



Christmas Party Handbook

By Norm and Becky Wretlind and Steve Fernalld

Introduction

The Evangelistic Christmas Party may be today's most natural and effective way to build relationships with our neighbors and share with them the life-changing message of Christ. In this handbook you will learn a simple step-by-step process for conducting this exciting method of outreach. Many people have successfully used this approach to launch a ministry in their neighborhood and to establish a tradition that their neighbors look forward to each year.

While we suggest some very specific steps for a successful party, we want you to design your party to fit both *your* style of reaching out to people and *your* neighborhood. Feel free to vary your approach from the ways we suggest. The most important thing is to provide your neighbors with a warm, fun-filled experience during which they will get to know you better, and be challenged to know the One we celebrate and worship at Christmas and throughout the year.

The first section of the handbook, "Perspectives", takes a look at God's heart for those who don't know Him and issues a challenge for us to join Him in the incredible privilege of introducing them to His Son. The second part of the handbook, "Throwing a Party With an Eternal Purpose", is organized chronologically, providing suggestions on what to do *before*, *during* and *after* the party. As you read this section, you will be referred to the third section of the Handbook (Practical Tools and Resources) which will provide you with helpful tools to assist you in each phase of your Party.

May God bless you with the joy of ministering to your neighbors and seeing many of them come to know the One we celebrate year round—Jesus Christ.

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***“We can be God’s
lighthouses, shining
out to those around
us adrift in the dark
sea of life.”***

My Dear Christian Neighbor,

Jesus Christ’s words ring out as clearly, as urgently, as ever, “You are the light of the world!” God is calling His people afresh to this promise, to this *command*. We *can* be His lighthouses, shining out to those around us adrift in the dark sea of life. It can begin in our own living rooms. And it can be much easier and more natural than you ever thought possible.

“Love Thy Neighborhood” has become the life theme of my wife, Becky, and me for over 25 years –ever since we held our first neighborhood evangelistic Christmas party in a Dallas suburb. That party broke through our fear of sharing with our neighbors. Within the first three years, more than 60 neighbors from an eight-block area invited Christ into their lives! They have become life-long friends. Our children grew up together. Whole families came to the Lord. And what’s most amazing, a thriving church of about 1,000 people grew out of that nucleus! All because we simply invited God to use our home as a lighthouse in our neighborhood!

What is God planning in *your* neighborhood? And what will be your part in it? We want to challenge you to become a lighthouse in your sphere of influence. God has entrusted believers just like you with the Word and the ministry of reconciling others to Him. It’s about the most loving thing you can do while awaiting His return! It’s also His *command*: “You *shall* love your neighbor as yourself.” That is His method for the Great Commission to be fulfilled. As we love them, He draws them to Himself!

We are asking God to inspire one million “lighthouses” to host evangelistic Christmas parties by December 31, 2000. Will you be among them?

May God visit your neighborhood.

Norm Wretlind, Co-founder and Director
Neighborly Evangelism Ministries

P.S. See pages 8-9 for more on “The Lighthouse Movement,” an exciting national strategy to mobilize three million Christians to pray, care for and share Christ with their neighbors.



Dear Ladies,

Do you long to really know your neighbors—to reach out to women and share the wonderful news of the Gospel?

Maybe this seems too lofty a goal. Maybe you have a job outside your home; Or maybe you are a stay-at-home mom who home schools her children; In any case, you seem to only have time for kids and house and husband, and barely that. Your life is mere survival every day. Of course, you see the needs around you—the single moms, the latch-key kids; you hear rumors of a struggling couple and the drug-addicted teens down the street. You know those neighbors need Christ, but your own life is too stressful and too busy to think far beyond it.

I understand where you are. I've been there too. Twenty-five years ago I couldn't see over my pile of laundry to even think about going next door and beginning a relationship with a neighbor who needed Jesus desperately.

But the Lord burdened my heart to at least *pray* for the neighbor next door, then the one next door to her, then around the cul-de-sac, then up and down the streets of my little neighborhood. Something began to happen in my heart. God began to give me an *expectancy* that He was at work in my neighbors' lives. Then He gave me a *plan* to go meet my neighbors, invite them over, and have a party! That became my recipe, if you will, for Neighborly Evangelism Ministries: PEP—Pray, Expect and Plan.

Within a few months, I had discovered two other Christian women on my cul-de-sac who were also burdened for our neighbors, so I shared my plan with them. We decided to have a Neighborhood Valentine Coffee for the women. At the coffee we invited them to join us for a six-week Bible study. Within six months we had seen 12 women come to Christ! God had been at work as I was *praying* for my neighbors, even before I knocked on their doors. He filled my heart with faith (*expectancy*), so when I began to work my *plan*, it was just a matter of reaping a harvest that was already ripe.

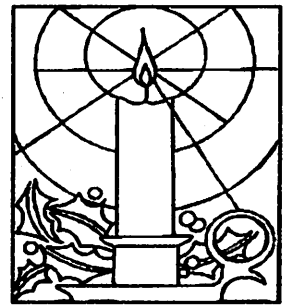
Seeing more than 60 of my neighbors come to Christ in a three-year period has been the single most joyful experience of my life. Now, over 25 years later, many of those 60 neighbors have children and grandchildren who are walking with God. Maybe the Lord has something similar in mind for your neighborhood. Isn't it worth looking over your pile of laundry and making a choice to begin a neighborhood ministry?

Follow the PEP recipe: Pray. Expect. Plan. God will do the rest! "O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the woman who puts her trust in Him" (Psalm 34:8).

Prayerful and expectant for you,

Becky Wretlind

Becky Wretlind, Co-founder
Neighborly Evangelism Ministries



***“Follow the
PEP recipe:
Pray. Expect. Plan!
God will do the rest!”***





Understanding the Big Picture

by Steve Fernald

The story is told of a wealthy Texas rancher who each year would invite all of his friends to a huge party. At this party the rancher would gather them all around his Olympic-sized swimming pool and make the following offer in his thick Texas drawl: "In this here swimmin' pool I've put 50 hungry alligators. If any man can successfully swim from one end to the other, I will give him his choice of one of three options: 10,000 acres of my finest ranch land; \$10 million cash; or the hand of my lovely daughter, Thelma Lou, in marriage."

Each year this offer was made, and each year no one dared to take him up on it. But this year was different, because just as the rancher had finished his offer, a young man exploded out of the crowd and into the pool, biting and scratching his way from one end to the other, winding up at the feet of the rancher. The rancher exclaimed, "Young man, I must say I never thought anyone would actually take me up on my offer, but being a man of my word, I will fulfill my end of the bargain. What will it be? Would you like 10,000 acres of my finest ranch land?" The young man, gasping for breath, answered, "No, sir, I don't want your land!" The rancher replied, "Well then, do you want the \$10 million I offered?" The young man, once again trying to collect himself, responded, "No, sir, I don't want your money!" A gleam shone in the rancher's eye. "I know. You must want the hand of my lovely daughter, Thelma Lou." "No, sir, I don't want your daughter!" Exasperated, the rancher fired back, "Well, son, what *do* you want?" Having finally caught his breath, the young man replied, "Mister, I just want five minutes with the guy who pushed me into that pool!"

"For some of us, evangelism can feel like someone is trying to push us into something — and there are alligators there waiting for us!"

Being challenged to be involved in evangelism can make some of us feel the same way. We're afraid someone is trying to push us into something—and there are alligators waiting for us! However, when we realize that evangelism is a process, and that the results are up to God, we are free to enjoy the greatest privileges we will ever experience in our walk with Christ—the privilege of sharing our faith with the people around us.

One of the most freeing truths about our ministry to neighbors is that *evangelism is a process*. Oftentimes, we view evangelism as a point-in-time exchange of information wherein we must immediately call for a response and "close the deal." Although we must be committed to challenging others to receive Christ, we must first make sure the "soil" of their hearts has been prepared, the "seed" of the Gospel is deeply planted, and that time is allowed for God to work in the lives of our friends. The apostle Paul alluded to this reality when he remarked, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth" (I Cor. 3:6). *The process of seeking to lead our neighbors to Christ begins long before we actually communicate the life-changing message of the Gospel, and continues long after we finish.*

Preparing the Heart:

The priority of prayer

One of the best places to begin reaching out to our neighbors is on our knees. Here we can ask God to give us a burden to be used in the lives of



those around us. Here we can express our complete dependence upon God to move and work in their lives. The apostle Paul expressed this conviction when he wrote, “Brethren, my *heart’s desire* and my *prayer* for them is for their salvation” (Rom. 10:1). Through our prayer, God can begin to work both in our hearts and in the hearts of those around us.

Preparing the Soil:

The priority of loving relationships

Christian author Joseph Aldrich once wrote, “Before we can share the Good News, we must *be* Good News.” Not only does the building of a trusting relationship add credibility to our message, but it also opens more doors for communicating that message. Relationship-building is one of the most frequently neglected aspects of evangelism—because relationships are costly. Healthy relationships require an investment of time. But many fail to recognize that making time for our neighbors can be as easy as including them in our existing activities.

In the parable of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15:3-7), the shepherd instinctively leaves the 99 sheep in open pasture and goes out after the one that is lost because he knows that it is *this* lamb who is in immediate and certain danger. As the prophet Jonah discovered, God desires to move us out of the whale and into the world so He can use us to bring His message of love and forgiveness to those who will find no real hope apart from Christ.

Planting the Seeds:

The practice of sharing the Gospel

The goal of the evangelistic Christmas party is not only to build rapport with our neighbors, but also to provide a natural opportunity to communicate the Gospel in a relevant way. During the group’s sharing of Christmas memories, we and our Christian neighbors have the chance to communicate how our personal relationship with Christ opened our eyes to the true meaning of Christmas. Seed-planting continues throughout the year as we build on what we shared during our Christmas party.

Watering and Cultivating the Soil:

The post-party follow up

As we continue to interact with our neighbors after the party, we water the seeds planted by asking our neighbors what they thought about the party and what we shared. By initiating spiritual conversations such as these, we will help them more clearly understand the Gospel. Moreover, by inviting our neighbors to join an evangelistic Bible study after the party, we provide them with a safe place to ask questions about the Christian faith and to overcome any spiritual hurdles that might be keeping them from trusting Christ.

Praying Faithfully:

A continuous dependence on the Lord of the harvest

Although the Apostle Paul took the initiative to plant seeds, he was acutely aware that only God could cause the growth (I Cor. 3:6). *Paul openly admitted his fears and weaknesses, but knew that these would never stop God from using him.* In I Corinthians 2:1-5, Paul confesses, “And when I



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***“The apostle Paul
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came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.”

Through prayer we express to God our complete dependence upon Him to speak through us and to use the message of the Gospel to impact the lives of our neighbors. As we follow up on what we shared at the Christmas party in subsequent conversations and at the Evangelistic Bible Study, we continue to petition God to draw our neighbors to Himself.

Celebrating the Harvest:

Rejoicing with God over changed lives

Returning to Luke 15:3-7, we see that the immediate response of the shepherd who lost one of his sheep was to search tirelessly until he found it. Upon finding the sheep, he immediately called together his friends and celebrated that this sheep that was lost had now been found. The passage concludes by saying that when someone comes to know Christ, all of heaven pauses to celebrate the miracle that a person’s eternal destiny has been changed.

When we see God move and work in the lives of our neighbors, we need to stop and join the heavenly hosts in rejoicing that someone we care about has gone from eternal separation from God into the loving arms of the heavenly Father. Imagine the impact that *their* testimony will have in the lives of our other neighbors if they were to share it at our next Christmas party!

Going to the Fields:

Committing to pray, care and share

When you and I are willing to actively pray for our neighbors, get involved in their lives as friends, invite them to an Evangelistic Christmas Party, and follow up on the seeds planted, we can trust God to work in their lives and draw them to Himself. This is a tremendous reason to relax and let God do the work!

Be inspired and motivated by the shepherd in Luke 15. As followers and representatives of Christ, the Good Shepherd, we need to step into the lives of our neighbors, pursuing those who need Him. When we are willing to leave the 99 behind to care for and seek after the one that is lost, we can trust God to use us to impact the eternal destinies of others.



