

Hospitality Activities

Pot Some Plants

One of the best signs of a happy summer is a front porch or stoop adorned with blooming flowerpots. In fact, aside from nice lighting, nothing quite makes a home seem more hospitable than bright blooms to welcome guests.

So, make it a family project to pot some plants—for your own door as well as the doors of friends and neighbors and spread the hospitality cheer.

You'll need:

- Pots (you choose the size, style, amount)
- Fresh potting soil*
- Annuals (in cells) of your choice from your local gardening center.* Consider factors like shade and water needed.

Optional:

- Small spade or spoon (hands work well too!)
- Gardening Gloves

**If you live in an apartment and have inside doorways, choose either artificial plants or make this craft for the windows or balcony!*

Wearing clothes you don't mind getting dirty, choose a spot outside to repot the plants. Fill pots halfway up with soil, and follow the potting instructions. Set the pots for your home around your doorway or your porch. Pray that God would allow guests to find joy when they see them.

Take the other pots to friends and neighbors. Pray over those plants that God's mercy and peace would fill their homes.

Extend the Hospitality

When we think of hospitality, we think of our own homes. But being hospitable is about extending kindness and generosity and a gracious, welcoming spirit wherever we go.

A child can be hospitable in school by being extra friendly to desk mates—or better yet, inviting a new or lonely kid to eat or play. A parent can be hospitable by letting another driver take the best parking spot or by being extra nice to that cranky coworker.

Hospitality is a posture of grace and open-handed and –heartedness in God’s world.

Brainstorm some ways that you can practice hospitality outside your house—and then put them into practice. You might:

- Smile more at neighbors when taking a walk.
- Offer to let another family sit before you do at a restaurant
- Work on your basic manners: hold doors, let others go ahead of you, make sure you say please and thank you
- Have conversation starters ready to go. Ask people you meet things like:
 - How do you like to spend your day?
 - What’s your favorite outside activity?
 - What’s the best place you’ve ever been?
 - Where is home for you?

Company Only Snacks

In the “olden days,” families often kept a coffee cake frozen and ready to go at all times. You just never knew when someone would pop over, and you’d want to be able to serve a snack. Family members were forbidden to defrost and eat that coffee cake—no matter how good it looked! It was for Company Only.

Though today’s world is usually more scheduled than in days gone by, it’s still a wonderful practice to have snacks that are for Company Only. This way, nothing gets in the way of having an impromptu gathering or inviting someone to sit for a snack when they stop by.

Of course, the snacks don’t have to go in the freezer—and certainly don’t need to be coffee cakes (though baking and freezing a coffee cake is always a great idea!).

As a family, decide on a few things that could work for guests that stop in. Consider buying things like granola bars, trail mix, and a box of store-bought cookies to keep on hand for company. Either put the food into a special Company Only Box in your pantry or simply use a marker to write Company Only on the outside. (Watch expiration dates. And if they don’t get used in a certain time, be prepared to eat them yourselves or better yet—invite others over to enjoy!).

Or, look up fun recipes for freezer-friendly coffee cakes or cookies to make ahead and freeze.

Good hospitality is never about *what* you serve, but the spirit you serve it in.

Tea Party on the Lawn

We get bogged down thinking hospitality needs to take lots of planning and preparation. But many times, the very best gatherings happen spur-of-the-moment—or nearly.

So, on a day when the weather is nice and you have a break (even a small one) in the schedule, put a couple of tables on your front lawn (or sidewalk or the hallway outside your door) and go knock on some doors. Invite neighbors to join your family for a Tea Party.

Serve cookies or snacks (whatever you have on hand—those Company Only snacks would serve in a pinch!) and pitchers of Iced Tea, Lemonade, and Water.

Of course, you could go all out and serve tiny finger sandwiches and scones with clotted cream and tea served in fancy pots. While that's fun and fancy, it's not the point. The point is to gather neighbors for a nice time and conversation.