



ESSENTIAL

NEIGHBORS

**BRINGING THE LOVE OF JESUS
TO OUR COMMUNITIES**





“We love because He first loved us.”

1 John 4:19

The very essence of the Gospel is summed up in this short verse. One simple statement says it all. God loves us, and it is because of His love to us that we are to show love to others.

Showing love to others is being obedient, as the Bible commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Showing love to others is imitating Jesus. His ultimate display of love was, of course, the cross, but Jesus loved people throughout His earthly ministry as He spent time with them, listened to them, and met their needs.

We invite you to join us as we each become “*Essential Neighbors*” to our communities. We will lift our communities to God through PRAYER. We will CARE for our communities as we spend time with them and listen to them. We will SHARE the Gospel message when the opportunity presents itself. As *Essential Neighbors*, we will bring the love of Jesus to our communities.

This packet contains three fun ideas for your family to connect with your neighbors during the weeks of June 21, 28, and July 5. You can choose a different activity for each week, or you can choose the same one for all three weeks; whatever works best for your family. Each activity is formatted with PRAYER, CARE, SHARE in mind, giving suggestions and talking points for each. Instead of a formal devotional time, we have created it to allow for intentional faith talks throughout the entire process. We encourage you to read through an entire event prior to starting it. This will help you understand the flow of the event as well as better prepare you for the discipleship piece.

It is our desire that your family will not only have fun engaging with your neighbors, but that you will realize that showing the love of Jesus can be accomplished in a variety of ways. We pray that this will spur on your family to look for more opportunities to be *Essential Neighbors*.



A SUNNY SURPRISE

“WE LOVE BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US.” 1 JOHN 4:19
Because of God’s love for us, we can show love to others.

PRAYER

Discuss whom should receive the surprise. Why did you choose that person(s)?

Pray that the recipient would feel loved by your gift.

Pray that this will create opportunities to develop friendships and create space for conversations about God’s love for them.

CARE

Discuss how God shows His love for us in many ways. Because of God’s love for us, we can show love to others. How is surprising a neighbor a way to show God’s love?

PREPARE

- Determine who will receive a Sunny Surprise
- Print attached door hanger on heavy paper if possible and cut out
- Attach a small treat or gift to the door hanger

ENJOY

- Secretly hang the surprise on a neighbor’s door or leave on front porch
- Ring the doorbell and run away
- Create a large sun and hang it in your front window to reveal you as the gift giver.

SHARE

Discuss why we should share God’s love with others. As a family, prepare an answer to the question, “Why did you leave me a sunny surprise?”

TIP: For a gift, fill a mason jar with a variety of yellow things (candies, lemonade, notes, etc)

FAMILY FIELD DAY

“WE LOVE BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US.” 1 JOHN 4:19
When we show love to others, we are being obedient to God.

PRAYER

Discuss whom you should invite—one family or many. Why did you choose them?

Pray that everyone will be safe and have fun

Pray that this will create opportunities to develop friendships and create space for conversations about God’s love for them.

CARE

Discuss how showing love to others is being obedient to God. How is playing games with your neighbors showing God’s love?

INVITE

- Choose a family-friendly game or activity that will allow social distancing (frisbee, kickball, water balloons, kites)
- Determine a time and location
- Invite one or more families to join

PREPARE

- Make sure the field has not been reserved for another event
- Gather any supplies that you will be bringing to the event

ENJOY

- Be the “ringleader” at the event: explain rules, divide into teams, keep time
- Look for opportunities to engage people in conversation: “What have you been missing the most during the stay-at-home order?” “What good has come from this that has surprised you?”

SHARE

Discuss ways to share God’s love while playing games. As a family, prepare an answer to the question, “What made you decide to do this?”

TIP: Set a time limit on your event and choose a public space rather than your back yard.

POP-UP ICE CREAM PARTY

"WE LOVE BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US." 1 JOHN 4:19
When we show love to others, we are imitating Jesus.

PRAYER

Discuss who you should invite. Should you include people you don't know?

Pray that this will create opportunities for further connections

Pray that this will bring joy to those who come.

CARE

Discuss how showing love to others is imitating Jesus. How is giving away ice cream to your neighbors showing Jesus' love? Jesus didn't even have ice cream!

INVITE

- Take kids and put invitations on people's doors
- Put a sign in your yard
- Take kids and invite in person

ENJOY

- Wear masks to show concern for others
- Have napkins and trash cans available
- If people want "grab and go", let them. It's about doing something for them.

SHARE

Discuss ways to share God's love while giving away ice cream. As a family, prepare an answer to the question, "Why would you give away free ice cream?"

TIP: Encourage your kids to be good hosts and wait to eat their ice cream until a neighbor has been served.

A SUNNY SURPRISE!

A sunny surprise
has come your way
To make you smile
and brighten your day
Enjoy the treats,
they're yours to keep
Can you guess who left them
without a peep?
Next time you walk
up and down our street
Look at the windows,
another sun you will meet
Then you will know,
you'll be able to tell
Who left you a smile,
who rang your doorbell
We delivered sunshine
and rays of hope too
So you know your neighbors
are thinking of you



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