

# THE BIGGEST BIRTHDAY PARTY EVER.com

## BIG LIVING ROOM GIG



## INTRO

Many great artists are turning their backs on the stage and bright lights in favour of the more intimate house gig. This is an opportunity to invite your neighbours, friends, and friends' friends round for an evening of quality live music in the comfort of your living room.

## IDEAL TARGET GROUP:

Everyone! (If under 18s will be present see your church's child protection policy and make sure you comply )

## IDEAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE:

30 – 50 (dependant on size of living room)

## AVERAGE COST FOR THE EVENT:

£200 - £250

## THE AIMS:

- Represent God's love through music and through hospitality.
- Christians from the church/churches involved get to meet new people who live or work locally and invite their friends to a high quality event.
- People from the local community are able to experience Christian community and have their perceptions of the Christian faith challenged.

## WHO?

Due to the fact that it takes place in a home this event is probably best aimed at the immediate neighbourhood of the house, and the friends and personal contacts of the church/group organising the event. This will also help build an atmosphere of familiarity, which will foster good conversations and relationship building.

## WHERE?

A house! Preferably one with lots of space and owned by people who are really happy to invite all their neighbours and have people they don't know come in. Ideally the room will have space for a small performance area and still have standing room for at least 20 people, plus a few chairs for those less able to stand.

## WHEN?

This event can be run at a date that fits with your church's current rhythm of mission, taking into consideration how the event might compliment or clash with your existing church programme. Think about when is right for the people you are inviting. In order to maximise your appeal, choose a time that is not in competition with other events in the community. For this event a week night would be advisable as restaurants are less busy and more able to accommodate such an event. If many people in your community commute to work make sure you give them enough time to get back for the event.

# MAKING IT HAPPEN!

## STEP 1. CREATE A TEAM

You could run this event as a small group, a church or a group of churches. Your team will need to include:

- someone who is willing to lend their house to the project and invite their neighbours and others along.
- someone to look after the performer.
- someone to manage hospitality on the night.
- someone to make sure the room looks good.
- someone who can provide and run the PA (if required).
- someone who is confident enough to host the event.
- someone to organise clean up at the end of the night.

These roles may overlap and some people might be happy to do more than one of the above. A recommended core team size is therefore between 3 and 5 people although you can still have lots more people involved!

## STEP 2. DECIDE WHO YOU'RE INVITING

Since you can only host as many people as fit in your living room, you'll just want to invite your neighbours your friends and their friends. Think about how many people can realistically fit into your house and decide whether you just want to invite the houses nearest you, your whole street or your block.

## STEP 3. PLAN YOUR FOLLOW UP

Don't leave it until the end to work out how this event will fit into the wider mission of the church. You need to have a plan in place for the following scenarios.

**Scenario A:** Someone comes to the event and they are already asking questions about faith in Jesus and really want to know more. How will they find out more through this event or be invited into a context where they can discover more about the gospel? Check out our list of Top Evangelistic Follow Up for ideas. Table talk could be great as a natural progression from a house gig. Alternatively, if it's a neighbour you could always just invite them over for a chat at a later date.

**Scenario B:** Someone comes to the event without much knowledge of the Christian story and not particularly interested in finding out more. However, they love the event and are impressed that the church would put on something like this. Is there another event happening in the near future that you can invite them to? Some of the bands ask that you let them know of pubs in the area where they could do a follow up gig which more people can come to. This could help you to continue building such relationships.

**Scenario C:** Someone comes to the event without much knowledge of the Christian story and not particularly interested in finding out more. However, they are struck by the sense of community and would really like to hang out with people from the church more even though they are not yet interested in the Christian faith. Is there a social group (maybe a sports team, dance class or film club) that meets regularly they can be invited to become a part of?

## STEP 4. BUDGET AND FUNDRAISING

Costs for this event can be kept to a minimum. Artists costs will be variable but as a guide costs will be approximately

- £200 Artist
- £30 Refreshments
- £20 Cards to send to neighbours

You could invite people to give towards the event to help cover the costs or your church may want to make this a gift to the local community. If you opt to ask for donations, have an honesty box somewhere in a prominent place and ask people to contribute whatever they can to the event. Be aware that you may need to supplement this in order to pay the artist.

