

Session: Neighborhood Scavenger Hunt

Description

Sometimes, in order to get unstuck from sadness or self-pity, it can be helpful to take the focus off our own personal struggles for a time and direct that God-driven energy toward another human soul. It's like "the breath of God moving around in the world. It fuels that which connects us one to another".ⁱ Eugene Peterson talks about "Wind, Breath and Spirit" all being the same Aramaic word that Jesus used. This made me think about the Holy Spirit in me as I move about in my community, my church, my family and as I travel to the fringes for my work with World Vision. What would it look like if that same God-breathed powerful wind that in creation filled the lungs of Adam moves through me as I love and serve?

Part of community-building is an openness to our oneness globally and our shared human history which includes the idea of justice. We often think of justice in our own lives but in order to experience true community we need to think about what justice looks like for others, even those we might feel angry with or even hatred toward. I wrestle with this.

Once, I had a conversation with my friend Ken who shared a story with me. He told me that he wrestles with justice as well, and shared that he believes it comes down to what is motivating the action. He told me that he was at an International Justice Missionⁱⁱ event with his daughter and there was a powerful story (a video) of how they broke up a sex trafficking ring. When the MC came to the microphone to wrap up the video, she said something to the effect that the perpetrators were caught and would "never see the light of day". Obviously, the crowd applauded. But, in the midst of the applause, his daughter leaned over and asked, "But Dad, **is** that justice for the offender? Don't they also carry the image of God? Why are we against them and not just against what they do?" Wow. As a parent kids can sure ask tough questions!

God does not call us to be passive, or as Jesus would say "lukewarm". Real love stops human trafficking. We should remember though, that we can "bring justice" in an unloving way, but we cannot love and NOT bring justice....a subtle, but Kingdom-impacting difference.

Canadian Jesuit Lawrence Braceland said, "So love between us increased, affection caught fire, and charity grew strong, until we came to the point where we had one heart and one soul, wishing and not wishing the same things, and this love was void of fear, unaware of insult, free of suspicion, and aghast at flattery".ⁱⁱⁱ

Healthy communities focus on empathy. They are diverse places where people don't necessarily look or feel the same and they may have different beliefs. In a healthy community people listen to each other and work through their differences. This is the beginning of Justice.

In this session in the spirit of building community, you will create a neighborhood scavenger hunt. This is an opportunity to get to know your neighbors and have some fun together.

Who knows, in the process of getting to know them you might discover a need which would open a door for your family to practice the justice of love and meet that need.

Materials Needed

Paper, pens and your imagination.

Handouts

Scavenger Hunt Handout

Neighborhood Scavenger Hunt

Read aloud the quote or scripture

“Flatter me, and I may not believe you. Criticize me, and I may not like you. Ignore me, and I may not forgive you. Encourage me, and I will not forget you. Love me and I may be forced to love you.”

– William Arthur Ward

Questions for discussion (10 minutes)

1. Do you think that we can bring justice in an unloving way? Explain. Is that good or bad? Explain.
 2. Do you think that the perpetrators of horrible crimes deserve “loving justice” as well as punishment? Explain.
 3. How do you think God would define justice? Explain.
 4. What do you think God’s (loving) justice look like for someone living in a third-world country? Do you have a role in that? Explain.
 5. What role do you think empathy plays in a healthy community? Explain.
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Rule of life activity

Neighborhood Scavenger Hunt

1. Get a cell phone (to take photos), paper, pen and Scavenger Hunt Handout for ideas.
 2. As a family, go walk around the neighborhood and find obscure (but not hidden) things that people will need to find on your scavenger hunt.
 3. Each time you find something that the neighbors will need to find, take a photo of that item and write it down on a piece of paper.
 4. Try to find things throughout the neighborhood. I recommend having at least 10 – 15 things that neighbors must find.
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5. Go back to your house and create your scavenger hunt. (See handout.)
6. Write riddles or hints (numbered - in order) for each item and decorate the scavenger hunt handout to make it colorful.
7. Decide what the prize will be for families that find every item. For example you might have everyone over for ice cream after and families who find every item get an extra scoop.
8. Now create an invitation with the date / time and description including gathering afterward.
9. Lastly, walk around the neighborhood and put the invites in mailboxes or on front porches.

Examen

How did it go? Debrief highs and lows

1. Each person shares their favorite part of the conversation / activity and why.
 2. Each person shares their least favorite part and why.
 3. Did you do a Serving/Giving activity last week? How did it go?
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Serving /giving ideas for any time this week: Choose one or create your own. These can be done individually or as a group. You will be sharing your serving experience in the next session.

- Offer to take the trash out to the roadside each week for an elderly or disabled person.
- Offer to dog sit or dog walk for a neighbor for free.
- Organize a community BBQ.
- Collect winter coats and donate to foster care.
- Offer to drive an elderly or disabled neighbor to their doctor appointment.

ⁱ Kathryn Saunders, *Leaving the Land of Me; The Little Things Do Matter* (N.p.: Createspace, 2010).

ⁱⁱ <https://www.ijm.org/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Bracelend et al., *Spiritual Friendship*, (2043 kindle).