

Series: At the Party

Lesson I: A Celebration of Community

Lesson Objectives:

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to...

- Celebrate what you have done and learned this year as a connected community

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Scrap paper
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Various items that the students contribute to the party

Preparation:

This lesson is a celebration to end your ministry learning year. It is part lesson and part party. As such, it will take extra preparation before the day you do it. And of course, it will require adaptation for your group and resources.

Before this lesson, you will need to tell the students that you are going to have a celebration and that they are going to bring things to contribute to it. They can bring food, games to play, or decorations. Provide a list of suggested items and have students sign up in advance to bring them. Students should choose items that are important to them. For example, if Madison loves decorating, she could bring flowers or balloons or posters to put up in your room ahead of time. And if Joe loves playing *Dutch Blitz*, he

could bring that to play with others. Items needn't cost anything. They can be things that you already own (a football, a game, a candle) or things that cost little (a bag of chips or candy). But if everyone brings something special to them, you will have a celebration that reflects your unique community.

You will also want to decide where to host the party, how to set up the room, whether any adult help is needed, a way to invite as many as possible, and so on. Set up the room in a way that is conducive to sharing: a circle or similar.

If you have a large group, you may want to split this lesson into two sessions. In the first session, do the Lead In and the tasks, and then devote the second session to the actual party.

Lead In:

Have students gather in pairs. Make sure every pair has scrap paper and pens for the Lead In. Tell students that you are going to give them 60 seconds to make a list. Ready? Instruct them to work together to write down everything they remember about the year, about City of God, or about being connected in community. Begin.

After 60 seconds, have students stop writing their lists and solicit a few answers.

Task One:

Have students stay in their pairs for this task. They will again need pens and scrap paper. Tell students that they are going to work together to write a summary of everything they did or learned this year about community. Each pair should work together to write a summary (about a paragraph) of what it means to be connected in community, as if they were going to explain it to a friend from outside the youth group. You may need to start off together, so that they get the hang of it. For example, one group may emphasize that they learned that community is accepting; even though everyone in the group is different, everyone is accepted for who they are. They might give examples from their experience of the year or from what they learned in the lessons, to express this idea. All ideas relating to community are acceptable for this task.

When they have prepared their summaries, have some or all of the pairs present their ideas. You could stage some little role plays, where one member of the pair plays the role of the friend from outside youth group and the other plays the youth group member. Let all the groups present who want to do so. The purpose of sharing is to celebrate what has been done and learned and to hear each other's ideas about community. You can guide things along with comments, questions, or conversation, but there are no right or wrong answers here.

Task Two:

In this task, you are going to give each student the chance to share what he or she brought to contribute to the party. Each student will take turns sharing their item. When they are finished, allow the other students to encourage that student's contribution to the community. For example, if Phil is going first, he would begin by saying that he brought a copy of the board game *Settlers of Catan* to play at the party. Next, the other students would tell Phil what they think he contributes to their community. Things such as, "Phil, you always make our events fun!" or "Phil is always there when you are having a hard time with school or parents." Do this for every student.

Party:

Finally, release students to enjoy the party games, food, and atmosphere. Begin by giving thanks for your connection to God, to each other, and to the world, and then go enjoy the good things God has given! Amen!