in-depth they went in their work (and if you are inviting outside speakers/guests to add their knowledge to the map during this session), you may need more than two hours for an adequate mapping process. Facilitators should check-in with groups before this session to see how much information they obtained and better gauge how much time you'll need for this part of the process. It certainly is possible and wouldn't hurt the flow if you took 2 sessions to do the entire drawing of results.]

Learning Objectives:

- To develop a first-hand understanding of:
 - 1) the congregation's reliance on basic natural resources and the decisions it makes in this regard;
 - 2) the ecological, social, health and economic consequences of this reliance; and,
 - 3) how the congregation is connected to various human communities close-by and far away through your common reliance on certain natural resources;
- To develop a more acute moral/ethical awareness of the impact of your congregation's environmental actions and decisions.

Equipment & Materials:

- Chalice (candle, matches)
- UU Hymnal, "Singing in the Living Tradition" – enough for every 2 people to share
- Closing Prayer (in large type on newsprint, as a handout shared with every 2-3 persons, or projected on the wall via laptop computer).
- Laptop computer with speakers
- Newsprint pad/roll of paper
- Blue painter's tape
- Magic Markers (at least 2 black, non-toxic ones, one blue and one green, if possible)
- 1-2 cordless microphones if room acoustics are bad and the group is large

Advance Preparation:

View the Training Video.

- A special podcast has been created to model this exercise. Please view the podcast first, and then read these directions. Download Video #1, "Ah-Hah! Demonstration of Mapping Exercise For Facilitators," from the link on the Ministry for Earth Donation page at

[https://www.z2systems.com/np/clients/uuministry4earth/donation.jsp?campaign=25&test=true.](https://www.z2systems.com/np/clients/uuministry4earth/donation.jsp?campaign=25&test=true)

Video # 1 is a QuickTime Movie uploaded to YouTube, Size: 383MB. Duration: 15 min.

(Room prep will take approximately one hour)

- At least 3-4 days before this session, check in with each group. Inquire how well they have been able to address their homework questions and coach about any possible sources to help fill gaps. Inquire whether they will be bringing any community member(s) to help with the mapping process. This will enable you to gauge whether all the reports can be done in one session or whether you will need two.
- A few days before the class, review the Ah-Ha! facilitation demonstration video and the Ah-Ha! tip sheet. Encourage the person(s) you have tapped to start the drawing process to review them as well. Confer as needed about any symbols you know you'll need to depict your situation and have the artist(s) begin to play around with developing possible symbols in order to save time during the session. If you haven't worked with a co-facilitator yet, this would be a good session to have a partner. A partner can help watch that everyone is engaged and asking questions, contributing ideas and information; a partner can also assist in keeping track of time. It is very difficult, even for the most skillful facilitator, to both guide the conversation AND watch time.
- Prepare closing prayer (on newsprint, laptop, or as a shared handout).

For the Congregational Mapping Exercise

- Tape together sheets of newsprint, or use a roll of white or craft wrapping paper (non-shiny) to create a blank "canvas" for your map. This should be at least 3' to 4' high by 6' wide. You may need to make two of these to have a double thickness on the wall so that magic markers will not bleed through to the wall.
- Test markers to ensure that they bleed through paper onto the wall.
- Test sound quality in the room. If you are in a room with bad acoustics or many participants, you may need at least one cordless microphone so everyone can hear the report backs and discussion.
- Move chairs so that they are in a U shape, as close to the wall as possible to enable everyone to see and hear what is going on, and to participate easily.

Process:

(See the enclosed sample map for one example of what this might look like, and the sample symbols to give you some suggestions for what simple figures might look like.)

The mapping is a beautiful process of creating a lasting visual image of what each group learned about your congregation's social, environmental and economic impact. It enables you to come back and add information at a later date, or to use the map as the basis for strategic planning, as you identify certain relationships or issues that you might want to address. This strategy is also a tool from the anti-oppression tool-kit: it is a great equalizer that enables people with different learning styles, levels of knowledge, speaking capacities, ages, and languages to participate and contribute to the analysis.

Sometimes participants get so excited that they spontaneously jump up to help add to the drawing. Let them! Make it "group fun!" If the artist gets stuck, the facilitator should ask the whole group for suggestions. The goal is not to create "perfect art" but to **provide a useful map or schematic picture of your congregations' place in the web of life – how you affect it, how you are affected by it.** If you have a lot of people who like to draw, you may rotate through them, changing "artist" with each thematic report.

The role of the artist is to listen carefully to the information being provided and to draw in SIMPLE images, symbols, icons, etc. the basic facts, the basic relationships between people and between people and the land (the environment). The artist may choose to use arrows, chains, spider webs, lines, linked hands – whatever s/he feels inspired to use -- to help show connections between people and people and the environment. The idea is to avoid using words if at all possible. If words are used, they should be sparingly. Tell the story in pictures.

It is sometimes helpful to begin with a single image of your congregation in the center of the map as a way of identifying your place in the web. Perhaps add 1 major landmark to identify your community next. Then, as each group begins to tell its story, start to trace out the relationships – with various other communities or countries to the north, south, east and west. Don't worry about perfect geography: it's about relationships! You may want to put some sort of symbol by a community to help identify its location, (e.g. if your water comes from a Canadian aquifer, you might want to put a maple leaf beside the aquifer to remind you.) The point is to be reminded visually and easily where your relationships take you!

