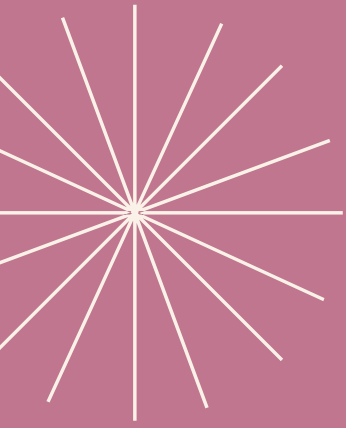


CELEBRATION IDEAS FOR BIRTHDAYS & HOLIDAYS

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THE POWER OF A PARTY

I'm actually not a huge "party" person: I find even the most enjoyable events rather tiring in this season of life... however, I believe there is something positively impactful about choosing to celebrate, & that makes any potential tiredness worthwhile to me!

Whether it's about making someone feel appreciated, building community, continuing traditions, or simply sharing the joys of life together, I think choosing to celebrate - whether it's a full-blown party or a relaxed but intentionally-spent gathering - can be so powerful for reminding our hearts that we were made for more than simply slogging through our days. There is so much beauty to behold in the natural world, in the human spirit, in the relationships we choose to grow... If we are willing to slow down long enough, & engage deeply enough in this moment, to see it!

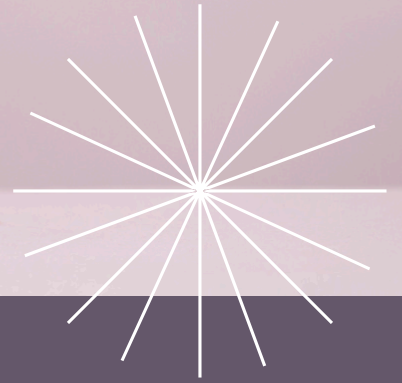
Maybe it sounds a little cheesy, but I think celebration is something of a battle cry against the apathy & cynicism that can so easily creep into our outlook on life when we feel we're just going through the motions.



At the risk of sounding even more cheesy, I'll say that I believe celebrations - whether they're birthday parties or holiday gatherings or events to commemorate other sweet things in life - give us the opportunity to lift our eyes up for a moment & connect with a broader, more joyful vision for what it means to be human!

So throw that birthday party! Celebrate that achievement! Go all-in for the holidays! It doesn't have to be a big to-do to be purposeful, & to facilitate a wonderful time together.

This little booklet is just a collection of simple ideas for different possible celebrations. I hope it sparks your own ideas, & that you end up having great times with great people - whatever the reason.



celebrating
BIRTHDAYS

Ideas for kids

SPACE PARTY



- DECORATE with star cut-outs hanging from the ceiling or stuck to the walls
- SERVE cake pops made to look like planets
- PLAY a variation of “pin the tail on the donkey” with “pin the astronaut on the moon”

MERMAID PARTY



- DECORATE with a bubble machine blowing bubbles across the room, & “seaweed” made from streamers
- SERVE sea-creature candy, like gummy sharks & Swedish Fish
- PLAY “mermaid obstacle course,” where the kids have to complete challenges like weaving between traffic cones & wiggling under chairs - all while their legs are tied together, as if they had a mermaid tail!

UNICORN PARTY



- DECORATE with rainbow confetti, sparkles on tabletops, & big pink balloons
- SERVE “unicorn horns” - large pretzel rods dipped in white chocolate & covered in pink sprinkles
- PLAY “unicorn race,” where the kids make their own hobby horse unicorns & ride them in race down the street or across the backyard

Ideas for kids

TEA PARTY



- DECORATE with little vases full of flowers picked from around your house
- SERVE bite-sized treats to pair with the tea, like macarons, cakes cut into small squares, or mini-cupcakes
- PLAY by having each child paint the outside of their own teacup to take home

CONSTRUCTION PARTY



- DECORATE with traffic cones & striped “caution” tape
- SERVE chocolate cake with a miniature digger toy positioned to look like it dug out some of the cake into the shape of the birthday child’s age
- PLAY by having the kids construct their own creations with age-appropriate food, like watermelon cubes & skewers or marshmallows & toothpicks

DINOSAUR PARTY



- DECORATE with dark green streamers & paper cut-outs of big, tropical-looking leaves
- SERVE “dinosaur bones,” small pretzels broken up into smaller pieces & coated in white chocolate
- PLAY “dinosaur hunt,” where little plastic dinosaurs are hidden around the common areas of the house & the person who finds the most dinosaurs wins

Ideas for not-kids

OUT FOR DRINKS



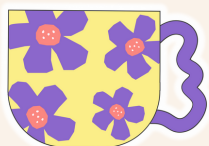
- **CHILL VERSION:** Everyone just meets for drinks & treats at a favorite local bar!
- **LEVEL-UP:** Talk to the bartender beforehand about offering signature drinks based on the birthday person's likes or characteristics

CAMPFIRE



- **CHILL VERSION:** Bring drinks & s'more supplies to a fire; people bring their own seating, & good conversation is the primary focus
- **LEVEL-UP:** Give people the opportunity to do something classically "campy" with their hands while they sit & talk around the fire, like whittling some wood or braiding a simple keychain

PAINT-YOUR-OWN POTTERY



- **CHILL VERSION:** Meet up at a paint-your-own pottery studio to hang out & create, & finish off with dinner somewhere nearby
- **LEVEL-UP:** Challenge everyone to have an element of their pottery design reflective of the birthday person - for example, using their favorite color or including something representative of a favorite shared memory



celebrating
HOLIDAYS

Celebrating holidays



HALLOWEEN

- Neighborhood Pumpkin-Carving Party: While carving pumpkins together, roast the scooped-out pumpkin seeds in the oven - then share them as a snack when everyone is done!
- Mystery Candy Jars: Fill different jars with candy, but blindfold participants. They must guess the candy by feel & smell (no tasting!)
- Pumpkin Bowling: Use small pumpkins as bowling balls & set up "ghost pins" made from toilet paper rolls.



