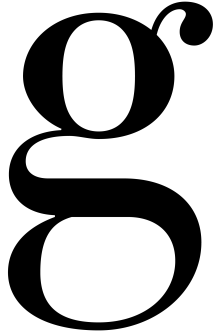


groups



Groups Without Walls

Here are some suggestions for opportunities to serve together as a small *group without walls*. But before you scroll down through the following information, please take a moment to read and reflect on the following suggested directions:

In thinking about our church's purpose, Transformed People, Transforming Our World, we have to ask ourselves, "How do we really put it into practice so that it becomes who we are, not just another thing we do in our small groups.?"

One way of integration is to put preparation and follow-up into regular practice. Let me give you an example: A church event is coming up on the calendar and your group is planning on attending. Rather than just attending, implement the following exercises:

- a. Have your group a few weeks ahead, begin praying for the event, their own opportunities to be a witness and to share the love of Jesus, and who is on their list to invite.
- b. Go to the event, hopefully bringing someone, with great anticipation of what the Lord may do in and through your group members.
- c. Follow-up on those whom you invited, drawing them in the church and even your group.
- d. Repeat this process for any all events, service projects, etc. that your group is involved in individually and collectively.

You might want to pray about how you can be an open group on a more consistent basis...just something to consider. In the meantime, the following are some church without walls opportunities, and please contact Jim Doyle at jim@northcoastcalvary.org with any questions or need for clarification.

Here is a quick snapshot of opportunities to serve:

- Contact your local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) chapter to ask how you can serve veterans in your community.
- Make cards for seniors in a nursing home or convalescent facility.
- Volunteer to spend time with children at a local YMCA or Boys & Girls Club.
- Mow the grass or clean up the yard(s) of your neighbors or neighborhood.
- Offer babysitting/childcare for your neighbors so they can have a date or run errands.
- Teach classes or tutor those who are learning English as a second language.
- Work with local officials to paint over graffiti in your city.
- Contact the local fire or police department to find out how you can bless these servicemen and women in your community.
- Write letters or create care packages for soldiers who are serving overseas.
- Collect backpacks and school supplies to give to children of families who cannot afford them.
- Get in touch with your local Habitat for Humanity chapter about helping them build houses for those in need.
- Get involved through our church's Operation Christmas Child Ministry, by contacting Diana Fox at iamdfox@hotmail.com.
- Brother Beno's Center (Oceanside): A service to the homeless.
- North County Food Bank or donatedontdump.net.
- NCCC's or Salvation Army's Thanksgiving and Christmas Dinner.
- Salvation Army's Door of Hope Complex.
- San Diego Sea to Sea Trail Foundation (Email: kgreenaway@seatosetrail.org)
- standupforkids.org (Oceanside).
- alphaproject.org (Casa Raphael - Vista).
- Walk for Life (Pregnancy Resource Center - Vista).
- Websites: volunteersandiego.org and volunteermatch.org.
- arocha.us {uh Raw sha} (Christian Ministry work to care for God's creation).
- Beach Clean-Ups.
- Single Moms Outreach.
- Collect Blankets for the homeless.
- Gift wrapping in the malls at Christmas.
- Pay for washing and drying at a laundromat.
- New Haven Home for Boys (not living with parents) - 760-630-4035.
- Restroom cleaning at a fast food chain or gas station.
- Car drying at self-service car washes.
- Coffee, cold water or soda giveaways at store exits or sporting events.
- Meals for community service workers (police, firemen, etc.)
- Doing chores at Women's shelters
- Dorm cleaning at the end of a college/university school year.
- Help someone move.
- Paint house numbers on curbs for free.
- carlsbadcommunitygardens.org

The following opportunities are broken down into categories including some detail information:

Friendship Evangelism

Seek by Serving (By Michael C. Mack, Sue Kite)

