



## Faithful Families Walking Challenge: Taking Steps to Reconnect

This week we encourage you to find ways to reconnect with your community—family members, friends, fellow faith community members or neighbors. Social connection and support provide a wide array of mental and physical health benefits and walking can be a great way to nurture connections.

*“Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light.”*

– Helen Keller

### Take Steps Together

Evidence shows a wide range of health benefits can result from regularly participating in walking groups, including improved cardiovascular health and mental health. Walking with a group can also improve safety and increase effectiveness by helping you adhere to a program. Read more about this and the other top health benefits of walking from [America Walks here](#).



### Connection Points

- Invite a friend, neighbor or family member to join you for a walk. Use the time to interview one another to learn something new about each other's lives and interests. StoryCorps has great tips for getting a conversation started. This can be a great way to make an intergenerational connection! Share your story of connection with us via social media or by submitting a success story.
- Make a map. Print a map of your neighborhood or community using Google Maps or other online tool. You could also use a traditional paper map. As you walk and take note of the places in your community that have meaning, mark them and share with your team or partner or family and friends. Use the time to learn about one another and the values and dreams you share for your community.

## Reconnect with Community

What are the connections to your community that need nurturing right now? What are your hopes for your community as you engage in life together? Think about how you might use your walking time to strengthen an existing connection or make a new one!

### Renew Existing Connections

- Reach out to a friend, family member, member of your faith community or neighbor and make a plan to walk together. Bring along a picnic or healthy snack and enjoy a time of rest along the way or afterward!
- If you are participating in the challenge as a team, consider scheduling a team walk once a week to encourage one another.
- Coordinate a walk before or after regularly scheduled faith community meetings or other community events and invite other attendees to join you.
- Establish a family routine of walking together for 15 minutes after an evening meal.
- If you can't be together in person, consider connecting over the phone or by text as you walk. Use the time to catch up!

### Make a New Connection

- Think about making a new connection with someone in your community who shares a common interest. Is there a mall walking group or a parent group who could stroll together? Or a fellow pet owner to join you and your pet on walks?
- The walking challenge can be a great reason to reach out and meet a need! Think about seniors in your community who need company or maybe parents/caregivers of young children who need a break.
- Find a new place to walk in your community and being intentional about making small connections—just a wave or a smile can go a long way!

### Take Time to Dream

- As you walk, take note of the things you love about your neighborhood—places with special meaning, people who make your life richer, beautiful spaces that inspire you.
- Change up your route and as you discover new places consider any opportunities for improvement or growth. Are there sidewalks that need attention? How accessible are walking spaces for families with children or individuals with physical challenges?
- Share your ideas and dreams with your team or walking partners and neighbors—the things you love and the things you hope for!