

YOUR GUIDE TO HOSTING YOUR OWN...

Neighborhood Hangout

CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH
MAKE. MATURE. MULTIPLY.



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Step 1

Develop A Heart For Your Neighbors

Before you can reach your neighbors, you first have to develop a heart for them. And the only way for this to really happen is through prayer and the Word. Our lives get so busy so quick, that we sometimes lose sight of the staggering eternal realities the Bible speaks of, especially with regard to what it says about the desperate spiritual plight for those who are not in Christ.

First, begin by praying! Ask that the Lord would graciously do this work in your heart. That He would help you see your neighborhood through the lens of Scripture.

Second, consider HANDWRITING the following passages of Scripture over the next 5 days to really help stir your heart for your neighbors.

DAY 1: Colossians 1:11-23

DAY 2: Ephesians 2:1-10

DAY 3: Matthew 28:18-20

DAY 4: John 3:31-36

DAY 5: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Finally, go on a Prayer Walk around your neighborhood! If you have kiddos, take them too! This is a great family activity and it might even help you meet some of those in your neighborhood you never would have otherwise.

Step 2

Learn Your Neighbors' Names

As the Lord develops your heart for your neighbors, the logical next step will be to learn their name. And never underestimate how important it is to remember someone's name. The next time you see them and you call them by name, it instantly communicates that you care for them. A simple way to make a huge impact. And this takes effort on our part, even those of us who say we are "bad" with names. If someone promised to give us a million dollars if we remembered their name, we most likely would! And if you've lived beside them for a long time, don't be embarrassed to start now! Take over a yummy treat and say something like "Hi. My name is ____ and I'm sorry it has taken me this long to do this, but I wanted to come meet you."

Another helpful strategy is to start small. Use the graph below to fill in the names of those who live in your immediate area of the neighborhood.



Your
Home

Step 3

Establish Your Identity

Don't fall into the trap of thinking "*If I let them know I'm a Christian, that will freak them out and I'll never get another chance to speak with them.*" Instead, when the conversation provides opportunity, use it to let it be known that you are a person who is serious about your faith.

So, for example, when they ask what you like to do on the weekends, list a few activities, but then be sure to include something like "I also enjoy gathering with my church family on Sundays for worship."

Guess what? When they are ready to have a spiritual conversation, they'll know exactly who to go to!

Another good rule of thumb is to think "EARLY & OFTEN". Establish your Christian identity as early as possible and then reference it as often as you can.

This means thinking strategically about conversations ahead of time. If they ask how you're doing, think through how you would respond. Plan ahead as much as you can so that you can shine the light of your Christian identity EARLY & OFTEN.

Step 4

Develop Relationships

Here's yet another rule of thumb while reaching out to your neighbors: THINK ULTIMATE, NOT ULTERIOR.

Okay, so what in the world does that mean? Well, it has to do with our motives for reaching out. If your neighbors begin to think that you are *ONLY* reaching out to them in order to see them convert, they will feel like they've been part of a bait-and-switch, because we had an ulterior motive the whole time. Or they may feel like your "project" rather than someone you genuinely care about.

Instead, sharing the Gospel is to be our *ULTIMATE* motive, but not an ulterior one. Even if they never repent and trust in Christ, it is still good to care for them as people created in God's image and not to simply cut them out of our lives if they never come to believe. We must show genuine love for them as a person, not a project.

This also means looking for tangible ways to serve your neighbors. As you establish your identity as a Christian, you can continue to commend the Gospel to them through good works. While these good works do not communicate the Gospel, Paul tells Titus that they do adorn the Gospel and make the teaching about the Lord Jesus attractive (Titus 2:10). Also, allow *them* to serve *you*. It may seem counter-intuitive, but that can go a long way in developing a relationship. Ask them to check your mail when you're out of town or let them help you carry the groceries in if they ask.

Step 5

PLAN & HOST YOUR HANGOUT

Don't stress with this part. Have fun and let those creative juices flow! And also realize that you don't have to go it alone!

It is at this step that Central wants to come alongside of you and help out! First, register your Hangout with the church by going to www.centralwr.com/hangouts. Once you've done that, our Discipleship Pastor will be in touch with you to go over next steps.

Once your Hangout has been registered, you will be assigned a Hangout Coach and your Hangout will be added to our Neighborhood Hangout Map, so that other Central members can see it and apply to help out if they live near to you.

Your coach will also be there to ensure that your Hangout experience is the best it possibly can be. They are people who are experienced with hosting Hangouts and have already learned some "tricks of the trade" for you to consider.

We will also help you walk through how to be intentional during your Hangout (For example: how or when to have a Gospel conversation). As we like to say around here, *Life is Better Together* and that includes our evangelism efforts!

Step 6

Determine Follow Up

Okay, so what happens when your Hangout is over? Well, chances are, appropriate Follow Up will be clear to you by the time it is over.

For some, you may simply want to keep them on your prayer list and ask the Lord for future opportunities to share. For others, you may want to ask them if they would be willing to do a Bible study with you (WE HAVE DEVELOPED A FREE 5 WEEK EVANGELISTIC BIBLE STUDY TO HELP WITH THIS). And for others still, you may want to keep investing in the relationship by asking them to join you for a round of golf or come over to enjoy a cup of coffee.

Hopefully other Central members will have been a part of your Hangout as well and you all can work together in determining next steps too.

Finally, start planning your next Hangout! Be that house in the neighborhood that is known for welcoming others in. Think of it as Gospel-motivated hospitality.

Neighborhood Hangouts

Within just a few square miles of our church facility, there are over 300 neighborhoods! Will you take the Gospel to yours?

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