

✘ Caring Neighborhood ✘

YOUNG PERSON EXPERIENCES CARING NEIGHBORS.

By Marcia Evenson

Edited by Lyle Griner and Marie Sundet © 2006 The Youth & Family Institute, Bloomington, MN

Marcia Evenson, a country girl from a dairy farm in Wisconsin, is studying Youth Ministry at Augsburg college. She is the middle child and only girl in her family. She is known for her random "late night deep thoughts" and talking during movies. She loves mint chocolate ice cream and starry nights. Her life goals include travel, skydiving, and marrying a Canadian hockey player who also plays the didgeridoo.

Matthew 22:39-40 And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.




- *What is love?*
- *How do we show love?*
- *What would a conscious effort to show your neighbor love look like?*
- *Why are loving neighbors so important to God?*
- *How would it effect your life if this commandment was not followed?*
- *What makes it hard to love your neighbors?*
- *What if your neighbor doesn't show you love in return?*
- *How do you love yourself? Do others know that you do?*
- *What is an example of a caring neighbor?*
- *How does caring and love in the community affect you personally?*
- *How can we continue to love those who do not love us?*

So What?



Now that you've pondered how to be a good neighbor, make a realistic plan of action. Make a group list of specific things to do this week to be a good neighbor. Choose a partner to check in with later holding you accountable for at least one thing from the list.

Candle Time



Lay out a pile of dominos. Ask each of participant to take one. Begin the prayer by praying for God's guidance, and for commitment to follow through plans to be a good neighbor by..." Participants name their own specific plan as they set their domino on end forming a line. End together by saying, "Amen," knocking down the line of dominos. The challenges that may keep us from our plan are knocked down with

EXPLORE



Romans 13:10	Love does no wrong to a neighbor...
Leviticus 19:15	...with justice you shall judge...
I John 4:19	We love because he first loved us.
Exodus 12:4	...shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one...
Matthew 5: 43	You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy...
Zechariah 8:16-17	Do not devise evil in your hearts against one neighbor



▣ *Leader Page* ▣

Discussion Goal

We love because God loves us.

Background

Caring Neighbors makes me think of *Wilson* from Home Improvement. He cares about his neighbors and is always trying to help the family next door to work out their problems. He never noses around where he doesn't belong or tries to make decisions for those who seek his advice. Wilson rather gives them guidance and support to encourage them to find their own answers. When I think about this Wilson is a lot like God. But then I snap back to reality and realize that we are talking about **real life**, not some Hollywood program where everything gets neatly wrapped by the end of the show. Life isn't perfect and our neighborhoods aren't perfect. So when God says "*Love one another*" how are we to know the right way to do that? What is the right way to show love?

We wish that all neighbors were Wilson and that all neighborhoods were made up of families like the Taylors. It would be nice if we knew how to help each other in the right way all the time. Life would be much different if we supported our neighbors and were like Christ to one another always. The hard and simple truth of it is that we're not. There are so many slogans and organizations that will define a "good neighbor" for us. No one defines it better than God does in the Bible. He says Love your neighbor like you love yourself. By definition then, your neighbors are the people you love. God commands us to love and even emphasizes that all other laws are built on this. That's why we need to follow Him and love our neighbors.

Motivate

Have everyone stand up and get in a circle. Then have everyone turn their entire bodies to face left. Encourage them to get as close as possible. Then on the count of three they will sit on the person's lap behind them. While doing this activity, vary the rate at which you countdown. Occasionally, add or skip numbers to throw off the balance of the group. When they begin to understand how to sit without anyone falling, then ask them to walk while in this sitting circle position.

After they complete this activity, explain to the group that the people around them are considered their "neighbors." How do you think this activity relates to the scripture verses? Why does it matter how you interact with your neighbors?

Options

Theme song from Mr. Rogers Neighborhood - or have everyone name their favorite characters from the show.



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