Potential Benefits of Hosting an Evangelistic Christmas Party



Benefits to You as Host

- A fun, non-threatening, first step to gather neighbors into your home
- An exciting experience in the joy of trusting God
- A valid reason to knock on every door on your block, with a party invitation in hand, and introduce yourself
- A way of presenting the true meaning of Christmas in a culturally acceptable manner
- A platform for sharing your testimony as others share what Christmas means to them
- A concrete way to show your neighbors how much you value them by inviting them into the privacy of your home
- A way to break down prejudices, fears and isolation in your neighborhood
- A fun-filled gathering where you gain insight into others' lives through the games, singing and sharing time together
- An opportunity to gain insights into the most effective ways of reaching out to and praying for particular neighbors
- A way to break down the stereotypes others may have of Christians
- A memorable experience for your children as they watch you make evangelism a lifestyle

Benefits to Your Neighbors as Guests

- A refreshing, uplifting experience compared to the other parties they may attend in December
- A time to discover that you are a friendly, approachable and "real" person who cares about them
- A way to foster new friendships throughout the neighborhood
- A fresh feeling of community that will encourage neighbors to take more initiative with each other in the future
- A sense, perhaps for the first time, of God at work in their lives
- A lessening of the isolation and loneliness felt by so many today
- A chance for their children to grow up with—and be influenced by—your Christian children
- *A chance to hear the most important and life-changing message of Christ in a nonthreatening environment of friendship*

“The last person we thought would come was the first to arrive and the last to leave! I was able to share my testimony one-on-one after the party. The very next day this neighbor came to church with us!”

Past Party Host





Jesus Loved a Good Party!

Jesus, God in the flesh, who came from heaven to seek and save the lost, enjoyed parties! In fact, He chose to perform His first miracle at one. The wedding and reception in Cana was probably packed with people. Lots of laughter, music, mingling, neighbors catching up on each others' news. Great food brought by all. A truly festive mood. And in that environment Jesus chose to demonstrate His power and blessing. God Himself showed up at a party!

Why would Jesus and His followers walk 90 miles to go to a party? Didn't they have work to do? Didn't He have principles to teach? Wasn't His time limited? How could attending a wedding party fit with His purpose on earth?

The answer is found in the second verse of John 2: "Jesus and His followers were also *invited* to the wedding." When the bride and groom were putting their guest list together, Jesus' name was included. Whoever was hosting this party was happy to have Jesus there.

He wasn't invited because He was a celebrity. He wasn't one yet. The invitation wasn't motivated by His miracles. He hadn't yet performed any. So why was Jesus invited?

I suppose they simply liked Him . . . a lot! Common folks enjoyed being with Jesus. The Almighty didn't act "high and mighty." The Holy One didn't put on airs as "holier than thou." The One who knew it all wasn't a "know-it-all." He would later be known for going to parties thrown by tax collectors and sinners. He would be accused of eating too much, drinking too much, and hanging out with the wrong people.

His faith made Him likeable, not detestable. He had walked 90 miles from Jericho to Cana to be at that wedding. He brought His friends along. He obviously enjoyed being with those people. And He probably liked the food and festivities.

Co-author Norm Wretlind remarks, "What was the result of Jesus' going to a party? John 2: 11: "His followers *believed in Him.*" Amen! I bet if Jesus had owned a home that He would have thrown some parties for His neighbors and friends. Should we do any less? If you open your home for your neighbors, Jesus will show up too! That was our experience."

Adapted from When God Whispers Your Name by Max Lucado, © 1994, Word Inc., Dallas, TX. (Used by permission of Word, Inc. All rights reserved.)

***"Common folks
enjoyed being with
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The Holy One
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Decide to be a Lighthouse. Commit to pray, care and share.



“A commitment to be a lighthouse is a commitment to pray for, care for and share Christ with your neighbors,” according to Mission America.

The key strategy to reach the 260 million Americans with the love of Christ by the end of the year 2000 is called “The Lighthouse Movement.” The goal is to make sure that every person in the United States is prayed for by name, cared for, and made aware of the Gospel. This was the unanimous agreement in January, 1999, of more than 300 evangelical leaders and heads of some 70 evangelical denominations. They have joined together under one umbrella called Mission America. They believe that Christians reaching their neighbors is the most effective means of evangelism today. They are committed to recruit three million Lighthouses.

Extensive research has revealed that nearly 85% of those who came to faith in Jesus Christ, came because of the influence of a caring Christian friend or relative. Mission America leaders are convinced that the Great Commission will be fulfilled, not by the professional clergy or evangelists, but by believers like *you* who are simply loving your neighbors. How interesting it is that Jesus said the whole law was wrapped up in one command: *“Love your neighbor as you love yourself!”* As Christians live out the Great Commandment, the Great Commission is naturally fulfilled. What an amazing plan God has! Every Christian is able to do this!

What is a “lighthouse”? It is a person or family, a church, or any group of believers who commits to pray for, care for and share Christ with those in their immediate neighborhood or social network. That’s you! Welcome to the Lighthouse Movement! We believe there will be more than three million lighthouses across our land by the end of the year 2000! Each will reach out to about 20 residences, or about 100 people. Three million lighthouses times 100 people is more than the total number of men, women and children in the United States! Go to www.lighthousemovement.com to learn more. The following sections describe what you can do for your neighbors as their Lighthouse.

Pray

Begin by listing three or four people that you know who don’t believe in Christ. Start praying for them now. Next, practice “prayer walking” around your immediate neighborhood or your place of employment. Pray this acronym: BLESS.

- B = BODY (pray for their health needs)
- L = LABOR (pray for their job needs)
- E = EMOTIONAL (pray for their emotional needs)
- S = SOCIAL (pray for their relationships with family/friends)
- S = SPIRITUAL (pray for their salvation)

One family in Winston Salem, NC, puts the names of their neighbors in a bowl. Each evening at the mealtime the children pick one name out to pray for together.

My Prayer List





Care Ideas:

Bring over a meal

Mow their lawn

Watch their kids

Share from your garden

Share Ideas:

*Invite them to
quality Christian events*

*Invite them to
a home Bible study*

*Give them a book with
a Christian perspective
about their felt need*



Care

Take the initiative to pursue a relationship with your neighbors, especially those on your initial prayer list. People are lonely. Choose to take time to be out in your yard when your neighbors are out. Or, leisurely go on a “prayer walk/talk” where you take every opportunity to strike up conversations as you pray for each family or home you pass. Invite them into your home for a casual coffee or dessert. Listen for needs and concerns. Tell them you will pray for them—and then *do* pray for them.

Share Christ

Bring the benefits of your relationship with Christ into your normal conversations. Ask non-threatening questions about what your neighbors believe. Share what you believe and the Scripture that gives you hope and guidance. Offer a Gospel tract and say: “The message in this booklet is from the Bible. It’s what helped me to begin a personal friendship with Christ. I think you’ll like it, and I would like to get your opinion on it, OK?” Another idea is to share *The Jesus Film* as a gift or as a loan. After they view the video ask: “What did you think about it? Did it make sense to you? Why or why not?” Remember, the more they know you, the more they will trust you. The more you care, the more they will let you share. God is pursuing your neighbors through *you!* You are His light in your neighborhood. It’s no accident that you happened to move into your present house!

Your Prayer of Commitment

Dear Heavenly Father,

I choose to accept that Your main purpose for my life is to “love my neighbor just as I love myself.” You called this the Royal Law, saying that all other commands concerning my relationships with man are based on my fulfilling this one law. That means I must take the initiative to befriend, love and care for those in my personal world. I purpose to seek to help lead them to Christ. Thank You, Father, for those who reached out to me to influence me for the Savior. I can do no less if I love my neighbor as myself.

I pray You would grant me the awesome privilege of assisting many to accept Your love and forgiveness in Christ! I will use my gifts to that end. Thank you for Your Spirit within me who continues the work of Christ to seek and save the lost through me. Every man, woman and child is made in Your likeness and therefore is worthy of my unconditional love.

Father, as that chorus says, “Lead me to some soul today, and love that soul through me, and I will humbly do my part to win that soul to Thee.” That is my earnest prayer today. I look forward to Your leading.

Your Son / Daughter, _____ Date: _____

Register as a Lighthouse

Make your commitment known *today!* Register your home as a Lighthouse and become one of the three million. Register your Christmas party also (see page 61).

Biblical Perspectives

If you are excited, yet somewhat fearful, about reaching out to your neighbors for Christ, we understand! Let us share some helpful thoughts and Scriptures that have helped hosts in the past.

Just as you only use clean dishes to serve your guests fine food, so the Lord only uses clean vessels to serve His guests the Gospel. Paul says to believers, "Live in such a way as to be worthy of the Gospel." Please take some time and meditate on the Scriptures that go with these points. Study them with your chosen Christian co-hosts.

- Be sure there is no unconfessed sin in your life. Fully accept the forgiveness Christ died to provide you. Pray Psalm 139:23-24 and make a list of sins He brings to mind. Then apply I John 1:9 to each and every one. You are now a clean vessel for Christ to use!

I John 1:5-10 Psalm 66:18 Romans 6:1-12, 8:30-39

- Be prepared for spiritual battles. Rest assured in the authority you have in Christ. Ask others to pray for you as you step out to serve Christ and love the lost.

Ephesians 1:18-23; 6:10-20 James 4:7,8 I John 4:1-6

- Be sure to ask for and accept by faith the power and control of the Holy Spirit over every area of your life.

Ephesians 5:18 I John 5:14,15 Acts 1:8

- Be sure your motive for reaching out to your neighbors is your love for Christ and obedience to His great commandment to "love your neighbor as you love yourself."

I John 4: 18,19 2 Cor. 5:14,15 I John 3:16-18 John 14:21



***"But you will
receive power when
the Holy Spirit
comes on you; and
you shall be my
witnesses . . ."***

Acts 1:8

***"Whoever has
My commands
and obeys them,
he is the one
who loves Me."***

John 14:21





How Well Do You Know Your Neighbors?

“There is no impact without contact”

Instructions: Draw a rough map of your immediate neighborhood on page 24 of this handbook. Include the nearest 20 homes or apartments, each represented by a box. Draw the boxes large enough that you can write in some of your answers to the following questions. Answer these questions as well as you can. Give yourself the designated points, and add up your score.

- Last name(s) of household (1 point for each last name you know)
- First names of each adult in the household (1 point each)
- First names of children (1 point each)
- Occupation of each adult (2 points each)
- Age and grade of each child (2 points each)
- How long they have lived in their current home? (2 points each)
- State in which each adult grew up (3 points each)
- A favorite activity for each adult or child (3 points each)
- Religious beliefs of each adult (4 points each)
- Something you admire about each adult or child (4 points each)

Bonus: Add 5 points for each home you have entered. Add 25 points for each household you have invited into your home for a meal.

Penalty: Subtract 5 points for each adult neighbor you would not recognize on sight.

Your Score: _____

1-25 points—You’ve made a start, but you have a long way to go. Why not plan a neighborhood pre-evangelism party to get to know them—at Christmas or anytime?

26-100 points—You know more than the basics, but it’s time to learn more about your neighbors. Think about inviting a neighboring family or single to join you in an activity. Also, plan a pre-evangelism Christmas party to get better acquainted, especially through the sharing of Christmas memories.

101-200 points—You’re well on your way to forming relationships with your neighbors! Now, think of one way you can deepen a relationship you have started. Then do it this week. Consider starting a neighborhood Bible study.

201+ points—Congratulations! You have worked hard at getting to know your neighbors and are beginning to reap the rewards. Let one of them know how much you appreciate them this week!

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Throwing a Party with an Eternal Purpose



Before the Party

Choosing the party's purpose

Pre-evangelistic: The logical place to start. At this party, your purpose is to enable you and your neighbors to get better acquainted in a fun, non-threatening way. You will have the opportunity to make it known during the sharing time that your relationship with Christ brings great joy and meaning to the celebration of Christmas. This will open doors later.

Evangelistic: You feel you know your neighbors fairly well, even if just by regular visits on the front lawn. You know their names and are getting to know them better. You sense the Lord saying, "this is the time to openly share Me with your dear neighbors. Those who are responsive to your friendship will be the ones I am drawing to Myself." The invitation should clearly state that you or a friend (outside speaker) will share some "inspirational thoughts on the true meaning of Christmas." There are no "surprises" for those who choose to come (see page 27).

To start a neighborhood evangelistic Bible study: Your party is the perfect way to open your home to your neighbors and make them feel valued and welcome. The next step is to offer your neighbors a relaxed opportunity to get better acquainted with the Bible's teaching and with one another.

Additional Resources included in Host Party Kit: See page 53 on "How to Lead an Evangelistic Bible Study."

