



## Hello, My Name is \_\_\_\_\_: Creative and Fun Events for Your Sunday School/Small Group and/or Ministry

[www.KrisSwiatochoMinistries.org](http://www.KrisSwiatochoMinistries.org)

[www.TheSinglesNetwork.org](http://www.TheSinglesNetwork.org)

**Anyone, any class or small group, ministry, can have a basic social or event. But why are we having them? What is the point to them?**

**Socials/activities usually come as a result of a foundation of ministry.**

*And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel." And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. Ezra 3:11*

For example, if you have a Sunday school class or group, at some point in time you will end up having a social of some kind. The social's primary purpose is to connect members of a class. To allow them to interact outside the class; to get to know their families, etc. The more we know about each other, the more we bond. The more we bond, the stronger our ministry can become.

Socials can also be a way to reach our neighbors, family members, those we haven't seen in a while, etc. Either way, they need to be strategic. Strategic in our goals, our purpose, the proper positioning of leadership, plus there needs to be a way to track those that have attended and how-to follow-up with them.

*The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty. Proverbs 21:15*

**Note:** When you see the word "social" it can also mean a road trip, mission trip, event, icebreaker, sporting event, etc. It's anything we do outside the teaching aspect of the Sunday school class, small group or teaching.

### **Socials...**

- Should be fun and enjoyable.
- Promote relationships within the church. When you have an icebreaker, table discussion, game/activity, event, road trip, mission trip, etc. you can help but get to know others
- Promote team building. When you work together in creating/building activity, you are building a team. Teamwork is what helps build the body to reach the lost.

*Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Ecc :9-10*

- Promote outreach. When you are working well as a team within the church, you are ready to go reach those outside the church and evangelize.

*And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.  
Mark 16:15*

### **So, what happens you when your socials:**

- Don't work as well anymore?
- When your numbers are starting to drop? People still want them but don't support them by showing up?
- When there is a lack of enthusiasm?
- When it's the same people end up doing all the work, all the marketing, all the setup and clean up?

### **Questions to ask:**

- What is the purpose behind the socials?
- Have we involved others to help using their ideas, gifts, and talents? Have I made time to meet with them, to share my/our vision and hear their ideas?
- Have we been willing to try different things, change, getting more creative?
- Are we evaluating the socials to see if it's what we expected?
- Are we ok with some events having smaller groups and other having larger groups?
- Do we see fruit in the socials? Are people talking, connecting, getting to know each other?
- Are the events too expensive? Or free and people do not value?
- Is there anything prohibiting people from attending the socials?
- What would others say about the events?
- Are they enjoying the socials? Is it something they would tell others about? Would they post it on Facebook and other social media?
- Are the events too often, or not often enough?
- Are we praying as a class about the socials; making sure people know what they are designed for? Are we praying to see if this is even what the Lord wants us to do?
- Are we sure if folks even want to have a social? Note: You can give out a survey, but you can also ask individually.
- Are we training people to know how to start conversations at the socials? How to build relationships? Are we training people to evangelize? Are we training leaders?

**Remember:** Giving out water bottles in the park may be fun, but wouldn't it be great if everyone in your class could start a conversation or be included in one about Christ? Not that you have to lead every person to the Lord but to start. Start by praying ahead of the time for God to open doors.

### **Some basic elements for greater success in planning your events/activities:**

#### **BEFORE THE SOCIAL:**

- a. Make sure there is an interest and lots of people to take ownership (team).
- b. It's easy to get to, distance, and direction
- c. Cost fits within their budget
- d. Time is manageable; you don't have to rush to get there or back
- e. Clear communication through social media, website, flyers, in person, emails, etc.:
  - What kind of social is it; is it just for our class or open to outsiders including those who are not Christians?
  - Who are the leaders/those to contact if needed.
  - What should people bring for the social.
  - What should people wear.

