

101 (or more) SERVE LOCAL IDEAS

The opportunities to meet needs and share Jesus in your community are limited only by the creativity of your local church. When priming the pump of creativity in the church, consider these practical ways to Serve Local. Incredible ministry can take place when individuals, families, and groups within your church are given some practical ideas and then encouraged and given the freedom to be creative as they love their neighbors and serve their community well.

Due to COVID-19 concerns, we are suggesting that you limit team size to 12 members at the largest. The majority of these ideas can be accomplished with a team of 5-7 members. Some ideas may require multiple teams. Again, these are only suggestions.

Costs will also vary depending on the number of people served, supplies required, and items purchased such as gifts, medals/trophies, care package contents, and food. Comparing each idea to the others, the following cost estimate is provided following each idea: **F** – free, **\$** - inexpensive, **\$\$** - moderately expensive, **\$\$\$** - most expensive.

As you serve, let's be intentional in sharing the Gospel. The opportunities for gospel conversations are limitless!

FAMILY FRIENDLY COMMUNITY EVENTS

1. Family Movie (\$\$)

- Family friendly movie projected on wall of building or large screen
- License may be needed for large gathering
- **Options:**
 - Family Drive-In Movie – family remains in car, sound provided by FM transmitter
 - Outdoors Family Movie – families bring lawn chairs or blanket and sit on lawn, sound provided by speakers
- Snacks: popcorn/candy can be provided – packaged prior per family/car & presented as family registers
- Gospel can be presented at conclusion of movie
- Evening works best if outdoors

2. Family Scavenger Hunt (\$)

- Publicize event on social media & through member networks
- Develop registration page & format for providing clues
- **Options:**
 - Photo scavenger hunt: post pictures of objects in community perhaps with a clue to location – family takes group picture at each location – returns to specific location at end of hunt to receive gift
 - Object scavenger hunt: similar to photo scavenger hunt but instead of posting pictures of objects provide clues to objects located in

community – family takes picture of object/records location of object on clue card – returns to specific location at end of hunt to receive gift

- Pumpkin scavenger hunt: paint/decorate pumpkins to be hidden throughout the community (in areas where people unable to handle or reach) – provide clue card when family registers – returns to registration site at end of hunt to receive gift
 - Gift ideas: movie packet for family (microwave popcorn, 2-liter drink, movie-size box of candy, \$5 or less family movie, tract/bible)
3. Mom/Daughter Tea (\$)
 - Moms in the church invite their unchurched friends to attend
 - Guest speaker talks about mom/daughter relationship and shares Gospel
 4. Dadapalooza Event (F, \$)
 - Family friendly competition between dads and/or dad/kid teams at local park or large lot: sack race, three-legged race, egg toss, wheelbarrow race, etc.,
 5. Picnic in the Park/Family Festival in the Park (\$\$)
 - Hotdogs/hamburgers
 - Family friendly games
 6. Neighborhood Pop-up Concert/Worship (F)
 - Select neighborhoods where church members live
 - Church member resident can inform neighbors of time & location
 - Worship team sets up in member's yard & performs live music for 30 minutes
 - On to the next neighborhood!
 7. 5K Family Fun Walk/Run (F, \$)
 - Publicize as a family event to support a local ministry (Food Bank, school, Crisis Pregnancy Center, etc.) Entry fee can be non-perishable food item per person for local Food Bank, school supplies for local school, diapers/formula for Crisis Pregnancy Center, etc.
 - Provide free Family Picture at walk/run end location. Gospel can be presented at conclusion of race when medals are awarded
 - **Idea:** Make it a virtual walk/run. Individuals/families set their own start time and, at completion, post a photo with route/time including event hashtag. Free Family Picture optional. Church can make a financial donation per runner to a local ministry.
 8. Antique Car Show (\$)
 - Invite antique car/truck owners to show their vehicle

- Trophies can be presented prior to show
- **Options:**
 - ATV Show
 - Motorcycle Show

9. Drive-thru Block Party (\$\$)

- In place of the traditional Block Party, offer a Drive-thru version featuring free cotton candy, popcorn, sno-cones, and hot dog meals as families drive-thru.

