

WEEK 2: LOVE YOUR NEIGHBORS

ABOUT THIS SERIES

Our theme for this year's *Prosper the City* campaign is "Love Your Neighborhood". Your group will take three weeks to plan a service project on the fourth week so someone who lives in your neighborhood can experience Jesus.

ITEMS NEEDED

- Bibles
- Printed Discussion Guides
- Pens
- Sticker dots
- Adhesive Easel Pad
- Markers
- Sticky Notes

CHECKLIST BEFORE YOUR GROUP ARRIVES

- Pray for your group
- Read through the Discussion Guide
- Refreshments (optional)
- Clean meeting area
- Clean bathroom
- Crack front door

OPENING (1 MIN)

After a general welcome, say: Okay, friends, last week we talked about the people in our literal neighborhoods and talked about what they need. This week we're going to choose a person to serve for our 2025 Prosper the City project.

But before we get into a conversation about all of that, let's pray.

OPENING PRAYER (1 MIN)

Host, lead the group in prayer.

JESUS, UNINVITED (10-15 MIN)

After a prayer, say: Before we get into today's discussion, let's give Jesus an opportunity to speak on the matter.

CAN SOMEONE READ JOHN 9:1-12 ALOUD FOR US?

After the reading, say: This is an interesting account because usually people sought Jesus out for his help. But in this account, a blind man is just sitting there, assumedly begging by the city gates of Jerusalem when Jesus, moved by the Holy Spirit, walks up to him and heals him. The blind man doesn't ask for help, but help comes.

WHAT SORT OF REACTION DO YOU THINK THIS MAN HAD AFTER HE WASHED HIS EYES AND COULD SEE?

After a discussion, say: The rest of John 9 is a pretty funny description of what happens after this man is healed. He and his parents are questioned by the religious leaders, but he still has no idea who Jesus is and hadn't even had a chance to thank him! After the man is thrown out of the temple, Jesus finds him once again.

CAN SOMEONE READ JOHN 9:35-41 ALOUD FOR US?

WHY DOES THE MAN START TO BELIEVE AND WORSHIP JESUS?**HOW DOES THIS ACCOUNT CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT OUR PROJECT FOR PROSPER THE CITY 2025? SPECIFICALLY, THAT YOU'RE LOOKING TO HELP, BUT OUR NEIGHBORS MIGHT NOT BE ASKING FOR HELP.**

After a discussion, say: The truth is none of us seek out God, he seeks us out. We're the wandering sheep, he's the finding shepherd. We're the enemies, he's the peace maker. We love BECAUSE he first loved us. As Romans 3:11 says, "...there is no one who seeks God."

All of this means we can initiate loving our neighbor without their request! Surprises are fun!

ABILITIES AND RESOURCES (5-10 MIN)

Host, get out the adhesive easel pad from last week.

Then, say: Here are the people, the needs, and the solutions we came up with for our last discussion.

Tear off a new sheet from the adhesive easel pad and hang it up for the group to see. Draw a horizontal line to divide the sheet in two and write ABILITIES at the top of the top half.

LET'S TAKE A MOMENT TO LIST THE ABILITIES WE HAVE IN THIS GROUP THAT COULD MEET ANY OF THE NEEDS AND SOLUTIONS OUR NEIGHBORS NEED.

Host, write down your group's answers. After your group has had time to brainstorm some answers, write RESOURCES at the top of the bottom half and say:

NOW LET'S BRAINSTORM ANY RESOURCES OUR GROUP HAS THAT COULD MEET ANY OF THE NEEDS AND SOLUTIONS OUR NEIGHBORS NEED.

Host, write down your group's answers.

HAS EVERYONE HERE SHARED AN ABILITY OR RESOURCE? WE'RE ALL GIFTED!**VOTING (5-10 MIN)**

*After a discussion, hand out the **GREEN** and **YELLOW** sticker dots.*

Then, say: Okay, now we need to vote on our project.

PLACE A STICKER DOT NEXT TO THE PERSON YOU THINK WE SHOULD SERVE. **GREEN IS YOUR FIRST CHOICE, **YELLOW** IS YOUR SECOND CHOICE.**

After people have voted, count the dots. Tally two points for green dots and one point for yellow dots. (This scoring system doesn't allow one person to dominate the voting.)

INITIAL PLANS (5-10 MIN)

After adding up dots, say: There are three big questions we have to talk about next—

FIRST, ARE WE CLEAR ON WHAT OUR PROJECT IS FOR THIS PERSON?

After a discussion, say: Our goal is to have our project by May 17th so it can be included in the celebration Sunday for Prosper the City on May 18th. So let's decide—

WHAT DAY WOULD WORK FOR US TO SERVE TOGETHER? (WE MIGHT NOT ALL BE AVAILABLE ON ONE DAY, BUT THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO BE INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING.)**THIRD, WHO CAN CONTACT OUR NEIGHBOR TO LET THEM KNOW WHAT WE'D LIKE TO DO FOR THEM?**

After picking a date, say: Thanks, team. Next week we'll get into the specific details, roles, and logistics of our project.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 – 7 MIN)

Let's close things out with prayer—

ARE THERE ANY PRAYER REQUESTS TODAY?

Host, begin with a prayer saying,

“Dear God, thank you for this opportunity to truly love our neighbor. Be in the planning process, Lord, and use this project to show our neighbor how much you love them. May this project bring them to a saving faith in you.

In addition, Lord, we also pray for...” *[Continue with this week's prayer requests.]*