

2012 Fall Ideas to "Live Love"

Genuine love and compassion for God and others
is what attracts people to the Gospel and thus to our church family.

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?" ~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a listening ear, an honest compliment, a kind word, or the smallest act of caring, all which have the potential to turn a life around. ~ Leo F. Buscaglia

Weekly suggestions can be done as a family, individual or with a small group.

September 2: Back to School Teacher Aids – As a new school year starts, here are ways that you can help your public school teachers. Stop in once a week for 15 minutes to sharpen pencils. Be a Reading Buddy who reads with students during a set time each week. Reorganize the class library, make copies, wipe down desks, tables, and windows. Offer to give homework help, be an extra adult for field trips or provide snacks. Ask the teacher if you can prepare materials for a project while you watch TV at night or over the weekend. Offer to purchase needed supplies which teachers often buy from their own salaries.

September 9: Welcome Basket - Help a new family in the neighborhood feel welcome with a basket filled with homemade cookies or other goodies, fresh fruit, instant drinks, disposable plates and silverware, small toys for children like sidewalk chalk or bubbles, gift card to a restaurant, a local map, library hours, a copy of your recent church newsletter, dates of special events in your area, a copy of the local newspaper or short term subscription and perhaps a welcome mat.

September 16: Smile & Give a Compliment – The simple act of smiling and giving a compliment to a store clerk, waiter, or co-worker, friend or family member can make their day. A compliment is a gift. We acknowledge the blessing others are to us, the qualities that make them great, and reinforce the positive efforts of those around us. Remember when complimenting to be sincere. Compliments need to come from true appreciation and with no strings or expectations attached. If the service you received was especially noteworthy, ask to visit with the manager and let them know their employee did a great job for you. Complimenting will not only bring smiles to others but will bring smiles to your face. You will notice how much others are bringing into your life and the positive impact they are having on you.

September 23: Take a Senior Citizen to lunch – Seniors who live alone, are disabled or live in care facilities would welcome the opportunity to have a meal out with a friend. Just getting out in God's fresh air is a blessing, and visiting a few hours with a friend will give pleasant memories to last for days. You don't need to spend a lot; a fast food meal, or just pie & coffee would be an enjoyable treat. If the senior is not able to get out easily, prepare a meal yourself or pick up something you know they don't get to eat often and take it to share with them. Perhaps there would be time for a card game after your meal. Depending on the senior, you might want to bring along your children for them to enjoy. Many miss having interaction with children and don't get to see their grandchildren very often. Be sure to ask about their family and allow time to look at their photos!

September 30: Walk, Clean & Pray – Take a walk around your neighborhood with a friend and challenge each other to see who can pick up the most litter during your time together. By simply carrying a few plastic bags, you can bring beauty back to your neighborhood while you exercise and visit. You might be surprised to have others join you in your efforts. As you walk you can pray for the families in the homes you pass and ask God to help you know how best to share His love with them. When you hear from God be sure to be obedient to follow through!

October 7: Fall Yard Work – Raking, pruning, weeding, trimming, cleaning gutters, sweeping, covering plants for winter, planting spring bulbs, etc. All these can be more fun and less time consuming if done as a family or small group. Likely there is an older couple in your neighborhood who would welcome assistance in preparing their yard for the cold months ahead. They might even express their appreciation to you with homemade cookies! Have cards available to hand out saying the church you represent, but don't push their need to attend and don't accept payment. When asked why you are doing this, say: "we are passing on the love of Jesus to our community," or something similar.

October 14: Share a Laugh – Clip out your favorite comic strip and mail it to someone who needs a laugh. Email a joke or funny story. Send a humorous free e-card. Read a funny book (perhaps from our church library) then pass it along to another who would enjoy the same kind of humor. Laughter reduces the level of stress hormones and increases the level of health-enhancing hormones. Laughter helps develop a stronger immune system, as well as fewer physical effects of stress. Laughter connects us with others. Just as with smiling, most people find that laughter is contagious, so if you bring more laughter into your life, you can most likely help others around you to laugh more, and realize these benefits as well.

October 21: Neighborhood Progressive Dinner – You can get lots of information about progressive dinners off the Internet. Four courses at four homes works well. Begin with appetizers, then soup & salad, the main course with side dishes and conclude with dessert & coffee. If homes are not large enough to seat everyone for the main course, 2 homes can share that responsibility. If you want to make it for adults only, children could have their own pizza party and game night at the church with child care provided by teens or adults outside the area. Neighborhoods are much nicer to live in when people know each other.

