

## A Night to Remember – Love Your Neighbor – by Marcy Lytle

We talk about teaching our kids to love God a lot, which is the first commandment, isn't it? But that second one is also about love. It says to love our neighbors as ourselves. And February is the month to show love, so why not to a neighbor. But why, and how, and who? Well...hopefully we can answer those questions with the kiddos...

Preparation: You'll need a big white board or large sheet of paper with three columns. Title them: Who, Why, How. Then fill in as you talk. Always provide a fun snack – maybe conversation hearts for fun!

### *Who is our neighbor?*

Do the kids know the story of the Good Samaritan? (Luke 10:25-37). The man in that story stopped to help a fellow traveler, because he was in need, and because it was the right thing to do. A neighbor can be anyone we pass by as we go to school, church, to the store, or in our neighborhood.

Who are some of the neighbors in our life that we know? Let's make a list. (Use the big pad to write their names...try to list at least 7)

### *Why are we told to love our neighbor?*

What if we don't know them or they're not nice?

The bible doesn't say love your neighbor if they're nice. God made humans in his image; therefore, they are all lovable. What happens when we're not nice? God loves us and forgives us. And loving others does something good in our own hearts. In kindness and cooperation, we thrive!

Do we know anyone on our neighbor list in need? Or someone that might need a kind word? (Write down the needs you might know of the list you just made.)

### *How do we love our neighbors?*

The Good Samaritan took care of the person's needs. But there are so many ways to love neighbors!

First, know their name. Do you know your neighbors' names that live next to you? Meet them!

Listening is neighborly. If a friend or a person we meet tells us a story, we can tune in and listen, with no distractions.

Offer help. If we see a neighbor with a bag of groceries, we can offer to help. We can bring up a trash can. We can bake cookies for friends and neighbors. We can offer a kind word or smile, or a wave. These are little things that are easy to do! (Fill in the third column with ideas, using the suggestions below, etc.)

Sharing is loving a neighbor. Sharing our things, our time, and our prayers with those nearby can bring them hope and joy and life.

We can keep things tidy. If our yard is a mess, that's not being a good neighbor.

We can share our own stories. We can tell how God is with us, for us, and hears our prayers. We can make cards, draw pictures, or share space with others.

Let's look at our list and hang it up to remind us this February to focus on loving our neighbor. After all, God first loved us. Therefore, we can freely love others.

Love your neighbor. It's not hard. And it's oh, so nice. After all, want to be loved, too. God so loved the world...and that includes us, our family, our neighbors and those we haven't yet met!