- **Model concern for the unsaved.** Make friendship evangelism a personal priority. Eat lunch with unbelieving co-workers. Take on a hobby that puts you in contact with non-Christians. Throw a block party for your neighbors. It's about building relationships, meeting needs and sharing your experience with Christ personally when the opportunities arise.
- **Pray for the lost.** In your small group gatherings, make it a priority to pray for unsaved friends and neighbors. Ask each person to write the names of unsaved friends on index cards, and pray as a group for the those people and how you can be a blessing to them. Encourage members to take cards home and pray for people on other group members' cards. ("So, who's on your list?")
- **Serve together.** Express God's love to people in your community by serving them as a group, (i.e. – house or yard work, grocery shopping, etc.).
- **Welcome others.** Look for ways to invite unsaved friends to your small group activities, (i.e. BBQ, beach parties, ball games, etc.) Be sure you hold events that people feel comfortable attending.
- **Neighborhood watch or child care program.** Organize one or both of these. They are both great discussion starters as well.
- **Garage sale.** So no one feels pressured, leave flyers on the doorsteps, inviting people to call you if they are interested. Plan a potluck after the sale.

Open Home, Open Hearts (By Keith D. Wright)

- **Fondue Party.** Who can resist chocolate? Enjoy socializing and dessert.

Totally Free Carwash (By Steve Sjogren)

Car washes do not cost too much to pull off, and there's something for all ages to do. Get plenty of signs, find a good location with a lot of cars driving past. Put some enthusiastic group members out on the street with the signs and go for it. This gives lots of opportunity to share why you're doing it for free. So have group members ready to articulate your purpose and the love of Jesus in a short amount of time. You can also be prepared to vacuum the carpets and clean the windows.

Soft Drink or Water Bottle Giveaway (By Steve Sjogren)

If you want to do a little more investing in product and to touch a larger group, this is probably the way to go. Set up at a stop light. The police won't mind your outreach as long as you are mindful of the flow of traffic when the light changes. Try to give away at least 200 drinks on your first outing, even if you are a small group. Get cards printed with the Gospel so you can hand them out with the cans or bottles.

Leaf raking (By Steve Sjogren)

As the saying goes, there's safety in numbers. When it comes to serving, this is a slam dunk. Find yards or parks in your area that have a lot of leaves, and go for it. Just make sure you have enough rakers on your team so no one gets worn out.

Work Party (By Steve Gladen & Lance Witt)

Find a family in the community who needs work done inside or outside of their home. Gather for a Saturday work party and help with yard work, housecleaning, painting and/or car washing. Have someone from the group bring lunch over for you and the host(s). You might even get some neighbors inquiring, which will give you more people to share the love of Jesus with. You do not need to preach at the host(s). Just let them know the project is an act of love from your small group.

Building for Jesus (By Steve Gladen & Lance Witt)

Volunteer to build homes in Mexico, Habitat for Humanity (habitat.org), etc. Do this on Saturdays or coordinate with one another for a weekend build.

Feast of Care (By Jim Doyle)

Prepare a Thanksgiving or Christmas meal and invite a needy or military family over to dine with you or take a meal to a homeless shelter (Bread of Life). You can actually do this any time of the year.

Planet Care (By Steve Gladen & Lance Witt)

Spend some time talking about creation care and then go out and pick up litter along a highway, park or beach; plant a garden and share in the work as well as the produce; recycle newspapers, paper, plastic, and/or aluminum and use the cash for a mission project.

Cans of Compassion (By Steve Gladen & Lance Witt)

Do a small group food drive for the hungry. Have everyone bring canned goods that could be donated to a shelter.

Serving

Community Service (By Jim Doyle)

Select a local organization, such as a fire or police station, city offices, etc. and bring a plate of cookies or wash their cars while they are at work, etc. Be sure to leave a note of appreciation.

Single-Parent Support (By Steve Gladen & Lance Witt)

Support a single parent(s) in our church or your neighborhood by offering childcare, taking kids to McDonald's, doing grocery chopping, changing the oil and washing the car, sprucing up the yard, delivering a meal, etc. And, of course, pray for the family.

