

Welcome Party Playbook

Get People Connected FAST!

Introduction

The Welcome Party serves as a bridge between attending a church service and becoming actively involved in the community through small groups and serving teams. This event creates a relaxed, engaging environment where individuals can explore their next steps without pressure. By fostering early connections, the Welcome Party lays the groundwork for lasting relationships and deeper involvement in the church's ministries. This playbook provides a practical guide to organizing and executing an impactful Welcome Party that leaves attendees feeling valued and connected.

Marketing Plan

Effective marketing is essential to attract attendees. Begin with a warm and inviting message that highlights the event's benefits: Free food, convenient childcare, and opportunities to meet church leaders and members in a relaxed setting. Use diverse platforms, including email campaigns, social media, and church bulletins, to ensure broad reach.

- **Start promotion early:** At least three weeks before the event
- **Personalize invitations:** Leverage church members to extend one-on-one invites
- **Follow up with confirmation emails:** Include clear directions, the event schedule, and RSVP reminders
- **Reconnect with past attendees:** Encourage individuals who haven't attended a Welcome Party to join

Key Principle: Consistency and clarity in communications improve attendance rates.

Executing the Event

Venue and Atmosphere

Choose a venue that matches the number of RSVPs, ensuring the space feels intimate and welcoming. Decorate the room to create a warm and inviting environment, and play upbeat music during the pre-party period to set a positive tone. Volunteers should greet guests warmly, answer questions, and guide them through the event.

- **Plan seating arrangements:** Group guests by similar life stages to foster connections.
- **Use decorations and music:** Set the tone for a relaxed and inviting atmosphere.

Icebreakers and Activities

Start the party with engaging icebreaker activities.

- Games like Bear, Ninja, Cowboy provide a fun twist on Rock, Paper, Scissors, encouraging laughter and interaction.
- Minute to Win It games, such as Cookie Face or Rice Bowl, offer lighthearted competition and help attendees relax and connect with each other.

Key Principle: Interactive activities break the ice and create lasting first impressions.

Food and Fellowship

Organize a buffet-style meal with volunteers serving food to ensure smooth flow.

Seating arrangements should be intentional, grouping guests by similar life stages to foster natural conversations.

Assign small group leaders to tables to engage attendees and discuss opportunities for deeper involvement.

Presentation and Next Steps

Following the meal, the Lead Pastor or a designated speaker should share a brief presentation about the church. This is an opportunity to highlight the church's history, beliefs, and values, helping attendees determine if it aligns with their spiritual journey. Conclude by introducing small groups and serve teams, encouraging attendees to take their next steps.

- **Distribute Welcome Party Next Step Cards:** Explain their purpose and collect them at the end.
- **Encourage active participation:** Prompt attendees to indicate their interests.
- **Follow up promptly:** Ensure all collected cards are addressed within 24 hours.

Key Principle: Clear calls to action drive meaningful engagement.

Post-Party Follow-Up

The follow-up process is critical to sustaining the momentum from the Welcome Party.

Within 24 hours, contact individuals who expressed interest in small groups or serve teams. Connect them with the appropriate leaders and provide information to facilitate their participation.

Sending thank-you emails to all attendees reinforces their positive experience and invites them to future events.

For those unable to attend, extend a friendly note acknowledging their absence and inviting them to the next Welcome Party.

- **Establish a follow-up system:** Use digital tools to track and manage outreach.
- **Send thank-you notes:** Express gratitude and reinforce their value to the community.
- **Encourage further steps:** Highlight upcoming opportunities to connect.

Key Principle: Timely follow-up sustains engagement and builds trust.

Games and Activities

Icebreakers

Interactive games are essential for creating a fun and engaging atmosphere. Alongside Bear, Ninja, Cowboy, consider adding activities like Speed Friending, where attendees rotate through quick, structured conversations to meet new people. Trivia Night with church or community-themed questions is another great option to build rapport.

Minute to Win It Games

Introduce excitement and friendly competition with popular Minute to Win It games. Options like Junk in the Trunk, where players shake ping-pong balls out of a tissue box, and Stack Attack, involving cup stacking, are easy to set up and are typically universally enjoyable. These activities promote laughter and camaraderie, setting a joyful tone for the event.

Key Principle: Fun activities foster community and leave a positive impression.

Building Deeper Connections

Incorporate personal testimonies into the Welcome Party to inspire attendees. Brief stories from small group members or serve team leaders illustrate the transformative power of connecting with the church community. This personal touch makes the church's message relatable and impactful.

- **Provide QR codes:** Link to small group directories, serve team descriptions, and event schedules.
- **Encourage storytelling:** Share relatable examples of community involvement.

Key Principle: Personal stories create a sense of belonging and purpose.

Metrics for Success

Measuring the impact of the Welcome Party helps refine future events. Track RSVP-to-attendance conversion rates, the number of sign-ups for small groups and serve teams, and attendee feedback to identify areas for improvement and celebrate successes.

- **Use data to assess success:** Focus on attendance and engagement metrics.
- **Gather feedback:** Solicit attendee input to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- **Establish retention checks:** Follow up one month after the event to ensure continued engagement.

Key Principle: Continuous improvement is driven by consistent evaluation.

By following this enhanced playbook, your Welcome Party will create a welcoming atmosphere that fosters meaningful connections.

Thoughtful preparation, engaging activities, and intentional follow-up will leave attendees feeling valued and inspired to take the next steps in their spiritual journey.