



We throw the word “neighbor” around a lot. Mr. Rogers famously talked about the neighborhood and told us to be kind to our neighbor. However, how we understand who our neighbor is has changed from 30 years ago. In the age of internet we can connect with people across continents. Neighbors can mean those who live down the street or those whom we may never meet face to face.

So, what does it mean to share this world with so many people?

In the story that we get our question from Jesus talks to a lawyer. The conversation begins with him asking Jesus, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” In response, Jesus has the lawyer recite the ancient Jewish commandment, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” The lawyer insisted on questioning more and said, “And who is my neighbor?”

**Read the Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37**

**Q1: How would you define a “neighbor” now that we can be so connected to so many people?**

**Q2: The Samaritans were a cultural group that was despised by many people (look up: Samaritan). Why do you think Jesus chose them to use as an example? When you think about your school or friends who would be a group that is left out or looked down upon?**

**Q3: What do you think held the Levite back from reaching out to the man in the ditch?**

Teenagers can be quite good at loving their local and global neighbors. Adults really should pay better attention. Check out this staggering statistic: “According to a 2005 study by the Corporation for National and Community Service, an estimated 15.5 million U.S. teens—55 percent—participate in volunteer activities. The teen volunteering rate is nearly twice the adult rate of 29 percent. Youth volunteer more than 1.3 billion hours of community service each year.”<sup>1</sup>

Much of that service takes place in churches raising money for *neighbors* in need. Youth group fundraising efforts (5k Fun Runs, 30-hour fasts, Car Washes) are a staple feature of local newspapers. Many of you can believe these statistics because you see it as part of our Imago Dei Youth Ministry. We travel to Bridge Academy to serve with our friends in the city of Coatesville, partner alongside other disciples in, Mexico, and Philadelphia (photo below) on missional partnerships and projects. Take a moment to visit the missional partnership pages on [www.imagodeiyouth.com](http://www.imagodeiyouth.com). **Which partnerships and service opportunities have you been a part of?**

Deep down most of you probably have a sense that we (humans) all need help at sometime in our lives. We may have an urge to help our brother or sister. But why do Christians serve one another and the world? Is it to get noticed and make national news?

No. Instead, Christians strive each day to be more and more like Jesus Christ and content with the reality that many brilliant acts of service will go unnoticed.

<sup>1</sup> Moring, Mark. “Youth with a Vision.” *Christianity Today*. 1/7/09 <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/december/25.46.html>

While Jesus was on earth he lived to serve people. By healing people, teaching, and caring for others he showed us the love of God. In turn, Jesus was serving God by caring for others. His concern was for those he was serving and he frequently deflected accolade. Paul’s letter to the Philippians says we are to have the same mind of Jesus who “humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death- even death on a cross” (2:1-8). We are to humble ourselves and look not primarily to our own interests and needs, but to those of others. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves.

**Q3: Why do we as Christians serve? Describe experiences you have had as a part of the church where you have served alongside others?**

**Read Mark 10:35-45**

In this passage James and John were concerned with whether or not they would be honored for all the work they have been doing for God. Why do you think Jesus did not answer them with a resounding ‘yes’?

**Q4: Why do you think Jesus came to serve?**

**Q5: How did Jesus give his life as ransom<sup>2</sup>?**

**Q6: What does Jesus say is a greater thing to be/do? Why?**



In the book of Luke, Jesus tells us to, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself” (10:27). It is not a coincidence that he gave this commandment at the beginning of the Good Samaritan, a story about a man saving another man’s life. When serving one another we may have to take risks. We may have to go out of our comfort zones or defy the society’s expectations of us.

**Q7: How can we serve? Where can you use your gifts, talents, and passions to serve alongside others?**

Many times we would like to help someone but don’t know how. Talk with those in your family, church, and CREDO small group and discover how God may use your gifts, talents, and ideas, to serve others as you love God by loving neighbor and being the hands and feet of Jesus. We often discover where God is calling us to serve through the voices and insights of others who know us best.

**Read 1 Peter 4:7-11**

Spend some time over the next week thinking about how you might serve God. Check the ways that Imago Dei Youth Ministry is serving the community. What do you like to do? If it is sewing maybe you could sew a blanket for baby in need. Do you like to play a sport? Do you like to write? Find a way to use your gifts to show someone the love of Christ. ***Find a partner in your small group and encourage each other to serve in a new and creative way in the week ahead, maybe together...***

*“As the church ministers to people who are discovering Christian vocation, so it offers nurture to those who are living out Christian vocation in public, active life. It guides and supports them in their discipleship as ministers to one another in the community of faith, as stewards of material resources, time, and talents, as members of families, especially in their own role of sharing the faith with others of their households, as responsible citizens, as servants of God for the world.”*

---PCUSA *Book of Order* W-6.2003 p. 140

<sup>2</sup> Ransom according to dictionary.com; 1. the redemption of a prisoner, slave, or kidnapped person, of captured goods, etc., for a price. 2. the sum or price paid or demanded. 3. a means of deliverance or rescue from punishment for sin, esp. the payment of a redemptive fine.



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The Apostle's Creed was adopted by the early church in efforts to convey what they believed about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the church, and other elements of the faith. It is a *creed*, or confession of faith, which we still recite today. *The creed is a communal "confession of hope" (Hebrews 10:23)*. Throughout the year we will work on understanding this beautiful tradition within the community of Christian faith.

Read begin to memorize the Apostles Creeds which describes what the church believes about God.

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried;  
He descended into hell.  
On the third day he rose again from the dead;  
He ascended into heaven,  
And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty,  
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.  
Amen.