Previewing what the evening will look like

Time	Activity
45 minutes	People arrive, drop off their food, sign the neighborhood guest book, fill out a "four-cornered" nametag and play "Who or What am I?" Lively music is playing. Everyone is eating and talking.
20 minutes	Ice-breaker games
20 minutes	Sing Christmas carols and play the Heavenly Christmas Chimes
35 minutes	Sharing of Christmas memories and traditions
15 minutes	Sharing the Gospel (optional)
15 minutes	Concluding the party <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Inviting comments on 3x5 cards2. Getting suggestions for the next neighborhood event3. Announcing your Bible study (optional)4. Giving out your Christmas gifts (optional)

Total Time:

2.5 hours, exclusive of mingling time before leaving

*"As I came away
from our
neighborhood
Christmas party,
God reminded me that
evangelism should
be fun!"*

Steve Fernalld





Selecting the date

Make yours the first party your neighbors attend in the Christmas season. They will then compare the others to yours. That's good. They will remember the "light" they felt at your party.

The first two weekends in December are the best times to beat the rush. Your neighbors will be more available and their lives will be less hectic. Weeknights are OK, but weekends are better. We suggest a starting time of around 6:00 p.m. Sunday evening is often a quiet evening for many families, and if the party starts at 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., it should not interfere with Monday morning work schedules.

Deciding who to invite

Adult couples: The most common scenario, with the whole neighborhood invited. Consider also inviting certain adults from your place of employment if there is room.

Ladies Only: Often the initial "coming together" as a neighborhood starts with the women, then it spreads to the husbands and children. This could be a daytime gathering or an evening event.

Children: "A birthday party for Jesus" can be the hit of the neighborhood! These are always effective in getting both children and parents together.

Additional Resources included in Host Party Kit: See page 28 for "A Birthday Party for Jesus."

Preparing and delivering the invitations

This is the key to befriending every neighbor. Until now you may not have had a valid reason to walk up to every door on your block and say "Hi, I'm so and so. We live down the block. How are you today?" Now you do! Even if some neighbors cannot attend your party, you have overcome the major barrier to friendship: *not ever having met*. Another great idea is to give out your invitation with a cookie. It's still a sign of old-fashioned friendship.

Additional Resources included in Host Party Kit: Use the invitations provided with the Kit. See page 27 for "How to make and deliver invitations." There you'll find a sample invitation you can make yourself.

Recruiting your co-hosts

Prayerfully select mature believers from your church or neighborhood to be your "behind the scenes" support. These names are listed as "hosted by..." on your invitations. Have a planning and prayer meeting at least once to review everything. At the party these co-hosts are taking care of the food, drink refills, etc., so the host couple can be welcoming and visiting with their guests. The co-hosts will also be praying throughout the evening.

After choosing your Christian co-hosts, invite a couple of neighbors to help you decorate and deliver the invitations. These can be non-believers who like your idea. Be sure to list their names (and telephone numbers) along with yours as the co-hosts of the party. (See page 27 "hosted by" example.)

My date

My co-hosts

My prayer partners



Recruiting your prayer partners

Invite several believers to be your prayer partners for the event. Give them updates and prayer requests. Also, ask for prayer from your church, Sunday School and Bible study groups. God moves as His people pray—and that’s a promise! You are stepping into Enemy territory, so you will sense opposition and stress at times.

Deciding if babysitters are needed

The decision about childcare is a very important one. Many parties have been sabotaged by the distraction of children entering the room and calling out for their parents. The best option usually is to let the neighbors find their own babysitters. If that doesn’t work well, you might provide someone from your church to care for the children at a nearby neighbor’s home. Good videos on the true meaning of Christmas could be shown to the children. You could also plan a “Birthday Party for Jesus.” (See page 28.) The main issue here is to control the environment at your party to experience the full benefits listed on page 6.

Decking your halls

Decorate your home for as much festivity as you can muster. But don’t do it alone. Ask neighbors and co-hosts to help by bringing some of their own decorations or Christmas music so they will feel more a part of the planning process.

Taking Photographs or video to capture the evening

Your neighbors will love to see photos or videos of themselves at a later date. It will give you a reason to get them together again after the holidays, maybe on New Year’s Day. Also, your church may be able to use your pictures to help train others next year to host a party like you did. Talk to your pastor about this.

Planning for food and beverages

Asking your neighbors to provide food makes this job much easier. More importantly, it gives everyone a sense of sharing in the party. Your invitation should ask everyone to bring their favorite festive dish to share. Some hosts ask guests to bring the recipe also, so others can copy it. You, as host, should provide all the beverages. This avoids neighbors assuming they should bring an alcohol beverage. If they do, thank them for their kind gesture and simply place it alongside the other beverages. Don’t let alcohol become a negative issue.

Presenting parting gifts

Consider giving guests a meaningful gift that expresses the love of Christ. Here are a few ideas:

The Jesus Video: Based upon the Gospel of Luke, this film is the most historically accurate account ever made of the life of Christ. Compelling and entertaining, *The Jesus Film* is also the most widely translated movie in history, having been recorded in 525 languages and shown to more than two billion people worldwide. The video is a powerful tool for challenging your neighbors to receive Christ into their lives. Campus Crusade for Christ, producers of *The Jesus Film*, is making it available for just \$5 a



Babysitters

Decorating Ideas

Food to Be Served





copy when used as an evangelistic tool (retail \$24.95). Call The Jesus Video Project at 888-537-8736 and allow nine or ten days for shipping. Consider gift-wrapping the video and giving it to all of your neighbors who attend your party.

Note: Because of the graphic nature of the crucifixion scene, parents may want to determine if *this part* of the video is appropriate for small children. The rest of the film is very appropriate for all ages.

“Why Christmas?”: Consider giving this powerful booklet by Nicky Gumbel. It communicates why Jesus is central to Christmas, why He came, why people need Him, and how they can respond to His offer of forgiveness and eternal life. It also speaks to many of the objections people have about Christ and provides evidence to support His claims. Copies of this booklet can be ordered from Cook Ministry Resources at 800-323-7543 for 99¢ each. Allow seven to ten days for delivery.

“The Christmas Sampler”: This booklet shares the wonderful promise of a Savior given to us in the Old Testament, the joyous fulfillment of that promise through His birth, and a challenge for readers to receive Him into their hearts. Copies can be purchased from Tyndale House Publishers for 25¢ by calling 800-644-6104.

Gifts to Be Given

During the Party

Greeting and mingling (30-45 minutes)

The excitement begins when the doorbell rings! So, have a brief prayer session with your Christian co-hosts about 30 minutes beforehand. Also, have the music playing and the tree lights on. You as the host or hostess should greet your guests and direct them to the nametag table, a table near the front door for the four-cornered nametags (see page 30), and your guest registration book. (You may wish to tell your guests you will create a neighborhood directory from the information given.) Have one of your co-hosts at this table to invite them to fill in the guestbook, and to explain the nametag concept. Other co-hosts might take their coats or hold their food for them while they sign in or take the food to the serving area. Have someone at the food table ready to serve punch or pour hot drinks as guests arrive. Warm hospitality is an important part of making people feel welcome. And when the responsibilities are shared among a number of people the mood is more relaxed and you are more free to focus on getting to know your guests.

At the same time your guests are filling out their nametags, have one of your co-hosts place one of the “Who or What Am I?” stickers on their back. Explain that they need to ask other guests “yes or no” questions until they are able to guess who or what they are. When they guess correctly, they may place the sticker on their front. This game keeps everyone active as they are eating and waiting for everyone to arrive.

Additional Resources in this Handbook: See page 29 for “Creative Guest Registration” and page 30 for “Four-cornered nametags.”



Playing ice-breaker games (20 minutes)

Four different games are described on pages 31-34. You will have time for only one. Expect lots of loosening up and laughter.

Singing Christmas carols (20 minutes)

This segment prepares all those present to reflect on their more innocent past and to be open to share their Christmas memories with one other. Singing together can be a bonding time, creating a sense of oneness as neighbors. Be sure to sing secular as well as sacred songs. Let guests choose their favorites from your song sheet. A guitar or piano player is a plus. Maybe one of the neighbors or someone from your church could help.

Some groups choose to go caroling around the block for a unique neighborhood experience! If you do this you may want to forgo the ice-breaker game for the sake of time.

Additional Resources in this Handbook: See pages 35 & 36 for “Songs for the Season.” You may make copies for your guests.

Playing the “Heavenly Chimes” (optional)

A set of hand-playable chimes are available as an especially fun option for your party. Here’s how they work: guests are issued one chime. Christmas melodies are played as guests work to strike their own chime at just the right moment. Special music sheets are made with numbers instead of notes. Requires concentration, teamwork and results in lots of laughter!

Additional Resources in this Handbook: See page 37 for a description of the “Heavenly Chimes” and how to order a set.

Sharing Christmas memories and traditions (35 minutes)

This will be the highlight of the evening! You will learn more about your neighbors in the next half-hour than you ever imagined. The man of the house is usually the moderator of this time. Avoid interruptions by placing co-hosts near the entry door for latecomers and near the phone to catch incoming calls. We suggest you open the time by calling everyone together in one room and saying something like:

One of my favorite aspects of Christmas is memories from my childhood. I know we all have more in common than we realize. Let’s discover this as we share our memories and traditions about Christmas with one other. Let’s take turns sharing on any one of three topics: What is a favorite or most humorous childhood Christmas memory? What are some of your favorite Christmas traditions you have kept over the years? Or what is the true meaning of Christmas to you? Begin by telling us your name and the answers from the four corners of your nametag. To give you all time to collect your thoughts, my wife will begin.

Other topics could include: The funniest Christmas gift you ever received; your favorite gift received as a child, etc.



Games to Play

Memory I Plan to Share

Beverages to be Served





As hosts you will set the tone for the level of sharing desired. You should be somewhat vulnerable, humorous, interesting, nostalgic. A spouse or a co-host should begin with something on the lighter side. Do *not* begin with a spiritual memory, as it may make some people uncomfortable. They may feel they have to share something spiritual as well. At the end, after all the neighbors have said whatever they felt like saying, the emcee host can share the true meaning of Christmas. (See below.)

Watch the clock. Some may be long-winded and not allow time for everyone to share. You will find that neighbors have wanted to talk like this but have not been given the opportunity. Many will thank you afterwards.

Sharing the true meaning of Christmas (15 minutes)

There are endless ways to share the essence of the Gospel. Prayerfully seek God's direction for your party. God loves your neighbors more than you do. He will enable you to be bold about your faith in Christ, as well as sensitive to what is proper at this time. Here are several options:

At a pre-evangelistic party: During the sharing of memories, choose to answer a question you can elaborate on during this portion of the party. Example: If, during the memories sharing time, you've talked about a funny gift you've received, you can share about Christ as the *greatest* gift you ever received during this time. When you share concerning the real meaning of Christmas, we encourage you to weave in how knowing Jesus Christ personally has made Christmas—and your entire life—more meaningful. Since everyone else has had the freedom to share whatever they wanted to, you can certainly do the same with confidence, but don't preach!

However, a well chosen Christmas reading is acceptable in this context. It allows you to include something more specific about the true meaning of Christmas by sharing someone else's comments. You can select a reading from this handbook, or you can simply read the Christmas story (Luke 2:1-20) from the Living Bible or The Message. This is an acceptable time to share historical aspects of Christmas and its meaning to you.

Additional Resources in this Handbook: See pages 38-39 for suggested Christmas readings

At an evangelistic party: After the group sharing time you, or you and your spouse, can *briefly* share your testimony with the Gospel clearly included. You may get ideas from the talks found on pages 40-44. Though perhaps scary, this is an awesome privilege. Non-believers rarely hear from a husband and wife how Jesus changes lives. Include an opportunity for people to pray to receive Christ at the end of your talk. This may be the night some of your neighbors open their hearts to the Lord! If you don't feel comfortable giving this talk, invite one of your co-hosts or another Christian couple or a friend who communicates well to share their testimony. *Remember*, if anyone plans to share the Gospel at your party, you *must* state on the invitation that there will be an inspirational talk on the true meaning of Christmas. No surprises!

Additional Resources in this Handbook: See pages 40-51 for Sample Evangelistic Talks, Outline for an Evangelistic Talk, Tips for Writing Your Testimony and Guidelines for an Outside Speaker.

“The sharing time was great! Our neighbors laughed and nearly cried. One lady, who barely spoke English, shared a touching story from her childhood. Our neighbors are hungry for love!”