Laundromat Service. (By Jim Doyle)

Collect lots of quarters and find a community laundromat and hang out for an evening offering to pay for people's use of the washers and dryers. Then while they are waiting you'll have a great opportunity to strike up any conversation, hopefully leading to one about the love of Jesus.

Operation Christmas Child (By Jim Doyle)

This is no brainer. Your group can get involved in this one together, even shop and boxes together, praying over them before you bring them to church or a designated drop off location.

Serving (con't)

Love By The Month (By Julie Marie Carobine)

January: Look for a family, in your neighborhood, in need because of job loss, medical crisis, or other circumstances. Bring them dinner and encouragement one night.

February: Bake or buy valentine cookies (with or without sugar), and take them to a convalescent home. Call ahead for an appointment, and make sure to set aside plenty of time to visit.

March: Throw a baby shower for the Pregnancy Resource Center.

April: Give the gift of spring cleaning and/or house repairs to an elderly neighbor.

May: Plant a vegetable garden, and make a list of local nonprofit food organizations that will receive your bounty at harvest time. Schedule delivery with these groups for sometime in the summer.

June: Volunteer to handle one area --- such as snacks, games, first aid, etc. for Kids Games.

July: Hold a backyard barbecue and invite neighbors. Groups that meet at church can throw a barbecue for the neighbors near the church.

August: Adopt a missionary. Pray at each meeting this month for a missionary (and family, if applicable). Find out some needs they have and mail them a care package, letting them know your group is praying for them.

September: Drop off a huge box of doughnuts to the teachers lounge at a local school. Leave a note telling faculty members you are praying they have a fantastic year.

October: Serve together at the Harvest Party.

November: Volunteer to serve dinner at a local rescue mission or shelter the weekend after Thanksgiving, once all the holiday helpers have gone home.

December: Don Santa hats, and deliver to needy families boxes of nonperishable food and gifts you've collected.

Now, remember these are ideas. You can tweak or change any of them to fit your group or meet the needs that are announced from the pulpit throughout the year.

Serving (con't)

Help for the Homeless (By Leadership Magazine)

Here's a suggested list for a monthly schedule of what could be donated to a homeless shelter or ministry:

| | |
|-----------|-----------------------------|
| January | Toothpaste/toothbrush |
| February | Cold & flu remedies |
| March | Laundry soap and bleach |
| April | Baby items |
| May | T-shirts |
| June | Personal Hygiene items |
| July | Sheets & towels |
| August | Backpacks & school supplies |
| September | Socks |
| October | Mittens & gloves |
| November | Coats & sweaters |
| December | Hot-drink mixes & juices |

Four Ways to Serve Your Community (By Keith D. Wright)

Project warmth: Collect blankets, coats, and other warm clothing for the homeless.

Graffiti be gone: Gather buckets, scrub brushes, sand paper, hoses, paint, etc. and throw a graffiti clean up party.

Urban garden: Help urban dwellers turn an abandoned city lot into a garden by providing seeds, tools, and muscles. Begin by checking with the City Hall in case special permits are required. Then set a time to plant the garden, alongside the neighborhood residents.

Prettify a park: Is there a neglected neighborhood park near you? Get permission from the appropriate local agency, then roll up your sleeves. You'll need trash bags, work gloves, brooms, and gardening tools. Bring large pieces of screen to sift through et sand box for broken glass, gum and dangerous objects. You may also need tools for repairing fences.

8 Ways to Serve Your Local School (By Worldwide Challenge Magazine & Jim Doyle)

Pray for administrators, teachers, students, and parents by name

Volunteer in the school setting: Tutor, decorate classrooms at the start of the semesters, coach, help in the office or library, chaperone field trips, be a room parent.

Write letters to the administration: Praise them for things they are doing well or for their strong moral values (if applicable). Also write to express concerns and observations.

Invest your prayers and/or finances: in someone with a ministry to students or faculty, like FCA, etc. Ask them if there are practical ways you can serve them and their ministry.

