

block party



101

an instruction manual
for churches who want to
reach their communities



Block Party 101

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This Block Party Manual assumes the use of a Block Party Trailer. If you do not have access to a Block Party Trailer, plan your event accordingly.

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GETTING STARTED

A LITTLE PHILOSOPHY ON BLOCK PARTIES

Block parties have been recognized as a very positive and powerful way for people to connect on their blocks to build stronger, safer, and more cohesive communities. Bill Sims of Oakland, California started block parties. They are very popular in other regions of the United States, especially on the East Coast. Block parties are encouraged and supported by the cities, foundations, churches and neighborhood groups. A block party sponsored by your church will also give you with a vital opportunity to share the good news with those in your own back yard.

One of the most important things to remember when organizing a block party is that it should be visible. The best way to do that is by closing off the street to traffic and having it in the street. That way everyone feels comfortable in attending and since the street is very public everyone can own the party. If you can't close the street, then have the party in someone's front yard or a series of front yards. Back yard parties are nice, but they don't have the same inclusive feel of a party in the street.

WHY HAVE A BLOCK PARTY?

There is no better way to get together and meet your neighbors than to have a block party. Neighborhoods are better and safer places to live when there is a sense of caring in the area. This can develop at a neighborhood block party. Block parties have varied from a simple gathering of a few folks in a front yard sharing memories and beverages to elaborate, highly organized events involving dozens of streets in a neighborhood. Whichever type suits your area, we encourage you to make this a day to renew neighborhood awareness, exchange greetings, and to celebrate the importance of neighborhood relationships, while opening doors to share the gospel.

PLAN THE PARTY.

Do what works for you, but respect your neighbor's property and privacy. If you use the street for your party, do not block residents who do not want to participate. Be sure that emergency vehicles are able to enter the block party area at all times.

DON'T FORGET!

Keep the arrangements as simple as possible and the atmosphere relaxed and informal. Nametags are recommended, especially in newer neighborhoods. After all, the point is to get acquainted! Block parties are a good place to discuss neighborhood concerns, but don't make your block party into a business meeting. It is okay to distribute a newsletter or literature and circulate a sign-in sheet.

INFORM YOUR NEIGHBORS.

Get the message out to all your neighbors. It's a good idea to get the word out at least one-month in advance and to distribute reminders the week of the party. This is a good opportunity to visit with your neighbors and make contact with those you haven't met. Take block party fliers door-to-door if possible. If you wish to cover a very large area, try dividing your neighborhood into equal sections and working with neighbors to make sure everyone is informed.

HELPFUL HINT:

Make your flier or invitation catchy and informative. In addition to the date, time, and place, list all the necessary items to bring, such as food, beverages, ice, and paper goods. Suggest extras, such as lawn chairs, coolers, bug spray, sunscreen, and athletic equipment. Give a brief preview of the party agenda. List phone numbers of organizers.

HAVE FUN AND KEEP IT GOING.

Once the block party begins, relax and enjoy the fun! Visit with neighbors to gauge their interest in future activities of this type. Some neighborhoods may wish to plan regular activities that promote neighborhood interaction. Anything that fosters a sense of community is a welcome event in any neighborhood!

ACTIVITIES

Suggestions for some free activities that would only require coordination from the Block Party Committee

Bike decorating contest

Games like twister, limbo, bingo and croquet

Obstacle course

Watermelon-eating contest (no hands is fun!)

Art contests (use sidewalk chalk for this or for 4-square and hopscotch games)

Volleyball

Dominoes and card games (try to set tables in shade)

Cake walk

Horse shoes

Visits from City fire fighters, police officers and refuse workers (check the appropriate space on the registration form to request visits) always please the kids.

Water games (shaving cream and balloons are essential)

Paper airplane contest

Egg toss

Face painting

Live band or other music/dancing

Crafts and baked goods

Relay races (try balancing an egg on a spoon)

ESTIMATED BUDGET:

25 Hot Dogs (8 pack)	\$1.00 ea	\$25
25 Buns (8 per pack)	\$1.00 ea	\$25
10 2 Liters of Soda	\$1.00 ea	\$10
1 Napkins	\$1.00 ea	\$1
2 Papertowels	\$2.00 ea	\$4
1 cleaning wipes	\$3.00 ea	\$3
1 garbage bags	\$3.00 ea	\$3
1 baricade rental		
1 street closure permit		\$10
1 activity rental (ponies/jumper)		\$200
TOTAL		\$331.00

