



HOLIDAY HOSPITALITY
· GUIDE ·



W E L C O M E

to Waterstone's Holiday Hospitality guide. We are thrilled that you are planning a Neighborhood Party this season.

Simple acts of hospitality are an opportunity to love others through invitation and conversation. Whether these are longtime friends or new acquaintances, your warmth and welcome can be a catalyst for connection and community.

A recent Pew Research Center survey discovered that 57% of Americans knew some of their neighbors and only 26% said they knew most of their neighbors. Of these two groups, a majority said they never met their neighbors for parties or get-togethers.

This holiday season, let's take a step toward changing those statistics in our own neighborhoods. We have created this guide to help you plan and think through what a gathering among friends and neighbors might look like for you.

As you plan your
gathering,
here are a few things
to keep in mind:

Hospitality is far more
about how you welcome
and engage your guests
and far less about what
you serve and what the
space looks like.

BE PRESENT.



Consider sending out a calendar invite and following up with each guest individually the morning of your party. Re-invite them and let them know you hope to see them there. Most individuals will not have made solid plans about their day yet, so a reminder invite can be helpful for their decision to come.

Think through the flow of the gathering. Don't be afraid to weave in structured and unstructured time. Will food be out as guests come? Will there be a time for people to sit and chat? Is there a special activity you are doing?

Don't be afraid to use paper or plastic products or take shortcuts; it can relieve the stress of hosting and will allow you to be more present with guests!

Accept help and engage guests in what you're doing.

Even better, invite someone to co-host a party! Find a neighbor or friend to share the planning and preparation and do it together.

Do guests know one another? If not, try to make personal connections. Do two of them love sports, music or an outdoor activity? Introduce them. Make sure guests know another person in attendance. Try one of our conversation starters (page 10) to begin making those connections.

Finally, remember to enjoy the party you've spent time planning. Don't stress if everything isn't "just so". When people arrive, make your guests the main focus, not the tasks you need to do. **Expect imperfection.**

GATHERING IDEAS

ORGANIZE A POTLUCK

INGREDIENT NIGHT

You provide taco meat and ask guests to bring a complementary ingredient.
(i.e. chips, cheese, tortillas, salsa, etc.)

WHITE ELEPHANT GIFT EXCHANGE

UGLY SWEATER CHRISTMAS PARTY

HOLIDAY COOKIE EXTRAVAGANZA

Everyone brings 2 dozen of one type of cookie;
provide bags and everyone takes home a variety.

Bonus: Include recipes!

RECIPE EXCHANGE

Guests bring a sample for everyone to taste
with recipe cards to take home.

PROGRESSIVE DINNER

Coordinate a few homes to host a course
(appetizers, soup, main dish, dessert)

GIRLS/GUYS NIGHT OUT

A photograph of a person's hands holding a black woven basket filled with several round, golden-brown cookies. The person is wearing a light-colored, textured sweater. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter.

create your own party

Here are some elements that may be helpful to think through:

Length of the event

Location

Seating

Music

Food and drink (provided by you or guests)

Something that will be engaging – games, entertainment or other activities

Ice-breakers and conversation starters

E V E N T S

that run themselves



Stay Outdoors

* Set up a front yard fire pit,
make s'mores and hot chocolate

* Set up lawn games

* Invite people to stop by

Christmas Light Viewing

- * Look up a Christmas light route
- * Grab holiday drinks
- * Drive together

Attend a Festival

- * Carpool together and take photos
- * Grab snacks or drinks together before or after the event

Meet at a Local Restaurant or Brewery

- * Gather for a trivia night or other games
 - * Consider paying for appetizers for your friends
 - * Plan a game you can play together
 - * Bring cards for everyone who comes
-



ICE BREAKERS

and conversation starters



GAME IDEAS

Charades
Pictionary
Pumpkin carving
Catch Phrase



FOOD IDEAS

Rice Krispy treats
Hot chocolate
Sugar cookies
Popcorn
Chips and queso
Meat/cheese board

What would your theme song be if you had your own show?

What was the best meal you've ever had and where were you?

What are the top 2 things on your bucket list?

What's your weirdest pet peeve?

When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

FOR THE KIDS

Set up a sugar cookie decorating table

Provide paper and coloring supplies (maybe even themed coloring books)

Lego creative prompts

Set up a movie area (blankets, pillows, etc.) and put on a holiday kids movie

Play pin the star on the stable or the feather on the turkey

Make handprint turkeys

R E S O U R C E S

Look up “Waterstone Holiday Party Playlist” on iTunes or Spotify for a pre-made playlist for all your holiday party needs.

Need to borrow a popcorn popper, cotton candy machine, or other Waterstone resources? Check-outs are available depending on availability. Email Susan Brouillet at susanb@waterstonechurch.org.