Bring coffee & donuts to the teachers' lounge: Along with a thank-you note to encourage the educators.

Help your children reach out to classmates: Teach them how to communicate their faith in Christ without alienating their peers. Help them incorporate what they believe into their school projects and speeches.

Open your home to gatherings: For students, teachers, or administrators. Youth workers often need a place to hold meetings and would be encouraged to have your support.

Donate books to the school library

Help your children's teacher in her room: *With clean-up, set-up, painting, decorating, etc. If the opportunity arises, be ready to help out the rest of the school when the word spreads that you help certain teachers. (Italics, Jim Doyle)*

Mission & Global-Minded

Stimulating interest in other cultures (By Paul Borthwick)

Identify and pray for friends, neighbors and co-workers who adhere to other world religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.

Get and up-to-date map, choose a country per gathering and pray for Christians living in those countries you choose or the ones our current missions partners reside.

Take your group on a field trip to a local mosque, Hindu temple or synagogue and try to interview the religious leader(s). Don't make this an evangelistic effort, but simply to learn about the beliefs of others.

Go to an ethnic restaurant and seek out the owners or hosts with the goal of interviewing them about their culture, religious beliefs, and, if they are immigrants, their experiences in our country/community.

Assign group members specific countries or nationalities to research on the internet, asking the members to bring a one-page summary to the rest of the group.

Stimulating Interest in Other Cultures

Go to a Christian worship service that is different than yours either culturally or ethnically. Use this opportunity to remind yourselves that God's people constitute a broad range of races and ethnicities. Reflect on Rev. 7:9 as you worship, and remind yourselves that you are part of God's global village.

Encourage Our Youth In Mission (By Karen H. Whiting)

Find out all the young people who are going on summer missions through our church. Pray over the whole list and identify one or two your group would like to "adopt." Then provide regular notes of encouragement, maybe even financial support. Keep in touch, if possible, through emails, etc., while the young person is away. Host a homecoming with your group for that person or people to come share with your group of how God worked in and through your young friend's life.

Adopt a Missionary

This is the same as the adoption of a young adult missionary.

A Care Package They'll Crave (By Sue Kline)

Less fragile items...

Sermon and/or music CD (Especially if the missionary does not have good internet access)

Holiday decorations

Packaged food (seasonings, Jello, instant soups, muffin mixes, chewing gum, tea bags, etc.)

Reminders of home (souvenir t-shirt, scenic calendar, a home-team baseball cap, etc.)

Comic strips/editorial cartoons from the local newspaper

Collection of greeting cards

Simple toys (balsa-wood airplanes, paper dolls, stickers, puzzles, etc.)

Photos

Recipes

Cosmetics

Magazines

Adult and children's books

Hobby supplies

Plastic containers and "zippered" plastic bags

Travel-sized toiletries

Mission & Global-Minded, (Con't)

An Evening in Mingouwee (By Sharon Fleming)

To heighten missions awareness and interest, plan a small-group or family event in which you “visit” another country, while at home. Select a country where one of your church-supported missionaries serves, ideally a missionary you already know personally or who will be visiting your area on furlough.

You will need:

From the Missionary

- A recipe for a typical meal from the chosen country
- An explanation of any mealtime customs that differ from those in your own community/country
- The words and pronunciation for “help yourself,” “please,” “thank you,” and “that was very good”
- prayer requests for the missionary’s family and ministry
- A family photo and snapshot or postcards of the missionary’s country, ministry, and daily life

For the Evening

- Decorations such as a country flag, streamers in the colors of the flag, curios, a map, or travel posters
- A meal prepared and served according to the culture
- Information obtain about the country via internet, travel books, and Operation World copied onto place cards or made into a quiz
- Index cards on which foreign phrases are written out for people to practice during the meal
- copies of prayer requests for your “adopted” missionary and country, which you pray over as a group at the evening’s end
- Video camera to record the event
- Stationary

Send the Missionary

- A copy of the video you took along with a personal greeting from your group/family
- Write letters or send a card along with the video

Resources

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