TIMELINE

JANUARY:

- Reserve block party trailer for dates around local fair / vacation bible school activities
- Solicit coordinators / neighborhoods, list to be finalized by January 31.
- Locate service for baricade rental, confirm prices
- Determine which large events will be part of each party, locate vendors, secure estimates and dates
- Provide schedule to church groups - adult, senior, youth and childrens dept, ask for volunteers for teams
- When locations are finalized, apply for street closure permits through the local City Managers office.
- Schedule a missions training session for one month prior to summer (i.e. Sharing Jesus without Fear)
- Determine what the church may like to pass out at the events, and ask for all items to be ready for pick up one month before start of summer.

ONE MONTH BEFORE START OF SUMMER:

- Confirm all church group volunteers, coordinators,
- Confirm all activities, baricades, block party trailer schedule, street closure permits
- Attend a missions training session to prep your team for the opportunities ahead
- Print all invitations and posters for the events stored in central location
- Collect all church materials, handouts
- Buy all non perishable items in bulk, preferable at a bulk foods type warehouse
- Prepare "Day of Event" letters for all coordinators (see attached)
- Prepare Block Party Kits for each event - store in central location
 - All non perishable food items / condiments
 - Note regarding location to pick up food items (i.e. in church kitchen)
 - Posters / fliers
 - Copy of street closure signature sheet
 - Copy of Day of Event letter

TWO WEEKS BEFORE EACH PARTY:

- Neighborhood sponsor picks up Block Party Kit from the church.
- Sponsor and volunteers meet at sponsors house – pass out fliers and posters to the neighborhood
- Sponsor obtains signatures from residents of street that will be closed

ONE WEEK BEFORE EACH PARTY:

- Core team meets 15-30 min (sponsor invited) to run through all details – pass out maps
- Print Sponsor Fact sheet to hand out to all who attend the Core Team Meeting
- Sponsor and volunteers meet at sponsors house - pass out fliers
- Sponsor returns signature form for street closure
- Coordinator files form w/ City & confirms barricade delivery
- Special **Activity coordinator confirms special activities and community service attendees**

DAY OF EACH PARTY:

- Sponsor thaw hot dogs in AM, cook in large pan of hot water for about one hour prior to event.
- 5 workers needed , one for each food station
- Photographer: take pictures during the events
- As many youth as possible, go door to door in the neighborhood to remind people to attend.
- Church members to circulate w/ hosts and seek opportunities to share the gospel

END OF SUMMER:

- Meet together as a team to discuss learnings. Summarize what you learned for next year
- What went well?
- What could have been done differently?

ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

BLOCK PARTY COORDINATORS (PRE ASSIGNED)

Responsible for coordinating the overall plan for the church including soliciting neighborhood coordinators, volunteers, material development, selection of location, selection and payment of vendor, selection of activities, budget development, volunteer schedule development, street closures if necessary.

ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR (PRE ASSIGNED)

Responsible for recruiting special help for games activities, community services etc. (see activities page for specifics) Will work with Block party coordinator to add details to volunteer schedule.

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR (PRE ASSIGNED)

The Block Party Coordinator should develop the spreadsheet below to sign up and remind volunteers of commitments to the events. A copy should be provided to all individuals, groups and neighborhood sponsors upon completion. **Need to determine best approach here – is this a ministry team event or just sign up sheets in Sunday school? Need more commitment....**

NEIGHBORHOOD SPONSORS (ADULT)

Responsible for forming a neighborhood team of all other church members in the neighborhood, distributing flyers 2 weeks and 1 week prior to the event, helping with minor food prep the day of, making arrangements for the trailer to be parked at the residence the night before the event, making arrangements for space for the designated activity. It may be helpful for the coordinator to target specific neighborhoods and seek out volunteers.

EVANGELIST (ADULTS / YOUTH / MENS MINISTRY)

Responsible for greeting and talking to neighbors who attend the block party. Evangelism training prior to start of the summer is very helpful.