CHILDREN'S EVENTS

10. Children's Sports Camp (\$)

- Choose multiple sports – don't be afraid to introduce new sports – provide rotations
- **Options:**
 - Cheerleading Camp
 - Dance Camp

11. One Day VBS/Children's Backyard Bible Club (\$)

- Choose location where children live and bring a COVID-friendly VBS to them

12. Bike Giveaway & Repair Clinic (\$\$)

- Collect children's bicycles during September and make needed repairs.
- Bicycles given away at a multi-housing neighborhood, mobile home community, or any other location with children who need a bike
- Team can also set up a bike repair shop

13. School Supply Give-Away (\$\$)

- Choose a local park or multi-housing complex/mobile home community
- Collect items (paper, pencils, erasers, crayons, glue sticks, hand sanitizer, etc.)
- Distribute to children (parents must be present)

14. Giveaways at Peewee/Youth Sports Program (\$)

- Free Family photo
- Free popsicles after games to all teams
- Free bottled water/Gatorade to teams playing

PRAYING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

15. Prayer Walking (F, \$)

- 2 Teams of 3 or 4 (at least one male per team) per street
- Maps are provided of streets assigned

- Prayer Walking Guide provided
- **Option:** Local school, city hall, country courthouse or other government buildings can be included on the prayer journey
- **Note:** one team can cover 50 homes per hour

16. Door-to-door Prayer (F, \$)

- 2 Teams of 3 (at least one male per team) per street
- Maps are provided of streets assigned
- Guide provided on praying door-to-door
- **Note:** one team can cover 50 homes per hour

17. Prayer Driving (F)

- Team of 4 (maximum) same gender or 2 couples per vehicle
- Maps provided for designated prayer driving area
- Prayer Driving Guide provided
- Works best in rural areas or neighborhoods with no sidewalks

18. Drive-through Prayer (F, \$)

- Choose area of high traffic
- Set up tent in parking lot with lanes for cars to drive through
- Tracts/bibles distributed

AUTOMOBILE SERVICE

19. Car Wash (\$\$)

- Free – no donations accepted
- **Options:**
 - Arrange with local car wash business to use their bay(s); provide team with certain amount of quarters (\$100) – when quarters are gone, car wash is over -offer to wash car for free - team can also offer to dry vehicle
 - Arrange with local business to use their parking lot & water; team provides: garden hose, washing solution, buckets, sponges, etc.
- Tracts/bibles available for distribution – perhaps offer a free CD or download of Christian music

20. Gas Price Knock-Down (\$\$, \$\$\$)

- Arrange with local self-service station to provide teams to offer full-service to customers while offering 50 cents off per gallon of gas up to 10 gallons (team pays the knock-down price, not the station). Depending on budget, team can increase knock-down amount or offer gas free between certain hours or for a certain number of vehicles.
- Teams station at pumps, explain service to customers, & offer to pump gas & wash windshield

21. Wash windshield/fill windshield fluid at self-service station (\$)
 - Arrange with local self-service station to provide service to customers
 - Teams station at pumps, explain service to customers, & offer to wash windshield and fill windshield fluid
 - Can also be combined with Gas Price Knock-Down

22. Wash windshield/fill windshield fluid Neighborhood-Style (\$)
 - Teams go door-to-door in a neighborhood offering to wash windshields/fill windshield fluid of cars in driveways

23. Single-mom Oil Change (\$\$\$)
 - Pre-registration is required for purchase of oil & filters
 - Location options:
 - Church may have mechanic who can provide place of business
 - Contact local garage and ask for use of bay(s)
 - Church parking lot
 - Statement of services provided/not provided is offered to customer (signature and contact info included)
 - Team members change oil/filter, check fluids/hoses/belts, inflates tires
 - If additional service is suggested, provide list of mechanics/businesses that can provide service. Helpful if contact is made prior with mechanics/businesses to see if discounts can be offered.

HOME BEAUTIFICATION SERVICE

Every community has areas that need a little TLC. Individual teams can be assigned to provide a specific service or a larger team/multiple teams can be equipped to provide a variety of services as needed. Team provides all equipment for service. **Note:** *Serve Local* events should be focused on the unchurched. Meeting these needs of church members, especially seniors, is a vital ongoing ministry of the local church.

24. Free Lawn Mowing Service (\$\$)
 - **Option:** Ask City officials if there are areas city doesn't mow often (medians, street corners, etc.) and offer to mow or weed-eat.

