



A dual-goal strategy to fight local hunger while meeting your neighbors under the best of conditions

Here's Why It Works

It works because it enables you to connect with your neighbors naturally by simply inviting them to help serve hungry kids and their families in their own community. Some people call this comfortable, non-threatening approach "the ultimate ice-breaker."

"Canning Hunger thru Neighborhood Connections" is a strategy that gives us the courage to go from our neighbor's sidewalks to their front door. It finally takes us from prayer-walking to neighbors talking."

— Dr. Paul Cedar, Chairman, Mission America

Here's How It Works

Visit approximately 10 of your closest neighbors and invite them to share one or more non-perishable food items from their cupboards to help fight hunger right where they live. What could be easier?

"Canning Hunger thru Neighborhood Connections" is, without exception, the easiest, most effective neighbor-to-neighbor relationship building strategy I have ever seen."

— Rev. Bob Baily, Indiana

Here's What We've Learned

After years of experience, and knocking on thousands of doors, here's 3 things you can be sure of:

1. "Canning Hunger thru Neighborhood Connections" never fails.
2. You can never knock on ten doors without collecting some amount of food.
3. You can never knock on ten doors and not either deepen an existing relationship or start a new relationship with someone you had never met before.

"Canning Hunger thru Neighborhood Connections" is a great way to meet your neighbors while doing good at the same time. It's a simple way to make acquaintances and build friendships. It always felt good to the soul."

— Dr. Charles Mylander, Retired Friends Church Pastor

Here's What Happens Immediately

You learn new names of people who live within walking distance of your own front door. You increase the name recognition of your church in your community. You learn of needs that you or your church can serve. You have a very real impact on hunger right where you live.

"I've been doing this for two years. I now know dozens of my neighbor's names and they know me by name. "Canning Hunger thru Neighborhood Connections" gives you the perfect reason to intentionally converse with your neighbors."

— Candace R., Neighborhood Volunteer California

Here's Where the Food Goes

All of the food stays in the community where it's collected. It's then distributed through your own church pantry, an agency that your church supports, or the agencies in your community that are experts at getting the food to those who need it the most.

"I know every item of food I collect makes a difference to the needy in our community. That makes me feel good, it makes my neighbor feel good, it makes the distribution group feel good, and makes a family near-by feel good. How can you not want to do that?"

— Jan B., Outreach Director North Carolina



Here's How Things Change

Once friendships have formed, and you continue to pray for and talk with your neighbors about their dreams and needs, real relationships build, real trusts begin to grow, and real doors open leading to opportunities to invite them to church, to an event, a small group, or a back yard BBQ.

"Wouldn't it be incredible if your neighbors, over a period of time, began to share with you their needs, dreams, and spiritual desires? That happens with 'Canning Hunger thru Neighborhood Connections.'"

— Bruce Wilkinson, Author, "Prayer of Jabez"

Here's The Good News

As those relationships grow naturally, they lead to opportunities to effectively share the Gospel.

"While prayer and fasting remain the foundation of spiritual revival, we come to a point where we must boldly and lovingly share the Gospel. "Canning Hunger thru Neighborhood Connections" paves an incredible path for the messenger."

— Dr. Bill Bright (1921 - 2003)
Founder of Campus Crusade for Christ

Here's What Happens Long Term

- Neighborhood Bible studies form or expand.
- Support develops for need in your neighborhood
- Individual prayer life develops and grows.
- Un-churched neighbors learn where to turn to in crisis.
- "Dis-connected" Christians get "Re-connected".



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Q What do we do with the food?

A Here's a few options:

1. If your church has a food pantry, keep the food until you meet all of your distribution needs.
2. If you don't have a food pantry but you have an existing relationship with another food distribution organization, give the food to them.
3. Contact your local food bank or other food distribution groups and develop that relationship. They will be excited to participate. A great resource is www.foodpantries.org

TIP: If possible, have the local agency on site the day of your collection. This way the food gets to the agency immediately and eliminates having to store the food at your church. Have that agency report the results of the pounds of food collected, number of meals provided, value of the goods and services, or any other fun facts. (1.2 pounds = 2 meals and every meal = \$4.05 worth of goods and services). Consider having that agency share in your service on "Collection and Celebration Day."

Q Where do we get the bags?

A Many churches ask their local markets to donate the bags as a way of advertising their participation in the fight against hunger. Others order the bags from a company like Uline, www.uline.com. The (12x7x17) paper bags with flat handles come in bundles of 300. Another option is to use plastic T-shirt bags from Uline or Costco with "Thank You" printed on the bags.

TIP: The paper bags with handles are easier to organize when they are being transported and stored. However, their cost can be a factor in making a decision between "plastic or paper".

Q Is it mandatory that we provide the bags for our members and/or our neighbors?

A No. However, our experience is that you'll receive considerably more food by providing the bags.

TIP: If you use paper bags you can staple the flyers...if you use plastic bags you should tape the flyers.

Q What are the best times of the year to do Canning Hunger routes?

A Here's a few options:

Spring, Summer, or Fall and here's why:

- Spring...several weeks before Easter, so that you can look for opportunities to invite neighbors to your Easter Service.
- Summer...because it is the highest spike in the hunger issue in America...kids are out of school and the food banks experience their largest shortages of the year.
- Fall...because Thanksgiving is the time of year that most people pay attention to the need for a holiday meal.

