

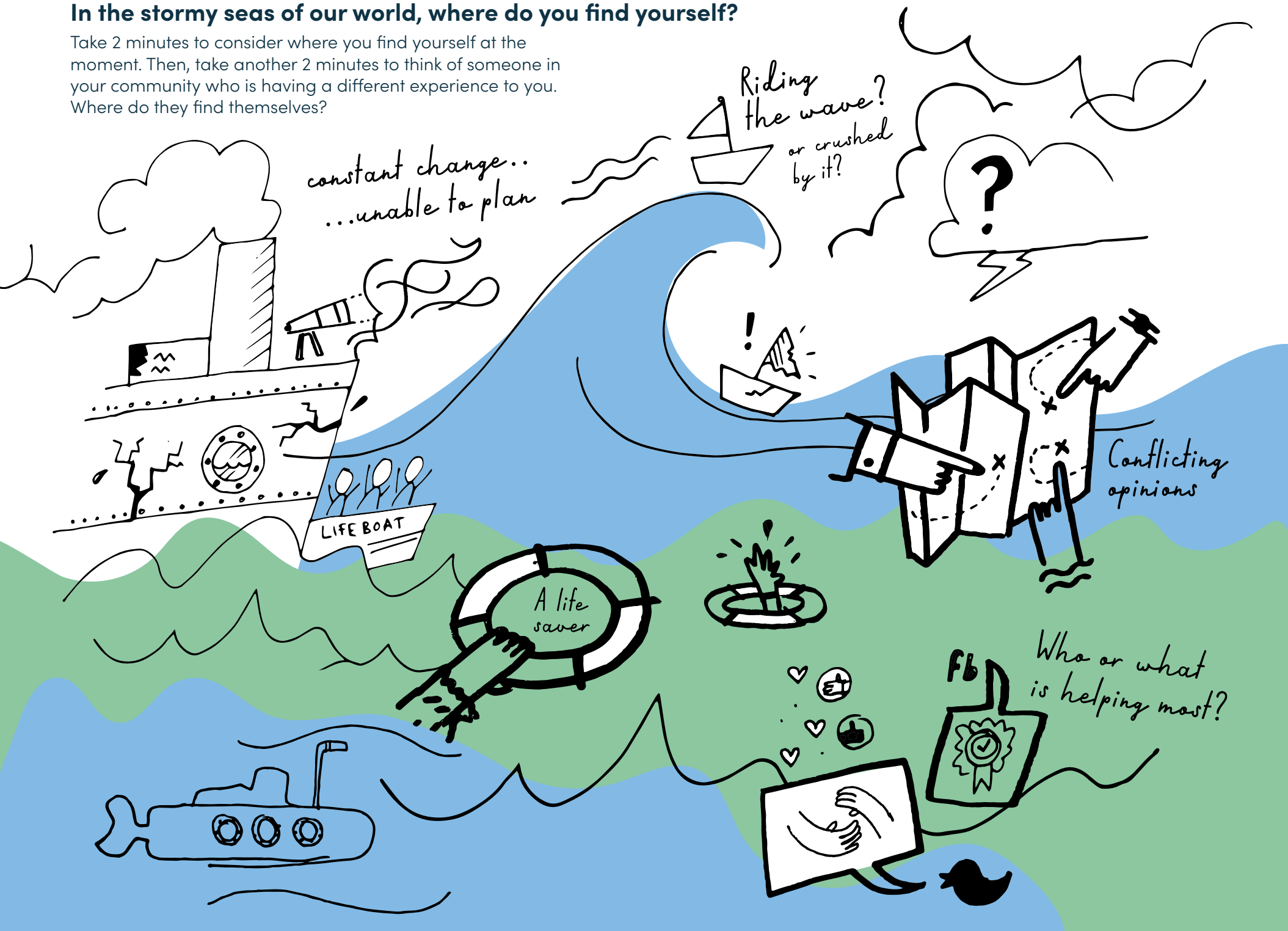
WHAT NEXT?

A creative tool to help ministries and communities of faith re-imagine our programs and life together



In the stormy seas of our world, where do you find yourself?

Take 2 minutes to consider where you find yourself at the moment. Then, take another 2 minutes to think of someone in your community who is having a different experience to you. Where do they find themselves?





INTRODUCTION

As ministries and communities of faith, we are in the midst of an uncertain and unsettling season. Our local communities are affected in many different ways and there are challenges everywhere we look. Making decisions as leaders has never been harder.

However, our mission and purpose as faith communities have not changed. Indeed, the need is all the greater. This tool will help you identify and discern creative new approaches, new ministries and new ways of being the big C church in a post-pandemic age. It will help you make important decisions in faithful and creative response to the new needs and opportunities in your community.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

This tool is designed for leadership teams within a ministry context. This may be the volunteer board, a staff team, a specific ministry team within a church, or any other set of leaders that would benefit from this process. This PDF can be printed and written on or filled in by typing in the spaces.

This tool considers all the activities of a nonprofit or ministry. If you only want to focus on the question of how to meet together for services, please download our tool, [How Will We Gather?](#)

SECTIONS

Mission & Purpose

Needs

Constraints

Activities

Resources - Our Assets

Inspiration

Bringing It All Together

Action Plan



Group and solo activities



This tool was designed with the idea that some of these questions need to be answered by each individual on the team and other activities are designed to be done collectively as a group. The individual activities are divergent (coming up with lists and ideas) and the group activities are convergent (choosing what matters the most). Where the activity is for the individual there will be a clear icon to watch for!



