

DOVIA Mississippi Presents

Ideas for Families and Neighborhoods

Families

- Go to a children's zoo or a park where feeding animals is allowed. Offer a bag of food to another family to feed the animals.
- Bake cookies together, and take them to a neighbor who needs a lift.
- Pitch in and clean up the yard of a neighbor who is ill, has had surgery recently, or has had a family emergency.
- Walk to a nearby park and pick up trash, then have a picnic there.
- Go to the pool for a swim, and pay the entrance fee for another family.
- Organize a carnival for young children, and invite neighboring families or a group of preschoolers to have fun throwing foam balls, fishing for prizes, and playing games. Be sure everyone gets a prize.
- Bake a treat and take it to a police or firefighter station.
- Arrange to plant flowers or a tree at a school or park on a Saturday morning.
- Have each member of your family choose someone outside the family who has made a positive difference in his or her life. Write short thank-you notes, and mail the letters together.
- Discuss the best things about the area where you live, the best places to shop and have fun, etc. Have someone take notes. Then type up the ideas to give to new neighbors who move in.
- Volunteer with your children to help at a soup kitchen.
- Create a Thanksgiving basket of food for a needy family. Make a card with cheerful artwork drawn by each of your family members. Deliver the basket and card to the family.
- Leave a bouquet of flowers on a neighbor's front step anonymously.
- Make some small gifts or write kindness wishes and drawings on bright greeting cards. Deliver them in person to residents of a nursing home, children's home, or senior facility.
- Collect stories from family members about kind acts both given and received, and create a family scrapbook. If you have photos, include them with the stories. As years go by and as your children grow, all of you can review the many ways that kindness has touched your family's life.
- Choose a family who is facing a meager holiday season, and begin collecting items in September for them. If you buy a package of six socks, put one pair aside for the surprise gifts. When you shop for food, buy a couple extra nonperishable items each time. Be sure that both the parents and the children have at least two gifts each, along with the food. Gift-wrap it all, and choose a time when you know they are home. Leave it on their doorstep, and have one person stay to ring the doorbell and run.
- Tape a lunch bag to each family member's door. For a week, put a daily treat or note inside for them to find when they wake up in the morning.

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Neighborhoods

- Plant flowers at a neighborhood school.
- Clean up litter on a stretch of road in your neighborhood.
- Work with a scout troop and paint house numbers on curbs to help emergency personnel find addresses.
- Shovel snow or rake leaves for a neighbor.
- Spruce up the yard of a neighbor or friend who is ill or who has just had surgery or a death in the family.
- Organize spring and fall clean-up projects. Choose an area that needs attention and collect debris, abandoned items, and other materials that have collected in the area.
- Start a neighborhood welcome service, with hints from residents concerning best shopping, childcare, restaurants, etc. Create a welcome basket or bake a treat for a new neighbor.
- Roll an elderly neighbor's garbage cans back up the driveway at the end of trash pick-up day.
- Sponsor a charity run/walk through your neighborhood streets. Runners either pay an entrance fee or get sponsors for their run, and the money goes to charity.
- Publicize a "Thank a Mentor" month in your neighborhood newsletter. Encourage residents to write a thank-you note to someone who has made a difference in the neighborhood or in their life.
- Collect brief personal stories about acts of kindness given or received, and print one in each neighborhood newsletter. People connect with personal stories, and stories are powerful community builders.
- Get a group together to drive to a children's facility and distribute Random Acts of Kindness bookmarks with kindness quotes on them that you have made.
- Gather a few neighbors to adopt an entrance to your neighborhood and periodically have a get-together to keep it weeded and cleaned up. Serve refreshments and make it a Saturday morning party!
- Collect teddy bears for police officers to give to traumatized children. Attach a note to each teddy bear for the donating resident to sign. Invite a police officer and/or trauma social worker to your neighborhood meeting to accept the bears and speak to the residents briefly about the role of kindness in trauma.
- Start an intergenerational program, in which senior citizens help schoolchildren with their reading, writing, or math.
- Create "Kindness – Pass It On" cards for residents to pass from one person to another to accompany kind acts that they do for one another. The card might have a simple graphic with the words: "This act of kindness was performed especially for you. Please offer an act of kindness to someone else, and pass this card on to that person."

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