Past Party Host



Inviting response and planning your next event (15 mins.)

At a pre-evangelism party: After the sharing time, pass out blank 3x5 cards with pencils to gather comments from your guests, saying:

This has been a great evening! We are so glad each of you came. Please do us a favor and jot down your candid comments about how you enjoyed the evening. Put your name at the top. We appreciate it. I'll give you a few minutes to write.

Give them time to write. As they are finishing, say,

I'm sure all of us have other great ideas for things we as neighbors can do together through the year. On the back of your card, please jot down a couple of your ideas. Maybe the next party can be at your home! We'll include these suggestions in the neighborhood directory. I believe this'll be the friendliest neighborhood in town in no time!

NOTE: If you decide to make a neighborhood directory, make sure you follow through and get the directory to your neighbors within a month.

At an evangelistic party: At the end of the talk, the speaker should pass out 3x5 cards and pencils, and ask for guests' comments on the whole evening and in particular, the inspirational talk. Invite them to put an X on the card if they prayed to receive Christ. *Giving your neighbors a specific opportunity to respond to the Gospel is important.* Next, offer to send new believers a follow-up booklet such as "The Journey," an excellent booklet that walks the reader through the Gospel of John (order by calling 800-727-1309). Then ask them to jot down some ideas for future gatherings.

If you want to offer a four- to six-week investigative Bible study beginning in January or February, simply mention it as people are jotting down their comments. Since they have just offered their ideas, it is certainly proper for you as the host to offer yours! Say something like:

One of the ideas we want to suggest right now is that we have a four-week investigative Bible study. You may never have read the Bible, but if you are curious as to what it says and would like to interact with other neighbors, then please join us! You don't need to have your own Bible. We will have extra ones available. Just write the word "study" in the right-hand corner of your card, if you're interested. We'll call you after the holidays to let you know when we will begin.

Pass a basket to collect all cards, or tell your guests where to place their folded cards. Then dismiss them to mingle and enjoy more refreshments. Thank them once again for coming. Be especially alert about anyone who seems to have warmed up to your friendship. This could be the one God is drawing to Himself through you!

Presenting gifts and planting seeds (optional)

The hour is late. It's time to bestow your guests with a parting gift, such as *The Jesus Video*. This token of friendship will nourish the seeds you've planted and encourage them to accept the most precious gift of all—the Lord Jesus Christ. *This is what Christmas is really all about! (See page 14.)*



My Ideas for Future Neighborly Events





After The Party

That same evening

Get together with your Christian co-hosts and other support couples and read the response cards. You will be thrilled and blessed! Then in a time of prayer, thank God for all He has done and rejoice together. Pray for future fruit! Then clean up and enjoy a well-earned night of rest.

That next week

1. Fill out "Your After-Party Questionnaire" (see pages 54 – 55). You may want to give a copy to your church coordinator or pastor. Also, ask to share about your experience in your Sunday School class, worship service, or Bible study group.
2. Thank all your prayer partners and give them a report about your party. Call others in your church who had similar parties to rejoice and encourage one another to keep going in your neighborhood ministries!
3. Jot down desires and ideas the Holy Spirit is giving you for the next 12 to 18 months. (See planning calendar on pages 56 – 57.)
4. Create a neighborhood directory, listing the neighbors' ideas for other gatherings. Plan to deliver the directories in January. This will give you another contact with your neighbors. Also, you can visit with each one who indicated an interest in a Bible study on the 3x5 cards.
5. Make a new prayer list of your neighbors and continue to water the seeds planted by having family prayer times and taking prayer walks in your neighborhood.
6. Take the "How Well Do You Know Your Neighbors?" test again (see page 11). Any change? You will be amazed!
7. Be open to getting together after the holidays with your pastor and others who had parties for a sharing and prayer time. Discuss and encourage future plans. Consider training other church members and even people in other churches!

"Take the 'How Well Do You Know Your Neighbors?' test again. You will be amazed!"



Building relationships / initiating spiritual conversations

Because of your party you'll find the door is now open! Now it will be more natural for you to discuss spiritual things with your neighbors.

Sometimes we think that our friends don't want to hear what we have to say or will feel that we are invading their privacy. Although this may happen occasionally, national researcher George Barna, in his book, *Evangelism That Works*, provides evidence to support the contrary: "Although it is true that half of all adults indicate they become annoyed when someone tries to share religious beliefs with them, we also have discovered that when those same annoyed individuals have an evangelistic conversation with a family member, friend or trusted associate, they are not annoyed. Depending upon the state of mind or point of spiritual quest of the non-believer, the person may even express gratitude for the interest shown in them."

When was the last time you went up to the person who led *you* to Christ to vent your anger at them for sharing the most life-changing message you have ever heard? Rather, you probably view that person with great appreciation and fondness for caring enough to point you to Christ! Many of your friends will be eternally grateful that you cared enough to do the same.

If you gave your neighbors a Christmas gift, such as *The Jesus Film*, take the opportunity to ask for their thoughts about it. The video is a great conversation starter and will lead into a discussion about how to begin a relationship with Christ.

Additional Resources included in the Host Party Kit: See the audiotape and Session Three in the *Becoming a Contagious Christian* participant guide entitled, "Building Relationships and Initiating Spiritual Conversations."

Sharing your story (your testimony)

One of the most powerful tools followers of Christ possess is the story of how Christ has affected their lives personally. In his book *Come Before Winter* author Chuck Swindoll comments, "The skeptic may deny your doctrine or attack your church, but he cannot honestly ignore the fact that your life has changed." Your testimony gives evidence of the reality of the work of God in your life and supplies hope that God can do the same kind of thing in the lives of your neighbors.

We all have a testimony. Co-author of this manual, Steve Fernald, tells this story: "My mother-in-law Carole shared with me a story about my wife that gave me insight into some of the events that God used in her life to bring her to Christ. When my wife was three years old, she was in the family room of her home while her mom was in the kitchen making lunch. My mother-in-law happened to glance into the family room to see my wife, Kylee, standing about six inches away from the TV. Puzzled, Carole asked her what she was doing. Kylee replied, 'The man on the TV said that if I wanted to ask Jesus to come into my life, I needed to come forward.' Even then my wife had a tender heart and was interested in finding out more about Jesus! This was just one of several events in Kylee's life that contribute to the story of how she came to know Christ."



"The skeptic may deny your doctrine or attack your church, but he cannot honestly ignore the fact that your life has changed."

Chuck Swindoll





When you are sharing your testimony, you are simply remembering the unique way God has pursued you and worked to draw you to Christ and how he has worked in your life since you met Him.

Additional Resources included in this Handbook and Host Party Kit: See Tips for Writing Your Testimony on pages 48 & 49. Listen to the audiotape and read Session Four in the Becoming a Contagious Christian participant guide entitled, "What's Your Story?"

Sharing His story (the Gospel)

You'll find a great deal of help about sharing the Gospel in your Host Party Kit. Effectively communicating its truth during the months after your party can be a challenge for many. But sometimes it seems that communicating anything effectively can be a challenge! These bloopers were lifted from actual church bulletins:

- Don't let worry kill you. Let the church help.
- Thursday night—Potluck Dinner. Prayer and medication to follow.
- For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.
- This being Easter, we will ask Mr. Vassilas to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.
- Next Sunday, a special collection will be taken to defray the cost of the carpet. All those wishing to do something on the new carpet will come forward and get a piece of paper.
- The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind and they may be seen in the church basement on Friday.
- At the evening service tonight, the sermon will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and hear our choir practice.
- A church was announcing the upcoming missionary meeting. The missionary was from Africa and her name was Bertha Belch. The announcement read, "Come hear Bertha Belch from Africa."

Even when we know what we want to say, sometimes it just doesn't come out right! But God somehow gets the job done in spite of us. And when it comes to communicating the Gospel, we can trust the Lord to speak through us if we do our part to become equipped and to step out in faith.

Additional Resources included in the Host Party Kit for practical training on how to share the Gospel: See Audiotape and Session Five in the Becoming a Contagious Christian participant guide entitled, "What's His Story?"

Leading an Evangelistic Bible Study

For some people, evangelism requires an investigation of the evidences that support the claims of Christ. In these circumstances, we need to create a non-threatening environment for our friends where their questions are not only answered but welcomed. An Evangelistic Bible Study will allow them to work through their questions as you help them clear their spiritual hurdles and take steps toward faith in Christ.



Your neighbors may not be ready to receive Christ until some of their questions have been investigated. Here's where an Evangelistic Bible Study can be very effective. Co-author Steve Fernald led an investigative study for some of those in his church with tough questions about the Christian faith. He recounts, "These questions had hindered people in this group from becoming Christians. My goal was to answer their questions and remove the barriers that were keeping them from Christ. After having met for nine weeks, a couple in the group asked to talk to me alone. I gladly agreed. When everyone else had left, Natalie, her husband and I sat around my kitchen table. Natalie confessed she had run out of reasons for not following Christ. That evening she bowed her head and gave her life to the Lord. Several members of that group (and of other groups I have led) have commented that in the past, when they had asked people for answers to their questions, they were told they had to simply believe. But when these friends were given evidence to support the claims of Christ, many became open to learning more, and others decided that Jesus is worthy of their full trust and devotion."



Additional Resources included in this Handbook and Host Party Kit: See "How to Lead an Evangelistic Bible Study" on page 53 and the enclosed booklet, "How to Start a Neighborhood Bible Study."

"Natalie confessed she had run out of reasons for not following Christ. That evening she bowed her head and gave her life to Christ."

Continuing the process—keeping God's perspective

Even if your friends do not become Christians immediately, don't become discouraged. Remember that evangelism is a *process*, and your commitment to continue loving and encouraging is crucial. Author Joseph Aldrich, in his book Gentle Persuasion, notes, "More than 80% of those who trust Christ and remain members of a local church are led to the Lord by a friend. Furthermore, they have had over five (5.9) exposures to the gospel before their conversion." It becomes clear that a trusting relationship and a commitment to continue to plant seeds is crucial in leading our friends to Christ. As you continue to faithfully pray for your friends, initiate spiritual conversations and plant the seeds of the Gospel, God will honor your faithfulness and work powerfully in the lives of your neighbors.

Helping our neighbors become grounded in their new faith

The need to help new believers become established in their faith is also emphasized by Aldrich: "The Great Commission provides a standard for evaluating methodologies. Therefore, 'Go,' our Lord said, 'and make disciples of all nations.' Notice that it does not say, 'Go and *decision* all nations.' The responsibility of the biblical evangelist goes far beyond leading a person to Christ. The task of evangelism involves bringing people to the point of discipleship." Our commitment to friends involves not only leading them to Christ, but helping them build a solid spiritual foundation.

Additional Resources included in this Handbook: To help your neighbors build a solid spiritual foundation, look under "More Great Books on Outreach" on page 58.





Remembering what is at stake and taking a risk

Steve Fernald shares this story from 1986, experienced during a missions trip to the former Soviet Union.

“In one of the cities our team visited, we met a young man named Achmed. Over the course of several days, he showed us around his city and we began to build a friendship. One afternoon, in the corner of a park, we shared with him about the wonderful news of our Savior. As his eyes lit up, he exclaimed, ‘I will be a man of enlightenment.’ That afternoon, Achmed gave his life to Christ, and over the next few days we began to help him grow in his new relationship. On our last day with Achmed, we spent some time praying with him before we had to leave his city.

“A few months later I received a letter from Achmed. I was humbled by what he had written: ‘Dear Steve, Thank you for the Bible. It seems to me that I am a real Christian. I love Jesus very much and He is my only God. Do you know that my Mother began to believe in God? I now understand my main task—to spread my religion. You must know that in my group of friends, five men, they began to trust in God with the help of your Bible and other books.’

“Later in the letter, Achmed confided, ‘Can you help me, because I know that sooner or later I will be sent to prison, because the spreading of religion is punished by the Soviet Union’s laws by ten years in prison. I will try to be very careful, but that is not important.’

“I was overjoyed by the excitement of knowing that in a few short months Achmed had led his mother and five of his friends to Christ, but I was also humbled by the simplicity of his faith and the depth of his devotion. ***Achmed was willing to take a risk, because he knew what was at stake.*** While celebrating the joy of his own salvation, he was still acutely aware of the desperate need of those around him for the love and forgiveness of Christ. And although he was new in his faith, with very little training, he stepped out in faith and allowed God to use him to help change the eternal destinies of those who were near and dear to him.