THANKSGIVING

- Untraditional Dishes: Mix things up by having everyone bring a Thanksgiving dish that isn't based on tradition, but based on a food or ingredient they're most thankful for.
- Gratitude Rocks: Paint small stones with things you're grateful for. Use them as the centerpiece for the meal!
- Turkey Tag: The person who is "it" wears a turkey feathered hat. If tagged, the new person wears the hat.
- Family History Storytelling Bingo: Create bingo cards with prompts like "Someone who lived on a farm" or "Someone who worked abroad." Family members share stories based on the prompts.

Celebrating holidays



CHRISTMAS

- Advent Adventure Calendar: Instead of chocolates, fill each day with a small task or adventure (e.g., building a snowman, reading a holiday book)
- DIY Hot Cocoa Station: Set up a small station where people can create their own hot cocoa mix, including marshmallows, spices, or unique toppings.
- Decorate-a-Door Contest: Instead of decorating trees, hold a contest for the best-decorated door. Each family member or team gets one door to decorate creatively.
- Crafty White Elephant: Have a white elephant gift exchange with things made by each person.



NEW YEARS

- Wishing Wall: Set up a wall where people can write down their wishes for the new year on colorful notes & stick them up.
- Balloon Countdown: Fill balloons with small prizes or challenges. Pop one each hour leading up to midnight for a fun activity or treat.
- Time Capsule Craft: Have everyone create mini time capsules (e.g., decorated jars or boxes) to open next year. Include small mementos, predictions, or goals.
- Dress As Your Year: Have a New Years party where people have to dress up in something representing a personal highlight from the year that is ending, or a goal for the new year starting.

Celebrating holidays



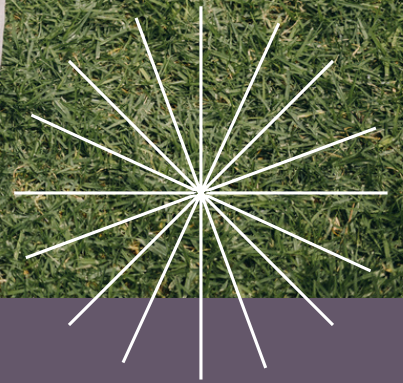
VALENTINES DAY

- Red & Pink Meal: Try to serve a meal using only red & pink foods
- Heart Scavenger Hunt: Go on a walk & see who can take the most pictures of things rearranged into the shape of a heart
- Message-in-a-Bottle Swap: Have everyone write secret, positive messages & place them in mini bottles. Swap them anonymously, like secret valentines.
- Heart Art Race: Each person gets a paper heart & must decorate them with the most creative design using whatever materials are around (pens, stickers, fabric) - within a time limit.



EASTER

- Bunny Hop Egg Hunt: Make the Easter egg hunt a little more interesting by turning it into a competition to see who can find the most eggs, the quickest... while only being allowed to travel by hopping like a bunny.
- Glow-in-the-Dark Egg Hunt: Fill plastic eggs with small glow sticks for a nighttime Easter egg hunt.
- Bunny Footprint Obstacle Course: Create a course with "bunny footprints" that lead to different challenges or activities (like hopscotch, jumping hurdles, or tossing carrots into baskets).
- Eggshell Planters: Use empty eggshells as planters for small herbs or flowers. Decorate them and then plant them in small pots or garden beds.



celebrating
THE LITTLE THINGS

Celebrating the little things

Who says you have to wait for birthdays & holidays to celebrate? Here are 10 ideas for reasons to celebrate life outside of classic “party-worthy” events:

- 1 - Your favorite house or garden plant is in bloom
- 2 - You reached a 100 day streak on Duolingo
- 3 - The season is changing, or the winter/summer solstice is happening
- 4 - The birthday of someone you admire (an author, an activist, an athlete, etc.) - or of your pet!
- 5 - Your favorite fruit is in season
- 6 - You completed a challenge you set for yourself (fitness, reading, being off of social media, etc.)
- 7 - You did something that took a lot of courage
- 8 - You finished that blanket you've been knitting for 2 years / that book you've been writing in your spare time / etc.
- 9 - It finally rained during a drought, or the sun finally came out during a rainy season
- 10 - Have an I Appreciate You Party for some of the people you're grateful to have in your life, just to say “Thank you”

I'd like to finish off by reiterating that having an amazing celebration doesn't have to mean spending a lot of time, money, & energy on it: If that's your jam, go for it! If it's not, don't let it stop you from having people over, inviting people out, or trying to bring an extra level of purposefulness to the next gathering you're a part of. Fun games, yummy treats, & beautiful decorations are wonderful additions - but it is connection that makes celebration so wonderful.

happy celebrating!



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