



LOCAL MISSIONS OPPORTUNITY REPORT

A major component of the **40 Days of Community** is to encourage and equip groups to connect directly with their local communities through outreach and service. The goal is for each of our groups to make a difference in their neighborhood, town, or community by demonstrating the love of Christ in a practical way.

To accomplish this, we're asking you to participate together in an outreach project. This may be a stretch for your group, but we really encourage every one of you to make a concerted effort to contribute something of significance to this component of the 40 Day journey. We believe that some of the most profound and powerful work of God will happen as you work together to make an impact locally.

Through this project, we hope your group will:

- Serve their local communities personally and directly
- Develop stronger personal relationships with each other by serving together
- Build new relationships by reaching out to new people who live nearby
- Become a distinctive, life-giving group within their own town

Can you imagine the impact it will make when groups like yours reach out with the love of Christ to people in towns all around the Boston area?

The **40 Days of Community** runs from January 8th to February 12th, but this doesn't mean that these outreach opportunities are only to be done within the 40 days. We'd love to see outreach become a way of life for your group. Below is a timeline for what we hope you can accomplish.

DURING THE 40 DAYS AND IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER

- Decide on a local project, social issue, or group of people to serve and organize yourselves to begin meeting the need that your group identifies.
- For the three month period following the 40 Days, continue to serve together (e.g. once a month). This may be within the same project your group chose during the 40 Days or God may lead you to do something else as the need arises and as you discover the gifts of the people in your group.

SATURDAY, MAY 13TH - A DAY OF OUTREACH

On Saturday May 13th, Grace Chapel will join together in an **All-Church Day of Outreach**.

- Set this date aside and plan to do some component of your outreach project on this day.
- Alternatively, groups can serve on one of a series of larger projects that Grace Chapel's 40 Days subcommittee has organized.
- At the end of the day, groups will gather at the church for a supper to celebrate what God has done.

BEYOND THE 40 DAYS

- Continue to make local outreach a part of your ongoing life together.

MAKING OUTREACH HAPPEN

To successfully make outreach happen:

1. Appoint an **Impact Coordinator**. An impact coordinator is a person who will mobilize your group to conduct local outreach projects. The ideal impact coordinator:
 - Possesses a desire to reach out with compassion to the people around them
 - Has the ability to make connections and to work with others to organize outreach project details
2. Guide your group through a brainstorming session using Study #2 in the *Better Together* book and this **Local Missions Opportunity Report** as a guide.
3. Choose a local need, agency, or group of people to serve, and organize your members in an effort that demonstrates love in a very practical way. Some ideas to help you choose an outreach project include:
 - Joining with a member of your group who is already serving in some capacity with a local organization to enhance the service being provided.
 - Discussing with your group issues they feel are most pressing in their towns and ways you can reach out together to address that need. (Some suggestions are included below)
 - Referring to the opportunities or contacts that a group can partner with that Grace Chapel's 40 Days subcommittee has identified. These opportunities/contacts include Grace Chapel's ministry partners and other local ministries, such as the regional operations of the Salvation Army, Habitat for Humanity, or the Greater Boston Food Bank and its related food pantries. (See attached for a listing of local service organizations.)
4. Go for it! Don't worry about failure or get bogged down in complex detail. Just ask God to bless your efforts as you love people in the name of Christ!

WORDS OF ADVICE

- Don't think of outreach ministry as a "one shot" deal. Outreach is an attitude and an ongoing value that is to be part of our community lifestyle.
- Try to choose a local connection that is within 10 - 15 minutes drive for most of the group's members to encourage regular contact and developing personal relationships.
- The emphasis during the 40 Days Campaign is more on getting started than on deciding which ministry opportunity or host organization is the one that the group will be attached to long term. In this sense, the phrase, "Just do it," comes to mind with the idea that the experience of ministering together as a group will be positive. Your group may later decide that other local agencies or needs would be a better fit for outreach, given your group members gifts and talents, time schedules, and relationship with the local host agency.
- Remember to focus on building relationships within your group and with the people your group is serving.

SUGGESTIONS FOR OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

The Better Together book suggests several projects/agencies which would be likely candidates for a group to consider, including:

- Volunteer at a local food bank once per month.
- Divide into teams, and rotate weekly to visit shut-ins or nursing homes in your area.
- Divide into teams and rotate weekly to volunteer service at a homeless shelter.
- Assist a local HIV/AIDS ministry.
- Volunteer in an after-school tutoring program for kids who are at high-risk for dropping out of school.

The following ideas are based on what other churches have done with the 40 Days' program and on what other active churches have done to serve their communities, such as:

- Support a crisis pregnancy center, with counseling, baby-care classes to expectant mothers, donations of clothing and other necessities
- Disaster follow-up with local assistance agencies (e.g. Salvation Army or Red Cross)
- Volunteering at Habitat for Humanity for local projects
- Logistical and advisory support in food distribution and other services for community development agencies
- Provide support (spiritual, physical and emotional) for single parents
- Adopt a local school and offer to help with maintenance/clean-up tasks, tutoring and literacy efforts, providing materials for students (backpacks, paper, pencils, and other school supplies), and donating books to the school library.
- Partner with your town or parks department or school to arrange for cleanup for the grounds or municipal building.
- In the Boston area, the Greater Boston Food Bank supplies food to a long list of local food pantries. You can get connected to your town's pantries by going to the Greater Boston Food Bank's website (gbfb.org) and then using Agency Locators and Emergency Food Providers to find a food pantry near your group's location.
- Refer to the attached list sorted by geographic region for a listing of Grace Chapel ministry partners and regional operations for the Salvation Army and Habitat for Humanity. The list also includes the contact name and phone number for the local ministry.