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1940'S TEA DANCE



INTRO

Remember the good old days of the 1940s? Maybe not, but there will definitely be members of your community who do and would like to take a trip down memory lane at a tea dance.

IDEAL TARGET GROUP:

Pensioners

IDEAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE:

30 - 100(dependant on venue size)

AVERAGE COST:

£250 - £500 (some of this can be reclaimed in ticket sales/ refreshment sales)

THE AIMS:

- Represent God's love through building an atmosphere of community and celebration.
- Christians from the church/churches involved get to meet pensioners who live locally and invite them to a high quality event.
- Pensioners from the local community are able to experience Christian community and have their perceptions of the Christian faith challenged.

WHO?

Tea Dances tend to appeal to pensioners because many of them remember the dances from when they were younger. Try to have a mix of church members and members of the local community at the event so that relationships can be built. It would also be nice if some younger church members were there to meet some of the older members of their community too.

WHERE?

As a start, find out about local Day Centres for Older People and see if there is one which would be happy for you to hold the event on its premises. You could then issue an open invitation to the people who attend and invite others too.

If this is not possible, try and find a hall, social club or community centre to host your event. You could of course use your church building but some people are unfamiliar with church and they may be more likely to attend if you hold the event in a neutral space. This also provides a great opportunity to start building a relationship with a local business owner as well as find a great venue for your event.

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?

1. CREATE A TEAM

A group of churches together, a single church or a small group within a church could run this event. In order to organise it, you will need a core team to include:

- Someone who is happy to take overall responsibility for organising the event.
- Someone who knows how to produce high quality publicity.
- Someone to organise catering.
- Someone to organise a venue and decoration.
- Someone to find and host a band or organise music.
- Someone to organise transport to and from the event (if required).

A recommended core team size is between 5 and 6 people, although, you can still have lots more people involved!

2. DECIDE ON YOUR COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES

Clearly define who your event is aimed at. What geographical area will you be advertising to? Is it a street? A few streets? A postcode? Ideally, do not try to reach too large a geographical area as this increases costs in publicity and makes it more difficult to build lasting relationships through the event.

3. PLAN TO THE LAST MINUTE

Don't leave it to last 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 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. For ideas download our 'Evangelistic follow up ideas' document.

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?

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. Are there any lunch clubs, silver screens or other similar groups you can invite them to?

4. BUDGET AND FUNDRAISING

The major costs for this event will be a tea dance band and a venue. If you have local people who are able to play a good array of 40s classics this may be cheaper than booking a full band from outside but if not there are a range of bands available for a wide range of costs (normally dependant on the number of band members).

- £100 - £250 band
- £50 publicity
- £50 - £100 refreshments
- <£150 venue

If you need to cover costs you could charge a small entry fee for this event, although we would recommend keeping it as low as you possibly can. Alternatively you could make entrance free but charge for tea and cake. Again, keep prices low to keep the event accessible for as many as possible. Another option would be to keep it all free but have a pot for donations by the refreshments.

If you are struggling to find a suitable affordable venue look for local social clubs or school halls as these may be cheaper than halls that make their money from hires.

If you charge entry you may need to pay a small amount for the music licences mentioned below. If the event is free you probably will not have to pay.

You will also need PA, which may come with the venue. If it doesn't your church or another local church is likely to have what you need. Some bands may come with their own PA. If none of these options are available you can hire in PA but this will cost another £200.

4.1 Raising Finance

If your church or small group does not already have a mission fund that can help with some of the costs of this event you may have to look into some fundraising. This can be everything from cake sales and car washes, to council grants. Most local councils have small grant funds which faith groups can apply for and as your event will be benefitting local business there's a good chance of you being able to raise some funds through this. Visit your local council website for more details.

5. BOOK YOUR VENUE

The right location

As mentioned above start your search with people who already cater for the demographic you are targeting. Look for somewhere big enough to dance in as well as have tables set out for tea. Remember that some of your target group may struggle with mobility so look for a venue with appropriate access, parking and facilities. Think about the dancing space, carpet is not really appropriate flooring for this event. The venue may need to be on a bus route.

Meet the Manager

Arrange to meet the manager for a face to face meeting where you can chat through your vision for the event and how it would work logistically. Remember that this is about building relationships so take the time to get to know the manager if you can and let them know that you want to support their enterprise and not just use their space.

