

Hospitality

Highly Rated Hospitality

by Nicole Whitacre

“Show hospitality to one another...” 1 Peter 4:9

I used to think that hospitality was for certain, uniquely gifted women who “got into that sort of thing.” You know the type: she has three lasagnas in the freezer, a roast and potatoes in the crockpot, cookies in the oven and coffee just brewed. Her table is always graced with fresh-cut hydrangeas from her garden—even in the dead of winter (or so it seems). She’s never happier than when a few strays show up unannounced for dinner, except of course, when a family of seven comes to stay for the week.

Me, well I panic when an extra guest shows up for dinner. My hydrangeas barely bloom in spring, and I think the chicken in my freezer has a frosty coat. Oh, and the coffee? I drank that already.

Don’t get me wrong—I love all things domestic, but I never thought I had the kind of capacity for regular hospitality as those “gifted” women.

Sadly, I didn’t see the importance of hospitality either. I considered my home to be merely one of many possible places to get together with people. So when my husband Steve and I would plan to hang out with church members, neighbors, family and friends, I was quick to suggest we take a couple to Starbucks or host a group at the park. Less work for me, I thought, to my shame.

You can see why I had to laugh when our senior pastor’s wife, Lesley called last fall and asked me to lead a women’s meeting on hospitality. I think maybe God was laughing too.

So I sat down with a stack of Bible dictionaries from my husband’s library and a few books on hospitality (I had to buy and borrow as I didn’t have any!) and made some surprising discoveries.

For example, did you know that hospitality is everywhere in Scripture? It’s a major theme in the Old Testament, notable in our Savior’s life and teaching, and a regular practice of the early church. Hospitality even figures prominently in the Bible’s description of heaven.

In fact, the number of times the New Testament authors exhorted believers to practice hospitality (Rom. 12:13, 1 Tim 5:10, Heb. 13:2, 1 Pet. 4:9, and so on) led one author to observe that to them, “hospitality was evidently rated highly.”

Sadly, I had not rated hospitality as highly as I should, but by God’s grace, my perspective has changed. I’m not so quick to suggest Starbucks anymore.

Today, we want to start a new series on hospitality, and our hope is that all of us would be encouraged to rate hospitality as highly as God does.

Hospitality Equation

by Nicole Whitacre

*“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. **Show hospitality to one another** without grumbling.”* 1 Peter 4:8-9

In this series, we’ll answer four simple questions about hospitality:

What is hospitality?

Who is to show hospitality and who is to receive hospitality?

Why show hospitality?

How do we show hospitality?

So what is hospitality? The word, as it is used in the Bible, is a compound word that brings together the two words “love” and “stranger.” It literally means to show “Love for strangers.”

Hospitality=**Love**+Stranger

Hospitality is love. Not only does the word mean “love,” but here it is set in the context of the command to “keep loving one another earnestly.”

“Love in action” is how one woman defines hospitality. It is “meeting the needs of others through the use of one’s resources, specifically in and through the context of the home” (*Practicing Hospitality*, Pat Ennis & Lisa Tatlock)

Showing hospitality is not limited to having people into our home (although this is its primary expression). We can also use the *resources of our home* to show hospitality by making a meal, buying groceries, visiting the sick, babysitting, sending a note of encouragement, gifting homemade crafts, and even supporting local and international ministries who feed and clothe the poor.

Hospitality=Love+**Stranger**

Hospitality is a love of strangers. “It is to show kindness to strangers in such a way that they cease to be strangers.” It is “A concrete and personal expression of Christian love, intended to include strangers in a circle of care.” (*New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*)

A “stranger” isn’t merely a person you’ve never laid eyes on before. So often, people in our churches, neighborhoods, jobs, schools, and even extended family are strangers. Even though we see them every day, we hardly know them.

But when someone walks through our front door, a tangible, powerful thing happens. There is a fundamental change in our relationship. People who were once strangers cease to be strangers. They become a guest, and even a friend.

Who is one **stranger** you can show **love** to this week?

Hospitality Demands

by Nicole Whitacre

“When most Christians hear about their responsibility to practice hospitality, they can think up an amazing number of creative excuses to explain why they cannot be hospitable. Yet Christians are commanded to be hospitable.” *Alexander Strauch*

Our budget is too tight.

Our home is too small.