Timing

In our experience, a key ingredient for creative conversations is vitality - a combination of energy and direction. Additionally, time constraints can actually help push for consensus and agreement. To keep things moving, every activity has a time-limit icon like the one here. Appoint a member of the team to act as timekeeper, helping to usher the conversation to the outcomes required. Some people love this role. Others do not! (Hint: you might need to share the responsibility.)



If you get stuck or need to move on...

Make use the parking lot (on p.6). It is easy in groups to run down rabbit trails... but use the parking lot to park those important conversations to come back to and stick to the time constraints and process of this tool to get all the benefits of it!



Preparing to run the workshop

This workshop requires a few different roles.

Facilitator - someone who guides the overall process and encourages engagement from all participants.

Timekeeper - keeping track of progress on each page.

Scribe - someone who fills in the PDF - either the printed or online version.

These roles can be filled by one person but it is better to share the responsibilities. **The facilitator will need to spend some time preparing - see the next page for a guide on running the workshop.**



THREE WAYS TO “PLAY”

In person

×1 3.5HR SESSION

Work through the whole process in person, alternating between individual work and group discussion. Take a break halfway through at a good stopping point (perhaps after the Activities section).

Online or by phone

×2 2HR SESSIONS AFTER INDIVIDUAL PRE-WORK IS DONE

Send each team member this tool by email or in the mail. Ask them to complete all of the individual pages in advance of the first meeting.

When you gather by video conference or phone, work through the group exercises from the beginning through the Activities section (page 19) in the first session. In your second session work through the Resources (page 22) section through the end of the process.

If one of your team can share a view of their computer screen online, have them type group responses on a master copy of the fillable PDF. Individual team members can also follow along, keeping notes on their own copy. When holding discussion online or over the phone take extra care to invite all participants to share and provide feedback.

Online alternate option using shared online documents

×2, 1.5HR SESSIONS

Follow the same directions for the online/phone use except in addition to sending team members the PDF also send them this [Google form](#) to collect their input. Click on the link, create a copy of the Google Form in your own Google account, and then share the form with the members of your team. Ask them to enter their pre-work answers in the form as they complete the individual activities.

When you meet together by video conference, work through the group sections of the process in the same way but as you go, the convener can share the written responses that individuals entered in the Google form. Pull up the response tab of the form and then share your screen with the group. This approach has the benefit of allowing all voices to be heard and visible and collects all individual responses in one place. It will also save time in the sharing process as each person will not need to verbally report out their thoughts/answers.

The same convener or another member of the team can keep a master document of the tool and individuals can still follow along with their own copies.

There is a google form if you choose to use it for your group discussions. On clicking this link, click the button to choose to make your own copy of the form.

<http://bit.ly/Whatnextform>



GOING DEEPER

Check out the Going Deeper Bonus PDF for more tools for your team to use. Please contact us for the Going Deeper resource if you are interested.

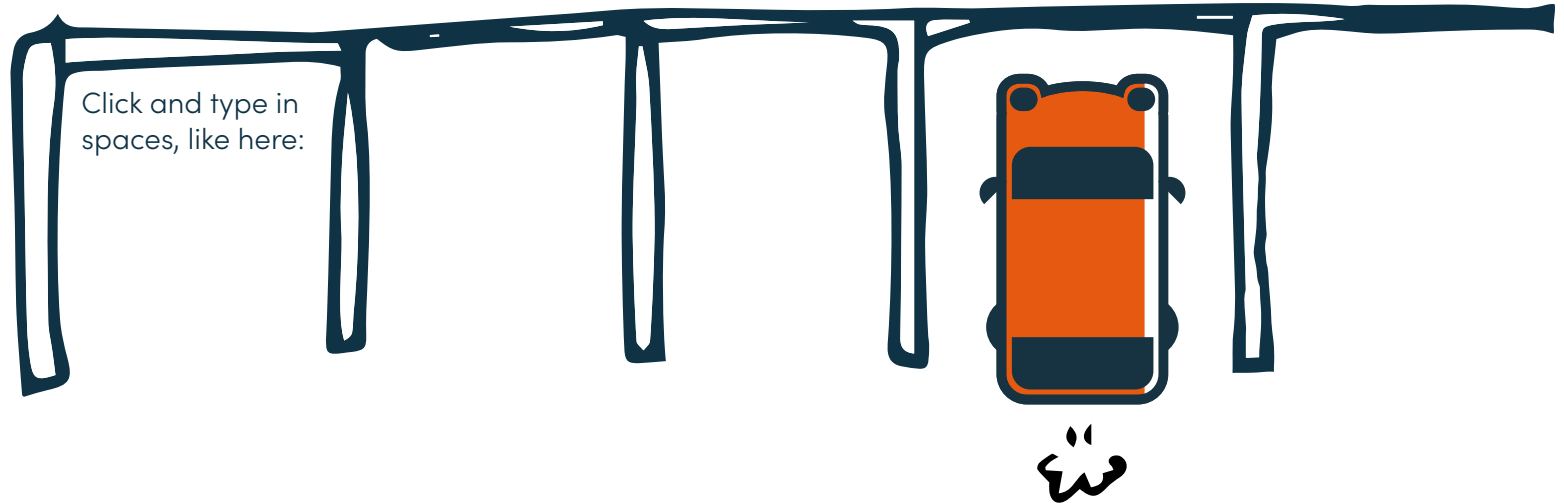


Feel free to adapt the tool further for your context. Some ideas you may consider:

- If your team wants to spend more time or go a little slower, break the process into three or four 2-hour sessions.
- You may want to return to one or more parts of the process again in a couple of months as circumstances evolve.
- Consider using additional online collaboration tools such as those built into Zoom, the online whiteboard Miro, Google Docs, etc.