Unless the artist is bringing their own or is happy to play acoustic you will also need a small PA kit. Most churches should have what you need and technicians who can run it so if your group doesn't have the necessary equipment ask local churches to help! If you're really stuck for PA kit you could hire one in for the night but that will cost around £200.

## STEP 5. DECIDE ON YOUR VENUE

Choose a house based on the following criteria

**Size and Space:** The more space the better as that way more people can enjoy the event! There will probably have to be some moving around of furniture to maximise the space so make sure this is ok.

**Suitability:** Are the owners happy to have music on late into the night and invite people they don't know into their home? How will their neighbours feel about the music?

**Neighbours:** Do the owners have good relationships with their neighbours and are their neighbours likely to want to attend this event. This helps to build a base of people to come along although of course those who attend do not have to be neighbours.

**Accessibility:** This is less important if most of the attendees will come from the immediate area but it is worth considering the proximity to transport links.

**Atmosphere:** Most living rooms will provide a suitable atmosphere for the event but do consider that people who have never been in the home must feel welcome and at ease so try to ensure you choose somewhere conducive to this.

**Pets:** Some people do find other people's pets difficult, or may even be allergic to dogs/cats etc. So, however friendly and welcoming you feel your pets to be, as a mark of respect to all your guests, it is probably wise to keep them away from the gathering.

## STEP 6. BOOK AN ARTIST.

Here are a few great Christian artists who are up for doing house gigs! Consider your target audience when choosing your artist. Your musical taste may not necessarily be theirs!

**Adam Wedd** - Warm Pensive Pop - [www.facebook.com/adamwedd](http://www.facebook.com/adamwedd)

**Baliva** - Jazzy HipHop / Soul - [www.balivamusic.com/](http://www.balivamusic.com/)

**Jon Bilbrough** - [www.wilderthorn.com/](http://www.wilderthorn.com/)

**David Grout** - vibrant, soul searching, acoustic-alt-rock - [www.davidgrout.co.uk/](http://www.davidgrout.co.uk/)

**Echo** - Faith Funk Fun

[www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.436511689702151.103858.331562113530443&type=3](http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.436511689702151.103858.331562113530443&type=3)

It's important to chat with artists and discuss expectations for the night so that you both have the same thing in mind. Things to discuss

- Payment of artist
- Expected audience size
- Do they want PA or not?
- How long are they happy to play for?
- Do they want to sell CDS/ collect data for mailing lists?
- Are they happy to do a quick interview about their music/faith during the evening?
- Do they want a meal provided before the event?
- Do they need somewhere to stay after the event?

## STEP 7. INVITE YOUR NEIGHBOURS.

Rather than printing publicity, why not send cards round to your neighbours inviting them to join you. Ensure you clearly state the date, time, location and price (if there is one) of the event. You could ask people to bring a drink with them. Make sure what you say in the card is a true representation of the content of the event. This includes trying to effectively communicate the style of music and not advertising the event as a gig night if you intend to include a 30 minute preaching slot. It is important to be honest with them and let them know exactly what they are signing up for!

Ideally when delivering your cards, knock on doors and invite people personally. This is especially important for the nearest neighbours who may be disturbed by noise. Let them know what you're doing and the times you will start and finish your event.

## STEP 8. VOLUNTEERS

To help with the smooth running of the event it would be good to have two people who are not core team members there on the day to chat with people and make sure everyone is having a good time. It is especially important to have someone on the door to give people a big welcome and someone to offer drinks as people arrive. This means core team members will have the time to make sure everything is running smoothly and to solve any problems that may arise.

Make sure you remind your church members that they are not just there to have a good time with people they already know but should be trying to meet new people and make them feel welcome throughout the event.

## STEP 9. CATERING

Make sure you get some drinks and nibbles in for the event! Also, if the artist is travelling a long distance to the event invite them to come for a meal beforehand. This will bless the artist as well as ensure you have plenty of time to chat through the plan for the evening.