“God is not asking most of us to lay our life on the line. He is simply asking us to lay aside our fears, trust Him and step out in faith to reach out to our neighbors. By praying faithfully for them, loving them as Jesus would and sharing with them His life-changing message, we can trust God to use us to point others to the One who has given us life and a true reason to live. As I remember Achmed’s words that day in the park, I realize that he has truly become a ‘man of enlightenment,’ and salt and light to those around him. I only hope that I will prove to be as faithful in this endeavor as Achmed has been!”

“God is not asking most of us to lay our life on the line. He is simply asking us to lay aside our fears, trust Him and step out in faith to reach out to our neighbors.”



My Neighborhood Map





Practical Tools and Resources





“We passed out 45 invitations on our street and received an overwhelmingly positive response!”

Past Party Host

How to Make and Deliver Invitations

- Invite more people than your home can comfortably accommodate. Not all will be able to attend. Expect about 50% to come.
- Use the unique invitations included with the Host party Kit or order them by calling 800-838-4368. You may also design your own. See below for an example. Make sure they are warm and personal.
- Deliver the invitations yourself with your spouse and children, if possible. Your personal exposure to your neighbors is key.
- Deliver about two weeks before the party.
- At the door, simply say:

“Hi, my name is Dwight and this is my wife, Hilde. We are your neighbors down the street. We want to invite you to join us for a neighborhood Christmas party on Saturday, December 5. It will be a great time to get to know our neighbors! Do you think you will be able to make it?”

- If people are not at home, leave the invitation in the door in a safe place. Then drop by a couple of days later and make sure they received the written invitation. Neighbors are sometimes hesitant to make new friends unless they feel really wanted.

Holidays are a special time for neighbors . . .

to make new friends,
renew old friendships,
and enjoy one another's holiday traditions.

So please come and join

Our Neighborhood Christmas Party!

We will eat, visit, play games, laugh, sing old-time Christmas carols and share favorite Christmas memories.

Saturday, December 5
The Johnsons' (#7 Maple Trail)
7:00-9:30 p.m.

Hosted by

Dwight and Hilde Johnson, 530-8312
Dennis and Sharon Simonetta, 530-9002
Jerry and Jeanne Ryan, 531-8966
Patrick and Barbara McGee, 530-1820



We will have a special time of sharing some inspirational thoughts on the true meaning of Christmas.

Please RSVP by December 1. Adults only please.

Please bring a favorite festive food to share. Beverages will be provided.



A Birthday Party for Jesus!

Hold a Christmas party as a way to get to know the children and parents in your neighborhood, or in your child's school class. Many a child has led his or her whole family to Christ after hearing the Gospel with wide eyes and an open heart.



Time

Activity

10 minutes

Children arrive and get nametags

Every child signs in on a "map" of the houses on your street. A copy of the completed map makes a nice gift for parents, especially if there are photographs of their children. Children will receive nametags, on which can be written favorite Christmas gifts from past years or what they want for Christmas this year.

10-15 minutes

Craft

Children make a Christmas ornament to take home and put on their tree. Choose an ornament with a Christ-centered theme; steer clear of secular themes (Santa, etc.) Note: If Santa is raised in conversation in a way that necessitates your honest reply, remind the children that St. Nicholas was a real person who lived 300 years after Christ and who, because of his love for Christ, was generous and kind.

15 minutes

Sing Christmas Carols

Use the lyrics provided in your packet. Don't be bashful about leading the kids in singing, accompanied by a guitar or piano, if available.

15 minutes

Sharing Time

Encourage children to share what is written on their nametags or what gifts they are *giving* to others, or what Christmas means to them.

15-20 minutes

The Real Christmas Story

Gather children on the floor in a circle to hear the Christmas story from an easy-to-understand translation of Luke 2:1-20. Encourage interaction by asking questions, using props or dramatizing with the kids. You may also want to read the story on page 39 if the children are old enough.

15-20 minutes

Eat in a "Safe Area"

Choose an eating area where messes are easy to clean. Bring out Jesus' birthday cake. Have each child place one candle in the cake ("because Jesus came for *you*, Johnny"). Then sing "Happy Birthday."

Now the party is officially over. Children play until parents pick them up. Make sure they take home their ornament and a copy of the Christmas story. After the holidays invite kids and their parents to see the video or photos you took during the party! Or attach photos to the neighborhood kids' map and deliver!

*"Happy birthday to You,
Happy birthday to You,
Happy birthday,
dear Jesus,
Happy birthday to You!"*





Creative Guest Registration

Here are some creative ways to collect enough information to produce a Neighborhood Directory as a future gift to neighbors.

1. Our Neighborhood's "Guest House." See sample below. Draw one of your own.
2. Draw a large map of your neighborhood with houses large enough for guests to write names (including children and ages), house number and phone number.
3. Sign in on the ornaments of a large Christmas tree poster.
4. Brainstorm to come up with an idea of your own. If it's a hit, let us know!

**Our Neighborhood
"Guest House"**

Please record your visit with us!
• Names (kids' names & ages) • Address • Telephone



Four-Cornered Nametags

How do you get people to talk about something other than the weather? These nametags are guaranteed to spark conversation! They encourage people to share information that they might not otherwise volunteer. Ask each guest to "interview" three neighbors as they mingle. Also have each guest explain their nametag as an introduction during the sharing time.



In each of the tag's four corners ask guests to write the following:

- | | |
|-----------|----------------|
| Corner #1 | Hometown |
| Corner #2 | Career or Job |
| Corner #3 | Hobby |
| Corner #4 | Childhood Hero |

Have a sample nametag at the table where guests will sign in. Provide thin-tipped pens (to write small in the corners); thick-tip to write their name large. Perhaps someone with neat block printing can be stationed at the guest book table to write the information on each person's tag.

*"The four-cornered
nametags worked
wonderfully!
We couldn't get our
neighbors to
stop talking."*

Past Party Host

Jamestown, ND (hometown)	Pilot (career or job)
Joe Campbell	
Fly Fishing (hobby)	My Grandfather (childhood hero)





Ice-Breakers

Christmas Mix 'n Mingle Games

Who or What Am I?

Play this as guests begin to arrive. "You may ask each person only three questions at a time. You must ask questions that can only be answered by "yes" or "no." For example, "Am I a Christmas animal?" "Am I a Christmas carol?" "Do I hang on a tree?" As people guess who or what they are, they place the label on their front. Encourage everyone to discover who they are before the next event.

Below are suggestions for Christmas words to use. Write these on self-stick labels before the party and put them on people's backs after they have received their nametags.

Ornament	Lights
A Christmas Carol Tune	Stocking
Wise Men	Tinsel
Shepherd	Snow
Manger	Elves
Star	Turkey
Gifts	Joy
Baby Jesus	Candles
Christmas Tree	Camel
Silent Night	Mistletoe
Frankincense	Fireplace
Santa	Children
Egg Nog	Potpourri
Reindeer	Carolers
Rudolph	Shopper
Candy Cane	Music
Frosty the Snowman	Hustle and Bustle
Peace on Earth	Christmas Cookies



Christmas Carol Quiz

Make enlarged copies of the form below for each group of four or five you plan to have. Ask them to "count off" and form their groups. Give one copy and pen per group. Call "Start."

Groups use the following clues to guess the Christmas song titles. The first group to correctly complete the titles wins! As soon as any group gets all the answers, they jump up, loudly singing the chorus of "Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells . . ." The rest of the groups continue guessing, each jumping up and joining in the song as they complete their list. Continue until there is one group left. (Correct answers to the quiz are on page 34.)



1. **White metallic bellows:**
2. **A quiet evening:**
3. **Happiness on earth:**
4. **Fat man in red suit coming from the North Pole:**
5. **Cards the corridors with branches of berries:**
6. **One letter missing from alphabet:**
7. **A running event through thick white stuff:**
8. **Small city in Israel:**
9. **Us two, plus one male crowned rulers:**
10. **It arrived at 12 p.m. uncluttered:**
11. **Listen, the ushered non-devils are musically speaking:**
12. **I must see my dentist before December 25th:**
13. **Far off in a barn:**
14. **Ice cold, the white flakes male:**
15. **Hallowed evening:**
16. **I peeked on Mom smooching with a fat man in a red suit:**
17. **Gather everyone, see Yellowstone Park:**
18. **A certain bird in a tree:**





Getting to Know You BINGO

Prepare in advance: Photocopy one "bingo card" for each guest. Provide pencils. Enlarge the form below when you copy it. Guests ask one another questions from the bingo card. They may ask only three questions of each person. They are to have the person sign the appropriate box if they can answer "yes" to the question. Winner is the first person to get five names in a row or diagonally. Feel free to create your own BINGO card customized to your crowd.

Who received an e-mail this week?	Who is/was a teacher?	Who played an instrument in band?	Who's a handyman?	Who has grandchildren?
Who is an engineer?	Who travels often in his/her occupation?	Who knows how to use the Internet?	Who attends college now?	Who has a nickname?
Who has kids under age two?	Who has moved in the last year?	Who has lived in a foreign country?	Who loves country music?	Who likes to work on cars?
Who's remodeled recently?	Who enjoys serious hiking?	Who is active in church?	Who had a garage sale last summer?	Who has a clean garage?
Who has put in a new lawn?	Who is/was a professional salesperson?	Who has lived on the East Coast?	Who enjoys biking?	Who earned a letter in athletics?



Christmas Pictionary

Prepare in advance: For this game you'll need several large pads of paper and colored markers. Write down all the Christmas or seasonal items listed below on 3x5 "clue cards." Decide on a few places in your home where the groups can gather, preferably all in one room and where each team's members can easily see the one who will be drawing.



Divide the group into teams of four to seven people (depending on the size of the crowd). Form teams by counting off: women versus men or a clever "neighborly" way (i.e., odd house numbers versus even; people on Baker versus people on Birch). Each team selects a team member to be the "drawer" for the first round; that person comes to you to be shown the clue and returns to his/her team. At the word, "Go!" teams race each other to guess first what Christmas article is being drawn by their representative. The team wins a point when their drawer is the first to let you know they got the right answer. After each round the teams send you a new "drawer" to read the next clue, etc. The first team to ten points wins. Obviously, you as host should not play, but give the clues and referee.

Ornament
Caroling
Wassail
Nutcracker
Tinsel
Snow
Turkey
Shepherd
Wise Men
Silent Night

Manger
Sled
Happiness
Shopping
Jesus
Candles
Christmas Tree
Scrooge
Grinch

Frankincense
Camels
Rudolph
Santa
Mistletoe
North Pole
Eggnog
Peace on earth
Fruitcake

Answers to Christmas Carol Quiz

(Quiz found on page 32)

Silver Bells
Silent Night
Joy to the World
Santa Claus is Coming to Town
Deck the Halls
Noel
Dashing Through the Snow
O Little Town of Bethlehem
We Three Kings
It Came Upon a Midnight Clear
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!
All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth
Away in a Manger
Frosty the Snowman
O Holy Night
I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus
O Come, All Ye Faithful
A Partridge in a Pear Tree





Songs for the Season

Jingle Bells

Dashing through the snow
in a one-horse open sleigh,
O'er the fields we go,
laughing all the way.

Bells on bobtail ring,
making spirits bright.
What fun it is to ride and sing
a sleighing song tonight!

Oh, jingle bells, jingle bells,
jingle all the way.
Oh, what fun it is to ride
in a one-horse open sleigh.
Jingle bells, jingle bells,
jingle all the way.
Oh, what fun it is to ride
in a one-horse open sleigh!

We Wish You a Merry Christmas

We wish you a merry Christmas,
we wish you a merry Christmas,
We wish you a merry Christmas,
and a happy new year!

Good tidings we bring to you
and your kin.
Good tidings for Christmas
and a happy new year!

Deck the Halls

Deck the halls with
boughs of holly,
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la
'Tis the season to be jolly,
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la
Don we now our gay apparel,
Fa-la-la, la-la-la, la-la-la
Troll the ancient Yuletide carol,
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth
and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."

Joyful all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in
Bethlehem!"

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the
newborn King!"

We Three Kings

We three kings of Orient are
bearing gifts,
we traverse afar;
Field and fountain,
moor and mountain,
following yonder star.

O-Oh, star of wonder,
star of night,
star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading,
still proceeding,
guide us to Thy perfect light.

Silent Night

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother
and child,
Holy infant so
tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.



Joy to the World

Joy to the world,
the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart
prepare Him room,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and heav'n
and nature sing.

