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INTRODUCTION

During Christmas, we at FCBC love to throw Christmas parties where we invite our family and friends to come and experience Christmas together with us.

This year, we are excited to lead the church in a mindset change towards Christmas parties. It is not just a one-off event, but a follow-up from PraySingapore and a lead-up to Celebration of Hope in May 2019.

Therefore, we need a good plan leading towards Christmas, as well as a good follow-up process after the party.

Objectives

1. Cultivate a lifestyle of evangelism in our open cells
2. Prioritise prayer as the key strategy to winning
3. Build contacts through conversational engagement
4. Share Christ as the main focus of Christmas

Strategies

To begin, let's plan our Christmas Party with the following strategies in mind:

1. Prayer
2. Process

PRAYER STRATEGY

Prioritise prayer as the key strategy to winning.

Starting October, pray daily for divine appointments. Start off the day by praying for divine appointments and God may lead you to connect with someone unexpected.

Starting November,

- Pray over a list of potential guests at cell level, e.g., 3x3 prayer.
- Pray and believe God for the following faith goals at your Christmas Party:

No. of Guests: _____

No. of Decisions: _____

PROCESS STRATEGY

There are three parts to this strategy that will be elaborated in the next section:

1. Connect

- Reconnect with friends or connect with new contacts whom the Lord leads you to.

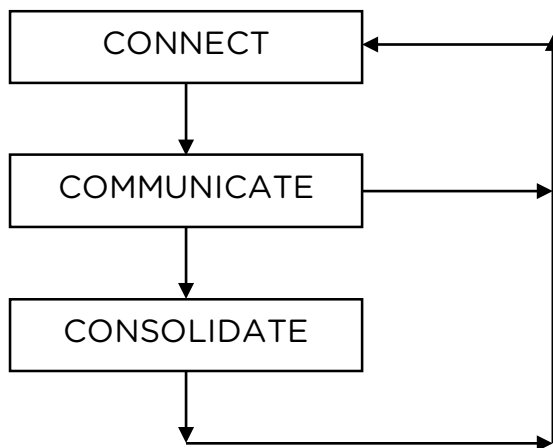
2. Communicate

- The best way to communicate the gospel message this Christmas is to celebrate together as a family of God. Celebrate Christ! Enjoy, have fun!
- If you assess that your guests aren't ready for the gospel message, you can find a right timing after the party to communicate the gospel message to them.

3. Consolidate

- Follow up with friends who made a decision to receive Jesus at the party.
- For friends who are not open to receiving Jesus yet, continue to connect with them.

This is how it works...



PART 1: CONNECT

From October to Christmas Party:

- Pray daily for divine appointments
- Reconnect with friends and connect with new contacts
- Share successful connections
- 'lim kopi' with three friends
- Deliver three Christmas cards to your three friends

PART 2: COMMUNICATE

Pre-Party Preparation

1. Cell Equipping

- John 3:16 presentation
- Assessment of type A or B pre-believers
- Sharing of personal thanksgivings
- Thematic stories

2. Party Planning

- See pages 7-11 below and refer to Appendix A or B
- Three keys for your Christmas celebration:
 - a) **Have Fun**: To build and present your community
 - Fun - Party games and music
 - Food - Hosting the party
 - Friendship - Be sincere and relational (Every cell member must get to know every guest. Prior to the party, hosting of guests can be preassigned to members.)
 - b) **Honour God**: To show the reality of God in our lives
 - Give thanks before food
 - Give thanks for our lives - sharing of thanksgiving
 - Mass thanksgiving (to whole group - see Appendix G)
 - Personal thanksgiving (one-on-one or in smaller groups - see Appendix G)
 - Share the gospel (depending on guests' readiness - refer to Appendix F)

- c) **Add a Personal Touch:** To be a blessing to your friends
- Cell to prepare a gift for every guest
 - Pray blessings for the guests (one-on-one or in smaller groups) through the sharing of felt needs (use Full House Connect Tool - see Appendix F)
 - Invite to Christmas service or other services

PART 3: CONSOLIDATE

1. Those who made decisions

- Continue to connect with them
- Find time to go through “Your New Life With Jesus” with them
- Invite them to service and cell
- Invite them to attend the next LifeClass

2. Those who have not made decisions

- Continue to connect with them
- Pray for rhema word and felt needs to be met
- Look for opportunities to share the gospel
- Invite them to cell’s outreach events for continued interaction (e.g., movie marathon, meals, games)

THE CHRISTMAS PARTY

PART 1: PLANNING GUIDELINES AND TIPS

1. Time and Date

Pick a time and date that is as convenient as possible for your guests. For a party to be successful, we need guests.

