

HOSTING AN ANGEL TREE PARTY

Many ministry partners choose to host an Angel Tree® party instead of delivering the gifts to the home of the family. This is a wonderful way to introduce Angel Tree families to your church as a welcoming, loving place. It is also a chance to involve many members of your church/organization, including younger members of your congregation. The youth-group-aged children can volunteer to help, while the elementary and younger children can join in the fun and attend the party.

It takes planning, preparation, and volunteers to make a party successful. You will need to start your planning early and make sure you have enough volunteers to help.

The purpose of Angel Tree is both to provide a Christmas gift to a child of an incarcerated parent and to present the Gospel. This can be done through the reading of a storybook, a puppet show, a drama presentation, a video, or anything else that would hold children's attention. Be creative and use the talents of your congregation! Activities are also a wonderful way to interact with the children and their caregivers.

The following are some **suggested activities** for your party:

- Face Painting
- Cookie Decoration
- Caricatures
- Christmas Craft/Ornament
- Photos
- Letter Writing/Card Making
- Karaoke
- Gingerbread House
- Finger Painting
- General Play Area
- Gospel Storytime/Puppet Show
- Playdough/Clay Fun
- Christmas Carols
- Gospel Drama Presentation

Suggestions for **volunteer opportunities at your party:**

- Reception Area
- Activity Tables
- Coat Room
- Parking Attendants/Greeters
- Set-Up Crew
- Clean-Up Crew
- Media/Public Relations Crew
- Sound Crew/Music
- Video/Photography Crew
- Refreshments
- Prayer Room
- Gift Room
- Story Readers
- Drama Team
- Carol Sing Leader



TIPS FOR HOSTING A SUCCESSFUL ANGEL TREE PARTY:

- **Contact families** as soon as you receive your list of Angel Tree families. Make sure you require a quick RSVP.
- **Express the importance of attending the party.** While most ministry partners will make arrangements to deliver gifts to families not able to make it to the party, make it clear that the party is where the gifts will be distributed and that it will be fun event for the child(ren).
- **Have transportation available** for families unable to make it the party on their own.
- **Send a ticket to each family** with their Family Number on it to make gift distribution easier. Have them present their ticket at a gift table to receive the proper bag of gifts.
- **Advertise your party** to the church/organization. List the volunteer opportunities available.
- **Keep refreshments or meals simple.**
- **No alcoholic beverages.**
- **Have counselors and follow-up materials available** for the Gospel presentation during your party.
- **Always plan for more people** and provide for extra family members who show up.
- **Take digital photos** of the child with their gift to send to the incarcerated parent (if caregiver gives permission).
- **Have volunteers available to deliver gifts** to families that did not attend.
- **Tell the child and caregiver that the gift is from the incarcerated parent,** not the church/organization.
- **Be sure to include the message from the incarcerated parent if one is provided.**
- **Keep the program upbeat and happy**—not preachy!
- ***Have fun!!!***

Forms to help organize your party are available online.

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