



June

parenting CHRISTIAN kids



A resource from your New Hampton Community Church family.

Practice Outreach in Your Own Neighborhood

POWERSOURCE

ASK JESUS:

1. To help your family form close ties to neighbors of all ages.
2. To show you areas of need in your neighborhood—and ways you can meet them.
3. To give family members a heart for reaching out to all people.

During the past year, the coronavirus pandemic has caused lots of stress, separation, and cancellations. Yet several bright spots have brought much-needed light to the dark times.

For example, families, neighbors, churches, and communities are coming together in creative ways to offer support and to meet a variety of needs. Acts of love, whether simple (waving, posting signs) or more involved (running errands for the elderly, donating gift cards to the unemployed) are lifting spirits and easing tensions.

These deeds forge connections among neighbors who may not even know one another's names. And they give family members

purposeful projects to tackle together while much of society must remain unnaturally apart.

As social-distancing restrictions gradually ease up in some areas, outreach methods can expand a bit, too. But that doesn't necessarily mean serving your neighbors will require more time and money—unless you have extra you'd like to give.

In fact, parents can use this out-of-the-ordinary period to show kids just how far a little kindness can go. Resist the temptation to self-isolate (unless you are sick, of course). Instead, search for ways your family can make life a bit easier—and more cheerful—for people around you. To get started, check out the suggestions on the following page. May God bless your outreach efforts!

“Who is my neighbor?”



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

The Samaritan Shuffle

Use this activity to teach kids about neighborliness while helping them release pent-up energy. On slips of paper, write one of these events from the parable of the Good Samaritan:

- A man walks to Jericho.
- Robbers beat up the man.
- A priest walks past the hurt man.
- A Levite walks past the hurt man.
- A Samaritan stops to bandage the man's wounds.
- A Samaritan puts the wounded man onto an animal.
- A Samaritan takes the wounded man to a motel.
- A Samaritan pays the motel manager to care for the man.

Put each slip into a different balloon. Inflate and tie off the balloons. Have family members bat the balloons around. When you yell, “Stop and pop!” everyone grabs a balloon (or two), pops it, and retrieves the slip. Work together to figure out the correct sequence. Then read Luke 10:30-37 to see how you did. Pray, thanking Jesus for opportunities to love your neighbors.

In Luke 10:25, a legal expert asks Jesus about the path to eternal life. Jesus tells him to follow the two greatest commandments—love God and love your neighbors. Yet the man presses for more detail, following up by asking “And who is my neighbor?” (verse 29). Then Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan, teaching that neighbors can be anyone, not just people who look, act, and believe as we do. In this era of wariness and extra caution, it takes effort to know our neighbors, let alone to serve them. But serving others helps us get to know people as individuals and also allows Jesus to work through us, as living examples of his love.

Rockin’ the Walk More people are taking walks these days, so provide strollers with some inspiration. Paint rocks with bright colors and write or draw simple messages on them. Set them along sidewalks or near flower beds to make people smile. Kids also can write Bible verses on your sidewalk with chalk.

Free for All! Instead of setting up a lemonade stand to earn money, kids can give away free bottled drinks (or individually wrapped treats). Display signs such as “Jesus is the Living Water” or “Free gift: Jesus quenches your thirst!” Instead of taking money, set out a jar for prayer requests.

Give & Take If you are handy, help kids build a Little Free Library or a Little Free Pantry (instructions are available online). With permission, you might be able to place it on your church grounds. Contributors can fill a library with books and Bibles and a pantry with toiletries and nonperishable food items.

Sing ’n’ Serve Teach children the joy of serving by finding age-appropriate tasks they can do with your supervision. Summertime examples include washing cars, watering people’s plants, and watching a neighbor’s pet. With younger kids, sing simple refrains

while you work. To the tune of “London Bridge,” for example, sing “God loves me, so I love you, I love you, I love you. God loves me, so I love you. Love each other!”

Prayer Pals Craft-loving kids can make colorful cards for elderly people who remain homebound. Include your phone number on a note that says: “Please share how we can help you—and how we can pray for you!”

Award-Winning Acts Although the Summer Olympics have been postponed, you can cheer on people’s good deeds. Using ribbon and card stock, create a bunch of ribbons that say Medal of Honor. Read aloud Hebrews 10:24. Tell family members their goal is to “catch” people being kind and give them a medal. After complimenting the good deed, they tell the honoree to pass along the medal to someone else who *they* catch in the act of kindness.

Crops of Kindness If you have a garden or fruit trees, deliver extra produce to homebound neighbors. Add notes with fun messages such as “Lettuce know if you need anything!” “You’re the apple of God’s eye!” and “We’d be in a pickle without good neighbors!”

All these commands and all others are really only one rule: “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.”
... Loving is obeying all the law.
—Romans 13:9-10, NCV