

## REACH WIDE

### HOW BIG IS YOUR WORLD?

By Nancy Tichy

#### “Meet the Nicholsons”

It was late afternoon as Jeremy sat with his laptop open on the dining room table. Mom came in carrying a stack of plates. “What on earth are you up to? School’s out now, even online,” she said.

“I’m making a list of all the people I know who live in or come from another country,” Jeremy answered. “I call it my friendship pandemic — although I know that a pandemic usually isn’t positive, like friendship is.”

“Well, do you know a lot of people from other countries?” Mom asked.

“Seven people! Can you believe it? I’ll show you later, after dinner.”

“I guess your world is really expanding,” Mom said with a smile, “but for right now, you can focus on helping me set the table!”



Later, as the four Nicholsons enjoyed apple pie (their once-a-week dessert treat), Mom asked Jeremy to tell about his “friendship pandemic” study. “I’ll just say,” Jeremy began, “my world includes friends from West Africa, Turkey, Bolivia, Ireland, Canada, and Tunisia!”

“Wow, Jeremy!” his sister, Cara, joined in. “I think we need a huge world map to put up somewhere, so we can get a better picture of your big world. And, by the way, Jeremy, you forgot Grandpa Benson, Mom’s dad. He came from Norway when he was a teenager.”

Dad added, “I think you’re really onto something there, Jeremy. People say the world is shrinking, but maybe God wants us to expand our family’s small world! I wonder how God views the world? I wonder where this friendship pandemic list will lead us?”



Take a look at Jeremy’s list:

- **Cara**, adopted sister, born in a West African country.
- **Ian**, Jeremy’s cousin presently in Turkey because Jeremy’s uncle and aunt are working there, moving every two years from country to country.

- **Jose**, a child in Bolivia, whom the Nicholsons help support through a mission agency.
- **Patrick**, an exchange student from Ireland who was in Jeremy’s class for a semester.
- **Alicia**, the neighbor’s daughter, an *au pair* (babysitter) in Quebec, Canada.
- **Mary Jo and Michael**, “sheltered at home” in Tunisia with their parents, who are “undercover” missionaries teaching at the university in the capital city of Tunis.
- **Grandpa Benson**, born in Norway.

## REACH WIDE: Ideas for Engagement

### Here’s what you need:

- A large paper or plastic world map mounted in a space that’s accessible to everyone.
- Small paper circles or a sheet of sticky circles for each person.

### Here’s what to do:

- Each member of your family or class makes a list of the people he or she knows who live, or used to live, outside your country.
- You can give a different color of circles to each person, or each person can print his or her initials on a circle for each name on the list. As you place a circle on the map, explain why you want to remember each person who lives far away.
- Talk about ways you might keep in touch. Can you phone, or send letters, emails or texts?
- Create a way you can pray for those on your list, perhaps a different person each day.

## PRAYER

**Dear Heavenly Father ...** Thank you for wrapping your love around our whole, big world and everyone in it. Help me and my family (class) to care more like you care. Lead us in ways that we can share your love to those far away and those close to us. For Jesus’ sake ... Amen.

## BE CLOSE: Kids With God — Loving Others

### KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Loving others flows from our relationship with God, which we share through relationships with others. Let's get to know our neighbors.

Draw a simple map of the street where you live, using a square to indicate each house on your map. Label each house with the family name, if you know it. Make a point of having a conversation this month with as many neighbors as possible, writing down the name of each family member.

Can you complete your map this month?

Take a few minutes and talk with your children:

- What was hard about this challenge? What was easy?
- Which families would you like to know better?
- Which families can you pray for? Do that together.

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### TIME WELL SPENT

What is something you like to do? Do it for or with another person in your neighborhood. Ask God who you should get to know more closely. Reach out by baking cookies that you deliver to them, invite them to your home for games and ice cream, or meet them for a walk in your neighborhood. Make sure you find out their name(s), the best thing that has happened for them this year, and their least favorite thing about this year. When you get home, pray for them and thank God for time with new friends.



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## LOVE DIFFERENTLY : Kids With God — Loving Others

### DIFFERENT YET ALIKE

Every day we are close to people who are very different from us. Remember, God loves all people everywhere. Look around each day. See how many types of people near you are different in one of these ways:

- Born in a different country.
- Much older.
- Much younger.
- Different skin color.
- Writes with a different hand than you.
- Speaks a different language.
- Has different physical abilities.

Put a pebble or an M&M in a jar for each difference you find every day this month.

- Count them.
- How many differences did you find?

Share with each other:

- Why do you think God has so many different kinds of people in the world?
- How are you still alike?
- Together, thank God for the different people you met.



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Begin a friendship with someone in their elder years. It may be someone in your neighborhood, church, or a home for assisted living. Talk with them about the things they did as they grew up in their family. Take them a card or a picture you drew, or sing them a song. Before you leave, ask if you can pray with them. You just made each other's day special. (If you can't currently visit in person, try calling or sending a text or email.)



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