PARKING LOT

Finding yourself heading down a rabbit trail or struggling to find consensus? Maybe someone has had a great idea but it is not for now. Or you get stuck as you need information that you don't have to hand. Park these conversations in the parking lot. This helps you acknowledge that they are important, while being able to move on. (Though make sure to come back to them at a later date.)



Example: "Should we require people to be vaccinated to come to our events?"





MISSION & PURPOSE

The first step to responding creatively to our rapidly changing context is reminding yourselves of your mission and purpose. While a lot is changing, your core mission and purpose remain the same. Indeed, there are aspects of your mission and purpose that are needed now more than ever. However, how you live out your mission may need to change.



Remember some of the following activities are meant for each member to do on their own and others are meant to do together!

ACTIVITY: WHAT WORDS DESCRIBE US AT OUR BEST?



Part One - 3 minutes

As individuals, spend 3 minutes coming up with three words that you think capture aspects of your community when you are at your best. For example: generous, welcoming, radical, compassionate.



1

2

3



Part Two - 6 minutes

Then, come together as a group and share the words. Choose the five that most resonate with the group. This can be done by having everyone vote for their favorite word (it might be a word someone else came up with) until you have five.



Zoom Web Conference Idea:

if you are using Zoom, use the "poll" feature, populate it with the words from the individuals in the group and vote on your favorite.

e.g. Generous



ACTIVITY: HOW HAVE WE CHANGED?



Part One - 10 minutes

Covid-19 impacted 2020 and beyond. Before we think about what next, pause and reflect on what you have learned, how you have changed and what capacities were developed through the time of Covid.



WHAT NEW THINGS DID YOU TRY?

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE EXPERIMENT?

Example: Created a sewing circle to make masks.

DID YOU HAVE ANY QUICK WINS?

Example: You mobilized 10 volunteers and delivered 100 meals to people in need.

WHAT SKILLS OR CAPACITIES HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED OR GAINED?



Part Two - 10 minutes

Given all that you have experienced and learned, what do you want to make sure to take forward?



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ACTIVITY: POSTCARDS FROM THE FUTURE

