

# Evangelistic Block Parties

Evangelistic block parties are a special, highly effective, and flexible sub-set of evangelistic events. Within each variation of a block party—and variations are as expansive as the imagination—you will find an **A**ttraction, **B**ridge, and means to **C**ommunicate the gospel. The following is a comprehensive explanation and coaching on doing effective evangelistic block parties.

*The evangelistic block party moves the church out of its building*

## Evangelistic Block Parties

### Attraction

The evangelistic block party (EBP) is an intimate, highly effective mass evangelism event enhanced by using a personal evangelism thrust. The evangelistic block party moves the church out of its building and provides the church with a ministry of presence and visibility.

### Bridge

There are many variations of a block party where believers can connect with unbelievers to communicate the gospel. See some of the types below. Fellowship, fun, food, and specific ministries provide numerous opportunities for sharing Christ in a nonthreatening setting.

### Communicating the Gospel

Communicating the good news of Jesus Christ is the goal of every evangelistic block party. Evangelism should be the priority in planning any EBP. An EBP should include an interesting program, but entertainment is not the main point. It should include food, but feeding a crowd is not the ultimate outcome. Every element of the EBP should focus on people hearing the gospel and praying to

*Communicating the good news of Jesus Christ is the goal*

receive Christ. At most parties no “come forward” invitation is given, but at periodic times during the EBP a speaker will thank guests for coming and present a short testimony. He will also call attention to church members who are mingling with the guests and giving them free marked New Testaments or evangelistic booklets. Trained witnesses explain the gospel in a nonthreatening, personal forum to enhance the sharing of the gospel.

## Types of Block Parties

### Neighborhood Pasta Party

Christians in Boston have hosted a New England potluck supper. They prepare pasta for their entire subdivision. Neighbors are invited to bring their favorite sauces. This creates interest and involvement. As acquaintances become friends, the gospel can be shared more effectively.

### Neighborhood Watch Block Parties

Recent surveys show Americans believe that crime is the major issue affecting our nation. Some churches have adopted as their community ministry ways to help neighborhoods, subdivisions, apartments, and mobile home communities set up neighborhood watch programs.

### The Neighborhood Super Bowl Party

You can use the Super Bowl as an opportunity to share the gospel. The Super Bowl is an event that friends frequently gather to watch together. This event has grown in popularity since it began in the 1980s. Invite neighbors to a Super Bowl party. The party can be held in a home, at the church, or in a nearby gym. You may want to rent a big screen TV. The Super Bowl is viewed in a group setting. During commercials, the pastor, a well-known athlete, or another special speaker shares his or her testimony. You could show special evangelistic videos during half-time. This event has

grown in popularity since it began in the 1980s. Many people have come to Christ through this type of event.

### Children's Block Parties

One church in Florida had a block party especially for children. They enlisted an ice cream truck to drive around the targeted neighborhood, passing out free tickets to be redeemed for free ice cream at the block party. This attraction brought children and their whole families to the EBP. Another large Florida church rented an entire carnival and provided bus transportation for 2,000 people from nearby neighborhoods and apartment complexes.

### Simultaneous Block Parties for Children

Some churches have a type of simultaneous EBP for children in subdivisions, mobile home communities, and apartment complexes. Use Backyard Bible Club (BBC) teaching materials and music available from LifeWay Christian Resources (LifeWay). Make sure that the gospel is shared effectively with children who attend the BBC. Use the "God's Special Plan" witnessing booklet for older children.

### Citywide Block Party

Some large churches that are located in smaller communities sponsor citywide EBPs which are designed to introduce people to Jesus. Your church may rent a local city athletic field and provide a meal for the whole community. Set up a large sound system and feature popular Christian musical groups throughout the day. Church members can serve up food, create fun, and make music while they share the gospel. The receptivity of city residents to the gospel is often greatly enhanced by the party.

### Sports Block Parties

Sports are an excellent attraction for many to come to a block party. Many people would come to hear a well-known Christian athlete speak, give a demonstration, or lead a sports clinic. The atmosphere of fun created by adding a sports strategy to your EBP will increase the receptivity of participants.

### Event Specific Preparation

Block parties require much preparation. Prayer meetings, leader/committee enlistment, securing the location, and getting the necessary permits are important in the initial phase of planning. Depending upon what type of block party you are doing, materials such as food, giveaways, equipment, and program personalities should be planned early. If you are using clothes distribution, begin collecting items several months in advance. Flyers, ads in newspapers, and other promotional items should be distributed. Witness training sessions should be conducted for all those involved.

On the day of the block party, all physical arrangements should be done and all volunteers present. Have a brief meeting before the block party so any last-minute details are taken care of. Insure that each volunteer knows the location of all witnessing materials and what to do with the registration cards once filled out.

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