

## LISTENING TO PEOPLE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

What is meant by neighborhood? Your neighborhood is where you go about most of your daily living. It would include places where you buy groceries, your local library, community centre and the street or complex where you live; places where you regularly come in contact with people who are part of the community that you call home.

In the course of everyday living, we often find ourselves in situations where there are natural opportunities to chat with the people we encounter. For example, perhaps you walk your children (or grandchildren) to school and spend time waiting outside the classroom for the children to be dismissed. Who else stands there with you? Do you wait for a bus to get you to work? Do you have a favorite coffee shop you visit often? What are some other conversation opportunities in your daily living?

Whatever this looks like for you, the intention is that you listen to people you may recognize from regular interaction but don't know as well as friends or family. As you meet people in your neighborhood, here are some questions you might ask:

How long have you lived in the neighborhood?

In the time you have lived here, what changes have you noticed?

Can you tell me a story about the neighborhood that you think characterizes this area?

The goal of this activity is not simply to complete it. Instead, the purpose is for you to engage with others, without agenda, simply to learn a bit about who they are and what their perspectives might be of your neighborhood. Feel free to let the conversation go where it will but try your best to listen to what the other person is saying. You may want to make some notes afterwards as a way to capture what you have heard.

So, why are we doing this? We are doing this because the clues to where God might already be at work can be found in the people that we meet. In order to uncover those clues, we need to be paying attention to what God might be trying to say to us through the voices of others. Just as God can be revealed by listening to what another has to say through the practice of Dwelling in the Word, so, too, might God be revealed through listening to the voices of those we encounter in our daily living.