He rules the world with
truth and grace,
and make the nations prove
the glories of
His righteousness,
and wonders of His love,
and wonders of His love,
and wonders, wonders
of His love.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie.
Above thy deep
and dreamless sleep,
the silent stars go by.

Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting Light,
The hopes and fears
of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

O Come, All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye,
to Bethlehem.

Come and behold Him,
born the King of angels;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

**It Came upon a
Midnight Clear**

It came upon a midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending
near the earth
to touch their harps of gold.

“Peace on the earth,
goodwill to men
from heaven’s all
gracious King.”
The world in
solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.

*And for fun: Try your
memory on these carols.
Here’s the first line:*

Winter Wonderland

Sleigh bells ring, are
you listenin’?
In the lane
snow is glistenin’ . . .

Silver Bells

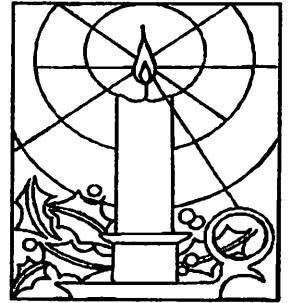
City sidewalks,
busy sidewalks
dressed in holiday style . . .

I’ll Be Home for Christmas

I’ll be home for Christmas,
You can plan on me; . . .

White Christmas

I’m dreaming of a
white Christmas,
just like the ones I used
to know . . .





Heavenly Chimes

Use Chimes to Create the Best of Times

One of the keys to hosting a successful party is having fun!

There's no better way to break the ice than to break out the "Heavenly Chimes"! This set of chimes is an optional purchase guaranteed to bring life to any social gathering. These chimes are easy to play; no musical experience is necessary. They are played in the manner of a bell choir.

The set comes with a special songbook containing popular Christmas carols as well as other traditional songs for year-round family entertainment. Simply copy the song's numbers on poster board so all the players will be able to see. Distribute the chimes, one to each person, display the song from the songbook and within minutes everyone will be amazed at the resulting symphony! The experience is captivating. To order call 800-838-4368.

Here's how you use them: After singing a few Christmas carols, say,

We have a special treat for you. We may discover a lot of musical talent in our neighborhood. How many of you were in the school band or orchestra? Good! How many were in the choir? Wonderful! Now, this is what we'll do. I'm going to give one chime to each of you along with a tapping instrument. Each chime sounds a different note. I've written on this poster board (or large sheet of paper) some songs with numbers. Notice the number on your chime. When your number comes up, hit your chime, and we'll have a neighborhood symphony. Let's try our first song.



'For Always'

A True Russian Christmas Story, by Will Fish

In 1994, two Americans answered an invitation from the Russian Department of Education to teach morals and ethics (based on Biblical principles) in the public schools. They were invited to teach at prisons, businesses, police and fire departments, and a large orphanage.

About 100 boys and girls who had been abandoned, abused, and left in the care of a government-run program were in the orphanage. One of the Americans related the following story: "It was nearing the holiday season, 1994; time for our orphans to hear, for the first time, the traditional story of Christmas. We told them about Mary and Joseph arriving in Bethlehem. Finding no room in the inn, the couple went to a stable, where the baby Jesus was born and placed in a manger. Throughout the story, the children and orphanage staff sat in amazement as they listened. Some sat on the edges of their stools, trying to grasp every word.

"Completing the story, we gave the children three small pieces of cardboard to make a crude manger. Each child was given a small paper square, cut from yellow napkins I had brought with me. No colored paper was available in the city. Following instructions, the children tore the paper and carefully laid strips in the manger for straw. Small squares of flannel, cut from a worn-out nightgown an American lady was throwing away as she left Russia, were used for the baby's blanket. A doll-like baby was cut from tan felt we had brought from the United States.

"The orphans were busy assembling their manger as I walked among them to see if they needed any help. All went well, until I got to one table where little Misha sat—he looked to be about six years old and had finished his project. As I looked at the little boy's manger, I was startled to see not one, but two babies in the manger.

"Quickly, I called for the translator to ask the lad why there were two babies in the manger. Crossing his arms in front of him and looking at his manger scene, the child began to repeat the story very seriously. For such a young boy, who had only heard the Christmas story once, he related the happenings accurately—until he came to the part where Mary put the baby Jesus in the manger.

"Then Misha started to ad lib. He made up his own ending to the story as he said, 'And when Maria laid the baby in the manger, Jesus looked at me and asked me if I had a place to stay. I told Him I have no mamma and I have no papa, so I don't have any place to stay. Then Jesus told me I could stay with Him. But I told Him I couldn't, because I didn't have a gift to give Him like everybody else did. But I wanted to stay with Jesus so much, so I thought about what I had that maybe I could use for a gift. I thought maybe if I kept Him warm, that would be a good gift. So I asked Jesus, 'If I keep You warm, will that be a good enough gift?' and Jesus told me, If you keep Me warm, that will be the best gift anybody ever gave Me. So I got into the manger, and then Jesus looked at me and He told me I could stay with Him—for always.'

"As little Misha finished his story, his eyes brimmed full of tears that rolled down his cheeks. Putting his hand over his face, his head dropped to the table and his shoulders shook as he sobbed and sobbed. The little orphan had found finally Someone who would never abandon nor abuse him, Someone who would stay with him—for always."



"As I looked at the little boy's manger, I was startled to see not one, but two babies in the manger."





Out of the Ivory Palaces

an adaptation of a story by James H. Hunter

There was sorrow in heaven. It all seemed so strange to the two little angels. "Do you know," said Ariel to her friend Pax, "I actually saw those things they call tears in Gabriel's eye. Something *terrible* must have happened." "I am sure," Pax replied, "it has *something* to do with those beings down there, the ones that were created on earth." "Yes," agreed Ariel, "The Father loves them *so much*, and yet I heard that they've forgotten Him. Isn't it terrible to think of it?" Pax nodded, "And do you know I heard the strangest story that the Lord Jesus Himself was going down to earth to save them."

Ariel was aghast. "Going to leave us? Going to leave all *this* for those creatures? But what will He *do* down there, dear Pax?" "I do not know. Someone said He was to be *born*." "Born! What's that?" "I've no idea," said Pax. "It seems to be something that happens to humans." Ariel's eyes grew *wider*. "You don't mean He is going to be *like* them, and take the same *body* as they have?" "Apparently that is what it is, but I cannot understand it." Ariel asked softly, "When does this strange thing come to pass?" "I think," said her friend, "it is what they call now—*tonight*."

*"Ariel was aghast.
Going to leave us?
Going to leave all this
for those creatures?
But what will He do
down there, dear
Pax?"*

Just then was a great blowing of trumpets, as angels gathered in from the four corners of heaven. Then, a hush as Gabriel stepped forward to speak, "You are gathered to listen to the most wonderful pronouncement ever made in the eternal ages in which we live. Our beloved Lord, the only begotten Son of our Father, has left us." A sob burst from the assembly. "Our Lord has gone to earth to be born as a babe to suffer the *punishment* for man's sins." A gasp rose from the ranks. "Tonight in a little town called Bethlehem His incarnation will be accomplished. By the order of the Father you will accompany me in bringing the good news to the weary world below. We will announce it to a few simple-hearted men, who fear God and believe His promises. Come, let us away."

By the tens of thousands they swept through the heavens—down, down through the still night air. At the sign from Gabriel, they folded their wings and looked beneath them where a few men, dressed in rags, watched their sheep 'round a fire. Suddenly, Gabriel was revealed to them. In awe, the shepherds fell on their faces. When Gabriel spoke, they listened breathlessly: "Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

Just then all the angelic host were revealed to the shepherds' wide eyes. The entire host lifted their voices and praised God. Ariel and Pax could *not* comprehend the mystery of it all, but the unfathomable love of God for the world caused them to lift their voices again and again. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." They knew *this* was the song to sing, and with all their power they sang it! The night breeze caught it and bore it heavenward, where it echoed around the Great White Throne.

At the signal from Gabriel, the angels moved upward. "What does it mean, Pax?" asked Ariel, as they sped through the stars. "I cannot say. But it was wonderful, wasn't it? Think of it, going *Himself* to rescue them from their own sin. Oh, Ariel, how glad they must be on earth to have Him there, and how eagerly they will accept such a Savior as He. Surely this night will be celebrated forever.



Sample Evangelistic Talk #1

Note: Tailor the first paragraph of this presentation so it is accurate for your own life. This is a talk you can give as host or co-host or one you can invite another Christian to share. Just change the references in parentheses so they fit your situation.



I've enjoyed hearing the traditions many of you have shared. Recently, I asked my children what they remembered our family traditions to be. When all three mentioned decorating the Christmas tree, I was certain they were thinking about those ornaments I made or purchased for them each year! In fact, what they all remembered was the annual debate over who should run to Target for more lights, and the tinsel war—should we hang each piece of tinsel individually and carefully as *my* family always did (the *right* way) or should we throw it on in big clumps as my husband's family did? I was gratified when all three children named that wonderful moment when we turned on the lights for the first time.

And what about presents? Certainly the giving and receiving of gifts is part of what we remember about Christmas. Have you ever thought about the dynamics of gift-giving? The giver of the gift is someone who makes a sacrifice of money, time, effort; the gift is free, with no obligation, no strings attached, and usually serves a purpose or fulfills a need; and the receiver chooses to open the gift and use it as his or her own.

I have a gift in my hands. I am the giver of this gift. Now, I need someone to receive my gift, someone to claim it as his or her own. (*Wait for someone to take the gift you have prepared, then invite him to open it. As he does, say the following.*)

There was some sacrifice involved in my being the giver—in picking out the gift, wrapping it, and spending money. However, the gift is free to (name). Did you see him/her give me any money? I don't know if s/he even deserves the gift. It was given with no strings attached (except the ribbon!). Hopefully, it will serve a purpose as a memento of our party. (Name) gets to keep the gift because s/he's the one who chose to receive it as her/his own.

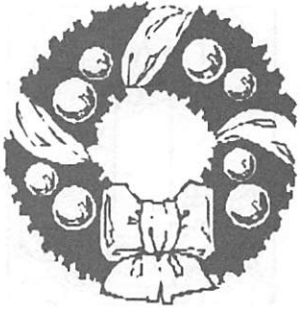
My point in this illustration is that (host/hostess) has asked me to share for a few moments about the most precious and greatest gift ever given. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him would not perish, but would have eternal life."

These words are from the book of John in the Bible and may be familiar to you. They're powerful words, but what do they mean?

God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. He created everything in the world, including you and me. And because He created us, He knows everything about us. He knows what fills your heart with joy; He knows what causes you to grieve. He knows your loneliness. He knows your frustrations and your hurts. He knows all of these things because He made you—He created you to have fellowship with Him forever.

And how do we respond to God's plan for us? We often turn our backs on God and choose to go our own way, rather than God's way. We do this because we seek fulfillment for our lives not in God, the Creator of the universe, but in the things He has created. We look to intellect, material possessions, money and other people. We put our hope in what has been created rather than in the Creator.





These things separate us from God and are called sin. *Anything* that falls short of God's perfect standard is called sin. The Bible tells us, "All of us have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God."

"God so loved the world that He *gave*": Some 2,000 years ago God gave His Son Jesus to be born in a stable. When I was little, I thought a stable was the cute red barn with sweet-smelling animals and clean hay. It wasn't until I was much older that I learned *this* stable was actually a dark, damp cave. The animals kept there were not very sweet-smelling, and the hay was probably not very clean. The manger in which Jesus slept was the animals' feeding trough. Imagine, our kids are born under conditions fit for a king, and the King of creation was born under conditions fit for an animal.

Fortunately, Jesus didn't stay in the manger. He grew to be a man and lived on this earth for about 33 years. While He was here, He said and did many amazing things, which are recorded in the Bible. They are also written in historical books of that time. One of the amazing things Jesus said was, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." He could say that because of something He did—something I still don't completely understand.

He willingly chose to die for every sin— every sin that you and I would ever commit! He died on the cross in our place. He shed His blood, so that you and I would no longer be separated from a perfectly righteous God because of our sin. Because Jesus willingly laid down His life, we can have forgiveness of our sin and peace with God forever. How can we know this is true? Jesus rose from the dead! He's alive! Several hundred witnesses actually saw Him alive.