Things to discuss with the venue manager:

- Explain who you are and what you are hoping to do.
- Propose the idea of a Tea Dance and tell them how it would benefit them and your local community.
- Confirm an available time and date, including set up (1 hour) and set down (1 hour)time.
- How much would it cost to hire?
- Are they happy for you to charge for tickets?
- Are they happy for you to rearrange the space as required?
- Are you allowed to put up banners and bunting? Can you use pins/blu tac?
- Would they be willing to have posters and flyers up advertising the event in the two weeks leading up to the event?
- Are they happy for you to bring food in? What catering facilities are available?
- What disabled access do they have in place?
- Is there a maximum number of people allowed in the building?

Get it in Writing

When you have found the right place and have decided the above details make sure you write a follow up email to the manager with everything that has been agreed clearly laid out. Ask the manager to reply saying that they are happy with this. It's really important that you do this as it ensures transparency and avoids problems arising from miscommunication later in the planning of the event.

6. BOOK YOUR BAND

A tea dance must include some good 40s classics, although you can tailor it to the classics of the era most of the attendees will remember best. There are plenty of bands available that you can search for on the internet. Alternatively a few musical members of your community may well be able to get together and learn some songs. Costs for bands vary hugely depending on the number of band members so make sure you ask a few different people before settling on one for your event.

Some bands will bring their own PA and lighting so make sure you ask them what they are bringing and what they expect you to provide. Some venues will ask for the PA to be pat tested and for the band to have Public liability insurance. Whether or not the venue request these things it is preferable to find a band that do as this offers you protection if anything goes wrong.

7. DESIGN YOUR EVENT

You may want to give your event a 40s theme with decorations and outfits that are reminiscent of the decade. Think about lighting and how to build an atmosphere., bearing in mind that older people do need brighter lighting. You may also want to organise some music for when the band is not playing,

This is a tea dance so making sure you put on a good spread is imperative. Tiny triangle sandwiches, cream scones with jam and cakes are standard afternoon tea essentials. Presentation is important too so put some time and thought into how you're going to set it all out to make people feel like the day is special.

Think about the layout of the room. You want to encourage people to dance if they can but also make sure that those who can't and will spend the time sat around tables also feel a part of the event. Provide enough chairs for everyone to have a seat.

Plan your timings. The band will normally come prepared to do two 30 - 45 minute sets with a break in between when you can serve tea. The whole event will be between 2 and 3 hours. Give people half an hour to arrive before the dancing gets going.

Think about whether or not you can/need to provide transport to and from the event. The most cost effective way to do this would be to ask for volunteers from the church who are willing to offer lifts.

8. LICENSING

If you're planning live music you will need a PRS (Performing Rights Society) for Music licence unless the venue is already covered. For recorded music you need a PPL licence. You may also need a Temporary Event Notice. For full details see our licensing guide. You will also need public liability insurance. For more information see our insurance guide.

9. PUBLICISE

Flyers and posters

For an event of this size, publicity should probably be released between 3 and 4 weeks before the event. Allow time for designing and printing of at least two weeks. Make sure you get the flyer designed by someone who is able to produce a professional standard of work. The quality of the flyer will indicate to the recipient the quality of the event they are attending. Examples and help with flyers are available on our website.

Make sure the flyer clearly states the date, time, location and price of the event. Make it clear what is included in the price. If there is a website or social media platform for the event make sure this is also included on the flyer. Be sure to communicate who is running the event.

Make sure the flyer is a true representation of the content of the event. This means do not advertise the event as a tea dance if you intend to include a 30 minute preaching slot. It is important to be honest with the public and let them know exactly what they are signing up for!

Places to distribute flyers/posters:

- Lunch clubs, bingo halls, and any other community groups that cater to a similar demographic to the one you are targeting.
- Day care centres.
- Ask local shops if they are willing to put a poster in their window or to keep some flyers by the till.
- Put flyers/posters up on community notice boards
- Get local churches to put the event in their news bulletin and give out flyers. Encourage church members to bring friends to the event.

Other publicity

Use the internet, it offers you free publicity! If you have access to any local/church websites make sure the event is listed there. Also upload the event to any online local community calendars you can find - your council probably hosts one and there may well be others too.

Use social media: more than 50% of pensioners are now on Facebook so do not totally disregard social media as a form of promotion for this event.

Let the local press know. Write a short press release about what you will be doing (see Communications doc online). Send it to your local papers or local news websites. Within 24 hours of the event send another press release about how the event went and include pictures. This will help promote the positive work the church is doing in your community.

Make sure you've registered your event properly so that it appears on thebiggestbirthdaypartyever.com. Don't forget to make use of the t-shirts and publicity we will send you as part of your resources pack to make a real visible presence on the day.

10. TICKETING

As mentioned above you may want to sell tickets for this event. There are several ways of doing this.