We don’t have a couch.

We don’t have a dishwasher.

The painter’s plastic hanging in the middle of our living room isn’t very attractive.

I’m not good at this.

It’s been a long week and I’m tired.

I’ve used all of these excuses to apply for hospitality exemptions. But Scripture has denied all my claims. The Bible is clear about who is to show hospitality: *all* Christians. By God’s grace, that includes me.

All Christians—not just the rich, or the creative, or the organized, or the gourmet cooks, or the outgoing personalities or the ones with lots of free time. *All*

Christians.

Members of the first century church understood that: “loving one another demanded being hospitable” (*Dict. of NT Background*, emphasis mine). So where genuine Christian love exists, there you’ll find hospitality. Or, in other words, we can’t claim to love others and refuse to show hospitality. It is, “a matter of obedience” (Alexander Strauch).

And it has particular application to us as Christian women. It is “a natural extension of [our] authority in the domestic sphere” (*Dict. of the Later NT*) and thus a primary qualification for the godly woman (1 Timothy 5:9).

All Christians are to practice hospitality but not all in the same way. “As each has received a gift” we are to serve one another, “as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (1 Pet. 4:7-10).

My hospitality may not be as frequent as my friend Taye’s. My house may not be as clean as Alyssa’s. My food won’t be as delicious as Bonnie’s or my presentation as creative as Lesley’s. But God has given me grace. I must use that gift of grace to serve and love and show hospitality.

“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” 1 Peter 4:7-10

Hospitality Says

by Nicole Whitacre

*“Above all, keep loving **one another** earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to **one another** without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve **one another**, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” 1 Peter 4:8-10*

Before vacation we were talking about hospitality—**what** it is (a love of strangers) and **who** is to show it (all Christians). Today we pick up where we left off and consider **who** we are to show hospitality to.

First and foremost, we are to show hospitality to “one another.” The members of

our local church should top our guest list.

You see, hospitality “builds up unity and helps meet practical needs” of those in our church (*Dict. of Later NT*). It strengthens bonds of friendship. It supplies food and shelter in time of need.

In the early church hospitality “was an expression of respect and recognition, a physical symbol of the destruction of those status boundaries irrelevant in the community” of believers (*New Dict. of Biblical Theology*).

What an amazing statement hospitality makes. It says to fellow church members: “Your background or ethnicity, your education or accomplishments, hobbies or interests—none of that matters. What matters is that we are both undeserving recipients of the grace of God. That is what unites us in friendship.”

It’s almost impossible to maintain evil prejudices or hold on to arrogant, superior attitudes or persist in sinful judgments and still show hospitality. By the act of inviting others to our home, giving of our resources, serving them, taking an interest in their lives, we show the world that “love covers a multitude of sins.”

And hospitality says something to our children as well. It speaks of our affectionate love for the people of God: “the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight” (Ps. 16:3). Hospitality, as one author put it, “is a way of bringing the household into the church and the church into the household” (*Dict. of Later NT*)

If we are wise parents, we will make hospitality a priority. In this way we can impart to our children a love for the people of God, teach them to follow godly examples, and encourage a passion for service in God’s kingdom.

What a powerful word hospitality speaks to our church, our children, and the world!

A Center for Evangelism

by Nicole Whitacre

Hospitality is not only for the church. We should extend hospitality to those outside the church community as well—people who do not yet know Christ, and also to the poor and needy around us and throughout the world.

“The gospel was preached and propagated” in hospitable households of the New Testament church says Christin Pohl, and it should be the same for us today.

“A home from a biblical perspective” explains Lisa Tatlock, “is to be a place of *refuge* and a center for *evangelism*.”

How can you make your home a center for evangelism?

Simply invite someone in. Maybe ask a neighbor or a fellow student or coworker over for dinner or dessert. Throw a party with friends from church and invite some non-Christian friends as well. Have a family to your home for a cookout or include neighborhood kids in a birthday party.

When we invite non-Christians into our home we invite them into our lives. We give them a chance to see us up-close and personal; to observe our family, our marriage, our parenting. Our hope is not that they would be impressed with us, but that they would see God’s grace at work in our homes.

In this way, hospitality can present the gospel as attractive to those who do not yet know Christ.

