

Lesson 4: Four Key Practices

Module 1: Getting Started

The Neighborhood Connection Group will engage in four key practices throughout this process. Those four practices are:

1. Engage in the neighborhood
2. Listen
3. Ask questions
4. Share stories

1. Engage in the Neighborhood

The participants of the Neighborhood Connection Group will engage in their neighborhood in some way. The good news is that most people are already involved in some kind of neighborhood activity. Which means that Neighborhood Connection Group participants won't have to *add* something to their schedule. They should simply continue to be involved where they are already involved. (But if they want to engage in their neighborhood in a new way, they can feel free to do so.)

The difference now in their neighborhood engagement is intentionality. Which leads to the second key practice.

2. Listen

The second key practice is to listen—to our neighbors, to each other, and to God.

The Neighborhood Connection Group will listen, first of all, to the people with whom they engage in their neighborhood. They will have conversations, pay attention, take notice. As they listen to their neighbors, they will begin to observe what it seems God is doing in their neighborhood.

The Neighborhood Connection Group members will also listen to each other. We will talk more about this later, but once a month they will gather to reflect together and listen to each other about their experiences in their neighborhood activities.

Finally, they will listen to God. As they pray together and on their own, as they spend time in the scriptures together and on their own, and as they engage in spiritual disciplines and practices, the Neighborhood Connection Group participants will listen to God.

3. Ask Questions

The Neighborhood Connection Group members will ask questions with intentionality. They will ask questions of their neighbors and of their fellow Group members. Asking questions is an important skill to learn in order to discover how God is at work in your neighborhood. A good thing to say to someone in a conversation is, "Tell me more about..."

Lesson 4: Four Key Practices

Module 1: Getting Started

4. Share Stories

This key practice will take place in the monthly Reflection Meeting (which you will learn more about in future lessons). Group members will share stories of what they experienced in their neighborhood. They will recount experiences they had with neighbors. And they will share the stories of that their neighbors shared with them (maintaining appropriate confidentiality, of course).

Reflect

Where are you currently already involved in your neighborhood? Is there some new way you've been wanting to get involved?

Whose story could you ask more about?

What kinds of questions could you ask to learn a little more about someone?

With whom might you share the stories you're hearing?