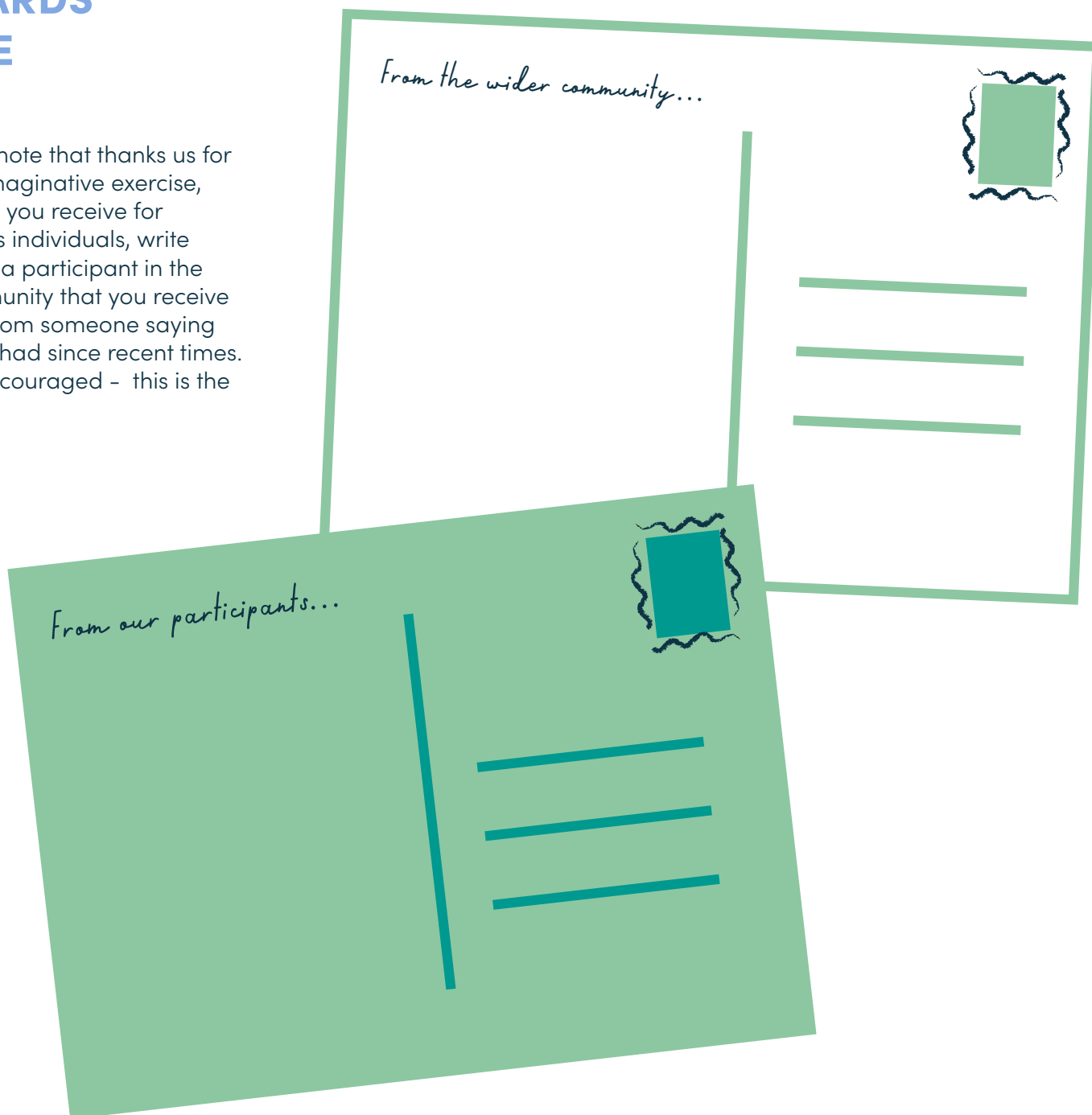


10 minutes



It is always wonderful to receive a note that thanks us for something we have done. In this imaginative exercise, you will write a thank you note that you receive for something you haven't done yet! As individuals, write a "thank you" postcard from either a participant in the ministry or a neighbor in the community that you receive a year from now. The postcard is from someone saying thank you for the impact you have had since recent times. Read them out together and be encouraged - this is the difference you want to make.

In one year, what do we want our participants and the community to say about us?



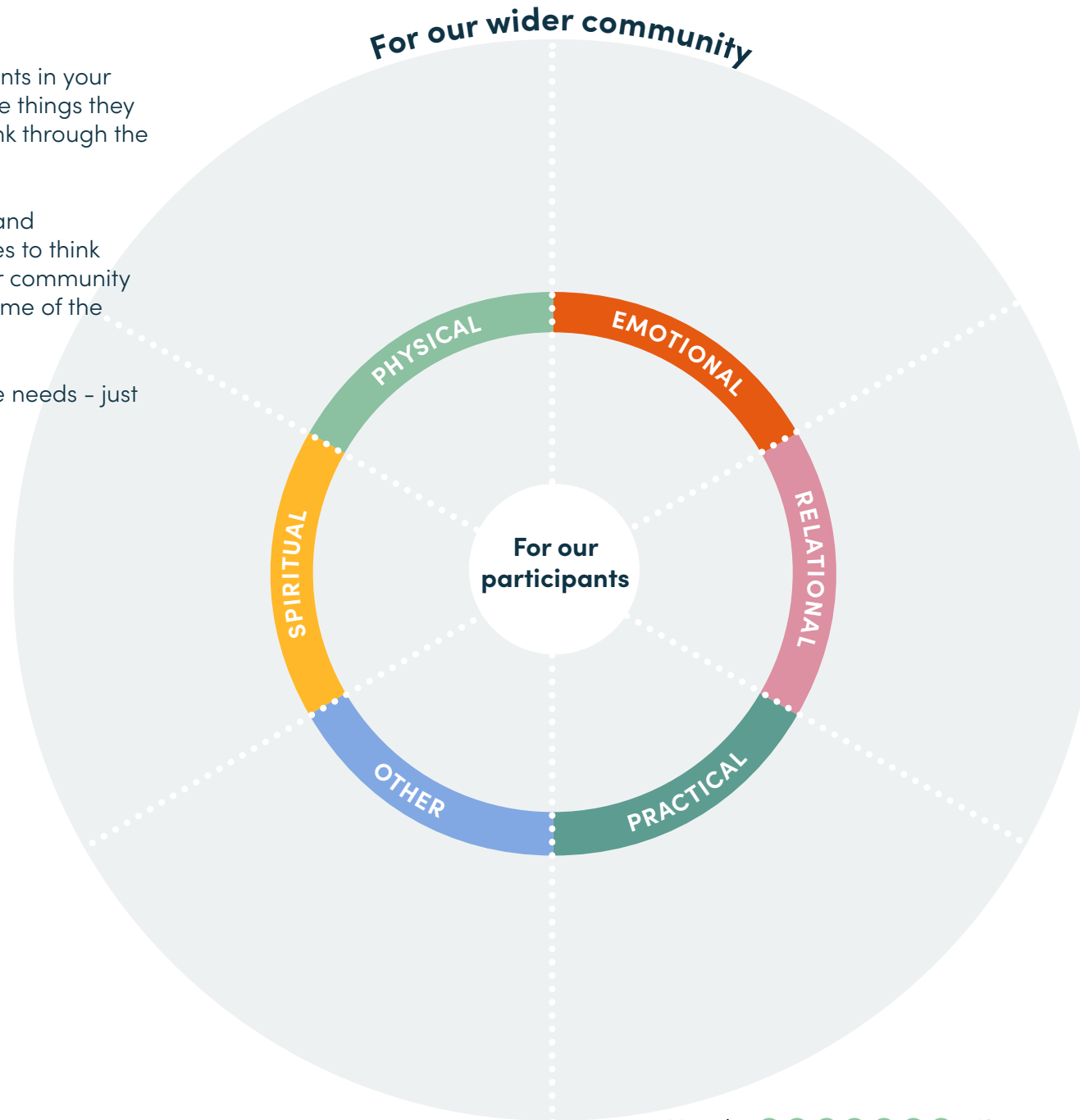


NEEDS OF OUR PARTICIPANTS AND OUR COMMUNITY

You love and care about your participants and the people in your neighborhood and community. Together, discern what your participants need right now and imagine what they might need over the next three to six months.