- What should people expect.
- What does it cost.
- What are the directions to get there; where do they park.
- How do people register, online, or in-person, and is there a deadline.
- Is there childcare.
- Can I bring my pet.
- Is there a carpool; where are they meeting to ride together.
- Is ordering or bringing alcohol allowed?
- Do you need more help.
- Is there a value for me to come?
  - There has to be a value/motivation for people to come. With singles, it's other singles. But with single parents or marrieds, it may be getting a break from kids or coming up with something that includes kids. It may be a way to bring their lost friend or family member.
  - Will they learn something they need to know; draw closer to God
  - Will they make new friends?

#### **AT THE EVENT:**

- a. Everyone needs to wear a name tag.
- b. Provide an easy way to check-in; drop off food, get their name tag, pay money, child-care, where to meet, etc.
- c. Make sure leaders do not sit together; spread them out with the goal of meeting new folks.
- d. Greeters are needed at all events; even off-campus (eyes and ears/safety).
- e. Ask open-ended questions; take the time to get to know people; listen to their stories, offer prayer, network them (icebreakers/get to know you mixers) are great as well.
- f. Be organized; start on time and end on time.
- g. Make sure people have what they need for the event, resources.
- h. Get guest (new folks) info so that you can follow-up with them one-by-one, even remembering things they might have told you.
- i. Watch for those that are alone, sociably disconnected, or could cause problems.
- j. Ask people you know and don't know to help.
- k. Ask for feedback of the event so you can do it better next time (maybe even at the event with a door prize).
- l. Meet with your team to evaluate and make changes; what worked with one group/class might not work with yours.

#### **Remember:**

When leadership teams plan socials, often they are made up of more women than men. This is critical when it comes to planning your socials and events. Men typically like sporting events, outdoor, camping trips, service projects, etc. where they aren't talking as much. Whereas women want socials where they can talk. Having childcare is critical to be able to enjoy themselves. But having a child in a nursery for hours will not work. Also note, if you have an event at someone's home, you need child supervision.

*From whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. Ephesians 4:16*

**To bring Kris to your city/ministry in person or by zoom, call her at 919.434.3611 or email at [swiatocho@gmail.com](mailto:swiatocho@gmail.com). For more information on her ministry go to [www.KrisSwiatochoMinistries.org](http://www.KrisSwiatochoMinistries.org) or [www.TheSinglesNetwor.org](http://www.TheSinglesNetwor.org)**



## CREATIVE SOCIALS/EVENTS/ACTIVITIES For Your Sunday School Class/Small Group/Ministry

[www.KrisSwiatochoMinistries.org](http://www.KrisSwiatochoMinistries.org)

[www.TheSinglesNetwork.org](http://www.TheSinglesNetwork.org)

Note: If you would like a list of over 100 icebreaker ideas and team-building exercises, you can purchase one-off our website at [www.KrisSwiatochoMinistries.org](http://www.KrisSwiatochoMinistries.org) for \$5.

Note: The list below is a compilation of years of doing social/mixers, activities not only by myself but from others around the country. If you have an idea not listed, or an expansion of an existing idea, please send it to Kris at [swiatocho@gmail.com](mailto:swiatocho@gmail.com).

### **FOOD:**

**Dessert:** Make your own Sundae where people bring their toppings to share. You could also have a smoothie or milkshake night.

**Family Recipe:** Create a family recipe, then print several copies on paper, then attend a function to enjoy the food and trade recipes. Other ideas: Bring something you not only created but decorated too (ugly or pretty).

**Budget Dish:** Set a price to create your dish item and then get creative.

**Cookie/Cupcake Swap:** Make your favorite desserts and bring them to a gathering to swap with others. You can make this theme based.

**Appetizer Hop:** Find an area of your city that houses a lot of restaurants altogether and go from one to the next (walking), preferably not sitting down. Everyone brings \$1 bills and you buy 1-2 appetizers. Share. Pay with cash, drink water. Go to the next restaurant, etc. End at a final restaurant where you eat dinner or dessert. (this can be fun in a mall as well).

**Progressive Dinner:** Singles, youth, teachers, married couples, etc.. host 4 parts of a dinner that singles visit. House one: Appetizer, House two; Salad, three: Meal, fourth: Dessert...you can also do this backward.

