

# Creating A Sense of Place Map

If you're working alone, an engaging way to set your mind freely roving through the special places of your community is to create a free-form map of the variety of places and ways you connect to your community—a solo brainstorm. Find twenty minutes, a piece of paper and something to write with. If you want to really open up, try to find a big piece of paper and some colorful pen or pencils.

Now draw a “map” of your place, your home community. It might look like a geographic map, or it might be more figurative, perhaps a tree with roots and leaves representing different aspects of your life and your relationships to your community. Next, mark the following things on your map (you may have more than one response for each item), and make notes beside the marks or symbols to identify the particulars.

- A favorite place in your community to go for a walk.
- A favorite public place to chat.
- A local sacred place or healing place that always makes you feel better.
- An older person in the community whom you appreciate knowing and spending time with.
- Something special you've noticed in your community that you suspect few people know about.
- A place where you connect personally with an element of your community's local or regional economy.
- A place where you connect personally to the human history of your community.

You can also do this exercise with a friend, family member or neighbor, and compare notes. In addition to generating some specific ideas for educational program sites, themes and stories, the exercise will yield a range of possible paths to pursue for more ideas. For example, it might be high time for you to invite that older person in the community for lunch and find out some of the nuances of his or her sense of place.