

What kind of neighbor are you?

Mark your answer to each question.

| | YES | SOMEWHAT | NO |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. I like my neighbors. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. My neighbors like me. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. I talk to my neighbors. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. I do nice things for my neighbors. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. I genuinely care about my neighbors. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. My neighbors invite me to their parties. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. I actually like going to my neighbors' parties. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. I know what's happening in my neighborhood. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. I watch out for my neighborhood. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. When people need help in my neighborhood, they come to me. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Now tally your score: 2 points for every YES, 1 point for every SOMEWHAT, and 0 points for every NO. SCORE: _____

17-20 POINTS: You're Mr. Rogers.

You are the best neighbor ever. You know your neighbors and you're engaged in your neighborhood.

13-16 POINTS: You're Steve Urkel.

You are a little quirky and sometimes annoying, but deep down you are good-hearted and always do the right thing.

9-12 POINTS: You're Wilson.

You are always there and are always willing to share friendly advice, but you like to stay on your side of the fence.

5-8 POINTS: You're Ned Flanders.

You're trying hard, but people are just not getting you.

0-4 POINTS: You're Newman.

Not sure who would like living next to you. You are in desperate need of some neighboring help.

Who is my neighbor?

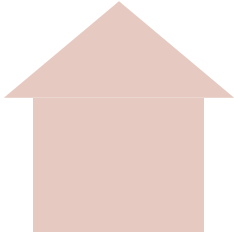
Fill in as much information as you can on the chart below by using these instructions.

In the middle of the chart, simply write your name. In the other boxes, fill in the three subpoints within each box - a, b and c - as follows:

(a) Write the names of the people who live in the house represented by the box.

(b) Write down some basic information - data or facts - about them that you couldn't see just by standing in your driveway (like what kind of car they drive). These are things you might know if you've spoken to the person once or twice (for example, grew up in Idaho, is a lawyer, plays golf, etc.).

(c) Write down some in-depth information you would know after connecting with people on a deeper level. This might include career plans or dreams of starting a family or anything to do with the purpose of their lives.

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| a. b. c. | a. b. c. | a. b. c. |
| a. b. c. |  | a. b. c. |
| a. b. c. | a. b. c. | a. b. c. |

7 Big neighboring principles

1. Investing ourselves in developing friendships with unbelievers is one of the most important activities we can do.
2. Prayer is the fuel of personal ministry. Before we talk to people about God, we need to talk to God about people.
3. Three of the best ways to make a difference in your neighborhood are hospitality, serving, and peace-making.
4. Remember, people will best understand God's love for them to the degree that they experience that love from you. Love opens the door. Truth sets them free.
5. We've got to be willing to not let ourselves be offended by or judgmental towards the language, actions and/or addictions of our neighbors. The underlying question that every unbeliever asks is, "Am I valuable and worth loving?" If we can show them that they are, then we've got a great chance of being able to tell them why.
6. We've got to make tough decisions about with whom we spend our time. It may be that we need to tell some of our Christian friends that we won't be able to see them as much because we want to spend more time reaching out to our unbelieving neighbors.
7. Think of "evangelism" as trying to move people closer to God instead of trying to get every person you talk with to commit their life to Christ in that one conversation. Remember, God uses some to sow the seed, some to water and some to harvest.

Think about it

Pick one question per week and write down an action step you will take.

- How can I live out the gospel through serving, hospitality and love with no strings attached?
- How can I value and build community, right where I live?
- How can I be nice to people and start good conversations?
- How can I meet neighbors, get to know them and even introduce them to each other?
- How can I take time to chat while I'm getting the mail or pulling in the trash can?
- How can I offer my help or ask for their help?

Learn to see the things you enjoy most as your best opportunities for ministry by inviting your neighbors to join you as you engage in your favorite hobbies and interests.

Volunteer at a local school or some other organization that gives back to the community. Great way to stay in touch with what is going on and be a blessing at the same time!

Throw a party, coordinate a neighborhood food drive, take a meal to a new mom, welcome new neighbors and much more. Use your imagination. The possibilities are endless!

Keep in mind that people aren't looking for a friendly church as much as they are looking for friends. Be that friend!

Getting Started

INSIDE MY OWN HEART

Be a person who has God's heart toward your neighbors and talks to God for the good of your neighbors.