**Breakfast:** Serving breakfast for events normally designed for dinners such as Valentine, New Year's Eve, Christmas Eve, Thanksgiving, etc.

**Dinners for 8 or less:** Divide your group up and have them bring a friend and have dinners in several homes in one night. You could have a theme or goal-specific for the evening.

**Chili Bakeoffs** or other types of food competitions like Iron Chef. Men versus women or singles versus a married class or young singles versus older singles.

**Tea Party:** Afternoon tea party, inviting older or young women in the church. Dress up, have a variety of teas and cookies, ask everyone to wear a fun hat, etc.

**Random Food items:** Go to the grocery store and buy food that is unusual or from a foreign country and make a meal.

**Memory:** Put out the ingredients to make cookies or a cake and from memory, people have to mix and bake the ingredients.

**Cooking class:** Invite a chef into the church to teach a cooking class. This is great if you are wanting to teach young adults, men, single parents, etc..

## **SPORTS**

**Any physical sport** such hiking, canoeing, rafting, horseback riding, tubing, roller skating, ice skating, paintball, laser tag, frisbee golf, field day, target shoot, ax throwing, etc.: take it to the next level with a history lesson, tree/wild-life identification, prayer, etc. Idea for hiking: You can pair or group singles together to find different kinds of plants or rocks. Also, add a twist by flipping a coin when you get to fork in the road, heads for left, tails for right. Add swimming in a river or lake, spending the night, taking pets, etc.

**Dance lessons:** Take a group and learn ballroom or line dancing and then have a dance. Dances could have themes.

**Prayer walking** through a community or town.

**Mancation:** Have a day totally focused on what guys like to do from white water rafting to cookouts to watching sports to actually doing the sports. In the end, have the ladies cook for them. The goal is to build our guys.

**Amazing Race idea/Survivor TV Show**

## **BIBLE STUDY:**

**Note:** Any item listed on this handout can have a Spiritual theme connected with it.

**Start with a Bible study/Devotion:** Then follow-up with an event related to it. i.e. Jesus fed the 5,000, then work in the soup kitchen or feed people in a park. etc.

**Take Characters Out the Bible:** Who are you most like and why?

**Costume Contest:** Using only elements around you, at church, at a hotel while on a retreat, dress up like a Bible character.

**Bring an Item:** Bring an item in that relates to the lesson. It could be an object, plant, food item.

## **MUSIC/DRAMA/CREATIVE:**

**Karaoke:** You can now purchase Christian Karaoke music.

**Sign Language:** Learn sign language to music and then perform at church.

**Skit/Play:** Write and act out a play/skit specific to what you are learning.

**Draw your Favorite Place:** Where you want to go on vacation and then go.

**Art Lesson:** Sort of like those new places where you show the end of what a painting would look like but with something non-alcoholic. You can also do crafts or pottery, etc.

**ABC:** Assign everyone a letter. Invite them over for dinner, telling them they have to dress as something related to that letter. Other ideas could be a dish of food that has something to do with that letter, an object, something to with missions, etc.

**Fly a Kite:** Create your own kites and then head to a park to fly them. See which ones last the longest.

**Fashion show** for ladies.

### **GAMES:**

**Large Groups:** Minute to Win It, Kubb, Corn Hole, Taboo, Bunco, Charades, Taboo, Mafia, Heads up, Pictionary, What do You Meme, Blurt

**4-6 Players:** Pit, Codenames, The Resistance, Sequence, Apples to Apples, Uno, Five crowns

### **COMMUNITY:**

#### **Scavenger Hunt:**

- Option A: Give out a list of items they have to get (the theme can relate to something you are studying church or among church members to get to know them or strangers for the purpose of witnessing).
- Option B: Give out a list of places they have to go and have them bring back a business card to dinner napkin to prove they were there (or a picture on their phones).
- Option C: Trade Up: Start off with a church coffee mug or t-shirt and they have to trade up to something better. You can divide the areas of the city for them to travel. Again, location can be based on a theme, church members, random businesses, etc., you hope they end up coming back with a TV, jewelry, iPod, etc., you can then donate the items, silent auction them, or give out as door prizes.

