

# THE ESSENTIALS

You've decided to host a block party and you're now wondering, "Where do I even start?" Whether you are hosting a group of 5 for dinner or a group of 50 for a party, there are a few key essentials to every gathering to create a welcome and safe environment. We all long to be seen and known, and hospitality is a chance to communicate "I see you!" through simple things such as an invite, preparing the environment, food, and the small details!

All of these questions are examples of things to consider when first planning your party! Determining the people, place, time, and thing that you're inviting others to do from the very beginning will make choosing all of the details along the way a lot simpler.

- 1. DETERMINE YOUR GOAL!** How many people can you host or do you hope to? What is their age range? Anything specific that might inform your type of party – do your neighbors love games? Movies? Bonfires? Are there people with food sensitivities? Are you able to team up with other neighbors to host a large group? Do you have a space inside to invite people over?
- 2. SEND THE INVITE!** After you decide what the block party is going to be and who you are inviting, the next essential step to any and every type of gathering is to let others know about it! If you are curious on the best methods to do this, we have in-depth resources and even invite templates for you to use!

## EVENT PLANNER TEMPLATE

- 3. PREPARE THE SPACE!** Now is where you start to get into the details. How are you going to pull off your block party and create a welcoming environment for your guests? A helpful tool to think through all of the details is to determine how you are going to create an environment to engage your neighbors through all 5 senses. Keep in mind – the goal isn't to overcomplicate this and make a pinterest worthy event, it truly is to plan the details that help cultivate a welcoming environment! Don't underestimate the power of the small touches.
  - WHAT WILL THEY SEE?** First impressions make a huge impact. Things like a welcome sign when people walk in or a bounce house out on the lawn communicate to people that you thought of them and glad they are there, just by what they saw arriving! Other ideas include a clear and simple invitation, signs by the food, or someone at the front door greeting!

- **WHAT WILL THEY TASTE?** Have something to eat and/or drink! This doesn't have to be a 5-course meal—it could simply be s'mores or burgers on the grill! Maybe even a fun lemonade drink or tea! Keep in mind your guests are, what they might like, and your budget!
- **WHAT WILL THEY SMELL?** This might be the hardest sense to incorporate, but smells can evoke strong memories! A simple candle in the bathroom or fragrant flowers on the table goes a long way to communicate intentionality! Other things that create a smell naturally that we can all imagine and tie to a fond memory – a bonfire or hamburgers on the grill!
- **WHAT WILL THEY HEAR?** Don't forget to incorporate a good Spotify or Apple Music playlist! Music makes people feel comfortable and helps to fill what could be awkward silence in hosting others. When choosing a playlist, think through your gathering and what makes the most sense for the environment. What is the demographic of your group? Are you having an upbeat outdoor party? An indoor coffee-house type gathering? All of these types of questions will help you determine the best type of music for your block party!
- **WHAT WILL THEY TOUCH?** Having things for people to do helps to create a space for others to get to know one another in a natural way! Pull out the cornhole boards or backyard games! Have a puzzle, board games, or coloring pages for kids. There are so many ideas here that all go back to knowing what you love, knowing your neighbors, and incorporating simple ways you can pull together a gathering where people feel welcome and have a whole lot of fun!

**4. PARTY ON!** The invite is out, your space is prepped, and you are ready for the party to start! The last few essentials to think through for your gathering are fostering intentional conversations and being prepared for plans to change.

- **PREPARE FOR INTENTIONAL CONVERSATIONS.** Going into the block party, have a few questions in mind to ask your guests that show you are interested in what is going on in their lives!
- **BE FLEXIBLE!** As with any planned event, things rarely ever play out exactly as planned. This isn't to scare you but to simply remind you, be flexible! Keep extra supplies close by (like scissors, duct tape, and markers), and once the event starts, go with the flow! Remember, the mission is connecting with people—not simply hosting the best party—so go into the night praying over who is coming and what God has in store for all of you!

## **THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND / AVOID**

**Supplies and Equipment:** Some of the most commonly forgotten event supplies are the small things—Sharpie markers to label cups, extra trash cans, or ways to label food items! Try to do a talk-through of the event with someone who can help you pick up on the small things you might have missed.