

# Spring 2013 Ideas to "Live Love"

"Churches that seek to follow God need only one thing, pure, unfiltered, and unconditional, 1 Corinthians 13 style love; first for God and then for our neighbors. Everything that a church does should be motivated by these two loves. Are programs, worship services, meetings, ushers, pastor, worship team, nursery workers, Sunday school teachers, and every other part of our local church motivated by the love they have for God and for His created people? If not maybe it's time for a change in focus...As a church there is nothing greater that we can invest in than our love of God and people." *(Manny Garcia, 42 Days of Prayer)*

**These suggestions can be done as a family, individual or with a small group.  
You might want to print a few in your church bulletin each week.**

## March

- In honor of National Craft Month gather materials for a project and offer to demonstrate & share with a mom of preschoolers, someone doing daycare, your local library or nursing home. One idea is to make flowers with Dum Dum candy. Just Google Dum Dum flowers for instructions.
- Buy car wash coupons; tuck them under the wipers of dirty cars with a note "Just showing God's love to you in a practical way," and include your church name.
- Offer to walk a neighbor's dog. Take a garbage bag along and gather any trash along the way.
- Pack a bag for someone undergoing chemo – snack, water, magazine, word-find game book, mechanical pencil, humorous book, etc.
- In honor of National Peanut Month bake peanut butter cookies, bars or candy then deliver them to your pastor and family; your local post office; senior citizen center; or mail to a college student.
- Leave an encouraging comment on someone's blog.

*"Let all that you do be done with love." (I Corinthians 16:14)*

## April

- Celebrate National Library Week - April 14-20. Drop off a card of appreciation and encouragement along with some Hugs & Kisses for the staff and volunteers. Leave \$10 at the desk with instructions for it to be used for the next person who needs to pay a fine. Leave a card with your church name.
- Prayer Walk around your community – simply pray for each home and/or business you pass.
- Give flower seed packets to retired couples or those widowed as a sign of hope for the future.
- In honor of National Poetry Month copy a favorite humorous poem and mail it to someone who needs a laugh. You could also post it on Facebook for many to enjoy.
- Spring clean your clothes closet. Give away what you are not using to charity groups.
- Buy sidewalk chalk. Take it to a park and pass it out for kids to decorate the walkways.

*"Forgive and give as if it were your last opportunity. Love like there's no tomorrow, and if tomorrow comes, love again." (Max Lucado, Every Day Deserves a Chance)*

## May

- Make May Baskets, fill with candy and deliver to neighbors, friends in retirement homes, etc. Simple patterns can be found on the internet or in library books.
- In honor of National Bike Month talk with your local grade school. Set a day to bring your tools after school and provide free tune-ups on brakes, gears, tires, etc.
- Surprise employees of local businesses with a cookies or specialty coffees. Leave a card saying how you appreciate their service to your community and that you wanted to share God's love.
- May 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> is both Teacher's and Nurses' week. Send flowers and/or a note of appreciation to each one who has impacted your life in a positive way.
- Post something you no longer need on craigslist.com for FREE.
- Stop a parent to tell them how happy their child looks and/or how well behaved they are.

*"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves." (Romans 12:10)*

## **We encourage your whole church to work on these suggestions together.**

**Appreciation Easter lilies:** Instead of buying Easter lilies simply to decorate the church, give them to law enforcement, a homeless shelter, hospital, nursing home, hospice etc. Attach a small note from your church, "With appreciation during this Easter season."

**Love Jars:** Take any size jar with a lid and decorate. Fill it with love; cookies, coins, Bible verses about God's love, socks, Easter candy, notes with encouraging words. Ideas: List things you love about that person, things they have done for you, or special times you've shared together. Kids could make one for their parents, or parents for their kids. You can also include favorite quotes or poems. Pray the person will be blessed with God's love. Pass it on anonymously or attach a card with your name.

**"Less is Love" dinner:** Set aside one evening for a very simple, low-cost meal and donate the funds you would have spent on a meal at home or at a restaurant to a mission project or local food box. Do this as individual families, then share your experiences or host the meal at your church. Menu ideas: Ramen noodles with a little chicken, rice & beans with fresh fruit, or vegetable soup with bread.

**Give the gift of music:** 1) Set aside a few hours for an old fashioned 'Hymn Sing'. Heavily publicize this free event in the community. Encourage members to prepare special numbers, both vocal and instrumental but allow most of the time to singing from a hymn or chorus book. Visitors should be allowed time to pick their favorites. Be sure to offer refreshments to encourage fellowship. 2) Take it on the road to a retirement or nursing home. Include popular radio hits from the 40's & 50's along with traditional hymns.

**Look for people that no one ever thinks about serving:** The whole church can donate items for goodie baskets. Include homemade foods, specialty teas or coffee, chocolates, joke book, fancy pens, etc. Give goodie baskets to the staff at a nursing home (instead of the residents); the case workers at child protective services or welfare office; employees at a store or fast food restaurant, trash collectors.

**Community wide garage sale:** Choose a central location such as a park to host a garage sale to benefit a local charity or cause. Offer to pick up larger items. Make it a fun community event by providing free hot dogs, cookies & music. Display posters about your church activities (perhaps designed by kids) but be sure they are not in anyone's way. Church brochures should be available only upon request.

### **Acts of love and kindness that can be expressed to children & youth**

- A special surprise one adult and 1 kid "date" at the restaurant of their choice.
- Let them help you do something you normally do alone, even though it will take longer.
- Plan a special day trip (children's museum, park, large mall, music concert, ballgame, etc.)
- Buy a funny card or write a letter and put it in the mail. Everyone loves getting personal mail.
- Buy a book that was your favorite at their age and give it or read it to them.
- Take a ball to the park and invite whoever is there to play with you.
- Invite a child who's grandparents don't live nearby to be your adopted grandchild.
- Share a skill you have acquired through the years with a child who has that interest.
- Send cards to all the kids in your church on their birthdays. Include a note about how you enjoy watching them grow.

What if your church really embraced the idea of letting God's love flow out into your community? What if you started loving God so much that you let what he feels for the people in your community overflow into your heart? Wouldn't that be something?

Though it may not seem like you or your church can make much of a difference, God has entrusted you with the power to give thousands a taste of Jesus and awaken their thirst...So let's give our all—heart, soul, mind, and strength—as we invest in something that lasts forever, the people Jesus loves and died for. It'll be fun. We promise! *This article was adapted from, Outflow: Outward-Focused Living in a Self-Focused World (Group).*

**Passing this along with our love and prayers . . . IAYM Christian Education, 2013**