OPTIONS for all: Video/take pictures it all to show at the end. Also, you can use humans that you have to gather along the way.

**Movie Night with a Twist:** Show or see a secular movie that would spark a conversation that could lead to a discussion about the Lord.

**Escape Rooms:** You can go to these in your city or makeup one on your own. Same as Clue-type events.

**Open Mic Night:** Have folks come and sing, recite poetry, perform, tec.

**Pottery shop:** Paint your own pottery or visit a real pottery shop and take a basic lesson.

**Paint Class:** There are lots of groups where you paint the same design as the teacher. But a twist would be where everyone would start to paint the picture and then after 5 minutes, switch to your right and continue on someone else's picture, and then again, 5 minutes, and so forth till it comes back to the original owner.

**Large Painting:** Everyone gets a shape or canvas to paint with a theme in mind. It could be scripture, something you are thankful for, your family, words of affirmation, etc. Then, when everyone is done, put them all together to make a painted quilt. It could be put on the wall of your classroom, or your church.

**Free Yard Sale:** Have everyone bring stuff they don't want and offer it for free so that you can meet your community.

**Trade Day/Clothing Swap:** Sponsor a day where you bring what you don't want and trade for what you do want. Works great with tools to women accessories to kids' stuff.

**Tour of the Home city:** Go on a tour of your hometown, learning all about it. Include museums and buildings of importance.

**Flash Mob:** You can use social media to get folks to show up or organize ahead of time.

**Mystery Dinner Theatre:** Create one yourself for others.

**Trade Services:** Write down a service you will do on a card. Then show up, and trade cards, and then do the service. You could put, create a web page to clean the yard to make dinner, etc.

**Start a Club:** Walking, running, biking, quilting, prayer, scrap booking, knitting, hiking, sports, pottery, etc.

**Bonfire/Hayrides:** You can do this year-round and end with a wiener roast/s'mores.

**Take Pictures:** Take pictures of places in your city. Then show on the wall. Put people in small groups and have them guess what the pictures are or where.

**Redo/Create Modern-day Versions:** Old TV shows such as "To tell the truth", Dating Game, The Gong show, What's my line, etc. to even today's shows such as The Price is Right or Jeopardy.

**Pick a Fruit:** Head to your favorite fruit grower and pick fruit for the day. Then deliver some of the fruit to a local shelter.

**Start a Garden:** All you need is some planters, dirt, fertilizer, and some seeds, and oh, maybe some water. You can get as creative as you want with this activity. You change things up, buy some flowers and plant in containers and deliver to shut-ins, nursing homes, etc. Also, great way to teach others the value of planting and seeing things grow. You could each take your plants home and take pictures to post online/Facebook to see how each person's garden is growing.

**Crazy Night:** Have a mad hatter night (wear crazy hats), crazy socks and/or crazy sweater.

**Local Theatre:** Attend a school or local theatre event. See Facebook or meetup.com for free events.

## **ROAD TRIPS:**

**Day trips:** Pick places that have something you can learn from them. They could be a part of a scavenger hunt to get there. Perhaps you could have a competition of visiting all the cities within 2 hours' drive all directions. Be creative as far as cost, encouraging people to bring their lunches.

**Play/Productions:** Attend a local or travel to attend a high school/amateur play.

**Thrifting:** Spend a day/weekend going to various flea markets, thrift stores with themes in mind. Maybe look for old toys or socks or fruit in a jar. Whatever it is, you can then resell on Facebook, donating funds to charity/church.

**Dinner Cruises/Ferry/Boat Rides:** Combine any of these with a scavenger hunt; dinner; message.

**Bike Trips:** Short or long; tandem bikes, motorcycles. Get creative and make it a scavenger hunt or mission opportunity.

**Fishing Trips:** Create a competition but add some Biblical stories of Jesus being a fisher of men.

## **WEEKEND TRIPS:**

**Camping:** Take camping to a new level. Add communion to your trip. If you're close to water, perhaps you can have celebrated your salvation by being baptized again.