- Pick a date that doesn't clash with any major event and a time that is convenient for the guests. For example: Mondays may not necessarily be the best days considering that it is the first day of the work week. For marketplace cells, weeknights are more feasible than weekends and lunchtime parties are a good option to consider.
- Set a time that is realistic for your guests. Starting too early might be difficult as your guests might have to come from work, and starting too late might not be good too as it means the party will end late. Dinner parties tend to be the most common but don't discount brunch and teatime too!
- Consider what your guests just did and what they will be doing the next day. For example: If your party is during the week and your guests are coming from work, make sure you give them enough time to get through rush-hour traffic to get to the party. Also, do consider that they may not exactly be full of joy if their work day didn't go smoothly. Also, if they must go back to work the next day, just remember that they may not let their hair down as much as you'd like and open up as they would be subconsciously thinking of the next day's work.

2. Select a Suitable Venue

Find a private venue where everyone can feel relaxed. In addition to having parties at homes, you can also consider other venues such as condominium function room, office meeting room or cafeteria. The main consideration for a suitable venue is where everyone can feel at ease but still engage in meaningful conversation. You can create a homely feel without necessarily being at home.

- Consider the number of guests and select an appropriate venue. Some parties have been conducted in private function rooms of condominiums, restaurants, or even church.

- Make sure to secure your venue early and consider the logistics that you will need to acquire for that venue to work (e.g., sound system, tables, chairs).
- The trick to having a great party is to have a venue that can facilitate meaningful conversation with little or no distraction.
- If you are having a party in the marketplace, be sure you seek permission to host a party from the venue owner or whoever is in charge.
- Do take into consideration accessibility to the venue by your guests as well as any time limitation for using the venue.

3. Decorations

How the place looks will also help in setting the atmosphere for the party. Naturally, decorate the place in a manner suitable to celebrate Christmas.

- Decorations can be bought or made. Either way, it's a good way to bring the cell together to prepare the place.
- Decorations don't just refer to decorative pieces. Other more mundane items play an important part too - like cutlery, tablecloths, lights, etc.

4. Venue Setup

Not all venues are ideally set up to host a party. Homes may have items or furniture that may not facilitate hosting a larger group of people and other venues may totally be bare. Make sure you plan the layout well so that people have enough space to mingle and sit around.

- Make sure there's easy access to the food and drinks.
- Have a lounging area if possible for your guests to get comfortable and relax.
- Shift any breakables away from the high traffic areas.
- Remove any rugs if you want to avoid getting them stained.
- Make sure that your guests know where the restroom is.
- If there are going to be children, child-proof your venue. The last thing you'd want is for a child to be hurt.

5. Plan the Guest List

Come together as a cell and plan who you're going to invite.

- Pen down the three friends whom you have personally delivered the Christmas cards to.
- Set a faith goal as a cell. How many guests do you want to see at the party? Remember, there will always be a level of attrition between the number of invited guests and number of attending guests. A general rule of thumb would be to invite more people and consider this attrition. Some sources indicate that it can only be 20% to 25% of invited guests who eventually attend, so take this into account!
- Invite your guests, especially the three friends whom you have delivered Christmas cards to. Praying is important and great and all that, but you need to step out and actually invite your guests.

6. Get the Word Out

For your guests to make it to your party, they're going to need some information. You can consider using social media to invite your guests.

- Give them all the relevant information on when and where the party's going to be and how to get there.
- Let them know if they can bring other guests.
- Provide all other miscellaneous instructions so that they can have a great time at the party (e.g., gift exchange instructions, food instructions if it's a potluck).