Don't worry right now about how to meet these needs – just focus on identifying needs at this stage.

- SPIRITUAL NEEDS**
(connection with God, prayer, hope, etc.)
- PHYSICAL NEEDS**
(health, food, etc.)
- EMOTIONAL NEEDS**
(mental health, stress, etc.)
- RELATIONAL NEEDS**
(connection, touch, conversation, etc.)
- PRACTICAL NEEDS**
(childcare, transportation, etc.)
- OTHER NEEDS**



ACTIVITY: MAPPING OUR NEEDS



Part Two - 20 minutes



Take turns to share the needs you have identified as individuals. Then, spend 10 minutes discussing these needs, adding any to the list that might emerge through this discussion. Then together decide upon the four most important needs for participants in your ministry or faith community and the four most important needs for the wider community. Write them down here. Then, add these to the Raw Materials Board on page 29.

It is not about the content that is being presented but the community that is being built.

For our wider community

1 2 3 4

For our participants

1 2 3 4



CONSTRAINTS

COVID-19 created a lot of constraints and made many of our normal activities risky or impossible. These constraints may be layered upon other limits in time, finances, or other resources that your organization was already facing prior to the pandemic. As we move forward, post-pandemic, a key step in developing plans is to name these constraints - not to dwell on them, but to be clear about what you are facing.



CONSTRAINTS AS OPPORTUNITY

Constraints are an opportunity to think differently and even have the potential to become assets. Some of the most amazing innovations in history have come about as a result of facing unexpected limits or constraints and coming up with new ways of doing things. Some of the most resilient companies – from Microsoft to Trader Joe’s – started during a recession. Some of the most significant theological works have been written during a time of crisis: consider Augustine’s *The City of God* during the fall of the Roman Empire and Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s *Life Together* in the midst of Nazi Germany.

There is hope even in the most dire of situations. During WWII, bombs created craters in the ground all over London. Shortly thereafter, flowers that had been assumed to be extinct for decades popped up from the earth when their seeds were exposed to sun and rain in the soil. New life and hope can emerge anywhere.

Take a moment and think about a scripture passage that has helped you see a new possibility in the past.



ACTIVITY: ACKNOWLEDGING OUR CONSTRAINTS



Part One - 10 minutes



List the primary constraints facing your community of faith that prevent you from doing your typical activities or activities that you would like to do. Think of constraints that match the time frame you are planning for. For example, if you are planning for the fall then think about the constraints you will likely face then. You may want to list the “worst case” constraints - it is always easier to pivot back to activities that become possible than to make adjustments for more limits.

Constraints may fall into more than one category, just pick one to put each into. If you get stuck on something that you aren’t sure about, such as what your insurance carrier recommends, write it down and also put it in the Parking Lot on page 6 of this tool so you can come back and gather that information at a later time.

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS

(Example: children are still waiting for an approved vaccine.)

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GOVERNMENT/LEGAL RESTRICTIONS/INSURANCE CONCERNS

(Example: state or county restrictions on gathering.)

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TECHNOLOGY

(Example: a large portion of our participants do not use or have access to technology.)

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FINANCIAL LIMITS

(Example: impact of COVID-19 on finances.)

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PERSONNEL OR EXPERTISE LIMITS

(Example: no one at church can produce video.)