- Pray for yourself today. Ask God to give you his heart for your neighbors.
- Deepen your own personal love for God and your relationship with him to help deepen your love for your neighbors.
- Look at your neighbors with a positive spirit and make a list of their most positive attributes.
- Pray a quick silent prayer for your neighbors whenever you see them.
- Ask God's blessing on your neighbor's relationships, work, health and spiritual well-being.
- If your neighbor makes you mad, pray for them. It's hard to stay angry with people when you are sincerely praying for them.
- Listen for God's heart toward your neighbors as you pray.
- Be aware of the nudges of God. When he nudges, listen. When you hear him, obey. Remember, God is the best neighbor of all!

OUT ON MY STREET

Be a person who loves their neighbors by getting to know them and by opening your heart and home to them.

- Learn your neighbors' names and write them down on your chart.
- Learn your neighbors' history, hobbies, hopes and hurts (not necessarily in the same conversation). Add this information to your chart as you discover it. Share your own history, hobbies, hopes and hurts with your neighbors when appropriate.
- Create space in your life and budget for neighbor-ing.
- Make it a habit to connect with your neighbors in some way at least every couple of weeks.
- Occasionally remind your neighbors with, "If you ever need anything, we're here for you!"
- Make yourself present in your neighborhood. Make yourself an easy person to bump into.
- Consider bringing your backyard activities into the front yard to be more available.
- Take a regular neighborhood walk with your family, praying silently for each house you pass. Walk slowly and take time to meet and talk to neighbors you see.
- Walk your dog with neighbor-ing intentions. Walk a little slower and stop to visit with neighbors as you pass.
- If your neighbor is outside, go out and join them. "How are you doing?" or "What are you up to?" will get the ball rolling.
- Discover any needs your neighbors have and see if you can help. When appropriate, ask your neighbors for specific prayer needs.
- Keep up with your neighbors' social media posts for ideas on how to pray for them.
- Put a list of your neighbors' names and prayer needs in your Bible so you can pray for them every time you open it.
- What do you love to do? Invite a neighbor or two to join you next time.
- The average person eats 90 meals a month. Set aside a couple of those to share with your neighbors. Plan it. Schedule it. Be intentional.
- Invite a neighbor to coffee.

Getting Started

- Invite a neighbor to a sporting event or outdoor activity.
- Take your neighbors out to dinner.
- Invite your neighbor over for ice cream.
- Throw a party or have a BBQ.
- Play card or board games together.
- Start a book club.
- Have a movie night.
- Go to your neighbors' kids' games.
- Celebrate your neighbors' special dates (birthdays, anniversaries, etc.).
- Say "yes" when people invite you over. They invited you because they like you! Go and look for ways to connect with them.
- Everyone loves receiving gifts. Find a way to bless a neighbor by giving them a gift. Doesn't have to be fancy. Just something to let them know you were thinking about them.
- Love your neighbors in ways they won't ever see. Find ways to bless them in secret sometimes.
- Neighboring is also about receiving. (No one wants to feel indebted to others all the time.) If you have a need, ask a neighbor for help. Great way to connect!
- Encourage your neighbors by pointing out their God-given strengths.
- Write notes and cards for special occasions, to thank them for something or just to encourage them (include appropriate Scriptures when applicable).
- In tough or tender times, gently share God's heart for them when appropriate.
- Invite your neighbors to special fellowship events at church.
- As opportunities arise in your conversations, talk about the difference God has made in your life and share the good news about Jesus.

IN MY LARGER NEIGHBORHOOD

Be a person who makes neighboring a way of life, no matter where you are.

- Neighbor in your other circles of influence (work, school, teams, clubs, online groups, etc.).
- Speak and live graciously everywhere you go.
- Keep a posture of love, even if neighbors are difficult.
- Seek to understand where your neighbor is coming from spiritually.
- Use social media to connect with your neighbors when appropriate, but don't let this become an excuse to avoid face-to-face encounters.