7. Set a Budget

Throwing a party can be expensive once you put everything together. We're talking about getting sufficient food, securing a venue, decorating the place, preparing other items and so on. So, set a budget and plan your party according to it.

- Parties aren't fun if you don't invest in it, but that doesn't mean that it's all about how much money you have. Plan according to your budget and if something might not fit monetarily, work around it!

- Pool together as a cell to make sure everything that's needed is provided for.
- If finances are a constraint, consider a potluck party.

8. Have a Clean Up Plan

You'll want your guests coming into a nice and clean venue and you'll also want your home to be restored to its former glory (or you'll need to return the venue in good condition). So, please do plan to clean up before and after the party.

9. Put Everything in a Planning Checklist

If you need a sample checklist to help you keep track of planning your party, feel free to use the Planning Checklist in Appendix C.

10. Delegate the Work

It takes the entire cell to host a great party, so don't just let a few people do all the work. Delegate and assign tasks so that the workload is spread out. Even when it comes to hosting guests and keeping the atmosphere nice and relaxed, everyone has a part to play.

- Assign tasks to as many people as required so that all bases are covered once the party has started.
- You might be busy coordinating some behind-the-scene activities while the party is going on, so make sure the rest of the cell are helping by hosting the guests.
- If you can't do it yourself, have someone on hand who is looking at the overall condition of the party. Are more drinks and food needed? Has the music stopped? Are people feeling a little too warm or cold? Is there enough space? These are just some things to be thinking about.

11. Prayer

As mentioned above, it is important to carry out the suggested prayer strategies.

Starting October, pray daily for divine appointments. Start off the day by praying for divine appointments and God may lead you to connect with

someone unexpected. Believe that God will give you opportunities to invite your family, friends and new contacts, and that you will have favour and open doors with them.

Starting November, pray over your potential or confirmed guest list at the cell level, e.g., 3x3 prayer. Pray for each guest you are inviting and follow up on the invitation made earlier. Pray and believe God for your cell's faith goals, pertaining to the number of guests you want to see. Pray for the salvation of your guests.

As the party approaches, intensify prayer and fast for your Christmas Party. Bind any spiritual forces that seek to thwart the programme or stop guests from attending.

PART 2: ACTUAL RUNNING OF PARTY

(refer to Appendix A or B for details)

Remember the three keys for your Christmas Party.

1st Key: Have Fun

FUN

1. Party Games

A party is only fun when the hosts of the party are having fun themselves. It's always important to put yourselves in your guests' shoes. While it may seemingly be apt to play games that revolve around Christmas (e.g., quizzes about the Christmas narrative or carols), not all your guests may be that familiar with Christmas. As such, try and plan out games where everyone can enjoy and be part of, regardless of what Christmas is to them.

- Attached in this manual are some party games for your reference. However, if you'd like to explore other options, please feel free to do so.
- It's always handy to have some household games ready, such as board games or card games. As long as they are simple enough, people can easily get into it and have some random fun.
- Refer to Appendix D for suggested ice breakers, which we recommend you use to get everyone acquainted before the Christmas meal.

2. Music

One of the best tools in our arsenal that can set the mood and atmosphere is music. Make sure you've got some nice tunes playing.

- Get a media player. This can be a laptop, your phone, an mp3 player and so on. If you've got appropriate music for the season, go right ahead. If you don't, get Spotify (just google it). Honestly, it's the best resource for music, even if you use the free version. With Spotify, you instantly have access to a huge library of songs. You can even search for pre-made Christmas playlists.

- Get suitable speakers. Even if you've got great tunes, those tunes wouldn't do any good if they can't be heard. Most of us would have speakers at home, but are they suitable? Try to get speakers that can cover your venue well. Be sure not to blast the music and drown out all conversations nor make it so soft that it might as well not be playing.
- Appoint someone to be the DJ. At the very least, someone needs to manage the volume during the party.

FOOD AND DRINKS

1. Food

Christmas parties tend to revolve around food, and lots of it. If you want your guests to stick around, make sure you provide good food. Since it's the Christmas period, take the opportunity to provide some festive food – turkey, baked ham and so on.

