

15 Easy Ways to Spread Kindness

1. Deliver soup to a neighbour.

Make a large batch of soup in the crockpot (enough to feed your family – with some left over). It doesn't have to be fancy! Fill a mason jar with soup, screw the lid on tight (you can even add a ribbon) and deliver the jar to a neighbour with a note letting them know you're thinking of them. It's a nice surprise meal to get on a winter cold day. Our favourites to share are butternut squash or an Italian sausage soup!

2. Share your wardrobe.

Take a dreary day to go through your closet and donate (either to an organization or friend/family member) clothing or accessories that you no longer wear, but are in great condition. Remember – only donate things you'd give to a good friend! You'll be blessing someone else and making some room in your closet – I call that a win-win!

3. Bring a treat into the office for your co-workers.

It's no secret that we love treats around the Graf-Martin Communications office. I love to bake, but I don't often have time. Why not swing by your local coffee shop on your way in to work one day, and bring in some donuts, cookies or even a carafe of coffee to share?

4. Make a donation.

This month, choose a cause you believe in, and make a donation, even if it's a small one, and send a note telling them why you care about what they do. When we choose to give back, we're serving others by extending the generosity that God has given us, which is so important.

5. Write a handwritten note.

Isn't it nice to go to your mailbox and find something other than bills and junk mail waiting for you? I love to write hand-written notes – it's a small act that can really brighten someone's day. This month, write a note to a friend or family member and drop it in the mail.

6. Tell someone they're good at their job.

Service industry jobs are tough. When we get great service at a restaurant, or at a store, we've started intentionally telling the person who served us! The next time you notice that you've had a great experience, let the person know! Many people who work in the service industry rely on tips to earn a wage to live off of – so, as you are able, leave them a generous tip.

7. Text a friend.

A short text message is a simple and sweet way to boost someone's mood. Think of someone in your life that could use some extra encouragement and send them a text! Pray for them, and let them know you're doing it!

8. Leave a book behind.

Next time you're at the doctor's office or waiting for your car to be serviced, bring a book or magazine you've already read and leave it behind. It'll be a nice surprise for someone who is sitting in the same place, waiting for their turn.

9. Shovel the driveway.

I'm not a winter person, that's for sure, and I'd rather not shovel my driveway - so my husband normally does. He sure appreciates it if I do it for him though! If you have a healthy back, grab a shovel and bring your kids out to clear your driveway - or a neighbour's driveway, as a surprise. It'll probably only take about 15 minutes but I'm sure they'll appreciate it (and you get some great exercise)!

10. Write a recommendation.

Do you have a LinkedIn account? Go out of your way to write a recommendation for one of your connections. You never know who could see it and your words have the power to make a great impression - in addition to making your connection feel empowered and encouraged!

11. Send Valentines.

Remember giving and receiving Valentine cards at school? Why did we ever stop?! Buy a package of valentines and send them to the children in your life - or your friends who could use a pick-me-up!

12. Invite others in.

Having people over for a meal has become a bit of a lost art - and it is a game-changer, especially in those lonely winter months. What about inviting someone over for lunch or dinner - even if it is take-out pizza with a board game after. It doesn't have to be fancy - easy, and low-stress beats out a stressful high-end dinner every time!

13. Give a friend a hug.

Sometimes we forget that our friends need hugs too - or even that our spouse needs a hug after a long day at work. A good hug can go a long way with a friend who just needs to know they're loved.

14. Put down your phone.

Face time is one of the most rare treats we can get some days - and too often, I look around the room and see half the people on their phones. Leave your phone in your purse, or in your coat pocket (with the ringer on, if you need to.) Have a fully engaged conversation, and show the person in front of you that you value them more than your phone.

15. Play a game.

My daughter LOVES games, but too often, I'm busy getting stuff done and don't take the time to sit down and actually play. What about giving the gift of an after-dinner game time? Make it special with popcorn, and a sparkly drink (our girl loves Pomegranate juice with a splash of club soda in a fancy glass.)