Register with an online ticketing agency. There are several websites which allow you to sell tickets through their system for a small registration fee. This allows for a fully functional system with minimal admin and means that people can book tickets online. Most of them require you to register with them before you can begin selling tickets so if you wish to do this make sure you give yourselves time to get it all set up. If the booking agency do not also have a telephone line, make sure you know how to use the system as some of your audience may struggle. Give people a phone number they can call where you can book the tickets on their behalf.

Have a dedicated phone line and sell tickets on the door. If you have an office or work number people can call to book tickets you could have a system where they phone up to register and you either take card payment (if you have the facility) or take payment on the door. It's important that there are a reasonable number of hours per day that someone will be available to take calls and a clear answer phone message for out of hours calls. People could also register by email but they would have to pay on the door. The limitation of this system is that many people will register without paying which will mean you cannot guarantee numbers. If people pay in advance they are much more likely to turn up and paying on the door requires good and reliable volunteers and efficient organisation both before and on the day.

Just charge entry at the door. As long as you are not expecting to be hugely overcapacity on the night you can just ask people to pay on the door. This means you will not have much indication of how many people are planning to attend but keeps things simple.

11. VOLUNTEERS

If you are selling tickets you will need to have a couple of volunteers available to help with this. You may also need people to serve or sell refreshments. 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 welcome people and make sure everyone is having a good time. This means core team members will have the time to make sure everything is running smoothly and to solve any problems that may arise.

Crucially, you need your church members to be there to get to know their neighbours and not just to have fun. You should also prepare your congregation to come, ready to get involved, get the dancing started and chat to people who come to the event. No one should be able to come to the event and not have a conversation with a church member all afternoon.

12. ON THE DAY

Here's a list of things to do on the day to ensure a smooth running event.

- Visit or call the venue early in the day to make sure they've remembered the event is happening!
- Phone the band to check they're happy with everything for the evening. They will need to arrive about an hour before they play to set up.
- Arrive at the venue around 1 -2 hours before the event to set up the space.
- Make sure the PA, decorations, lighting and refreshments are all set up and ready to go.
- Make sure you have everything you need for ticketing, including pens, change, a list of anyone who pre-registered/ pre-bought tickets
- Have the money ready to pay the band
- Risk assess the venue using the form on our website.
- Arrange to meet with the host and band before the event to talk through the schedule and answer any questions they might have.
- Ask the band to give you a list of all the songs being played. You will need this for licensing purposes.

- Make sure there is water on hand for the host/band throughout the event.
- Make sure you clearly communicate the follow up opportunities you have planned.
- At the end of the dance be sure to clear up thoroughly, thank the venue 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 a few ways you can share the meaning behind the party.

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

Welcome to the Tea Dance brought to you by <insert church name here>. We're here today in celebration of the biggest birthday party ever – the birthday of the church. We hope you enjoy the evening!

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

Make use of 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 retro 40s toy, maybe a metal slinky
- Liquorish allsorts
- 40s postcard
- The Biggest Birthday Party Ever gospel booklet

Get someone from a local church who has lived in the area all their life to do a short interview about their life in the locality and about their faith. Here are some guide questions:

- How has the area changed since the 1940s?
- What do you miss about your childhood?
- What has been the change that you are most thankful for?
- You've been attending <insert church name> for ___ years. Why have you been attending church for so long?
- What is the biggest difference faith has made in your life?

STEP 13. 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?

You could also ask people to leave contact details if they would like you to let them know about similar events in the future. Have a plan in place for your next event so that you can build on the good work you've begun.

WHAT IF....?

I WANT TO RUN A 40S DANCE FOR ALL AGES?

This could work really well. Things to think about :

- Having a strong theme is important, making sure the décor is well themed and inviting people to dress up will really help.
- As the event will probably be later in the day, you should focus more on serving drinks than afternoon tea.
- As people are likely to be a lot less used to dancing to 40s music you should invite someone who can teach everyone a good 40s dance that everyone can join in with. The band you book may be able to help with this.
- You will need to tailor your follow up options to a broader demographic.

I WANT TO RUN THE TEA DANCE OUTSIDE

A lawn tea dance would be lovely. Do be aware that if you wish to use council property you will need to book the space. We have a council applications guide available on our website to help you with this.

Do think about whether there is a suitable area of flat ground for dancing. Also, make sure there is some sheltered area or a gazebo for the band and PA equipment. Make sure there is somewhere nearby to plug in PA.

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



Share Jesus International
The Church, Tolverne Road, Raynes Park, London, SW20 8RA
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0208 944 5678
info@sharejesusinternational.com
www.sharejesusinternational.com/tbbpe