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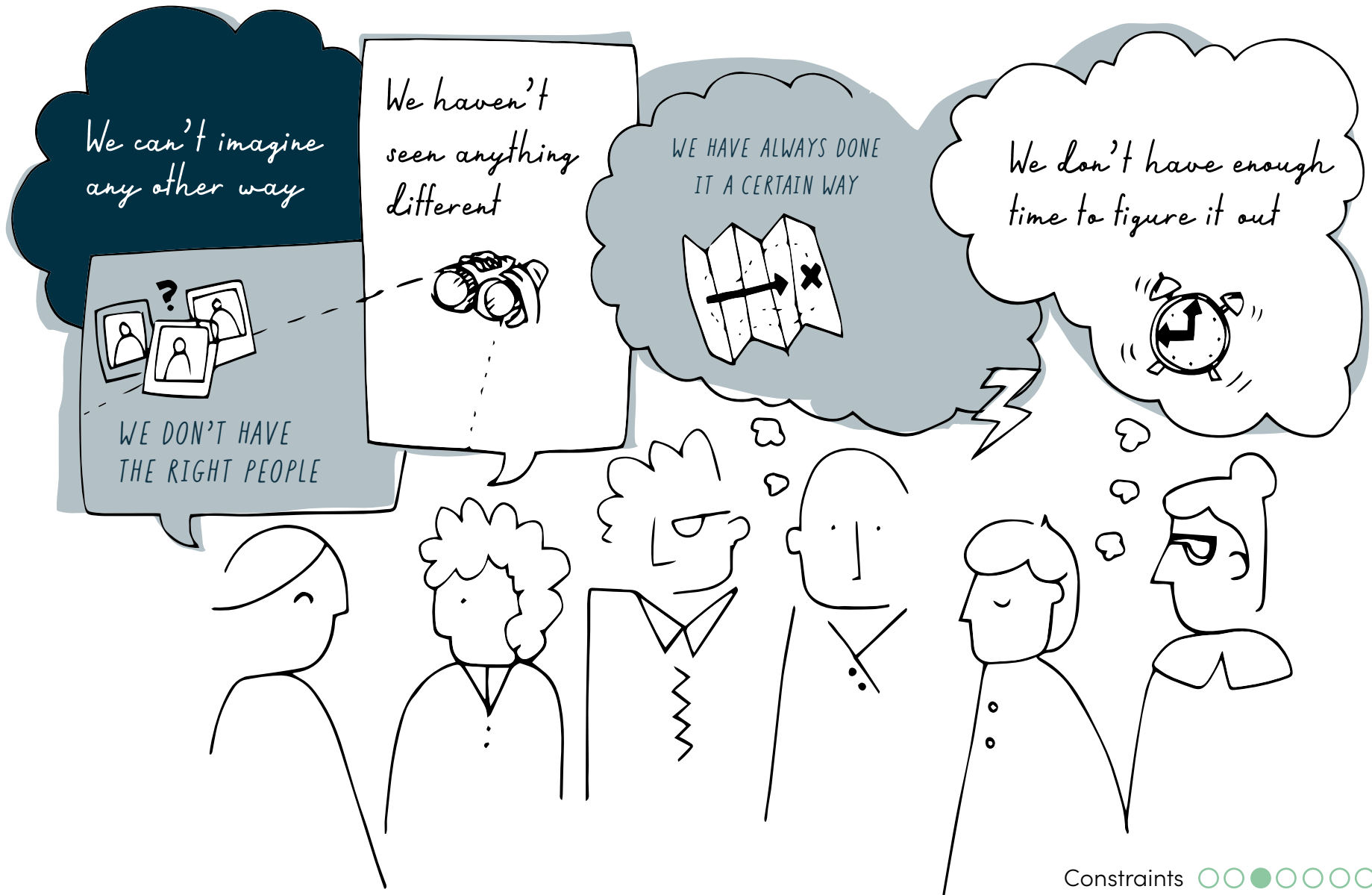
VOLUNTEERS AND LEADERSHIP

(Example we don't have the right people.)

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We can't because...

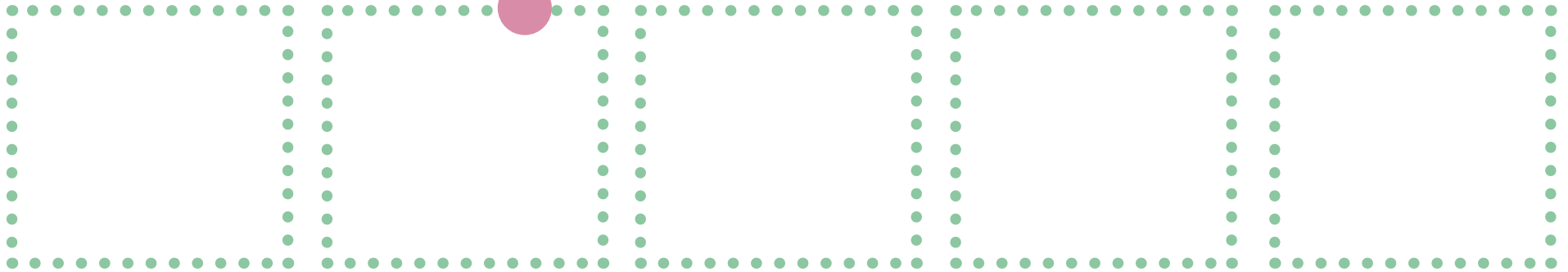
In addition to hard constraints listed on the previous page, there will always be constraints in the minds and attitudes of a group. Take 2 minutes to consider where the people you engage with might be struggling. Which one of the comments below most represents where you are? Where your participants are?





*We need to move from
“We can’t because...”
to “We can if...”*

- FROM 'A BEAUTIFUL CONSTRAINT'
BY ADAM MORGAN + MARK BARDEN



Part Two - 10 minutes



When you come back to this section as a group, put each of the constraints your individual participants have come up with on a list. (Make your lists either in a digital document or on physical paper.) Discuss the list of constraints. Add new ones if they come up in conversation. Finish this exercise by listing the top 5 most difficult constraints on this page, and also at the bottom of the Raw Materials Board (page 29).



ACTIVITIES

The implications of Covid-19 have had a significant impact on a number of activities that an organization would typically do. You have already found creative ways to adapt - perhaps moving events online or outside, meeting in small groups, or mailing activities to participants. This section will help you identify how you need to respond to other typical activities you are involved in, what needs to restart, change and what needs to stop. This involves difficult decisions and it is important to grieve the loss when something important has to be stopped, even if only for a while.



ACTIVITY: TYPICAL ACTIVITIES

10 minutes

Ministries are busy places... In addition to worship services, Bible studies, and prayer meetings you might typically be planning or running mission trips or vacation Bible school, weekly dinners, a food pantry, literacy training, advocacy projects or sports clubs. You might also have day care or schools that run from your facility. As we mentioned before this tool is best done thinking in in short-term chunks.

Consider a time period that is important for your planning, for example, the next three months, and list all of the core activities you would typically do during that time period.

More copies of this page can be found in the Going Deeper Bonus PDF. Please contact us for the Going Deeper resource if you are interested.