The artist may want to depict the transfer of money and economic power (wages, rents, salaries, payments for energy bills, profits, etc.) in GREEN; any kind of political power relationships, such as the effects of laws or regulations in BLUE.

The Learning Agenda

0:00-0:03

Chalice lighting

Today's opening meditation will be in the form of a hymn related to our theme. We suggest singing: Hymn #134 (Our World is One World).

0:03-1:20

Mapping Exercise (also called, “The Ah-Ha Exercise”)

1. Introduce the Ah-Ha! process as a way of depicting how our world is one world. Mention that the purpose of this visual approach is to help make relationships more visible. One of the ways that various forms of oppression operate is that they tend to be invisible to those who benefit from what is going on. This mural drawing process can help us literally to “connect the dots” between different issues, people and communities in your congregation’s life, to better see cause and effect – to produce a few “Ah-Ha!” insights. Everyone is invited to contribute what they know, and help ask questions to assist with the drawing, to assist with the emerging analysis.

2. Work with the group to BRIEFLY create a Map Key.

The whole group should create “map key” to symbolize people of different racial-ethnic identities, economic conditions, sexes, etc. It is important to be sensitive about this, and to distinguish between people on your map because the whole point of this exercise is to become conscious of differences among people and unequal power relationships!

Artists should draw the symbols on another piece of newsprint rather than the map so artists and the whole group can use it as a reference. Do not allow more than 3-4 minutes for creating a “key.” Use green lines and arrows to depict economic power and relationships. Use blue lines and arrows to depict political power and relationships. Alternately, you can develop symbols together as you go through the conversation.

3. Each group begins reporting out. Go in the following order: Land, Water, Food, Waste, Energy, Air. (If you didn’t cover certain themes, just skip those parts of the list).

[Facilitation note: Your role now is to:

- a) Help regulate the flow of information when research teams are reporting. Do this in part by asking questions in order from the homework sheets. This will naturally break up the talking and help everyone digest what they are learning. Make sure that the artist(s) can keep up with the info and understand it (as well as the audience). This may involve slowing reporters down and/or asking them questions to elaborate what they’ve learned.
- b) Draw out information and analysis as needed. Are relationships clear? What do the reporters know about cause and effect? Is that being pictured? Are people talking about possible differential impacts on groups of people, for example,

by age, gender, sex, racial-ethnic identity, economic status, citizenship status, etc.? Be sure to ask follow-up questions to get at the specifics of WHO and HOW certain things happen, about inequalities and other harms as well as benefits from certain relationships. The more specific and concrete you can get, the easier it will be to process what you've learned in Session 4.

- c) Encourage the audience to ask questions, as time permits, and to fill in important pieces of the analysis they feel are missing. Participants may start making connections with the issue they researched. That is fine – encourage this and make sure it gets on the map!
- d) Watch the time! The wonderful aspect of the Ah-Ha! process is that conversation tends to flow easily. Time management will be key here. Save enough time for a good processing of the information once all the report-backs are done.

1:30-1:58 **Processing the Mapping Exercise**

1. Does anyone see an important cause or effect connection between issues on our map that we have not made visible? (Add any final pieces that come up.)
2. Are we satisfied with what is on our map re: depicting who may be bearing a special or disproportionate harm by something that is happening? (Add anything new that comes up.)
3. Is there any major piece of information or analysis that is missing because we just don't know at this point? (If so – decide whether you want to do some additional research before the next session to fill in this gap.)
4. How are we feeling about what we've learned today?
Go around in a closing circle: ask everyone to share briefly what is on their heart – what they are feeling right now. (Divide up the remaining time and give everyone an equal amount.)

1:58-2:00

Closing

(Say something like): We'll return next session to explore the significance of all the brokenness we've seen and felt as we've sketched out our place in the Web of Life. (Modify this statement if you are taking another session to process all the research.) I would encourage everyone to take some quiet time to privately meditate on this – how

you are feeling, what new insights emerged for you – before we next meet. Our culture does not encourage us to pay much attention to the consequences of our actions. One role of the religious community is to help all of us live more consciously. The first step is to sit with what we've learned for awhile, particularly if it is uncomfortable or painful and prayerfully reflect on it.

Homework:

1. Weigh implications of what has been learned/discussed.
2. Read definitions of “institutional racism” and begin discerning its relevance to the work of environmental justice. Think about, “How are you seeing “racism” as an explicit factor in the outcomes you are surfacing in the curriculum?”

Closing Reading ¹ (in unison):

*Grandfather,
Look at our brokenness.*

*We know that in all creation
Only the human family
Has strayed from the Sacred Way.*

*We know that we are the ones
Who are divided
And we are the ones
Who must come back together
To walk in the Sacred Way.*

*Grandfather,
Sacred One,
Teach us love, compassion, and honor
That we may heal the earth
And heal each other.*

¹ *Ojibway Prayer*, from “*Earth Prayers from Around the World*”, Edited by Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon, HarperSanFrancisco, 1991, p. 95.