So who is the giver of the greatest gift? God. He gave us a gift that involved the utmost love and sacrifice. The gift was Jesus Christ. His purpose was to restore our broken relationship with Himself and assure of us eternal life. And the gift is free; it cannot be earned. Though most of us try to live good lives, we will *never* deserve Him. However, no matter how much we have sinned, the gift of Christ will *never* be withheld from us. This is where my gift illustration breaks down. I only had one gift to give and only one of you could accept it. But the gift of Christ is offered to each one of us.

So how do you receive this amazing gift? We can know all the words to every Christmas carol, send religious Christmas cards, attend every church service that's offered, but the gift of Christ cannot be truly ours until we choose to believe He is who He says He is and *invite* Him into our lives.

In the last book of the Bible, Revelation, there is a word picture in which Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in." This is a picture of Jesus gently knocking on the door of your life, at the door of your heart. He will not force His way into our lives. He will wait until we invite Him in.

Church has always been very important to me, but it wasn't until (___) years ago that I understood for the first time that I needed to *choose* to accept Christ as my Savior and invite Him into my life. When I did, it was like finding the missing piece of a puzzle.

Perhaps you can identify with me. This may be the first time you've heard that you need to make a choice. And you make it simply by expressing to



God the desire of your heart. I want to take a minute to thank God for our time together tonight. I would also like to pray this simple prayer. If you would like to invite Christ into your life, just pray silently along with me:

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Your Son Jesus Christ because You love me so much. I realize for the first time that Jesus died for the sins I have committed that have separated me from You. I want to open the door of my heart and invite Jesus to come in and take control of my life. Thank You for coming into my life. Amen.

If that prayer expressed the desire of your heart, Jesus makes a wonderful promise to you, something we can cling to in this unstable world. He says, "I will never leave you or forsake you."

For some, Christmas is not a joyful time. Because of deaths of loved ones, broken relationships or moves, many people find Christmas to be a sad and lonely time. But if Jesus is in your life because you invited Him to come in, you have His promise that He will never leave you or forsake you.

Now I want to give all of you the opportunity to communicate to (host/hostess) and me how you felt about being here. I have some cards to pass around. Please take one and fill it out, and when you're finished, just drop it in this basket on the coffee table.

On the card, I would appreciate your comments on what I shared and how you enjoyed the evening. Just put your name and telephone number at the top. If you have any questions, please feel free to write them down. Either (host/hostess) or I will gladly talk with you. If you did silently pray along with me and ask Jesus to be the center of your life, would you put an X on your card? I would like to send you something to help you grow in your new faith.

(Host/hostess) is interested in starting a four- to six-week neighborhood Bible study in January. If you are interested in a Bible study, put your name and phone number on your card so he/she can contact you about it. Write Bible Study in the corner.

Thank you, (host/hostess), for asking me to join you and your neighbors tonight. There are plenty of refreshments left, so help yourselves after you've filled out your cards, and we'll have more time to visit.





Sample Evangelistic Talk #2

I've enjoyed hearing about your favorite Christmas memories. Many of them involve the giving and receiving of gifts. I'd like you to consider—what would be the greatest gift that one person could give another?

Some of you who have been in the military service might say the greatest gift would be to lay down your life for a friend. For others, it might be a winning lotto ticket or your dream car. For still others, it might be as basic as a steady job, good health or more meaningful relationships with family.

I'd like to share what I consider to be the greatest gift ever given. "For God so loved the world" (that's you and me) "that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him would not perish but would have eternal life."

These words are from the Bible. Two thousand years ago, on that first Christmas night, God came to this earth in the person of the baby Jesus. In fact, one of the names given to the baby (at God's command) was Emmanuel, which literally means "God with us."

Do you know why God did this? Because of love! God loves us so personally that He calls us by name. Better yet, God loves us just the way we are, with all our failures and faults.

Fortunately for us, Jesus didn't stay a baby but grew to be a man. He was a carpenter by trade, a working man just like you and me. He walked this earth fully man and yet, at the same time, fully God.

In His early 30s, He paid the penalty for all the nasty, selfish things you and I have ever thought, said or done. Jesus took my punishment and yours by willingly dying on the cross for us. He was buried, and on the third day, He rose again. He lives today.

You see, God is a holy God. He is perfect and flawless. Man, on the other hand, is imperfect, marred by sin (sin being anything that separates you from God). You might be saying to yourself, "Well, I'm a good person. I go to church. I'm no sinner." But think, just for a moment, about the selfish things you've done—those angry outbursts, those unkind thoughts. These are all sins, and they separate us from God.

The Bible says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and that the penalty of sin is death. But it goes on to say that while the penalty of sin is death, the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus. Now a gift has two parts. It must be given, no strings attached, and it must also be received. If it is given but not received, then it's not a gift at all.

The Bible also says that this gift is not earned. It is a gift of God, so we can't brag about it. God does not expect nor does He want us to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps so that we can *earn forgiveness* or *deserve heaven*. We will never be good enough. He wants us to simply accept and receive forgiveness and eternal life as His free gift through faith in Jesus Christ. Everyone must make his own decision about receiving this gift.

I once heard a true story about a fascinating legal case. I think it's a great analogy to what I'm talking about. The case involved a man named



Wilson, a convicted felon, sentenced to die according to the Georgia state penal code. Due to certain irregularities in his trial, the governor, and later the president of the United States, granted Wilson a pardon. The problem was that Wilson, frustrated and embittered about his situation, refused the pardon. The authorities faced a dilemma. The prosecution said, "Execute him!" The defense said, "Let him go free." They decided to appeal the case to the United States Supreme Court.



In writing for the Supreme Court, Justice Marshall acknowledged the dilemma. There was a valid pardon, and Wilson's name was on it. The problem was that the defendant was still guilty. He had been found guilty by a jury. Understand, a pardon does not remove the guilt; it just *covers* it. A pardon does not make a guilty person innocent. Wilson was still guilty.

Justice Marshall went on to say that a pardon is a gift, an act of grace, which is basically an undeserved favor. As a gift, it is given, but it must also be received. A person can choose to receive the pardon or not. Wilson chose to reject the pardon. Therefore, his guilt was not covered, and since he was still guilty, he had to pay the penalty for his crimes. In carrying out the Supreme Court decision, the State of Georgia executed Wilson.

You see, that's where all of us are today. We are all guilty because of sin, but we have the opportunity to accept a pardon that will cover our guilt. There are two choices we can make. We can invite Christ into our lives, and receive forgiveness and eternal life. Or we can choose to reject Him or avoid making a decision at all, which is the same as rejecting Him.

Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except by Me." He goes on to say, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and invites Me in, I will come in and eat with him and live with him forever." God has given us free choice—to choose Him or reject Him. Unlike Wilson, who chose to refuse his pardon, I chose to accept mine from God. I didn't deserve it then; I don't deserve it now. But I received it all the same.

I want to give you an opportunity to receive your pardon from God simple by asking for it in your heart, as I did a few years ago. Will you pray silently with me: *Dear Heavenly Father, I know that I've done many selfish, self-centered things, and I confess those things to You. I believe that Jesus Christ died for me and for my sins, and I want to receive my pardon. I invite Jesus Christ to come into my life and take control. Thank you, Father, for not giving up on me and for loving me. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen.*

If you prayed with me and sincerely meant it, you can know that God heard your prayer and Jesus Christ has come into your life. Thank you for listening, and for giving me a chance to share the most important gift ever given. Would you do me a favor by writing, on one of these cards, your impressions about this evening? Did you enjoy the party? What did you think of what I just shared? Good, bad or indifferent, I'd welcome your comments. If you prayed along with me tonight, would you put an X on your card. (Host/hostess) would be willing to get together in January for a short-term Bible study. If you are interested, write the words "Bible study" in the corner. When you've finished, please put your card in the basket on the coffee table. Thanks!

(used by permission from Joyce Bademan, Founder of Christmas Gatherings,
a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ.)





Outline for an Evangelistic Talk

Introduction

Your introduction should flow naturally out of the activity that has just taken place in the sharing time. You may want to share about one of your fondest Christmas memories or joke about the most unusual gift you ever received. This could lead naturally to a discussion of a family tradition you celebrate that reflects your relationship with Christ or the greatest Christmas gift you have ever received: Jesus Himself!

Example:

It's always fun to hear about the exciting family Christmas traditions that people continue year after year. My most treasured memory has to do with a family tradition I looked forward to each December. You see, each year my entire family would gather together to go downtown to visit a bank that had been transformed into a winter wonderland. The highlight of that time, though, was the gingerbread and wassail they provided! We would gather together with our refreshments and catch up with one other, recounting the events in our lives over the past few months. Once we had eaten our fill it was across the street to another bank that had assembled a huge choir. Although none of us could carry a tune in a bucket, it didn't seem to matter as we belted out those songs we had sung for years and knew by heart.

Pre-evangelistic Party

The goal of a pre-evangelistic party is to share the true meaning of Christmas. What you share will not only let your neighbors know what you believe, but it will open doors for future conversations about how they too can have a relationship with Christ. Tie in how knowing Christ has deepened the family tradition you shared above. Communicate how special Christmas is to you and your family.

Personal testimony

*I remember one year in particular. I was home from college and was really looking forward to seeing everyone. As usual, we headed over to the first bank, ate more gingerbread than we needed to, and then proceeded to the next bank. But this year something was different. When we began to sing the Christmas carols, they took on a whole new meaning to me. The songs that I had once sung by heart, I was now singing **with** my heart. I remember singing, "Joy to the world, the Lord has come. Let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare Him room." As I sang those words a true sense of joy overwhelmed me, as I realized for the first time what they really meant. You see, that's exactly what I had done just a few months earlier. A friend had explained to me about the true meaning of Christmas. He shared how the greatest gift ever given was Jesus Christ, who came to earth as a baby, but who went on to die on the cross to pay the penalty for all the wrong things I had done. That afternoon, I realized I could do what the song encourages; I could prepare room in my heart for Him and invite Him into my life to forgive me of my sins and bring me into a relationship with God.*



That day, Christmas took on a whole new meaning because it reminded me that the Son of God not only came into the world born in a manger, but came into my life to restore my relationship with God and give me joy throughout the year, not just on Christmas day!



Evangelistic Party

The goal of the evangelistic party is to communicate the Gospel, relating it to the true meaning of Christmas and to give your guests an opportunity to pray to receive Christ. At the end of the group sharing time begin your portion by relating briefly your personal testimony (similar to the one above). It's a natural introduction to sharing the Gospel.

Personal testimony

Include a testimony like the one above, then transition into the Gospel.

Transition to the Gospel

Having shared with your neighbors about how the message of Christ has changed your life, now discuss the content of that message and how you responded to God's offer of forgiveness and eternal life.

Example:

A friend had explained to me about the true meaning of Christmas. He shared four very important truths from the Bible that have radically changed my life, and I'd like to share them with you briefly.

Gospel presentation

Presenting the Gospel means explaining its four main truths. As you share each, try to relate it to the true meaning of Christmas. Several outlines are available in Gospel booklets such as "Would You Like to Know God Personally?" (Campus Crusade for Christ); "The Bridge to Life" (Navigators); "Steps to Peace with God" (Billy Graham Association). These and other resources are found at Christian bookstores. You may also want to memorize one verse of Scripture to reinforce the significance of each point. Avoid reading to your guests. Rather, adapt these resources to the context of a Christmas party and share them as your own thoughts flow naturally.

The Four Main Truths of the Gospel:

(from "Would You Like to Know God Personally?")

- *God loves you and created you to know Him personally.*
- *Man is sinful and separated from God, so we cannot know Him personally or experience His love.*
- *Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin. Through Him alone we can know God personally and experience His love.*
- *We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then we can know God personally and experience His love.*

To illustrate the fourth point, you might say,

At Christmastime, people love to give gifts to one another, but those gifts only truly become ours when we reach out and accept them from the person who is offering them to us. Likewise, God's greatest gift to us, the gift of forgiveness and eternal life, is ours only when we reach out to God and accept it by inviting Jesus Christ to come into our lives.

See "Sample Evangelistic Talks," on pages 40-44.





End the evening by closing in prayer

As you close the evening it will be important that you give your neighbors an opportunity to accept God's greatest gift to them: Jesus Christ.

Example:

I'd like to take a moment to thank God for the fun we've had together this evening. I also want to give you the opportunity to receive God's greatest gift to us: His Son, Jesus Christ. Remember the carol, "Joy to the world, the Lord has come; let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare Him room." As I close our time in prayer, if you would like to prepare room in your heart for Christ, and invite Him into your life to forgive your sins and give you eternal life, just pray silently as I pray out loud.