PROGRAM OR MINISTRY	WHEN DOES IT HAPPEN?	HOW OFTEN DOES IT HAPPEN?
Bible study / Sunday school	Sunday morning	Weekly

PROGRAM OR MINISTRY	WHEN DOES IT HAPPEN?	HOW OFTEN DOES IT HAPPEN?
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PROGRAM OR MINISTRY	WHEN DOES IT HAPPEN?	HOW OFTEN DOES IT HAPPEN?
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PROGRAM OR MINISTRY	WHEN DOES IT HAPPEN?	HOW OFTEN DOES IT HAPPEN?
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PROGRAM OR MINISTRY	WHEN DOES IT HAPPEN?	HOW OFTEN DOES IT HAPPEN?
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PROGRAM OR MINISTRY	WHEN DOES IT HAPPEN?	HOW OFTEN DOES IT HAPPEN?
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ACTIVITY: STOPPING AND GIVING SPACE FOR GRIEF



10 minutes



Whilst this tool will focus on what communities can do to creatively respond to the challenges and opportunities of this current moment, it is crucial to create space to acknowledge and name the things that we can't do or things that we need to change.

There are activities that, as a community, you simply can't do in this current context or that just can't be the same. Consider some of your core activities from the prior page, given the constraints you have identified. Decide together what will you need to stop? What can continue? And what do you need to adapt for the current conditions?

Take a moment to create space for the grief that these changes might create.



Stop

Continue

Restart

Adapt

Not sure

ACTIVITY NAME:



RESOURCES - OUR ASSETS

It is all too easy to only focus on what you need and forget what you already have. When we do think about what we have, our culture shapes our thinking: We jump straight to counting the money. However, your community's assets are much more than just financial. You have all sorts of resources - some of which are obvious and others which might take some uncovering.

Seeing your resources with new eyes can help develop new ideas and unlock new possibilities.

ACTIVITY: MAPPING OUR RESOURCES



Part One – 10 minutes

In the following 2 pages generate a list of resources you have in different categories:



EQUIPMENT

(sporting equipment, cooking equipment, glass jars, etc.)

PEOPLE

(staffing, volunteers, skills, gifts and talents AND free time from the people in your community)

PLACES

(youth room, park, Sunday school rooms, camp, parking lot, outdoor field, family mission trip)

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

(Who do you know in the community, from outside the community of faith, that could be helpful?)

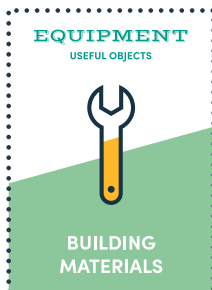
***You may not always
have exactly what you
need but you will have
something you can use
or leverage. Is there a
more creative way you
can use the obvious?***

- ROOTEDGOOD'S MISSION POSSIBLE GAME



Take 5 minutes. In the bubbles provided write down all of the equipment that your organization has — everything from sticky notes and hymnals to basketballs and chalkboards. Then, write down all of the people that your organization has — staff, volunteers, members, etc. For instance you might have a chef or a group of lawyers who love what you do, or you might have a lot of retired folks or young people looking for work experience. Don't evaluate, just list everything you can think of.

EQUIPMENT



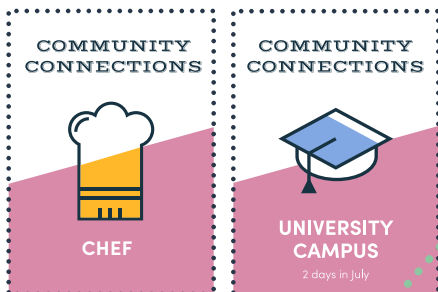
PEOPLE





Set the time for 5 minutes. In the bubbles provided write down all of the places your community has access to — you might have classrooms or you might have access to a local park in addition to your most-used spaces. Then, write down all of the community connections that you have — think about the non-profits you partner with or different organizations that you have or can collaborate with.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



PLACES





Part Two - 10 minutes

Give everyone in the group 10 seconds each to name the top two resources in each category that they are most excited about. Write these down on this page, then decide together which out of the list are the four resources for each category you want to choose. Jump ahead and write these four on the Raw Materials Board, on page 29.

A large dotted green circle on the left, connected by a dotted line to a solid green circle on the right. Inside the solid green circle are four horizontal lines for writing.

INSPIRATION

We all have a tendency to want to go back to the way things were. However, this is a moment filled with opportunity. Remember: God is with you, making all things new (Isaiah 43:18-19). Here are just a few ways people are reimagining their spiritual practices.

Reimagining Land Use and Serving Neighbors



New ways of
partnering with
your community

Reimagining Faith Formation



Reimagining Rituals



Reimagining Milestones



Reimagining Hybrid Church Post-Pandemic



BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

ACTIVITY: RESOURCES GAME



Part One: Raw Materials Board 3 minutes



In order to play the resource activity game, take all the work you have done from the previous sections and populate this page - the needs, resources and constraints. This will give you what you need to get creative!

Bring over the needs from page 13; the constraints from page 18; and the resources from page 26.

Our needs (from p13):

PARTICIPANTS

1
2
3
4

WIDER COMMUNITY

1
2
3
4

Our resources (from p26):

EQUIPMENT

PEOPLE

PLACES

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

If you are working collaboratively online you may want to do this exercise using a Miro virtual whiteboard (miro.com), a Google Doc, or some other tool that you can view and annotate online together.