25. Free Hedge Trimming Service (\$)

26. Free Rake leaves/clean gutters Service (\$)

27. Free Power Wash Service (house and/or sidewalk/driveway) (\$)

For each of the above ministries:

- Homes can be discovered in several ways: speak with local Chamber of Commerce/City officials regarding areas that need TLC, drive through

communities to choose a neighborhood or homes, or blitz a neighborhood on the day offering services provided

- Refrain from any service without permission from homeowner/resident
- If you do a neighborhood blitz, leave a note on the doors of residents not home explaining what your team did and how they can request a team.
- When service is complete, request homeowner/resident to see completed project. Use this time as opportunity to share the Gospel.

MINOR HOME REPAIR SERVICE

Most likely you have men and women in the church who love to repair and build. Offering free minor home repair can make a huge kingdom impact in your community, especially among senior adults. Check with Chamber of Commerce or local Senior Citizen's Center for individuals who may have these needs. **Note:** *Serve Local* events should be focused on the unchurched. Meeting these needs of church members, especially seniors, is a vital ongoing ministry of the local church.

28. Build Wheelchair ramps (\$\$)

29. Home Exterior painting (\$\$\$)

30. Repairing fence or porch (\$\$)

31. Home Winterization: sealing windows, repair underpinning (\$\$\$)

NEIGHBORHOOD/CITY CLEAN-UP & RENOVATION:

In addition to providing beautification projects to individual neighbors, here are some ideas to show that your church loves your community!

32. Rid-Litter Day: Neighborhood (\$)

- Teams pick-up trash along the streets of a specific neighborhood
- Caution: Kindness in Progress signs

33. Rid-Litter Day: City (\$)

- Teams pick-up trash along the city's major streets (high traffic areas)
- Caution: Kindness in Progress signs

34. Debris/Large Item/Garage Clean-up (\$)

- Publicize prior to event informing residents that teams will be available to assist in clearing debris/large items from yards and garages
- Provide trailers for removal
- Arrange with local landfill for delivery of debris/large trash items. **Note:** If items can be salvaged, arrange with a local shelter/ministry for delivery. Some items may be collected for a "No Sale Yard Sale" event later

35. Paint the Park (\$\$)

- Paint playground equipment in city/neighborhood park
- Don't forget to post "Wet Paint" signs

36. Park Renovation (\$\$\$)

- Replace basketball backboards, goals, nets
- Renovate park benches/shelters by replacing broken or weathered boards. A fresh coat of stain/paint adds a "wow" factor.
- Clean/paint park restrooms.

37. Softball/Baseball Complex Renovation (\$\$)

- Clean/paint restrooms.
- If complex is being used for tournament or other activity, check with complex director about providing free services.
 - Free bottled water/Gatorade to teams playing
 - Free popsicles after games to all teams

SERVING YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL

Local schools may have projects that have been put on hold due to increased costs & use of personnel related to COVID-19. Speak with local school superintendent or principal to discover needs and offer volunteers to help. The school may be able to provide some or all supplies needed. Below are some possible ideas for developing a partnership with your local school. **Note:** Providing these services may not have immediate opportunity for gospel presentations but will provide teachers/administrators who are members of your church the opportunity for conversations with their peers. You will also open the door for additional partnerships with the school that could have Kingdom impact.

38. Mulch playground areas (\$\$)

39. Plant fall flowers, mulch flower beds (\$\$)

40. Paint accent wall in classrooms (\$\$)

41. Renovate teachers' lounge: fresh paint, furniture (\$\$\$)

42. Wash exterior windows (\$)

43. Paint playground equipment (\$\$)

44. Power wash sidewalks (\$)

45. Provide take-out lunch for teachers (\$\$\$)

- Prepare meal and have drive-thru at school
- **Option:**
 - Instead of lunch, serve a Pancake Breakfast.
 - Provide gift card to local fast-food restaurant for each teacher with hand-written Thank You.
 - Provide gift card for supplies (WalMart, Amazon, etc) for each teacher with hand-written Thank You.
 - Arrange with Administration to place items in teachers' mailboxes.