And let me also add, that while our home-life can be a witness to the gospel, we should not hold back from hospitality simply because our kids aren’t fully trained, or our house isn’t perfectly organized or clean. God will use even our weaknesses and shortcomings; and our humility to allow others to see us as we are is an evidence of His grace.

John Piper gives us this biblical charge: “Don’t ever underestimate the power of your living room as a launching pad for new life and hope and ministry and mission!”

Living Room Evangelism

by Nicole Whitacre

At our church’s women’s meeting on hospitality a young woman shared a powerful testimony of her mom’s example of hospitality. It is a perfect illustration of John Piper’s quote from yesterday: “Never underestimate the power of your living room as a launching pad for new life and hope and ministry and mission.” May we all be inspired by this woman’s example:

For as long as I can remember, my parents have made hospitality an integral part of our family life. Though my mom has used her home countless times to serve, bless, and welcome relatives and church members, God has recently used her hospitality in evangelism.

Last year, my mom started to befriend my neighbor, (I'll call her Sue) meeting her for coffee and starting to build a relationship. When my neighbor tragically lost her husband, my parents invited her over for dinner every Wednesday night as a way to offer comfort and support. In order to make our home a place where Sue felt loved and accepted, my mom purposely did nothing out of the ordinary. She didn't scrub the kitchen floor or prepare a five-course meal or even dress up. She just invited Sue into our family. In order to make Sue feel accepted, my mom incorporated her into our everyday traditions. In our family, everyone has their own napkin ring so that we all know exactly where to sit at the table; so, on Sue's first night over, my mom got out a new napkin ring and handed it to her, telling her that it was her napkin ring now and that we would look forward to her coming every week. A couple of months later, Sue shared with us how much that simple gesture had meant to her, and that she truly felt part of our family.

Using hospitality in evangelism not only makes your friend part of your family, it also, by God's grace, demonstrates the gospel in action. From the way my mom cheerfully greets my dad when he walks in the door, to the way my dad gently corrects us, to the way we do our chores without being asked, our everyday actions prove the power of the gospel. When Sue wonders how my mom and dad became such wonderful parents, or how they have such a healthy relationship, my mom has the opportunity to tell her why. Three-fourths of the time their conversations aren't about the gospel at all; they just talk about life. But while my parents don't avoid the gospel, they certainly don't force it either. Rather, they feel that God has more room to work with a firm basis of friendship and trust.

Personally, I really appreciate the way my mom has incorporated our entire family in hospitality. Wednesday nights aren't a one-woman-show; she's purposefully includes all of us. Actually, she began integrating us years ago when she trained us to help around the house, to have meaningful conversations with adults, and to welcome others into our family. When my mom first started teaching me to wash the dishes and make my bed, I could never have imagined that God would one day use my chores as a witness to the gospel. But Sue finds it amazing that my brother and I cheerfully start clearing the table without being asked. Evangelism has brought an eternal perspective to my everyday life reminding me that, when the gospel starts working, ordinary life becomes amazing.

When I look at my mom's life and the way God is using her to reach the lost, I'm struck by her faithfulness to obey God's commands, even when it didn't seem so important. The way my mom uses her hospitality to evangelize began over twenty years ago, as she learned to cook, trained us to do our chores, and began practicing hospitality within the church. Now God is using those gifts, not just to bless Sue, but also her accountant. 'Her accountant?' You ask? The Wednesday before Christmas, Sue brought us a tin of peanuts from her accountant, explaining that once she had mentioned our Wednesday dinners to him and that now he always asks about us and our time together and wanted to give us a gift. I think it's a reminder from God that the effects of our hospitality aren't confined to our home. All of the little things you're doing today: changing diapers, correcting math tests, cooking dinner after dinner; they all have an eternal effect.

We no longer see Sue every Wednesday, but dinners with her have become normal: last week we ate diet chicken as we sorted out our schedule for the week. But these dinners, they mean a lot to Sue because they show her that someone cares about her. Our entire family is looking forward to the day when Sue understands that God is the One who cares for her and who makes our care for her possible.

If my mom were here tonight, she'd want you to know that none of this is her doing. It's all because of God, and it's all for his glory. He brought Sue into our lives, He led us to extend hospitality to her, and He is using it all to show His love for her.