ADVERTISING TEAMS (ADULT / YOUTH / SPECIAL GROUPS)

Responsible for helping Neighborhood sponsor distribute flyers and put up posters 2 weeks prior, 1 week prior and day of the event. Developing a schedule with pre-arranged meeting times and locations and distributing to interested church groups at the beginning of the summer will be helpful

FOOD SERVICE (ADULTS / KIDS)

Responsible for 2 people for each “station” kids are really great here – they’re enthusiastic, smiling and love to make cotton candy, with minimal training! PLEASE NOTE: it is not recommended that chairs are placed behind food tables – typically this results in crowds of people *behind* the tables which can be rather intimidating to neighbors. Only one person (or two kids w/ a “helper) is needed at each station at a time.

SET UP / TEAR DOWN (MENS MINISTRY)

Responsible for unloading all equipment from the block party trailer, setting up tables and tents, and tearing down again at the end of the night. Also includes clean up of equipment and location, disposal of trash.

TRANSPORTATION (MENS MINISTRY)

Responsible for picking up the block party trailer, delivering the night before the event, and returning the day after to pick up again.

CONTACT INFO

VENDORS

Blazing Saddles address	Jumpers address
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SPECIAL ACTIVITYS / GROUPS

Face Painting Name / address	Fire Department Name / address
Games Name address	Police Department Name / address

Hello Neighbor!



You are invited to a Block Party for all the residents of this block!

Date: _____

Time: _____

We will have a permit from the city to close off the street for part of the day. The street will be closed from approximately _____ to _____. Please bring a side dish or salad to share. Hot Dogs, beverages, paper and plastic ware will be provided.

This will be a great opportunity to get to know each other and have some fun! We will have some games for children. Anybody want to sing or dance or play a musical instrument?

Let me know if you have ideas, questions, or thoughts on the event.
I will be coming around to get your signature for the street closure.

Please RSVP by: _____

To: _____

Phone: _____

Hello Neighbor!



Just a reminder that _____ street closures will be closed from

about _____ to _____

on _____ (tomorrow!) for our block party . If possible please refrain from parking your cars on the street during this time. Once the street is closed and the party is in progress it will be difficult to get in and out with your vehicles.

Just a couple more bits of information:

- Please bring out any tables and chairs for the party.
- Please bring a side dish or salad to share.
- Burgers, hot dogs and beverages will be provided.
- Paper plates etc. will be provided.

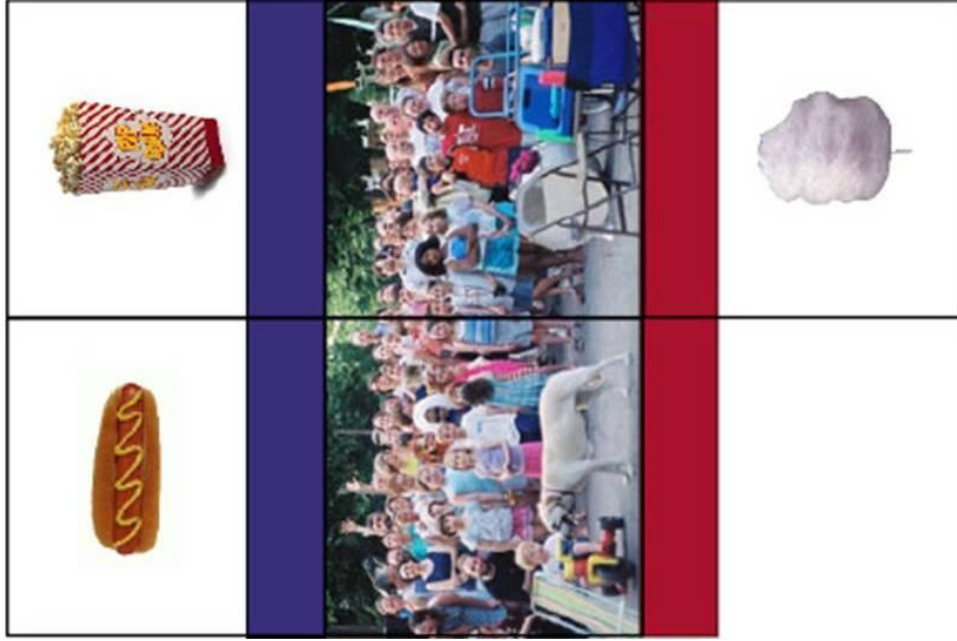
Let's have a good time and get to know one another!
Please call if you have any questions.

Your Block Party Organizers,

Phone

block party

...looking for
SPONSORS NOW!



contact church
office for details