46. Teacher Appreciation at Sonic (\$\$)

- Provide free Route 44 Sonic drinks for teachers during a set time period.
- **Idea:** Speak to Sonic manager about getting Happy Hour prices during the scheduled event time.
- **Option:**
 - If your community does not have a Sonic, offer another option from a local business: Hawaiian Shaved Ice, Icee, etc.

SERVING POLICE & FIRE PERSONNEL (AND THEIR FAMILIES)

Show your support for those who provide protection and help for your community.

47. Free Movie night for families (\$\$, \$\$\$)

- Choose an option from the Family Movie Idea, or
- Rent a local theater for a private showing

48. Wash police cars/personal vehicles (\$)

49. Deliver Care Package to local station (\$)

- Large basket containing a variety of snacks, drinks, etc.
- Include hand made "Thank You" notes. **Note:** This is a great mission opportunity for your children's and/or student ministry.

50. Meal for officers/families (\$\$\$)

- **Options:**
 - Cookout/picnic in park or at station
 - Prepared meal delivered to station or to each officer's home

51. Sidewalk chalk messages of support/encouragement (\$)

- Another great idea to involve children and/or students!

52. Family Care Package (\$\$)

- Provide hand sanitizer, face masks, movie, microwave popcorn, gift card, thank you note and clear presentation of gospel
- Deliver to the station for distribution or to each officer's home

53. Personalize one or more of the Family Friendly Ideas for the officers and their families!

SERVING THE MEDICAL COMMUNITY

Consider creative ways to say “thank you” to your local medical community for how they have served and sacrificed during COVID-19.

54. Deliver care packages (snacks, drinks, etc.) to Medical/Dental staff (\$\$)
- Include hand-written scripture cards and thank you notes – notes from children are special
 - Face masks and hand-sanitizers are often requested items
55. Deliver Care packages to Hospital/ER waiting rooms (\$\$)
- Include prayer cards
 - Offer to pray with individuals
 - Check with hospital chaplain or administration for permission
56. Care packages to Nursing Home staff (\$\$)
- Include fingernail polish, snacks, face mask, hand sanitizer, etc.

SERVING THE NURSING HOME COMMUNITY

Ministry to Nursing Home residents & staff may be prohibited due to COVID-19 concerns. Contact Nursing Home Administrator to discover possible areas of service.

57. Game day: trivia, bingo (F)

58. Sing-a-longs: name that tune (F)

59. Personal Care for Residents (F, \$)

- Paint fingernails, door-to-door visits with small gift (socks) & hand-made card.
- Including children always brings a smile to residents!
- **Option:**
 - If unable to visit personally, check with Nursing Home administration about providing small gift for residents: socks, hand-made card with scripture and prayer. Administrator can provide the # and gender of residents.
 - Artwork and hand-made cards from children are special!

60. Outdoor Concert (F)

- Team provides an outdoor gospel concert in the courtyard

SERVING LOCAL BUSINESSES

Local businesses provide needed services to the community, not to mention the economic impact. During COVID-19, many local businesses have had a difficult time. As you Serve Local encourage members to Shop Local. Here are some ideas to serve your local businesses.

61. Prepare & deliver cookies/snacks to local businesses (\$\$)
 - Deliver with a “thank you” and prayer
 - Thank you notes can be created by children’s ministry
62. Free Window Washing (\$)
 - Teams visit local businesses offering to wash windows, clean awnings, etc.
63. Host cook-out lunch for local businesses (\$\$\$)
 - Call morning of event for # of lunches requested
 - Deliver meals at lunchtime and pray for employees
64. Cleaning Public Restrooms (\$)
 - Visit area business and offer to clean restroom free of charge

SERVING THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY

October is a busy time for the agricultural community. Farmers are harvesting and local mill workers are working over-time. Here are some simple ways to bless them.

65. Meals for Farmers (\$\$\$)
 - Provide a take-out meal (hamburger, BBQ) for local farmers.
 - Contact local farmers prior to event for # of meals requested.
 - Farmers can pick up meal or team can deliver.
 - Prepare extra meals for those who did not register!
66. Meals for mill workers (\$\$\$)
 - Contact your local mill and offer to provide lunch for all mill workers.
 - **Option:**
 - If farmers are delivering harvest, provide lunch to drivers. Trucks have a designated route to enter/exit the mill. You can provide while they are waiting in parking area, as they enter, or as they exit.