October 28: Community Worker Appreciation – Write a note of appreciation to your local fire fighters, police officers, first responders, paramedics, emergency medical technicians, etc. Drop the note off with some homemade goodies, a plant or a gift card to a local restaurant. Encourage children to make an attractive "Thank You" poster and have them help create the homemade goodies.

November 4: Reconnecting – Call someone you haven't seen at church recently. Let them know they been missed and be sincere in asking if there are any problems. Be willing to listen. Don't be quick to give advice. Ask if they would like a visit from you or the pastor. If so, take along homemade goodies or a plant and allow plenty of time to listen to any concerns.

November 11: A Stress Free Meal – Cook and deliver a meal to someone who is dealing with a lot of stress in their life. Pray and have God lead you to the right person. If you know the person very well it might be fine to give this as a surprise, but in most cases it would be best to call and make arrangements first. You could say that God is leading you to prepare a meal for their family and you are just calling to ask what day and time would be the best to have it delivered. Ask if the family has any food allergies or preferences. You might also want to take disposable plates and silverware to make the meal totally free of effort for them.

November 18: A Thankful Note – For the week of Thanksgiving write at least one, or several thank you notes. These could be to your family, friends, church workers, pastor, co-workers, service workers in your community, teachers, school bus drivers, postal workers, health care providers, etc. Be genuine and specific in your appreciation. A handwritten note is especially treasured in our day...but if necessary you could buy a card that speaks your thoughts. Just be sure to personalize it with a sentence along with your signature.

November 25: Automotive Aid – Single women, senior citizens and any one with a low income would all appreciate help caring for their automobiles. Offer to check and change oil or washer fluid, check tire pressure & hoses, replace spark plugs, vacuum, wash, and other general upkeep. Using the skills God gave you to help another will surely give pleasure to all involved.

*"If there is any kindness I can show,
or any good thing I can do to any fellow being,
let me do it now, and not deter or neglect it,
as I shall not pass this way again."*

~ William Penn

We encourage the Monthly suggestions to be a whole church challenge.
Following are 4 ideas to pick from and use for September, October and November.

National Back to Church Sunday is September 16, 2012: Did you know that most people who have dropped out of church haven't lost their faith in God—they simply fell out of the habit of going to church? Some moved, had a change in life circumstances, or had a falling out with their former church and drifted away. Most often, life just became too busy. This means many of them could be open to returning. We encourage you to step out in faith & invite someone to rediscover church. Have a special service on Sunday, September 16 so that new guests will feel welcome and comfortable. Inviting a friend or family member is a simple gesture that could change someone's life. You'll be amazed at how easy it is. Check out the following website for promotional ideas: <http://backtochurch.com/participate>

Fall picnic, bonfire, hayrack ride, harvest party, game night, soup supper, pie & coffee night, etc. (all free of charge) Invite the community. Make invitation notes for your members to hand out; publicize in the local paper; post flyers; put in on the local radio station, etc. But the best way is for a member to invite a friend as a personal one to one invite is most effective. Have cards available with church information, but don't push involvement.

Community Clean Up Day: This could be at a local park or garden area, (check with local officials first) at your church, or at the home of someone who is unable to do the work themselves. Encourage everyone in the church to be involved. Bring rakes, cleaning supplies, perhaps even paint. Children can help out or just enjoy playing while adults do the work. End with a hot dog cookout or potluck meal. If this is for a community area, invite those who live close to come to the meal. Likely they will offer to help with the work as well and give you an opportunity to visit with them. Have cards available to hand out saying the church you represent, but don't push involvement and don't accept payment. When asked why you are doing this, simply say: "we are passing on the love of Jesus to our community," or something similar.

College Care Kits: Put together care kits for the neighborhood students off at college. They will love getting a funny card of encouragement in the mail, but be even more grateful for a package of goodies. You might include any of the following: microwave popcorn, hot cocoa mix, coffee, post-it notes, granola bars, pudding cups, bubbles, crayons or small silly toys for stress relief, pens, small boxes of cereal or oatmeal, a gift card to a local pizza restaurant, laundry detergent and/or quarters, music CD, homemade cookies and/or Chex mix, lip balm, card game, Easy Mac, Ramen Noodles, gum, trail mix, batteries, etc.