



Six Ways to *Serve Your Community*

Project warmth

Collect blankets, coats, and other warm clothing for the homeless. One group advertises their annual “blanket run” in the church newsletter and receives several truckloads of donated items. They also approach area businesses for monetary donations to buy rain ponchos and socks (the most requested items). Deliver your bounty to local homeless shelters and soup kitchens for distribution.

Graffiti be gone

Gather buckets, scrub brushes, sandpaper, hoses, and so on and throw a graffiti clean-up party. Concentrate on a single area and you can achieve tangible results in one day.

Urban garden

Help urban dwellers turn an abandoned city lot into a garden by providing seeds, tools, and muscle. Begin by checking with City Hall in case special permits are required. Then set a time to plant the garden, alongside other neighbourhood residents. As you tend the garden all summer, relationships will grow along with the plants.

Prettify a park

Is there a neglected park in your neighbourhood? Get permission from the appropriate local

agency, then roll up your sleeves. You'll need trash bags, work gloves, brooms, and gardening implements. Bring large pieces of screen to sift broken glass, gum, and dangerous objects from sandboxes. You may also need tools for repairing fences. Paint hopscotch and four square courts on the asphalt. Ask local businesses to donate fresh sand or tree bark.

Expect plenty of onlookers

Perhaps you could invite the curious to a cookout at the park to celebrate its restoration.

Treating without the tricks

Instead of collecting treats at Halloween, distribute them. One small-group dressed in amusing (but non-scary) costumes and distributed sweets at a children's hospital (check with the hospital first). One group was able to pray with some of the children's parents, providing hope and encouragement.

Gleanings

Farms and orchards in your area may allow you to collect leftover fruit and vegetables for distribution to food ministries. Groups who've done this are often amazed at the amount of food they can collect in a day.