

EXPERIMENT # I – OBSERVATION – Week of 2/22

What you'll need

- An hour
- A notebook
- A pen
- A location near your home where people hang out. (Your school cafeteria during lunch, a school sporting event, the city park, grocery store, etc.) Don't limit yourself to the neighborhood you live in, but something in your neighborhood would be ideal.
- Optional: Music and headphones

What it is

The first tangible step to becoming Good News in our neighborhood is learning about the people who live near you.

Why do you have to do that? You might think you know everything about your neighbors you need to know. But chances are pretty high that you only notice the things you want to notice. In fact, one of the primary jobs of your brain is to filter out unimportant information so that you can concentrate on what's important. In this experiment, we are going to try to reverse this a bit so that you might discover things about your neighborhood you never noticed.

Don't worry-- You don't have to talk to anyone! This experiment is purely observation.

The goal is really, really simple. You are going to go and watch people and write down everything you see. Then, next week we will come together and share our observations.

How it works

Find a place to sit for an hour. A coffee shop is the easiest. But anywhere that people might hang out will work. During this experiment you need to either be alone or with one other person. (A parent or friend is fine-- they just can't talk to you!) Once you get started all you have to do is sit there and write down what you are seeing.

Reserve making any judgments on what you see. The goal here isn't to draw any conclusions, just make observations. You're just going to write down everything you see. We're going to give you some guidelines, but don't limit what you can observe!

What to do

Divide a piece of paper into four sections. Label the sections: Gender, Age, Race, and Shoe Color.

Divide another piece of paper into four sections. Label the sections: Alone/with someone, Type of clothing, What are they doing, and How long do they stay.

Next, start keeping a tally of each person you see. After a few people you'll get the hang of it. If there's a lull in the action, start observing other things that seem interesting to you. Maybe draw a

layout of your location and start to track which door people come in or how many people go to the bathroom. The point here is just to write down as much of what you're seeing as possible.

At the end of the hour, tally up all of your observations and save your notes for the next time your group gets together.