## STEP 10. ON THE DAY

- Call the artist to check they have remembered about the event and to make sure they are planning to arrive at the correct time.
- Decide on timings for the evening. It might be good for the artist to do two short sets with a break between them. Set yourself a finish time and try to keep to it.
- Re-arrange the room to maximise space. Decorate with Biggest birthday party ever banners and make sure the room is warm and welcoming.
- Set up some atmospheric lighting.
- Ensure you have plenty of drinks in.
- Put away any valuables you want to keep safe.
- Make sure there's enough toilet roll.
- Risk assess the venue using the form on our website.
- Don't forget to have the payment for the artist ready at hand.
- Cook dinner for the artist.
- Make sure you clearly communicate the follow up opportunities you have planned.
- At the end of the night be sure to thank the artist and ask for any feedback they are able to offer on how the event went.

### ***How to share the meaning behind the party!***

You'll want to make sure that people don't just go away having enjoyed the event but that they've also been challenged or intrigued about the Christian faith. However you choose to present the gospel, it must be short and informal and should not leave anyone feeling like they have been tricked into coming to be preached at! Here are five ways you can share the meaning behind the party on the night.

1. Get the host to introduce the party with a little bit about why the event is taking place

Welcome to \_\_\_\_\_'s house gig brought to you by <insert church name(s) here>. We're here tonight in celebration of the biggest birthday party ever – the birthday of the church. We thought we'd celebrate with some music because we believe God is a creative God! We hope you enjoy the evening!

2. Make a birthday cake. At the end of the evening give everyone a piece of the cake and explain to them that you are holding this event to celebrate The Biggest Birthday Party Ever – the birthday of the worldwide church.

3. Use the opportunity to get to know your neighbours better by leaving interesting questions dotted around the room on tables, on the wall or wherever is appropriate to provoke more meaningful conversations.

4. Interview the artist using a few simple questions. Keep the interview to just a few minutes. Here are some questions

you might use.

- How did you end up being a musician?
- What inspires your lyrics?
- If you could change one thing through your music what would it be?
- What message do you hope to communicate through your music?
- You're a Christian as well as being a musician. How does your faith affect your music?

You could also open up the floor for people in the room to chat to the musician about their music.

5. Make use of your party bags to give people some fun stuff as well as The Biggest Birthday Party Ever booklet telling them a little bit more about why we have so much to celebrate.

Ideas to fill the party bag:

- A free download of one of the artist's songs
- A mini chocolate bar
- A mini musical instrument, e.g. a whistle or shaker
- The Biggest Birthday Party Ever gospel booklet

## STEP 11. WRAP UP AND IMPLEMENT FOLLOW UP

It's important that this event fits into a wider context of mission. Therefore, get feedback from everyone involved about how they thought the event went. You could ask them to respond to three simple questions:

- What did you like about the event?
- What did you think could have been done better?
- If we were to run the event again what changes would you suggest?

Also, ask them if they would like to leave their details so you can let them know about further events or when the band is next planning to be in the area. Have a plan in place for your next event so that you can build on the good work you've begun.

## WHAT IF?

### TOO MANY PEOPLE TURN UP?

Hopefully the weather will be OK and people can just spill out and stand around outside some of the time. If there are people who can't hear the music you could chat with the musician about doing a second gig in the locality and tell them there will be another opportunity to hear him.

### I WANT TO AIM MY GIG AT YOUNG PEOPLE?

That's great! Refer to your church's child protection policy and make sure you comply with it. Make sure there are several CRB checked people in the house. Close off access to any bedrooms and make sure that there are enough adults around to make sure that no adult is left alone with young people.

## MORE ABOUT SHARE JESUS INTERNATIONAL



SJI is passionate about communicating the good news about Jesus in our ever-changing times. SJI's work covers three main areas:

1. Missional Leaders – leadership development has long been a focus for SJI. Over the past ten years, our leadership development programmes have seen in excess of one thousand young people trained to serve God in their communities. Find more details on the FRESH programme here
2. Missional Festivals – in 2008 we hosted London's first Pentecost Festival with over one hundred events, many of them free, in the heart of London. Since then the Festival has grown by collaborating with a wide range of organisations and churches. Now we are also training churches to run local festivals in their communities
3. Missional Churches – planting missional expressions of church locally, SJI is working to equip churches across the UK to be missionally focussed

*For more information please visit our website: [www.sharejesusinternational.com](http://www.sharejesusinternational.com)*

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