Our constraints (from p18) :

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Part Two: Generating example ideas 5-15 minutes

On the following page take one of your needs and some of your resources and come up with new ideas for how you would use those resources to meet the needs of your participants and wider community. This could be a brand new idea or an adaptation of something you are currently doing. There is an additional copy in the Going Deeper Bonus PDF for you to use. Here is an example! Please contact us for the Going Deeper resource if you are interested.

The need

Connection and
community

Our resources

Extra land

Extra capacity

Cars

Our resources

Extra capacity

lots of cars

phones

IDEA 1



Create a
community vegetable
garden - and food
delivery boxes

IDEA 2

Adopt a neighbor

Deliver soups or make
weekly phone calls

(Check out Coop Soups
<https://www.instagram.com/coopssoupstoshare>)



Checked against our constraints:

Lots of vulnerable/
elderly/at risk participants

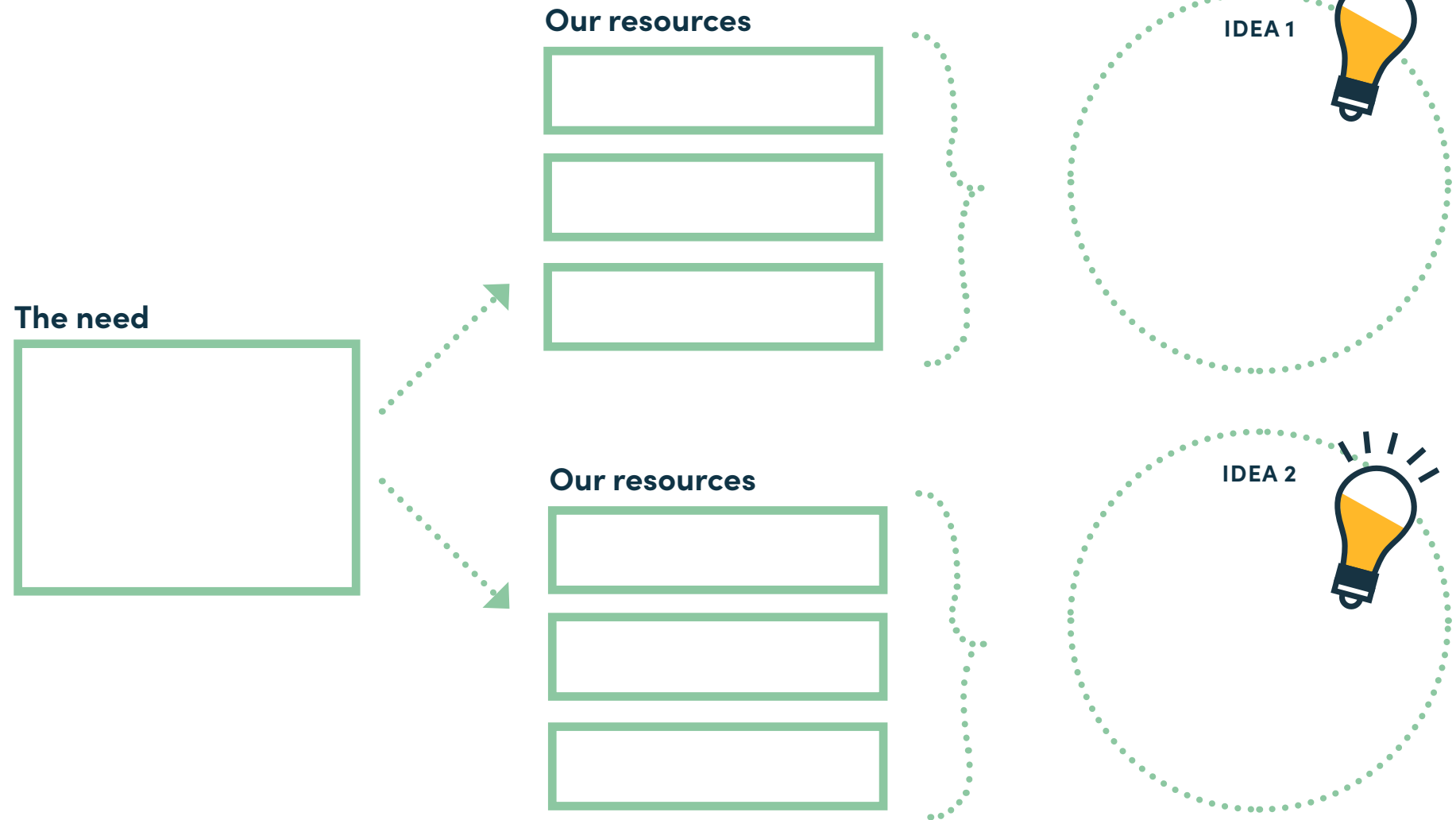
Social Distancing
still advised

Indoor activities
riskier than outdoor

Small staff

Budget is tight

Our Ideas



Checked against our constraints:

ACTION PLAN

Use this page to create an action plan for how you will implement the ideas you have developed.

ACTIVITY NAME
(TYPICAL AND NEW)

ARE YOU STARTING,
ADAPTING OR STOPPING?
(CIRCLE ONE ICON)

WHO IS
RESPONSIBLE?

WHEN WILL
WE START THIS?

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE
WE NEED TO DO THIS WELL?





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