Keep the following in mind

- Remember, it's not all up to you. Just be faithful to love your neighbors. God will take care of the results. Trust him.
- Think about how you have been loved by others. Find a way to do that for your neighbors.
- Think about how God has loved you. How can you love your neighbor like that?
- God put you where you live for a reason. Your unique qualities are needed in your neighborhood. Go love!
- Stay alert to what is going on in your neighborhood. The more you know, the more you can step into the lives of others with love.
- See a need. Meet a need. Repeat.
- Maybe you are the answer to the prayer you are praying for your neighbor. Love is an action.
- Be yourself in front of your neighbors—no need to put on any kind of mask. Authenticity is the key.
- Let God's Spirit nudge you in your neighboring.
- Tell your story when appropriate, and don't leave the faith parts out. It's part of who you are. Share confidently and with humility.
- Don't give up on loving people. Sometimes love takes a long time to sink in.
- Most importantly, remember that neighboring isn't a strategy or gimmick to get people to become Christians. We don't love our neighbors to try to make them Christians. We genuinely love our neighbors because we are Christians and we're simply acting like Jesus would towards them.

A few conversation starters

“Hi, I’m _____. What’s your name?” and “Where do you work?” are good starting places, but how do you keep the conversation going from there?

Here are a few ideas:

- How did you end up in _____ (your city or state)?
- What do you like best about your job? What’s the least favorite part of your job?
- Where did you grow up?
- What were some of your favorite things to do as a kid?
- What do you like to do for fun now?
- What’s your favorite food? Favorite beverage?
- How did you meet your husband/wife?
- Do you have any kids? Tell me a little bit about them.
- What was one of your favorite vacations?
- What was your best day ever?
- What’s one of the best gifts you’ve ever received?

IMPORTANT: Resist the temptation to take over the conversation. Most people enjoy talking about themselves once you get them started. Listen more and talk less to learn more about other people.

Transitional questions/statements

Taking a conversation in a spiritual direction can be a bit awkward at times. Here are a few suggestions for how to do that in a more natural way:

- What did you do this weekend?
- That sounds so challenging. Did your faith in God play a role in how you handled that?
- Where do you go to find a place of rest and peace?
- How do you handle difficult situations like that?
- My faith in God has been helpful to me during times like that.
- I’ve found a lot of joy in gathering with other people who share my same struggle.

IMPORTANT: Love and authenticity are crucial here. Nobody wants to feel like somebody’s evangelistic project. These should be heart-to-heart moments that make it clear that you genuinely care about them.

Sharing the gospel

**There are many good ways to explain the gospel to others.
All methods, however, should at some point include the following basic elements:**

The ABC's of the Gospel

Admit that you have sinned and then turn away from your sin to God.

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." - Romans 3:23

Believe that Jesus died for your sin and was raised from the dead for your forgiveness.

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." - Romans 10:13

Confess Jesus Christ as your Lord.

"If you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." - Romans 10:9

Tools for Sharing the Gospel

Tracts and Booklets

One of the easiest ways to share the gospel is to use a tract or booklet. As you review it with someone, it helps to keep your conversation focused on the key points of the gospel message. You can then leave the material with the person to read more carefully after you are gone. We carry a few tracts and booklets in our Bookstore (see examples on the next page), but you can find a wide variety of these at www.ATStracts.org.

Online Resources

Digital versions of the gospel story are becoming increasingly popular and are making it easier to share the gospel with people in fresh new ways. You can even download apps on your phone.

Adult Version – TheStoryFilm.com

Children's Version – TheStoryMaker.com

Additional resources available in our bookstore

The Art of Neighboring: Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Door by Jay Pathak & Dave Runyon

The Neighboring Church: Getting Better At What Jesus Said Matters Most by Rick Rusaw & Brian Mavis

Next Door As It Is In Heaven: Living Out God's Kingdom In Your Neighborhood by Lance Ford & Brad Brisco

Eats With Sinners: Loving Like Jesus by Arron Chambers

Staying Is The New Going: Choosing To Love Where God Places You by Alan Briggs

Neighboring in a nutshell

Live in 3D

Develop Friendships . . . by engaging in the lives of people around you.

Discover Stories . . . of people before sharing your own story and God's redemptive story.

Discern Next Steps . . . by following the Holy Spirit's direction.

"Witnessing is less about something that I do and more about who I am. Witnessing is really nothing more than befriending people and telling your story at the right time (usually when they ask you)." John Fischer

Notes & Ideas



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