FAMILIES ON MISSION

These ideas can be shared with individual families within the church as a way of loving their neighbors.

67. Create a Neighborhood Facebook group and invite neighbors to join. Share Scripture, post prayers, and get to know your neighbors. (F)
68. Family Prayer Walk in the Neighborhood (F)
69. Family Door-to-Door Prayer in Neighborhood (F)
70. Pick up limbs, mow the yard, or rake leaves for a neighbor (F)
71. Bakes cookies/bread and deliver to neighbors with offer to pray (\$)
72. Blessing our Neighbors: Deliver small "brighten your day" gift (potted plant, drawing/painting from children) to neighbors with offer to pray. (\$\$)
 - No answer? Leave gift with handmade note including a prayer or scripture with contact info (email) for prayer
73. Create handmade Thank You notes and deliver to a selected community group: medical professionals, first responders, police and fire departments, business owners, etc. Include an encouraging word and a Scripture. (\$)

CHILDREN/PRE-TEENS ON MISSION

Many of the ministries listed in this resource can include children/pre-teens or be accomplished by a children/pre-teen mission group with adult supervision. Here are some ideas for your children/pre-teen to be on mission during Serve Local.

74. Collect gift cards (gas, groceries) and donate to the parent center at your local school (F, cost absorbed by members)
75. Create Thank You cards for teachers/administration (\$)
 - If possible, deliver during Serve Local. If not, deliver on Monday.
76. Create Thank You cards and decorate Care Packages being delivered by other Serve Local teams. (\$)
77. \$20 Mission Trip
 - Break into as many groups as you can (with enough adult volunteers for each team). Give each team \$20.
 - Tell them they must figure out a way to use the \$20 to serve someone in their community. Give them a 15-minute time limit to brainstorm and come up with the best way to spend the money. (They can add their own money or collect more if they want to have more to spend).

- After 15 minutes, send them out into the community to serve others. Give them a time limit and have them meet back at the church for a time of debrief.
- Talk to them about how they came up with their ideas. Ask about opportunities to share the Gospel. Get any other reports. Talk to them about the challenges of this project. Ask them if they would be willing to do this more often?

STUDENTS ON MISSION

Students love to serve. Include them in ministries serving alongside adults or with their families, but also encourage them to develop their own ministries where they can serve with their peers. Here are a few ideas:

78. Free Technology Workshop (F)

- Offer a workshop for senior adults: connect with family, posting on social media, etc.
- Offer a workshop for parents of elementary-aged children: virtual learning, Zoom, Google classroom, etc.
- Workshop can be offered in-person or on-line.

79. Care kits for Homeless Shelter (\$\$)

- Prepare and deliver care kits: shampoo, deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, etc.

80. Create/Clean a Community Walking Trail (\$)

81. Graffiti Paint-Over (\$\$)

- Check with city officials and/or local businesses to discover unsightly/unwanted graffiti and offer a fresh coat of paint

82. Grocery Escort (F)

- Teams station at local grocery store and offer to assist shoppers to their vehicle.
- **Idea:**
 - If it is raining, offer an umbrella escort.

SERVING THE "UN"s IN YOUR COMMUNITY

One of the essential intents of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention is to "focus our evangelism partnerships toward people that are unengaged, unreached, and underserved in access to the Gospel." These "uns" live in communities all across Arkansas, including your community! The final three categories of ideas focus on two

groups of people who may be included in the “uns”: those living in poverty and internationals.

SERVING THE UNDERSERVED

Of course, not all people living in poverty are unreached with the Gospel. Many impoverished families are incredibly faithful and generous members of local churches. However, poverty often creates a barrier against the Gospel. Seeing the Gospel in action can lead to Gospel conversations.

83. Free Laundromat Services (\$\$)

- Team offers to pay for laundry at local laundromat
- Team members offer games/activities/crafts for kids
- **Note:** Not all people who utilize a laundromat live in poverty. The service is offered to each family/individual.

84. Free Haircuts (\$)

- Recruit barbers/hairdressers from your church or community to offer this service
- Location can be a barber shop/salon or you can set up an outdoor venue in a multi-housing neighborhood.

85. No Sale Yard Sale (\$)

- Members gather clothing, household goods, furniture, etc. during September
- Items are offered to the public free of charge
- Assign one team member per customer to assist in gathering items. Great opportunity for one-on-one gospel conversation.

