

# 20 ways kids can reach out to needy people in their

## **1. Reach out to loners.**

Extend yourself to people no one really likes. Eat with them when they're sitting alone in the cafeteria; walk home from school with them; ask them to join your group when the "cool" group rejects them. When you touch lonely people, you're doing what God does.

## **2. Get involved in a food drive.**

There are hungry people all around you—not just in some Third World country. Show your active love by going house-to-house in your community asking for food donations. Then take the food to a community food pantry or homeless shelter.

## **3. Invite someone for dinner.**

Know anyone who eats dinner alone? Invite that person (and maybe his or her brothers and sisters, too) to your house for a meal. (Be sure to clear this bold love idea with Mom or Dad first!)

## **4. Help out at church.**

Shock your church's leaders by volunteering to clean the church grounds, parking lot, sanctuary, and so on. Wash windows, vacuum floors, or clean up the kitchen.

## **5. Practice random acts of kindness (Part 1).**

Go to a parking lot and wash windshields. Leave a note: "Your windshield was washed as a random act of kindness by a follower of Jesus Christ."

## **6. Stop by a nursing home on a Saturday afternoon or on the way home from school.**

Ask a nurse to tell you which residents rarely get visitors. Then volunteer to visit those people. "Adopt" a grandmother or grandfather for a day, a week, or forever!

## **7. Practice racial reconciliation.**

Ask to have lunch with minority young

people in your church, school, or community. Find out if they feel welcome or accepted in everyday life. Listen. If they've felt rejected or treated unfairly, ask forgiveness!

## **8. Reach out to people of other faiths.**

Demonstrate love by listening to their beliefs, their convictions, and their needs.

## **9. Be homeless for a day.**

On a Saturday or after church on a Sunday, recruit a group to serve for a day at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter. Don't wait for your church to plan it, just do it.

## **10. Be homeless for a weekend.**

Arrange to live in a homeless shelter for a weekend—just so you can talk to and support people who are struggling to make it in life. Most shelters won't allow you to stay without an adult chaperone—so challenge your parents to join you.

## **11. Practice random acts of kindness (Part 2).**

## church, community, and world

By Paul Borthwick

Once or twice a summer, walk around your neighborhood with a lawn mower looking for a lawn that needs to be mowed. Do it, then leave a note (see #5) if you want. Or do it in complete anonymity.

## **12. Get involved in world missions at home.**

Ask your school counselors for names of young people who struggle in school because English isn't their first language. Volunteer to help with homework, or see if you can assist with their English lessons.

## **13. Volunteer to be a tutor.**

You can help someone stay in school who'd otherwise drop out. Demonstrate active love by tutoring struggling students either in your own school or in another school with fewer resources.

## **14. Shock church leaders again by volunteering for mundane tasks.**

You can fold bulletins, help out in the nursery (for free!), set up chairs, or wash dishes.

## **15. At a supermarket, carry bags to the parking lot for people.**

Make sure the supermarket's manager knows what you're doing and why.

## **16. Practice random acts of kindness (Part 3).**

Recruit a small group; then contact your city government and volunteer to clean up a park or recreation area—just as an act of love.

## **17. Offer homebound people a chance to get out.**

Find three or four hours to give; then ask your pastor for names of homebound people in your church. Offer to drive them to a scenic place, or push them in their wheelchairs around the neighborhood.

## **18. Go on a cheap group date, and give away the money you save.**

Get a group together, and go on a cost-free group date; then calculate how much it would've cost to go on a regular date (meal, movie, popcorn, gas, and so on) and collect that amount. Then donate the money to someone in need.

## **19. Clean out your closet.**

Go through your clothing to pluck out stuff that you never wear. Then give it to a social service organization that offers free clothes to people in need.

## **20. Practice random acts of kindness (Part 4).**

Take a half-hour to write two or three thank you notes to people who give to you but are often unappreciated—for example, your pastor, parents, principal, or coach. **G**

*Paul Borthwick is a minister of missions and a longtime youth leader in Massachusetts.*