

Around the Corner

10 Places to Go with Young People in Your Community

“The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality.”

-Albert Einstein

“So long as we live among men, let us cherish humanity.”

-Andre Gide

Humans are said to only use 10% of our brains. Similarly, we often only explore 10% of our communities. There are many unexplored parts of our communities that can offer fantastic opportunities for young people.

Below is a list of ten places that are in most communities. Youth can explore these sites as a way to engage outside of the church walls. Accompanied with the location are scriptures that offer a biblical connection.

1. Community Garden

Genesis 1:11-12, Psalm 126:6

Recently, communities and cities have united together to support urban farming. This new trend can have a tremendous impact on the people and children in the area who seek fresh, healthy food and resources and tips on sustainable and organic growing. These gardens often include classes, raised boxes for rent, and chickens! The scriptures teach us that gardening is important for understanding God and our responsibilities to the earth.

2. Homeless Shelter

Luke 9:58, Psalm 107:4-9

Many communities have more than one type of homeless shelter. Some are for women or for women with children, some are for men, and others are for families. There can also be a difference between homeless shelters and temporary shelters. The scriptures and the life that Jesus lived teach that all human life is valuable. Through service to local shelters, we are able to better serve God and better understand how valuable all humans are. How their lives (bad time and good times) are connected to our lives.

3. Other Places of Worship

1 Corinthians 12

One way to gain a better understanding of what we believe is to study what we don't. Paul writes that the Spirit has gifted all people with different gifts. Different faith communities feature different worship traditions, rituals, words and styles of praise and prayer. Young people can be strongly impacted by seeing what others do.

4. Senior Center/ Nursing Home

Hebrews 12:1-2

There is no doubt that our elders provide us with an elegance and wisdom that cannot be obtained from anywhere else. Visiting the elderly can also remind us that humans are vulnerable and dependent on God for all things. And that God depends on us – to be God's hands.

5. Music Festival or Performance

Psalms 98, Psalm 150

People in the Bible have a custom of making a joyful noise to God with instruments and voice. When we perform at or attend music festivals/ performances we are giving thanks to God for the many gifts we have been given. Such events are more regular in the summer months and make a great occasion for a picnic!

6. Art Festival/ Museum

Exodus 31:1-5

Art can be a meaningful expression of praise in both the action of making art and in observing art. Many cities have art events ranging from small exhibits, local gallery strolls, and large museums. Attending an art festival or art museum can provide a new perspective on another's experience as a person and as a person of God.

7. Sports Game

2 Samuel 22:33-37, 1 Timothy 7-10

Most major cities have a professional sporting team. Even more cities have little league or high school teams. Plus, there might be youths or members of the church on a team for whom you can make signs. Show your support for the athletes in your group! When we show support for athletes and sporting events, we are giving thanks to God for our bodies and their abilities while recognizing that it is God who gives all things. These community events are a great way to get to know neighbors, cheer on the home team, and enjoy a hot dog!

8. Animal Shelter

Luke 15:1-7, Numbers 22:27-30

Animals are essential to our existence as humans. They provide us with food, comfort and environmental turnover. They are vital to God's plan and our lives. In response to the gift of animals it is important that we are kind to them. The scriptures teach us that animal cruelty is unacceptable. In response to scripture, we can volunteer in local animal shelters that rescue animals and seek safe homes for them. Through service to all of God's creatures we can faithfully respond to the lessons we are taught in the scriptures.

9. City Hall

Romans 13:1-7, 1 Timothy 2:1-4, Proverbs 29:2

John Calvin confirmed what we read in scripture - that the calling of a civil magistrate is one of great importance because it directly serves God and seeks justice for God's people. It is important to be actively engaged in civic government. Presbyterians see civic engagement as discipleship. This begins in our neighborhoods, around our church or in our schools. Visiting City Hall is a great way to explore the many layers that go into making a community work.

10. Historic Cemetery

Hebrews 12

Most communities have a historic cemetery. When visiting the cemetery, one can learn about the founders of the town and early settlers. Frequently these cemeteries will also have a section for fallen soldiers of local battles and other US wars. The book to the Hebrews reminds us that God has blessed our lives with a great cloud of witnesses. Some of these witnesses came many years before us. While visiting historic cemeteries, we have the opportunity to give thanks to God for the people and to thank God's people for their lives.

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