



the visual **faith** project

A Visual Faith Experience

Wow! The Neighborhood Has Changed!

By Dr. Dick Hardel

Theme: Wow! The Neighborhood Has Changed! (Luke 10:25-37)

Intended Audience

It is best to do Visual Faith Exercises within small groups of four or five because it gives more opportunity for all the members of the group to participate. If you have more people for your experience, divide them into two or more small groups. Intergenerational groups are always most helpful because of the variety of experiences. For this experience it would be most interesting to include people who have moved often to different states, cities, rural areas, or countries.

Outcome of Experience

The participants will learn from their discussions of the variety of communities where they have lived that the diversity of a community is a gift. They will also learn of God's command to "love your neighbor as yourself" needs to continue as a immediate neighborhood, a city, a state, a country, our world change with ethnic diversity. Our motivation to care for all people in need is the love of God.

Introduce Experience

Moving into a new community is often a difficult emotional experience. One can be filled with many emotional fears of fitting in or being accepted: at work, at school, with neighbors, at church, with making friends, etc. The study of the last USA Consensus shows a much greater growth of people of ethnic groups other than white. Thus our neighborhoods will be changing and we will also be challenged to make changes in ourselves with each move. This visual faith experience challenges us to understand and follow God's command to "love our neighbor as yourself."

Image Selection

Think about a time either you, as an individual, or with your family, made a major move to a new community, including college or trade school or going into the workforce. What were your emotions or fears? What did the new community look like? Or think about a time you returned to a community where you once lived some time ago. How had the community changed (people or physical buildings)?

Choose two images that connect to the emotions you experience in moving to a new community or choose images that connect to the change in a community to which you returned (visited after a long time or moved back).



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Facilitators Questions To Guide Group Discussion

1. How do the images you have selected connect to your experience of a major move into a new community or after several years returning to a community where you previously lived?
2. What emotions do you remember having in the move or return?
3. What were the changes you noticed or felt in the new community or past community?
4. How had these neighborhoods changed?
5. What in you has changed because of these neighborhoods?
6. Describe your neighbors in either of those places.

Scripture - Luke 10:25-37

25 Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" 27 He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." 28 And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." 29 But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' 36 Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" 37 He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Image Selection

Choose one person from the small group(s) to read this Scripture text dramatically. Choose two other people to listen carefully to this text and when this reading is completed to go to the table(s) with the various images displayed, and choose two images each that connect to this Scripture story. Instruct those remaining at the table think of questions to ask of the persons presenting the connection of their images with this story in Scripture.

Image Packs

We recommend the People Pack (set of 100 printed images) for use with this experience or other images that you may already have. You can find the People Pack at: <https://vibrantfaith.org/shop/visualfaithcards>



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Questions to Connect Chosen Image with Scripture

1. Question Directed to the Two People Who Selected the Images:

What is the connection of the images you have chosen with this story in Scripture?

2. Question Directed to Others in the Small Group:

What questions do you have concerning the connection of the images with this text?

3. How is this story still very relevant in the Middle East today—the same area of the original story?

4. Hospitality is an important custom or value of the faith systems of Muslims, Jews, and Christians.

Why is it so difficult to make happen in our communities?

5. Where might God be in our struggles with changes within us and/or in our neighborhood changes?

Application

- What action does Jesus' command and story to "love your neighbor as yourself" call to you in your neighborhood?
- What action or change in action does this command and story call to your congregation or faith community?
- How does this command of Jesus and the story challenge you and your friends?
- How does this command of Jesus and the story challenge our country?

Prayer

As the facilitator create a holy space for the individuals and group to engage in prayer. Lighted candles often enhance a holy space. Place a cross in the midst of a table. Invite the participants to bring their images and place them around the cross on the table.

Give each participant a short piece of paper with the following sentence prayer starters:

- A change in me that I need from you, Lord, to make me a better caregiver to my neighbor is...
- To love my neighbor as myself what I need from this group is...
- What this congregation (or organization) needs from me to increase its caregiving is...

Instruct the participants to complete the sentences in writing and then placing their responses on the images that surround the cross. **[Note to Facilitator: If the group is very close and trust each other, the statement can be complete orally.]**

Close by either reading or singing Eddie Espinosa's hymn "Change My Heart, O God" (or use a different song or hymn known by the small group that connects to the theme of this experience).

Change my heart, O God; make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God; may I be like you.

You are the potter; I am the clay.

Mold me and make me; this is what I pray.