86. Smoke Detector & Batteries Giveaway (\$\$\$)

- Teams go door-to-door in selected neighborhood offering free batteries for smoke detectors.
- Teams offer to install smoke detectors in home without one.
- **Idea:**
 - Check with your local Fire Department about partnering with them for this ministry or about the possibility of obtaining free smoke detectors.

87. Light Bulb Giveaway (\$\$\$)

- Teams go door-to-door in selected neighborhood offering free a pack of free light bulbs
- Teams can offer to change bulbs for those unable to do so

88. Food Distribution (\$)

- Members gather non-perishable food items during September

- **Options:**
 - Teams organize food boxes prior to event.
 - All items are placed on tables/shelves and individual chooses set # of items
- **Idea:** Explore a partnership with the Arkansas Food Bank for prepackaged food boxes

89. Shoe & Sock Giveaway (\$)

- Shoes and socks are the fifth most needed item by children in the U.S.A.
- Members collect socks and new/almost new children's shoes during September
- Items are given away at selected location
- **Options:**
 - Check with school resource person to discover children in need and sizes. Publicize information to church for collection. This option also applies to school uniform and school supplies giveaways.
 - Combine shoe/sock giveaway with school uniform giveaway or other event intended to gather children from impoverished families/neighborhoods.
 - Partner with an organization like Soles4Souls. Due to application process, this option may be best for a future date.
- **Idea:** Consider following the same steps for a School Uniform or School Supplies Giveaway.

SUPPORTING LOCAL MINISTRIES:

90. Crisis Pregnancy Center (F)

- Partner with your local Crisis Pregnancy Center to discover items needed or ways your team can assist the ministry
- Collect items during September.

91. Food Bank (F)

- Partner with your local Community Food Bank to discover items needed or ways your team can assist the ministry
- Collect items during September.

BLESSING OUR INTERNATIONAL NEIGHBORS

Many communities across Arkansas are becoming increasingly diverse. Many have growing Hispanic and Asian populations, as well as families from over 130 distinct people groups as well. Some ideas for using your Serve Local event to impact ethnic people groups in your community include:

- 92. Purchase lunch for your Serve Local teams from an ethnic restaurant. (\$\$\$)

93. Purchase gifts cards from and/or for ethnic-owned businesses to include in giveaways for other ministry projects. (\$\$\$)
94. Survey ethnic-owned businesses and homes for needs you can meet, such as trash pickup around businesses and apartment complexes. (F)
95. Free gas giveaways at ethnic-owned gas stations. (\$\$\$)
96. Discovering ethnic peoples around you. (F)
 - Whether as a separate team, or as an intentional component of other ministry teams and ministry projects, discover what ethnic groups are present in your community by visiting businesses (i.e. gas stations, restaurants, salons) and neighborhoods and having conversations related to their country of origin, languages spoken, family and friends, and preferred places of worship and prayer. These details will give you insight into the culture and worldview they represent, while at the same time beginning relationships you can continue long after your event.

For more information and ideas on how to do this, or where to start in your community, please contact Jamie Naramore (jnaramore@absc.org) on the ABSC Missions Team. See also: [Video Intro to Reaching Internationals in Arkansas](#), [How to Discover People Groups Around You](#), [5 Conversation Topics for Any International](#)

SERVING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Almost every church in Arkansas is within driving distance to a Baptist Collegiate Ministry. From major four-year universities to community colleges, there are thousands of international students studying in Arkansas every year. Consider contacting your local BCM to see if you can partner with them to:

97. Provide a food and basic essentials distribution to international students. (\$\$\$)
98. Provide a conversation club and tea for female international students. (\$\$)
99. Help sponsor a World Cup soccer tournament, with local churches adopting a team to cheer on and support. (\$)
100. Provide a "Life in (Your City/Town)" or Cultural Exchange event that introduces them to unique things in your community. (F, \$)
101. Survey basic needs among international students (i.e. Free Garage Sale, rides to grocery stores, oil changes, etc.) (F)

For other ideas, and who to connect with in your area, contact Teresa Stephens (tstephens@absc.org) on the College and Young Leaders Team.

ONE DAY: SERVE LOCAL
Meeting Needs. . .Sharing Jesus