TIP: Postal Workers normally do an annual food drive called "Stamping out Hunger" on the 2nd Saturday of May. The Boy Scouts of America do their annual food drive called "Scouting for Food" at various times of the year. Check with the Local Scouting Council in your area for their dates. Both of these groups have a long history of doing great works and you should avoid competing with them.

Q How many times a year should we visit our neighbors to collect food?

A Start with once.

Our Canning Hunger Challenge: "Dedicate at least one day, once a year, to help fight hunger in America."

Q Does everyone visit exactly 10 neighbors?

A No! There is nothing magic about the number 10. If you live on a cul-de-sac with 7 homes... your route could be 7 homes. If you live on a street with 12 homes from one corner to the next...your route could be 12 homes. Your route should make sense geographically and be physically comfortable.

Q Can I visit more than 10 neighbors to collect even more food?

A "Canning Hunger thru Neighborhood Connections" is not just a food collection. It is about developing relationships. Experience has taught us that exceeding 10 to 12 neighbors starts to diminish the quality of the relationship building component.



CANNING HUNGER thru Neighborhood Connections 7 Steps



"If you ask Christians what they believe the number one job of the church is, the majority would say "to save souls". But those outside the church... they say the number one job of the church is to "feed the hungry and care for the poor."

—Dr. Norm Whan

- 1 Pray for your neighbors before you make your first visit**
Start praying by name or by address for every neighbor that will be on your route.
- 2 Let your neighbors know you'll be stopping by**
On Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, drop off bags and/or flyers to each home on your route. Fill in the date and time of your planned visit and PRINT your name at the bottom so they can read it clearly.
- 3 Collect bags**
Return at the time schedule you specified and pick the bags up. Chat and get to know your neighbors whenever possible. Try and get their names and learn something about them that you didn't already know.
- 4 Take notes**
As you leave each home, write down names and take quick notes on things you learned and anything you can pray about for your neighbors.
- 5 Bring the food to church**
On "Collection and Celebration" weekend, bring all the food you collected to church. The food will be distributed to the least, the last, the lost, and the left-out in your community.
- 6 Follow up with the results**
You can make this contact with your neighbors in person or you can use a note or card to share the results of how much food was collected. In either event, add personal notes or comments like, "I've been praying for your new job" or "hope your son's baseball game went well!"
- 7 Continue praying and building relationships**
Continue to pray for your neighbors by name and look for opportunities to connect with them. This dual strategy of meeting the needs of the hungry while meeting your neighbors under the best of conditions leads to numerous ways of developing relationships that eventually earn you the right to effectively share the Gospel, invite them to church, to an event, a small group, or a BBQ.



STARTING YOUR ROUTE

Option One

The first option is to drop off “Invitations” to each of your neighbors on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday. Use green or blue tape to attach it to their door to keep from and harming the paint.

Knock on each neighbor’s door on Saturday morning (or other day and time of your choice), introduce yourself by first and last name, remind them why you’re there in case they didn’t see the invitation, hand them a bag, and wait on their doorstep while they gather food to donate. For some of us, that’s NERVOUS TIME! But...it’s very rewarding as well. Since you’re a neighbor, you’ll be well received and even thanked for caring for others.

Here’s some great news...from the information on the “Invitation” flyer, they know three things about you...they know your name, they know you’re a neighbor, and they know you attend a church that cares about others. It’s a great way to “break the ice”.

Option Two

The second option is to drop off a bag with a flyer attached at each of your neighbor’s homes. This option does not require a knock on the door or a face-to-face encounter. Most people do their drop-offs on Wednesday or Thursday evening for a Saturday pick up.

For some, this is the most comfortable first step. However, remember that our ultimate goal is to meet needs of the hungry AND meet our neighbors. There’s nothing bad about a food collection, but, if it doesn’t lead to meeting our neighbors, we’ve missed the primary mission of “*Canning Hunger thru Neighborhood Connections*”.

Here’s some more great news...when you distribute bags with flyers, several of your neighbors will leave food on their doorsteps. That provides a wonderful opportunity to connect with those neighbors to thank them, in person, for their generosity.



TIPS FOR VOLUNTEERS

- Smile and be friendly. Let the light of Jesus shine through you.
- Follow the word track.
- Try to acquire and remember names. It really enhances your new relationships when you call your neighbors by name.
- Deliver “Thank You” notes or visit to say “Thank you as quickly as possible. It’s not expected by your neighbor but they respond very positively to it.
- Do not ask for or accept cash.
- Do not collect before 10:00 a.m. or after sunset.
- Look for opportunities to greet or exchange “small talk!” with your neighbors as often as possible.
- Don’t put donors on the church mail list unless they ask to be included. Don’t “betray” their trust by going beyond the right to collect food.
- Take your children. This is a wonderful opportunity to include other family members in a service and outreach program. But make sure that children are old enough to be a benefit AND benefit from the experience.
- Don’t walk on lawns. Use common sense courtesies.
- Collect only where and when you feel safe. Don’t exceed your “comfort zone”.



CANNING HUNGER thru Neighborhood Connections

ROUTE RESULTS

Participant Information

Your name _____

Church or other organization _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Neighborhood Route Information

Total number of homes on my route: _____

Total number of homes that donated: _____

Total number of items collected: _____

New Participant Returning Participant



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CANNING HUNGER thru Neighborhood Connections

ROUTE RESULTS

Participant Information

Your name _____

Church or other organization _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Neighborhood Route Information

Total number of homes on my route: _____

Total number of homes that donated: _____

Total number of items collected: _____

New Participant Returning Participant

