

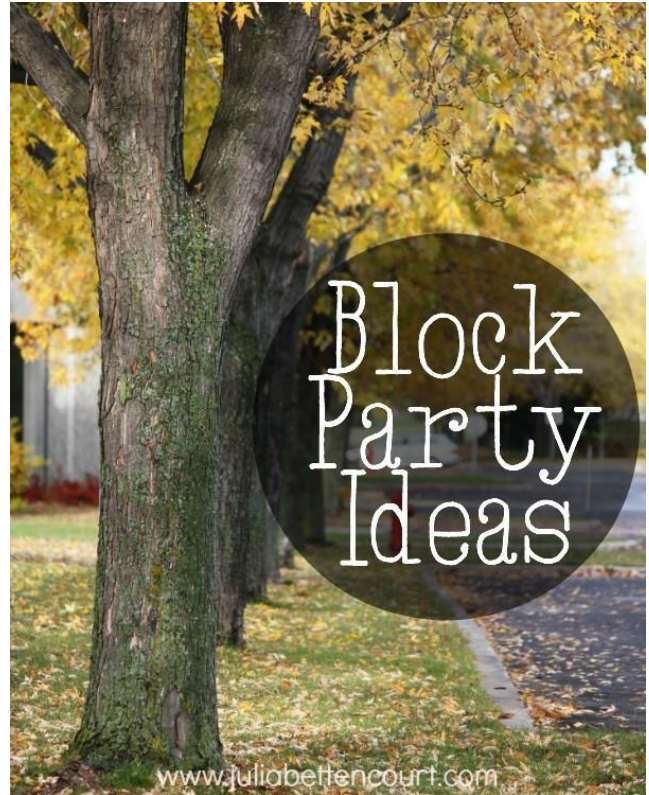
Block Party Ideas

Julia Bettencourt

Put your hospitality on the block!

Fall is coming so I thought it would be a great time to share some block party ideas. Fall is a fantastic time to hold one. I think block parties are one of the ways we can show our Christian hospitality.

Our church has had block parties in the past and they can be a good time to build community and connect with people. You can also have a personal block party and just invite everyone in the neighborhood over to your home and have a big party on your lawn.



We live in a world where everyone stays to themselves. The trend is to live inward and only be on our technological devices for communication. We are real people, and we could use a dose of the real world from time to time. At least that's what I think. Having a block party is a great way to reach out and offer a little Christian hospitality to those who need some real people time.

Block parties don't just happen though. They require several hands working together to pull them off.

Block Party Tips

- Have a plan. You can't just all of a sudden decide to have a block party. It takes planning and there are too many details that have to be taken care of legally with your city and county that you can't overlook like permits, ordinances, etc.
- Make your plan have a purpose. Is it a personal block party to just build community and meet friends? Is it a church block party to meet new families and invite them into your church and show you care?
- Meet any city and county requirements. Check with your city, county, police, and all departments necessary to research if a block party is even feasible. Do everything within the legalities of your city and county.
 - Check to see if you need permissions and permits.
 - Check any ordinances that may bar you from having a block party. Be sure to check noise ordinances in your city and county as well.
 - Check to make sure there are no requirements or stipulations if you serve food.
 - Make sure any insurance requirements are fulfilled.
- If you are having activities, have plenty of workers and helpers.
- Make sure all safety measures are in place for any activities.
- Have a doctor, nurse, or some type of medical staff on hand in case of any emergencies.
- Have a few first aid kits located in strategic places throughout the block party area.

- If you are having food, follow clean food handling procedures. Make sure hot and cold food are kept at appropriate temperatures.
- Pick a great location.
- Fill your program with activities, food, and fun.
- Advertise and get the word out.

Bring on the Block Party Food!

Block parties require some food because food is always a great way to bond. It can be done in some different ways.

- If it's a personal block party and you are just inviting the neighborhood, try one the following.
 - Potluck
 - Ice cream and toppings
 - Watermelon and other fruit
 - S'mores
 - Appetizer type foods
 - Hot cider and donuts
 - Pies (great time for all the fruit that is in season)
 - Have water, coffee, and tea on hand.



- If it's a church or community event, try one of the following.
 - Barbecue – hot dogs, hamburgers, or whatever meat and provide some side dishes.
 - Ice Cream and toppings
 - Hot cider and donuts
 - Pies (great time for all the fruit that is in season)
 - Watermelon (cut up into small wedges)
 - Have your church people prepare and bring in pot luck dishes.
 - Have water, coffee, and tea on hand.
 - Bring in food trucks from your community. It shows you want to work with local businesses and also makes it easier on your budget as everyone will be paying for their own meals. (Be sure to add: "Bring money for the food trucks!" on your flyer) Our church just brought some food trucks in on a Sunday afternoon for an event after church. It was a great way to work with local community businesses and provide a meal option for our people.

Bring on the Block Party Activities!

- If it is for a personal block party, you won't need too much. A personal block party is mostly to get to know the neighbors.
 - Game of horseshoes or croquet on the lawn
 - Game of touch football (teens and adults)

- Games for the younger children
- Face painting for the kids
- For a church or community event you may want to try some of the following.
 - Face painting
 - carnival type games
 - Game of touch football (teens and adults)
 - Bounce house (have all legal issues taken care of ahead of time–insurance and permits)
 - Vender booths by local crafters and home businesses
 - Outdoor movie



Remember the purpose of a block party should be to build community and connect with people. So, get out there and meet and greet people! Don't just talk and stay with your own group of friends at a block party. That will defeat the purpose.

Have you ever been involved in a block party? If you have some tips to share, please leave them in the comments. I love hearing from my guests!