**Prayer:** Have a weekend where you are silent; set up prayer stations. Have folks put their phones away, practice times of silence, or listening to music, walking, hiking, etc.

**Separate the Sexes:** Any event that separates the sexes apart, allowing them to build each other up. For example, "Mancation". A Mancation is a time-specific to men whether at your church or away from where the time is spent doing man things such as golf, hunting, rafting, camping, fishing, etc. In the same way, women can have spa weekends where they either give each other manicures or bring in a Mary Kay rep or actually go to a spa.

Note: Obviously any type of retreat, renting a house on a lake or beach, staying at a hotel can all be great. But take this list of ideas and take it up a notch of creativity.

## **OUTREACH IDEAS:**

*The ideas listed below may duplicate some of the ones above. However, each item listed below specifically would work in doing outreach.*

### **One-day type events/activities:**

- **Trade-Up:** Start with a dollar item. Then put people in groups and have them go into their local city/town and try and trade up to something better than what they have. The goal is to continue to trade up. Give each group a time limit. Be sure they are prepared to share their faith and why they are doing the trade up. Have a prize for the best item they ended with or best story of sharing their faith. Then you can sell the item on Facebook and use the money for missions.
- **Scavenger Hunts**



- Movie nights that lead to conversations
- Water bottles/popsicles in the park/Hot dogs at a beach or park; wrap bun with ministry track
- Outside events in public areas; concerts, big inflatable balls, cookouts, etc.
- Back to School; free haircuts, school supplies, shoes
- Car and home repair
- Neighborhood cookout /Fire trucks/Police Cars
- Baby showers for the local pregnancy center
- Blood drives; walk-a-thons
- Trade Day/accessory trade/yard sales
- Thank you event to local heroes for their services; teachers, medical, military
- College Move-In Day support/help

### **On-going events/activities:**

- Missions: local and abroad; adopt a missionary family
- Adopt/Clean up the Highway
- SOS: Singles Offering Service (Make a list of services you can offer from cooking classes to oil changes to cutting grass and painting).
- Holiday ministry to those who are shut-in; those with no local family members
- Urban Ministry: Create groups based on interest such as hiking or knitting group with the focus on invite lost people into the group.
- Take 5; Give 5: Talk to 5 people you don't know on Sunday morning or 1 new person for 5 minutes.
- Fill a Tub with Love: Place large tubs at area businesses with the goal to raise something for local charity. For example, baby products for pregnancy center; blankets for homeless.
- Resourcer for a local Rescue Mission, etc. Find those hard to find items that no one donates.
- Homeless ministry
- First Sunday Lunch/guest free lunch
- Members commit to personally invite one person to church each week
- New member text/lunch/dinner (or new folks—group dinner)
- Thank you party for people in your church, leaders, local heroes

### **Personal outreach**

- Cards/text/emails, etc.
- Playing games on Facebook to start conversations about God
- A personal tract of your story to give out
- Ministry business cards with a line for your name/phone
- YouVersion.com allows conversation between folks
- Soularium by CRU
- Inviting people out to dinner/coffee, etc.
- Pounding to new folks/coffee or tea gift/homemade meal
- Painting or moving party
- Offer to help someone by buying groceries, mowing yard, take them to the doctor
- Random conversations (Divine collisions)

### **OTHER:**

**Bring in someone who specializes** in a certain area such as homes, stocks, finances, raising kids, etc., to teach a short message, allowing time for questions.

**International night:** Celebrate different parts of the world, learning about the culture, the people there, what they believe, etc...come dressed the part; bring a food dish, etc...you could have a missionary share, learn a dance, eat something different, play a sport, etc.

*To bring Kris to your city/ministry in person or by zoom, call her at 919.434.3611 or email at [swiatocho@gmail.com](mailto:swiatocho@gmail.com). For more information on her ministry go to [www.KrisSwiatochoMinistries.org](http://www.KrisSwiatochoMinistries.org) or [www.TheSinglesNetwor.org](http://www.TheSinglesNetwor.org)*