- Make it a special festive menu; after all, this is a Christmas party.
- Try and have a special attraction in the meal, e.g., home-cooked food, specialty dishes, barbeques.
- There are a lot of Christmas set meals available during the season, but they usually require advance booking. Keep that in mind!
- Have lots of finger food on hand. It's always important to have food available to guests the moment they walk in. These can be as simple as chips and dip or as fanciful as homemade dim sum.
- Before you begin the feasting, take the opportunity to honour God by saying grace to give thanks for the food.

2. Drinks

People don't only come to a party hungry, they come thirsty too. So, let's have some nice drinks prepared for them!

- Just like the finger food, have drinks available the moment the guests step in.
- Have enough drinks for everyone; don't let your guests mingle empty-handed or with an empty glass.

- Have a nice selection of drinks; often we don't focus much on drinks and only prepare a limited variety of drinks. Have a variety of fizzy drinks, non-carbonated drinks, juices and of course, water.
- Have some coffee and tea on hand too. You'll never know who would like a hot drink instead.
- Make sure there's easy access to the food and drinks.

FRIENDSHIP

Be Sincere and Relational

Being yourselves is a surefire way to make your guests feel at ease and relaxed. Make it a point to welcome your guests and mingle with them. Pay attention to their body language, whether they are comfortable or feeling unsettled. Help your guests settle in by introducing yourselves and take special interest in getting to know them.

- Find a non-imposing manner of identification. The most common way this is done is through stickers with names written on them. For a sit-down party, you can consider asking your guests to write their names on stickers and stick to their glasses.
- Most of your guests would not know the other invited guests. The cell is the glue that will bring them all together. Encourage the cell to unleash their most sociable personalities and get them talking to various guests from different groups, and where possible, bring the various groups together.
- Remember: every cell member must get to know every guest at the party! It is important for our guests to feel connected with the cell community and not just the friend who brought them.
- One surefire way to get guests mingling at your party is to have a gift exchange since it is Christmas. Just remember to set a price cap on the gifts so that it doesn't get too out of hand. Another way of managing this gift exchange is for the cell to prepare enough gifts for all the invited guests so that no one is embarrassed for not bringing a gift to exchange.

2nd Key: Honour God

SHARING THANKSGIVING / PRESENTING JESUS

(refer to Appendix F)

- After the Christmas meal, gather the guests and use the “Full House Connect Tool” in Appendix F to elicit sharing from the guests at a more personal and light-hearted level. It is recommended that one set of cards be used in a small group of four to five persons, with a small group leader present to facilitate. Do print enough sets based on your party’s attendance.
- Prepare one cell member to share his/her impactful thanksgiving with the group. Refer to Appendix G for how to share a thanksgiving.
- The host of the party should then invite everyone to return to their small groups, and the small group leaders should takeover to surface and pray for any felt needs of the guests using the “Full House Connect Tool”.
- Depending on the readiness of your guests, present Jesus by sharing the John 3:16 presentation.
- Lead your guests in the Sinner’s Prayer.
- Appendix F provides the entire flow after the Christmas meal till the end of the party in verbatim.

3rd Key: Add a Personal Touch

- On top of the gift exchange (if it is part of the programme), the cell should prepare a gift for every guest.
- Invite your guests to our Christmas service or other services.

PART 3: POST-PARTY FOLLOW-UP

Post-Party Reporting

Please report the details of your Christmas Party through this Google form:
[fcbc.org.sg/christmasparty18](https://www.fcbc.org.sg/christmasparty18)

- Select the type of party
 - Christmas Party
 - Christmas Party (families with children)
- Team Pastors
- SP144 Leaders (drop-down option)
- Name of Cell Leaders
- Date of party
- Start time of party
- Number of members involved
 - Adults
 - Children (12 and below)
- Number of guests attended
 - Adults
 - Children (12 and below)
- Number of salvations
 - Adults
 - Children (12 and below)
- Number of rededications
 - Adults
 - Children (12 and below)