



# PLAY IT

## WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

Jesus' love reaches out ... for more than to drag someone off the side of the road to safety. He reaches out to build a community of acceptance and love ... with himself and with others who follow Him. His love invites us into a place of belonging, into His family.

This all means when we reflect His love—when we reach out to others—it's not just to do rescue operations. We're inviting them into a relationship with Jesus and with us—His church.

Good news: In the church there's room for everyone, and everyone has a place.

Let's play a game that makes that point! Let's play Welcome to the Neighborhood?

### Supplies

Clock with a second hand (or device with countdown timer function)

### Directions

1. Have everyone stand.
2. Explain that players will form a line by placing themselves in order according to the way you call out. They're racing against the clock to see how quickly they can get organized and find their places.
3. Call out these ways to line up:
  - height (shortest to tallest)
  - age (oldest to youngest)
  - birth month (January to December)
  - number of times they've visited \_\_\_\_ (fill in site)
  - first name (alphabetically)
  - middle name (alphabetically)
  - favorite pet's name (alphabetically)
  - favorite teacher's name (alphabetically)
  - favorite pizza topping (alphabetically)
  - family birth order (first, middle, last)
  - favorite ice cream flavor (alphabetically)



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After the game, talk about this:

- Tell about a time you were new to a group, school, workplace, or neighborhood and you weren't sure where you fit in. What was that like and how did you feel?
- Jesus' love reaches out and keeps reaching out. How is He reaching out to you right now?
- What might we do to make our group more welcoming to others? How would that be reflecting Jesus' "reaching out" sort of love?



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## NEIGHBORHOOD NUDGES

Sometimes it's easy to see what kind of help people need. The Samaritan could see at a glance what the wounded traveler needed.

But other times you can't see what your neighbors need—at least until you get to know your neighbors. Let's play a game where we connect with our "neighbors" in this room—even if they aren't all that excited about connecting with us!

### Directions

1. Ask players to stand and spread out around the room. Have them stand with their hands on their hips, elbows sticking out.
2. Explain: The goal of the game is to use your elbow to tap the elbow of another player while doing your best to not be tapped yourself.
3. If one of your elbows is tapped by another player, raise that arm over your head. If your other elbow is tapped, raise that arm over your head too. Keep both arms in the air for 10 seconds and then resume play.
4. When you finish playing, have players mingle, tapping one another's elbows in a round of not-quite-so-high high fives!

After the activity, talk about this:

- What strategy worked for you to tap without being tapped?
- In life, are you more comfortable approaching people or being approached, tapping or being tapped? How does that preference impact your reaching out in love to help people?
- The wounded traveler had no choice: he needed help. When they do have a choice, why are some people reluctant to accept help? Why are you sometimes reluctant to ask for or accept help?
- When Jesus' love reaches out to you, in what ways, if any, do you reach back to Him?
- What's a way you can thank Jesus for His love?



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## JUMP RIGHT IN!

Here's what the Samaritan knew about the man he helped: the traveler was half-dead from a beating and needed help. No name, no home address, nothing except the truth that the traveler needed assistance.

You have people who live with or near you who sometimes need help too. And you don't have to know their names to consider them neighbors. You can jump in first to help and find out later who you've helped!

In this game of Jump Right In! you'll be coming to the rescue while the rest of the players try to figure out exactly what you're doing.

### Supplies

- Slips of paper
- Pen
- Rescue Mission Ideas (see below)

### Directions

1. Before playing, create Rescue Mission Cards by jotting the suggested missions on slips of paper, 1 mission per slip. (See list below.)
2. Explain: Players will take turns silently acting out something helpful they might do for another person. The rest of the players will guess what's being acted out.
3. If after 30 seconds nobody can guess what's being acted out, the actor will read aloud the Rescue Mission Card. Play continues with another person acting out a rescue!
4. Applaud all efforts!



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## Rescue Missions Ideas (Feel free to add your own!)

- Cleaning out a goldfish bowl.
- Helping to carry groceries.
- Mowing a yard.
- Shoveling snow.
- Washing windows.
- Helping a fisherman land a huge fish.
- Weeding a garden.
- Cleaning leaves out of gutters.
- Rescuing a drowning person.
- Catching someone who's jumping out of a burning building.
- Helping with math homework.
- Cheering as a marathon runner trudges past.
- Calling a friend who's sad.
- Helping someone search for a lost TV remote.
- Assisting at a party by being in the back half of a horse costume.
- Filling up a car's gas tank.
- Fluffing up pillows for someone who's sick in bed.
- Making lunch for someone.

After the game, talk about this:

- When you see someone struggling to do something, how likely are you to jump in to help? Give an example of why you answer as you do.
- Describe a time you needed assistance and someone did—or didn't—jump in to help. What happened?
- Where's someplace in life you could use help right now? In what ways is Jesus lovingly reaching out to lend you a hand—or don't you see that happening?