How Do You Do Hospitality?

by Nicole Whitacre

"Show hospitality." 1 Peter 4:9

In addition to the *what* and the *who*, Scripture tells us *how* to practice hospitality. First off, we're to show hospitality **intentionally**. To "show hospitality" is to make vigorous effort. We are to pursue or strive after hospitality.

This eliminates the, "I'll do it when I feel like it," "I'll do it when it is convenient," and "I'll do it when I have to" approaches to hospitality—all of which I've tried. No, we're to go after hospitality like a dog hunting a bone. We're to sniff out opportunities and seize upon them.

If you're like me and spontaneity is a mild form of torture, (somewhere just below water-boarding), then scheduling hospitality can help you be intentional. Every month, my husband and I sit down with our calendars and lists of folks we'd like to have over, and plan a few months in advance.

But we can also plan to be spontaneous: one woman in my church has a meal prepared before the Sunday meeting so they can invite someone to join them for lunch. And of course, if you are one of those women who love the last minute, late-staying guest, then invite away!

Second, we're to practice hospitality *wisely*. "The wisest of women builds her house," it says in Proverbs 14:1; and she "looks well to the ways of her household" it echoes in Proverbs 31:27.

Here's where you come in! We want to glean from your hospitality wisdom. So, please contact us this week and tell us:

1. Your favorite hospitality recipes. Maybe they are easy, make ahead, budget friendly, or good for a crowd. Or maybe you have a special meal or dessert that your guests have really enjoyed. Share your hospitality-tested recipes with all of us!

2. Your favorite hospitality tips. These can be menu ideas, party themes, or game suggestions. We'd love tips for doing hospitality with kids or on a tight budget. And we'd love to know how you schedule and prepare for hospitality. Please pass on what you've learned from experience or from other hospitable women.

We'll compile the best recipes and ideas and post them next week so we can all learn from each other how to practice hospitality more intentionally and wisely.

Hospitality Choreography

by Nicole Whitacre

There is an interesting little phrase tacked on to the command to show hospitality in 1 Peter 4:9. We're to do it "without grumbling."

I find this rather humorous. It's as if Peter knew this was going to be a temptation for us and so he put that little modifier in there. He ups the ante on us. It's not enough to do hospitality—we must do it without grumbling. We must do

it *cheerfully*.

This hits close to home for me. Especially during the exhausting “Three Hours Before Small Group Meeting” choreography: Dinner has to be made and served, dishes cleared and washed, kids fed, read to and in bed, foundation applied to the dark circles under my eyes and perfume sprayed to mask clingy household smells, coffee made, snacks laid out, bathroom wiped clean (almost forgot!), ice bucket filled and—whew!—smile ready when the first person walks through the door fifteen minutes early.

(All show times begin at 4:15—on good days. Tickets are free if you promise to help.)

The minute everything is ready and people walk through the door, they see my smiling face. What they don’t see is that I’ve spent the last three hours fretful, complaining, and anxious. But my family sees. And God sees.

News flash: Hospitality is work! It requires sacrifice of time, energy, and even finances. So how do we practice hospitality cheerfully instead of begrudgingly?

We remember the *why*.

More on this next week. In the meantime, keep the great recipes and ideas coming!

At Julie’s House

by Carolyn Mahaney

Ten years ago when I had hip replacement surgery, my dear friend Julie Kauflin offered to swap houses with me for my recovery since her home (unlike mine) had a master bedroom on the first floor. Even though I didn’t take her up on her offer, it’s a perfect example of Julie’s heart for hospitality.

Julie loves having people in her home: whether a couple or a large group of people, whether planned or spontaneous, for a short stay or a long visit. She’s a warm and creative hostess who makes it seem effortless—even though you know she’s invested much time and effort to make you feel welcome. Julie embodies that well-known Spanish saying: “Mi casa es su casa.”

Earlier this summer, Julie wrote some thoughts on “Intentional Hospitality” for a group of pastors’ wives. Her heart to serve and practical ideas were so encouraging that I asked permission to share them with our *girltalk* readers and she graciously agreed. So, without further ado, let me turn it over to my good friend, Julie.

“Intentional Hospitality”

by Julie Kauflin

Ah Summer... longer days, freer schedule, no school...it’s time to fire up the grill, have some folks over, and enjoy sitting out on the deck. I love summer! Can you tell? But if you’re like me, the summer can slip by in spite of all my best intentions. Please join me as I make some intentional plans, and exercise my desire with actual hospitality.

