

Winter 2012 Ideas to "Live Love"

"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

This love must spill over from the walls of our churches and out into the community in significant ways if we are going to make any lasting impact. It seems people don't always remember what they are *told* of God's love, but they never forget what they have *experienced* of God's love. ~ *Conspiracy of Kindness* by Steve Sjogren

**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.**

December

- Run an errand or cook a meal for someone who is extra stressed.
- Ask everyone you meet "How are you, today?" or just say, "Hi, have a nice day!"
- Have a family baking day, then take the cookies to people you haven't seen in a while.
- Invite a senior citizen who doesn't have family living near to join you for holiday activities like decorating the house or baking goodies for Christmas.
- Take a pizza to a hospital waiting room for anxious family members.
- Look for opportunities to open the door or give up your seat for someone.

"No kind action ever stops with itself. One kind action leads to another....A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees. The greatest work that kindness does to others is that it makes them kind themselves. "

~ Amelia Earhart

January

- Write a note of appreciation to someone at least once a week.
- Buy a calendar with funny photos to share laughs with a friend all year long.
- Send flowers to a teacher who has dedicated their life to educating children.
- Put sticky notes with positive messages ("You look gorgeous!") on a restroom mirror.
- Pay for the order of the person behind you in the drive-thru line. Leave a card saying that you are sharing God's love with them in a practical way today.
- Distribute hand warmers, socks, or home emergency care kits to the homeless.

"We cannot all do great things, but we can do small things with great love." - Mother Theresa

February

- Write a note to management sharing about someone who has treated you nice while doing their job (waiter, clerk, sales person...etc.)
- Send cards to friends who are snow birds to let them know you miss them.
- Make valentines for residents of an elder care facility.
- Drop off a new or lightly used toy or game at a hospital or shelter for the abused.
- Send your spouse a text or email just to say that you appreciate them.
- Hide chocolate hugs & kisses around the house or office to remind your family members and co-workers that they are loved.

"Those who make compassion an essential part of their lives find the joy of life."

~ Robert J. Furey, Author

We encourage these suggestions to be a whole church challenge. Following are ideas to pick from and use during December, January & February.

- Parents' Night Out: Adults and youth volunteer to keep children at church while parents go out for an evening. This not only benefits parents but allows others to get to know children of the church better. Provide pizza, crafts, board games and a G-rated video.
- For Random Acts, Create a card: "While you were gone we fed your parking meter to show you God's love in a practical way. If there is more that we can help you with, please call us at _____(your church name & phone number)". Or change it to read that you left quarters in the grocery carts, change in the phone, or vender machine, etc.
- Souper Bowl Party: Host a community party at church on February 3rd that is both kid and adult friendly. Ask everyone to bring cans of soup for your local food box or shelter and take a few minutes during half time for a representative to share about that ministry.
- Reach Out and Touch: Choose a month and those who want to participate submit their names. People are matched up secretly. Weekly during the month they anonymously connect with their secret pal. It could be as simple as a card and as extravagant as a delivered meal, restaurant gift card, or a 'movie-pack' (microwave popcorn, M & M's, and a DVD). At the end of the month all is revealed.
- Game night for all ages: Be sure to include multigenerational games. There is nothing like the younger ones getting together for fun with the older generation. A blessing to both. Provide drinks and have everyone bring their favorite snack to share.
- Fruit Giveaway: People really like fresh fruit, and they readily take it. Put an orange, an apple, and a banana in a bag with a connection card saying you are sharing the 'fruit of God's love'. Hand them out in a mall area or go door to door in your neighborhood.

LIVE LOVE Ideas Especially For Kids

- ♥ Set up a board game to play with your family.
- ♥ Pick up someone's jacket or bag that has fallen on the floor.
- ♥ Ask a student you have never played with to join you at recess.
- ♥ Call your grandparents and tell them why they are special to you.
- ♥ Take out the garbage or clean your room without being asked.
- ♥ Pick up trash around your neighborhood. Recycle whatever possible.
- ♥ List 3 things you like about your brothers and sisters and tell them!
- ♥ Write a 'thanks' note to the kitchen workers at school or your Sunday School teacher.
- ♥ Volunteer to help babysit for younger siblings or in your church nursery.
- ♥ Bake cookies or cupcakes and deliver them to your fire or police station or local library.
- ♥ Send an e-card to someone who is sick or in the hospital.
- ♥ Share a healthy snack with a friend – fruit, carrots, granola, cheese stick, yogurt etc.
- ♥ Give someone who is struggling with a skill or school subject a helping hand.

If our faith in God doesn't cause us to do anything different in our lives, then our faith is not a living faith. Bring your faith to life by putting it into action!

If these spark other ideas that work for you and your church, let us know and we'll pass them on to encourage others. May you feel God's blessings as you strive to live God's love in your family and community.