

My Life Road Map

Purpose: Reflect on key choices that help shape one's identity and foster community through the sharing of personal stories.

ADVISOR NOTES:

1. Familiarize Yourself with the Life Road Maps Strategy

This activity is based on the **Life Road Maps** strategy, which you can learn about at facinghistory.org/advisory-media. As a variation or for advisees who need more structure, you can use the **Positive-Negative Line Graph** handout for this activity. After advisees reflect in their journals, have them choose eight to ten pivotal moments or decisions to chart on the line graph. They can determine what to plot on the y-axis. For example, they might plot the positive or negative impact the moment had on their emotions or how they rank the decision as a high or low point in their lives thus far.

APPROXIMATE TIME:

2 x 45 minutes

MATERIALS:

White paper, preferably legal size or larger

Colored markers, pens, and/or pencils



HANDOUT

Positive-Negative Line Graph (optional)

2. Pacing This Activity

You will probably need two advisory meetings for this activity. Advisees can brainstorm and create their maps in the first meeting and then share and discuss their maps in the second meeting. Some advisees, especially those who enjoy art and creative activities, might want to bring their maps home to finish after the first meeting. If they do so, make sure to remind them that they will need them for sharing in the next meeting. You might use the time while advisees are creating their maps for a round of mini-conferences.

PROCEDURE:

1. Reflect on Your Life Journey

- Let advisees know that in this activity, they will be reflecting on significant events and choices that helped shape their identities.
- Then either have them write a journal entry about pivotal moments or important decisions in their lives or create a timeline that represents the significant events and choices.

2. Brainstorm "Life as Journey" Metaphors

Explain to the group that they will be drawing a "map" of their lives. Start by having them brainstorm things that people might encounter when they take a trip

or journey, and record these ideas on the board. Items on this list might include stop signs, speed bumps, traffic lights, dead ends, detours, highways, tolls, and rest stops. Give advisees the opportunity to discuss what these items might represent when applied to the metaphor of “life as journey.” For example, a dead end might represent a decision that did not yield the desired result. A green light might represent getting approval to move ahead. A rotary (roundabout) might represent a time when they had to make a choice or felt like they were going around in circles.

3. Construct Life Road Maps

- Invite advisees to move into small groups, if they wish, to work on their road maps, and pass out white paper, markers, pens, and colored pencils. Remind them that the journey should represent important decisions and events that have shaped their lives. They can add details to their maps, including factors that may have influenced decisions, such as historical events, important relationships, goals, beliefs, and aspects of human behavior (fear, conformity, prejudice, etc.).
- As they work, you might allow them to walk around the room to survey what their peers are doing. This can be a great way for advisees to generate new ideas about how to represent an individual’s life as a journey.

4. Share and Debrief

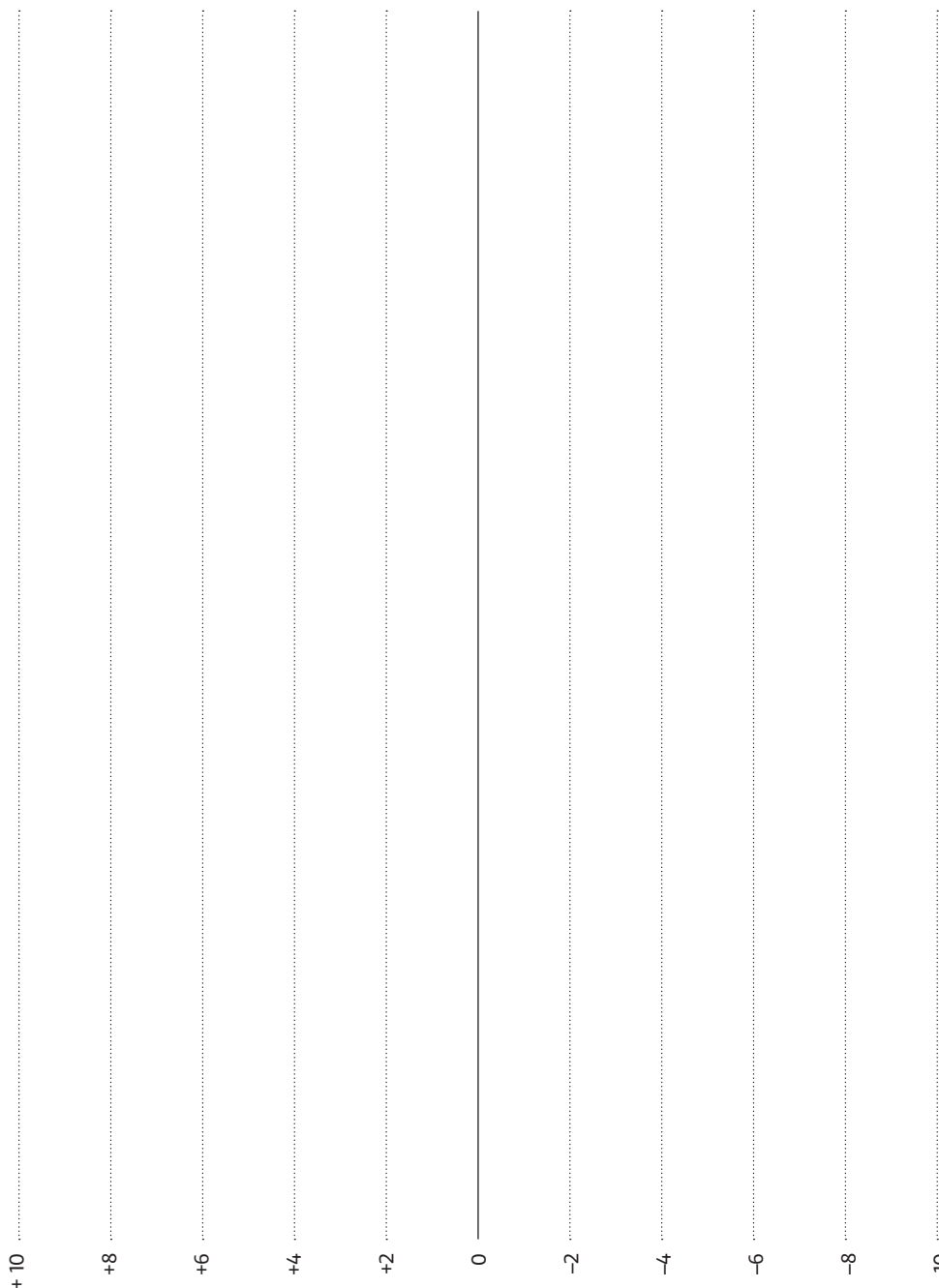
Share the “life road maps” in a circle discussion or as a **gallery walk** (visit [facing history.org/advisory-media](https://www.facinghistory.org/advisory-media) to learn about this teaching strategy). As advisees learn about their peers, ask them to pay attention to similarities and differences among these maps. Prompts you might use to guide advisees’ reflections and a follow-up discussion include:

- What factors influence the choices people make?
- What factors help people move forward and make progress?
- What factors set people back?
- What is unique about this person’s life, and what seems universal to the group?



Positive-Negative Line Graph

Directions: Graph eight to ten high and low moments from your life. For each moment, draw a dot on the graph and write a short phrase to explain what happened. Then connect the dots with a line.¹



¹ Kelly Gallagher, *Deeper Reading: Comprehending Challenging Texts, 4–12* (Portland: Stenhouse Publishers, 2004), 98–100.