First things first, let’s talk to our husband about our desire to have some folks over.

“What days can you see this working?”

“How often would you have faith for having people over?”

“I’ll try to stay within the budget, but could we possibly find any money that we could add?”

He says maybe 2 times a month. Perfect...I have faith for that! I’ve realized that it helps me to include people in what is already in place. So, with our extended family coming over every Sunday...let’s start with adding people in to that mix. I’m already cooking, so let’s add a few more! We get the word out to singles, “come on over around 2:00.” It has been so much fun, we’ve built relationships, offered counsel and given the lonely a place where they feel part of a family.

Sundays I typically plan for 12 to 16 people. Since I get home from church later...I do some prep on Saturday, dessert and salad, marinate the chicken. Then I plan something quick and easy.

Some quick and easy meals have been:

Casseroles in the oven on time bake.

Chicken on the grill. (Lots of different marinades to try, or toppings for the chicken brings variety and flavor.)

Shish kabob

Hamburgers

Crock pot barbeque.

I've started planning on having appetizers out as I'm cooking. This has really helped people feel relaxed and welcome right from the start. Nothing fancy...chips and salsa, artichoke dip from Sam's. We always have a cheese plate with crackers. I walk in from the meeting...start the grill and grill chicken. My girls start setting things out, set the table, and begin offering drinks.

The other times that seem to work for us are Friday nights. These will be more specific. We know we have the slot, so we keep our eyes and ears open for people we don't know or people we want to deepen our friendship with. Maybe just a couple or a family. With a smaller gathering I feel more freedom to make some dishes that may be new or more labor intensive. I love to cook, so any chance to do something new is an adventure for me. Also with a smaller group we can really invest in this relationship, drawing them out and finding out about them.

Hospitality has been one of the biggest blessings our family enjoys. It has been so rewarding to see our family chip in, in a relaxed, unhurried fashion to prepare for having people in our home. Now I get the joy of seeing my married daughters and sons have a heart that welcomes others in to their homes, with joy.

[More from Julie later this week...]

More from Julie's House

by Carolyn Mahaney

Today Julie shares a few practical things she has learned about hospitality over the years...

Go with your strengths...

- Do you like a more formal dinner or casual? Don't try to be what you are not comfortable with.
- Do you like to have a buffet or family style or serve a meal plated?

- Budget wise...maybe you should just have dessert.

When planning your menu...

- A simple meal served by a relaxed hostess is preferable to an elaborate meal with a worried and anxious hostess.
- Choose recipes that are equal to your cooking skill level.
- Pick one or two items to invest time into. Make the other parts of the meal less labor intensive.
- Make the food you love and everyone will love the food you make.
- Hospitality is about giving, not impressing. It creates an atmosphere that makes you want to sit, eat, drink and linger around a table for a long time
- Develop a plan or schedule, working back from when you want to eat.
- Be light hearted. If you feel anxious, your guests will not feel at peace.
- Our children are watching what having people over is like for us. Do the heart work for it to be a true joy.
- Accept that things rarely turn out the way you imagine.
- Approach meals with the thought that this is like family. People are blessed just to be in your home.
- There is a learning curve so start simple!
- The good hostess is the person who makes you feel welcome, relaxed, and part of his or her life.
- Take stock of your strengths and weaknesses. If you don't enjoy cooking with others watching, then plan to have everything ready.
- Plan your time realistically. Making things ahead of time while leaving a few things that need to be done last minute.
- Create a check list of things to be done and your menu. There have been times when I've made food ahead of time, stored it and then forgotten to put it out.
- Leave yourself 15 minutes before guests arrive to clean up all the pots and pans. Starting with an empty sink makes for a peaceful start.
- Think of things that people can do to help if they ask...chopping, finishing salad, getting drinks.
- Start with your dishwasher empty.
- As far as cleaning in preparation, concentrate on the kitchen, the room where you'll be eating, and the bathroom. People aren't coming to inspect your cleaning skills.

Gathering supplies...

- Gradually acquire large serving pieces. I pick these up at Marshalls, T. J. Maxx, Ross for under \$10.00.
- Consider purchasing plates, plastic ware, cups from Sam's or Costco to have on hand.