Dear heavenly Father, I want to thank You for all these wonderful friends and the fun we have shared tonight. As the Christmas celebration approaches, help us to remember the gift of Your Son, who You sent to bring joy to the world and forgiveness and eternal life to those who would accept Him. Father, I pray that if there is anyone here tonight who has never accepted the gift of Your Son, that they would pray this prayer with me. "Dear Jesus, thank You for the incredible gift of forgiveness and eternal life that you offer me because You died on the cross for my sins. Right now, I accept that gift and open the door of my life and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Please come into my life to forgive me of my sins, to give me eternal life and to begin making me into the person You created me to be. Amen."

Comment cards

At this point, pass out the comment cards and then extend an invitation to a home Bible study. For tips on how to do this, see "Inviting Response and Planning Your Next Event" on page 18.

Tips for an effective talk

- Try to limit your talk to about 10-15 minutes. If you see your guests looking at their watches, nodding off or using their neighbor as a pillow, this is your cue that you should close fairly soon!
- Make sure your invitations clearly state that you plan to have a time of sharing inspirational thoughts about the true meaning of Christmas. You want your guests to know this will be an important part of the evening.
- Don't use religious clichés. Carefully prepare what you will say and think about how it will be understood by a non-Christian audience. Run it by several discerning Christian friends.
- Practice your talk until you become very comfortable with it.
- Make your talk personal, sharing your own life experiences.



Tips for Writing a Testimony



Your personal testimony is a natural introduction to sharing the Gospel of Christ. Use these guidelines to tell about what God has done in your life.

1. Let God be original in you. You have your own story to tell, and in the telling, Jesus Christ can be lifted up and glorified.
2. God's power shows up best in "weak" people. Paul wrote in I Corinthians 2:1-5: "And when I came to you brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God."
3. Ask God to give you insight into how He has worked in your life.
4. Don't think of sharing with a group, but rather, with an individual. You do not need to be a speaker, just one who has the riches of Christ and who wants to share those riches with another person.
5. As you write, avoid Christian terminology. The non-Christian is not familiar with it. If you do use it, be sure to explain what you mean by it. The non-Christian is not familiar with Bible language. Avoid using denominational names as well.
6. To help you as you prepare, read Acts 22, 23 and 26. Note Paul's "before," "how," and "after." Organize your testimony accordingly.

a. **Before I received Christ, I lived and thought this way:**

Spend a brief time on "before." This is not a biography from childhood. It's best to start at a time in life which relates to your experience with Christ.

If you became a Christian as a child, thank God for the years you have known Him. We often think that the only exciting testimonies are those of people who have committed a lot of sin. Remember, *anything* God does in a life is exciting. Christ did not sin, but He did relate to people.

b. **How I received Christ:**

Be specific. The Holy Spirit often convinces people they should receive Christ when others are sharing how they received Him.

However, many people cannot remember the exact circumstances of receiving Christ. The circumstances are not as important as the assurance that Christ is in your life.





c. **Now with Christ in my life, as I trust Him, I live and think this way:**

Be practical. Explain how you are continuing to grow as you learn to trust Christ as your Lord and Master. Some areas where you may have seen changes are:

- Relationships with spouse, children, boss, employees, friends
- Atmosphere in the home
- Adjusting to changes and handling life's problems
- Goals in life; changing priorities
- Inner peace
- Bad habits
- Being in control vs. surrendering to God
- New attitudes

Be realistic; don't create the illusion that all things, including you, are perfect. Share how Christ is the problem-solver, and the only One who is all-sufficient.

Be positive. Explain how you are applying God's word to your life. Some ideas:

- Receiving and expressing God's love
- Receiving and expressing God's forgiveness
- Fulfillment
- Peace of mind
- New perspective on life
- Freedom from fear and/or guilt
- Assurance of eternal life
- Purpose for living
- God's direct counsel from His Word
- Fellowship
- Inner strength
- Witnessing
- Sense of belonging
- Understanding of others
- Surrendering to God



Notes







Guidelines for an Outside Speaker

If you are an outside speaker at an evangelistic Christmas party, get to know your host couple and their hearts for their neighbors. Ask questions about what your audience will be like. Write down specific prayer requests and the names of the expected guests. Make personal prayer a priority, as well as recruiting prayer support for this event.

Prayerfully prepare a 10-15 minute message that will relate to this particular audience. God has chosen you as His spokesperson. He will draw them to Christ through you. Be confident in Him as you prepare. As you rehearse and memorize your message, use these guidelines and review your notes.

Establish Rapport

There's nothing like a captivating introduction! Commend the group for getting together as a neighborhood.

Use Humor to Put the Audience at Ease

Briefly relate your own light-hearted Christmas memory.

Transition to Christ and Your Testimony

Keep track of the clock: five minutes on your life before coming to Christ; three minutes on specifically how you came to receive Christ as Savior; and five minutes on the changes He has made in your life and the assurance you now have of eternal life with Christ. Tie in the personal significance Christmas now has.

Weave in the Gospel basics: that there came a point when you understood you had offended God by your attitude and actions; that you realized Christ died for your sins; that He rose from the dead and offered you hope and forgiveness. See "Outline for an Evangelistic Talk" on pages 41-43 for more ideas. Don't pass out tracts or read to the group. Be more personal.

Close by Inviting a Response

Say this to conclude:

I'd like to ask you to do one thing for me: Could you put your name, address and phone number on this 3x5 card, along with any comments you may have about the evening or my talk? Was it helpful? Did you identify with me in any way? If tonight you prayed to invite Christ into your life, would you place an X by your name?

Repeat these instructions: "name, address, phone number, comments and X by name," then wait for guests to complete their cards. Don't worry if the silence seems awkward; it's not awkward to the guests. They are thinking and writing. This time is critical for the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts.

Thank the host and hostess for inviting you and turn the party back to them to announce the Bible study and make additional comments. After guests leave, read the comment cards together with the host and hostess. Praise and thank God for His mighty work!



How to Introduce a Neighborhood Bible Study



Invite Them at Your Party

As the host you will direct the flow of the evening. After the 3x5 cards have been completed by your guests, conclude with sentiments about how much fun the evening has been and how you hope your neighborhood can grow closer together. You might say:

Tonight has been so much fun. For many of us it has been the first time we have ever met. You may have been wanting to have a closer community within our neighborhood as we have. If you have any ideas for neighborhood activities, please write them on the back of your card.

Pause for a couple of minutes to let people think and write. The silence may seem awkward, but it won't be to your guests. Some may even share aloud what they have been wanting to do in the neighborhood, or talk about how neighbors need to know each other, "especially these days, when there is so much crime and trouble all around us . . ." Then transition into the Bible study invitation:

My wife and I have an idea you might be interested in. Starting in the month of _____, we will host a brief Bible study in our home for the neighborhood. You do not have to be a Bible scholar or even own a Bible to attend.

We will decide what specifically to study based on the interest of those who want to attend. Abraham Lincoln, our president in one of the nation's darkest hours, was quoted as saying, "I believe the Bible is the best gift that God has ever given to man. I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go." We will provide Bibles. We'll always have coffee and dessert. This will be a great time to get better acquainted as neighbors and build a sense of community as we explore what the Bible actually says about God and life in our day. Somebody told me once that the Bible is actually a love letter from God. That made me want to read it.

If you are interested in being a part or just want to come and see what it's all about first, please write "Bible Study" on your card and we will contact you. When you have finished, fold your cards and place them in the basket that is being passed around.

Follow Up

Contact each interested person within ten days, and let them know when the first date of the study will be, that it will be about an hour and a half, one night a week, for six to eight weeks.

"I believe the Bible is the best gift that God has ever given to man. I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go."

Abraham Lincoln





How to Lead an Evangelistic Bible Study

- **Announce** the study at the Christmas party and invite guests to indicate their interest on the comment cards.
- **Pray** faithfully for your neighbors, by name, as you ask God to work in their lives and cause them to hunger to know Him. Consider taking “prayer walks” through your neighborhood, asking God to bless your neighbors and open their hearts to the truth of His Son.
- **Gather** together a team of people committed to working together, using their gifts to help facilitate an evangelistic small group study.

One person to handle hospitality: host the study, greet, coordinate food.

One person to handle teaching the group: determine the type of study most appropriate for your neighbors, prepare lessons, provide study guides for participants, provide other resource materials, such as apologetic books for group participants to study on their own, etc.

One person to invite the neighbors and to follow up with a written invitation and a phone call confirming their desire to attend.

Note: It is not necessary to have a team, but it may prove helpful. If you do use a team strategy, choose Christians in your neighborhood if possible, and make sure those who will help are involved in the process from the beginning so they know your neighbors too and can begin to build relationships with them.

- **Assess** the needs of the group before you get together or during the first meeting time. Determine if their interest is in (1) seeking answers to apologetic questions; (2) studying the life of Christ; (3) studying the Bible to understand what it says and how it relates to them; or (4) studying a particular felt need (marriage enrichment, finances, etc.).
- **Choose** the curriculum this group will study on the basis of your evaluation of their needs (See resource materials list on pages 58-60.)
- **Conduct** the six- to eight-week study. Make sure that all know what they are committing to and what is expected of them (attendance, any preparation needed, etc.). After the initial study is over, ask if they would like to start a new study together. You may want to consider adding any other neighbors who were not able to attend the first study.
- **Continue** to build your relationships with the group outside of study times. Ask God to give you other opportunities to discuss what has been covered in the study. Plan some social activities for the group to continue building unity and rapport.

Additional Resources: See the booklet in the Host Party Kit entitled, “How to Start a Neighborhood Bible Study.” Also, obtain the book Your Home, a Lighthouse by Bob and Betty Jacks.

Announce
Pray
Gather
Assess
Choose
Conduct
Continue



Your After-Party Questionnaire



Please

- Give a copy of this page to your church evangelism coordinator or your pastor. It will encourage others to host a party.
- Mail a copy to Neighborly Evangelism Ministries, P.O. Box 620816, Littleton, CO 80123 or fill out the questionnaire on our website: www.neighborlyevangelism.org. We'll use your information in our ongoing evangelistic research and literature. Thank you!

Facts

- Name of hosts _____
- Names of co-hosts _____
- Date and time of your party _____
- Focus of party (adults, children) _____
- Purpose of party (pre-evangelistic or evangelistic) _____
- Number attending the party _____

Feelings

1. Did you follow the "script" from the handbook or use your own approach? What new ideas could you share?
2. Give a few brief highlights from the party.
3. How were the games and singing received?
4. How was the sharing time?
5. What did you learn from the comment cards?





6. What changes would you make for future parties?
7. How did God work in your lives through this experience?
8. What did you sense God was doing in the lives of your neighbors?
9. Do you have any ideas about what you would like to do next in your neighborhood? Would you like some help in developing those ideas?

*Thank you so much
for your love and obedience to Christ!*

*Your love for your neighbors
is bringing glory to God!*



Planning for the Next Two Years

Your Neighborhood Planning Calendar

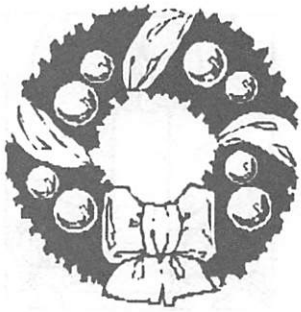


How to Use

1. Label the first box as the current month.
2. Choose the month you want to have your first pre-evangelistic event. In the month prior, write “make invitations” and “recruit co-hosts,” as well as other preliminary items described in this training manual.
3. If you host a Christmas party, write in January any follow-up ideas you have. Will you start a Bible study?
4. Will you seek to befriend particular families on your block? Put their names in various months with an idea of what you might do together.
5. Which month could you have another neighborhood party? Getting together casually at least once during the year before the Christmas party is recommended so that people’s hearts can be more at ease for the more evangelistic Christmas party.
6. What are the natural themes and national holidays observed each month? It’s easy to find a reason to get together. Be creative. You can adapt the structure of the Christmas party to any party. For instance, at a fourth of July party the sharing time topic could be “What childhood memories do you have about the fourth of July?”
7. If you learn the date of a neighbor’s birthday or anniversary, jot it down and do something special for that person or couple.
8. Choose a “cookie month” when you take your neighbors a tasty token of friendship.
9. Write in quality Christian events that might appeal to your neighbors.

Be creative in developing other ideas for your calendars.





Planning for the Next Two Years

Your Neighborhood Planning Calendar

