

Redeemer Ministry Corps
Lifelines Exercise

This exercise is designed for all participants to share their own life story. It is recommended that the participants have time to prepare their story - perhaps introducing this the night before. Life lines helps facilitate a process to begin getting to know more about each other and to see where "common" experiences may exist. It helps foster a sense of community and encourages the community to ask questions later. The story teller has the freedom to share to the extent they are comfortable. The listeners are encouraged to respect the time of the story teller.

Each person has $\frac{1}{2}$ hour to share his/her story in whatever mode or fashion. Creativity is encouraged and photos a must! During the story sharing, there will be no interruptions or questions asked.

Below is a suggested opening prayer, reading from Scripture, guided meditation and self reflection.

LIFELINES - OPENING PRAYER

We gather today in the presence of God our Creator, our Liberator and our Animator.

We gather today present to our recollection of God creating us anew. We gather together on a journey to a promised place: a communion, a crossing-over, a liberating conversion. We meet here in this gathering, storytelling wilderness as witnesses to each other's lives.

We gather to share our unique journey to the burning center where God dwells.

In this most sacred place, we touch the earth with naked feet. We stand with each other in the reverent care of the vulnerable.

We pray with our stories. We bless each other's lives with our open, vulnerable hearts. We give thanks for the courage of beginning, the power of remembering, the treasures of our journey revealing, "I am who am" burning present, calling, blessing our empowered, shared life word.

Reading: Psalm 139: 1-16; 23-24

Guided Meditation

Think back to the time before you were born. What were the circumstances that brought you into being? Think of the person or persons that would eventually be your parent or parents. Think of your mother or think of your father or think of both your mother and your father.

Think of God who blessed you and loved you into existence. Creator God brought you forth and life began. Initially the tasks of life left you dependent on others - you needed help to eat, to be clean, to be changed. You were dependent on others to take care of you and to love. Your every need was left to be taken care of by others. Some of these needs were taken care of and perhaps other needs were neglected. And then life called you onward.

You began to crawl and explore. You went from being on four legs to eventually being on two - you took your first steps and found your own direction. Your babble and sounds eventually led way to communicating and you began to communicate yourself to the world around you. Saying yes and saying no. Apron strings gradually got longer and you ventured further and further - you met companions along the way. Play mates and later school mates. You made friends and perhaps you made enemies too.

Life brought a variety of experiences -some left you laughing as you rolled in the cool summer grass and others left you crying from scratched knees or even worse from broken hearts. You grew and grew. Eventually your body began to grow in ways that were new and perhaps even frightening. At times perhaps you wondered what this new adolescent creation was eventually going to become. Perhaps it was an awkward time. Perhaps it was an exciting time. Perhaps it was a painful time. Perhaps it was a combination of all these things and more. But you grew and you passed through the various stages - physically, socially, intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and personally.

Life continued on, introducing you to new people and experiences that you invited and others that perhaps you just accepted but would rather not have had. There were years of schooling and learning. Perhaps you enjoyed those years, perhaps you did not. But life constantly calls us forward and we journey on.

The years ahead might have been filled with new people, experiences, travels and jobs. Moments perhaps were filled with clarity of who you wanted to be and what you wanted to do. Or perhaps there were more moments of uncertainty - not knowing who you were or what you wanted. Life experiences might have shaken up what you once held tightly as you asked "Why"? Perhaps dreams were broken, perhaps dreams were mended, perhaps dreams were growing or perhaps dreams were achieved. And where was God in the midst of your dreams. Do you believe that God dreams the dream within you?

And life moved on - there were people and experiences that you carry with you, that make up your story, that make up who you are. Other people and experiences are no longer part of you in the way they once were. For some of these, you feel a loss and for others you let go with a sense of relief.

And life moves on. For change is one of life's constants. And we carry with us a story of what was, a story of what is and a dream of a story yet to be.

Self- Reflection

As we draw our own lifelines, and listen to the story of each other's lives, we become very conscious of the absolute uniqueness of each person's story. But then gradually, linking up all these stories, we find the story of God.

Life is the creative interaction between two stories; the unique personal history of each of us and the story of God, which is present in all of human history, and in all the things that happen to us. This interaction takes place in our lives to the extent that we are open to the story of others. In knowing more about one another we know more about God.

As we reflect on our lives we can often see how God has acted in our lives through other people. God has called them to co-create us. This is one of the deepest ways in which we can understand what it means that we are made in the image of God. God is the great creator, but God has called us not only to share in the creation of the world, but even to share in the co-creation of one another.