

INVEST AND INVITE - PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND SHARING FAITH

Investing in Others - Ideas for Building Relationships

Praying

- Prayer walking - Walk your neighborhood and pray for families as you pass their homes.
- Dinner Table Prayer - Use dinner time (or other meals) as a time to pray for neighbors by name. Focus on a different neighbor family each night, and pray for them as a family. Encourage the family to pray for this family throughout the day.
- Devotional prayer - Make a copy of the neighborhood list and put it with your Bible and other devotional material. Include the list as part of your prayer time each day.
- Neighborhood map - Draw a map of your neighborhood, or print one from Google Maps. Label the map with family names. Include as much information as you know about the family (IE, how many kids, kids names, ages, pets, etc.). Use the map to as a way to start getting to know names of people.
- Family discussions about the list - Begin to have family discussions about the neighbors on the list. Pick a family to discuss, and have members of your family share as much information as they know. Start a journal with this information.
- Neighborhood note cards - Write the names and addresses of families on your list on separate note cards. Draw a card each day and put it in a pocket, purse, or something else you carry with you. Pull the note card during the day as a reminder to pray for the family.
- Prayer Business Card or Magnet - Create a business card or magnet that says, "if you need prayer, call the _____ family at (your phone). Deliver to neighbors.

Get to know neighbors and others in community

- Take walks with a purpose – Last month we encouraged you to prayer walk. Keep using walks as a way to get out in the neighborhood. Add an element of service, relationship to these walks. Here are a few ideas:
 - ★ Take a trash bag and clean trash in your neighborhood
 - ★ Grab a few dog biscuits and give them to neighbors with pets
 - ★ Take a few bottled waters and give them to people who are working in their yards or on walks themselves
- Be a nosey neighbor - Take note of times when neighbors are doing projects around their home. They are almost always willing to talk about their fabulous work. When you see people working, ask them what they are doing.
- Find and frequent the neighborhood hangout - In most neighborhoods, there is a place where kids and parents tend to congregate. It might be a park, or the cool kid's home at the end of the block. Figure out where that place is, and stop by in the evenings when everyone is there.
- Do life in your front yard - Choose to hang out with your family in your front yard from time to time. Sit out lawn chairs, play catch, do family games... Then greet people as they are on their walks or are working in their yards.
- Provide a lemonade or water stand - Now, don't put the little girl down the street out of business. But make a pitcher of lemonade or some other refreshing drink and make it available for people who are out and about.
- Do a canned food or peanut butter drive or some other collection - A project like this is a great, non-threatening way to go to every home in your neighborhood. Drop by each house, introduce yourself and your family, and listen as they reply. As you collect cans, find out about their family.
- Deliver cookies, holiday goodies or other treats to neighbors.

- See meetings as divine appointments - If your neighbors take the trash to the street, mow the lawn, or walk their dogs at the same time, see this as an opportunity to get to know them.
- See service people as people and notice their names. Speak to them, and even ask them how you can pray for them.
- Be the fund-raiser for an organization such as American Cancer Society or Red Cross. They will send you packets that you are to “mail” to people in your neighborhood. Deliver them by hand instead with some cookies. It is a way to meet people and get relational around something that is non-threatening.
- Initiate a neighborhood social committee or community safe program. Plan activities for your subdivision and involve others in the events.
- Go to sports games, plays, concerts, etc. of kids whose parents are in your relationship circle. There is no better way to build relationships with parents than to sit with them watching their kid’s game.

Intentional investing - Some ideas for taking relationships to next steps

- Host parties, barbecues, or other events at your house with people you are seeking to reach.
- Discover the person’s beliefs - Way too often we are eager to share our faith that we accidentally trample the other person’s beliefs and background. Spend some time listening to their beliefs. Ask these questions, and just listen:
 - ▶ To you, who is God?
 - ▶ Where did we come from? How did we get here?
 - ▶ What went wrong and how is it fixed?
 - ▶ What about your faith gives you hope?
 - ▶ Where are we going?
- Invite others to participate in the things that give you joy - Instead of golf with your Christian buddies, play golf with guys in your neighborhood. Quilt, sew, cook with people you are seeking to reach. Hunt or fish with people that are not followers of Jesus.
- Start something for the people who are in your relationship circles - Do a kickball or frisbee golf league, a series of financial seminars, a home-improvement workshop.
- Do a book study with a friend or group of friends. Find a good book that addresses issues of faith and read it together, then hold a weekly or monthly discussion.
- Send cards or e-cards at birthdays, religious holidays they observe, times of crises, etc.

Investing in times of crisis or hardship

- When crisis or tragedy hits, ask them how you can pray for them, then pray right there.
- Provide a meal.
- Send cards.
- Provide childcare while the family is dealing with the crisis.

Inviting Others - To Jesus and To Church

- Send a link to the Genesis website. Pick a favorite sermon and tell them to listen online.
- Give them an invite card.
- Discuss their fears of going to church, encourage them that you will meet them and sit with them.
- Tell people your faith story.
- Use holidays like Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. People are more likely to try a church at these seasons.