

## 2018 Spring Emphasis

### Love Your Neighbor

**Proposed dates: Sunday, March 11 – April 8, 2018**

In Matthew 22:36-39, a lawyer challenges Jesus, asking him, *“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?”*

Jesus answers him saying, *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself”* (ESV).

Who is your neighbor? What does it mean to love your neighbor? How can we as Christians practice loving our neighbors as ourselves?

These are important questions you are encouraged to explore during this emphasis. Reading and reflecting on the story of the “Good Samaritan” will help guide the conversation (Luke 10:25-37). While the following weekly instructions will give you direction for the emphasis, please explore the “Strategic Discipleship Methods and Ideas” document below. In addition, be sure to review the planning, promoting, and recruiting documents.

### **Suggested plan for the 2018 “Love Your Neighbor” emphasis:**

#### **Sunday, March 11**

In your Sunday School classes and small groups, consider what it means to love your neighbor as yourself. The tone of Jesus’ words is, “love your neighbor as you would like to be loved.” Reading and discussing the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) is an excellent way to start the discussion. Be sure to end the discussion by asking, “Who are our neighbors, the people in need that we walk by every day?” Then pray for those “neighbors” mentioned in the discussion.

#### **Sunday, March 18**

Resume the discussion from the previous Sunday. Review the list of “neighbors” mentioned the previous week. This is also an excellent way to review those on the class “Responsibility List”. Then ask participants to share how they came to know Christ. Who was involved in that introduction? What steps did they take to lead you to Christ? Then ask if there is someone God has laid on their heart who needs to know Christ personally. Discuss the importance of building a personal relationship with that person. Encourage participants to pray for a person who is a “neighbor” who needs Christ and to find a way forward in that relationship through a phone call or possibly a conversation around a cup of coffee.

#### **Sunday, March 25**

Review last week’s discussion about the “Good Samaritan” and what it means to be a good Christian neighbor. Take time to have class members share how they have been guided to pray for someone God has laid on their heart. Ask if anyone had an opportunity to have a conversation with the person they were praying for. Have them share what happened in their interaction with the person. Encourage everyone to invite someone to Easter services next week. Make sure everyone on the “Responsibility List” has a personal invitation to the services. Close in a special time of prayer for

those being invited.

**Sunday, April 1**

Easter Sunday is a special time of celebration and an important time to practice Christian hospitality. Inviting guests to share a meal is a great and biblical way to forward the relationship and provide space for conversation about the Church and God. Those who don't have special visitors can be in prayer for those who do.

**Sunday, April 8**

The Sunday after Easter is an ideal time to review and celebrate what has taken place over the past few weeks. Provide time for class members to share how praying for and conversing with neighbors has helped them become more attentive to the Lord's command, "love your neighbor as yourself." This is also an ideal time to establish a pattern of praying for those on the "Responsibility List" every week. By praying for our "neighbors," we keep our eyes and hearts open to those Christ died to save.