- I have sought to gradually get enough dishes to serve our extended family, plus friends. It took some time and saving, but has really served us.

Well, summer is here! Let's talk to our husbands and get some dates on the calendar. Hospitality doesn't need to be one more thing to do. It is an opportunity to build friendships, influence your children, and bless others. There are few more relaxed ways to get acquainted than over a meal. What a joy it is to bring glory to God through this gift He has given us.

How Do You Do Hospitality?

by Nicole Whitacre

Very well, indeed!

Once again you've answered the call. You sent us a bunch of easy-cooking, money-saving, kid-friendly and creative ideas for blessing guests. We've compiled our favorites in [this file](#) which you can download, print, and save. I know my practice of hospitality will benefit from these tips for years to come!

Your hospitality recipes are up next, but here's a sneak peek at some of our *very* favorite ideas from today.

With all the HGTV and Food Network shows, I think some of us feel pressure when showing hospitality. I know that when I am a guest, I feel loved when the hostess has taken the care to make me/us feel special. That doesn't necessarily mean slaving all day for a Paula Deen spread.

I have found that Trader Joe's has wonderful cheats for quick appetizers and desserts. They have fresh pizza dough that can be quickly rolled out, spread with their pesto in a jar, add freshly chopped tomatoes and some grated parmesan (already grated in a tub) and you have a beautiful summer bruschetta. Serve with cloth napkins and flavored seltzer waters or sparkling TJ lemonade and it takes less than 5 minutes to prepare.

I bought a round cutting board at a discount store and can quickly throw together a cheese board with 2 types of cheeses, 2 types of crackers and some grapes (use 2 colors) and maybe some strawberries. It feels elegant, but is not work at all.

Their tarts and flourless chocolate cakes can be set on a stand. Add fresh berries. Done.

One last elegant cheat is the frozen raspberry and brie in pastry. About \$6 and can stay in the freezer 'til needed. You can always garnish with some mint or basil from the garden. Or you can gather a few blooms in a tiny jar and stick in the center of your platter.

The idea is to keep things handy to pull out, use the semi-homemade line of thought and serve your guest without stressing (or not inviting because of the intimidation).

Heather

I went through the church directory and made a list of people I want to invite and have paired up couples with things in common...2 couples expecting their first baby, 2 couples who are new to the church, etc.

I'm single and live alone, so at least once a week when I cook I prepare enough for about 6, take out my portion and then either parcel out servings for a few other single friends, or share the rest with a family in the church.

I try to always keep the ingredients for a few simple meals and desserts handy so I can whip something up quickly.

Bethany

I'm a single mom and I really enjoy being able to be hospitable. My son is 5 and loves to cook, so we often make a day of preparing. I choose a recipe that needs to bake for a long time and we make it together in the early afternoon, then straighten up while we race the meal in the oven (this also works well with a dessert made in the morning). This gives him a sense of ownership over the serving and heightens his anticipation of the evening. It also allows time for us to discuss appropriate behavior as we make preparations—we both prepare our hearts for the time with others, including prayers for godly responses to our guests and those in authority.

There are three specific groups of people I try to invite over, and I prepare for each differently:

- 1) If I invite a family with children over, I ask them to come 45 minutes to an hour before the meal. This gives the kids time to play, and me time to discuss seating and special needs for each of the children with the other mom. I usually make a casserole or enchiladas for this—something that frees me to serve as a hostess instead of a director tied to the stove.

- 2) If I invite a childless couple or singles over, I usually serve dinner a little later

than normal. I specifically ask the guy (usually beforehand) if he would be willing to play with my son at airhockey or catch or some such thing before the meal—my son loves this, and is then usually more willing to engage in the conversation appropriately at dinner. I bathe my son before they arrive and he eats in his PJs. After dinner, he goes to bed so that Mama can have “adult time” with her friends, and while I am putting him to bed, I ask my guests to clean up the dishes or choose a game or movie (this may sound rude, but it enables us to have fellowship instead of me being on sink-duty all night).

3) If I invite the children of different families over, I do it in the afternoon or for an early dinner so their parents can have a date without getting a sitter. The kids play together, and if it’s age-appropriate, I have a cooking activity for the kids to all participate in—either a meal or a dessert for their family that they can take home with them. Bisquick Impossible pies are perfect for dinners and brownies for desserts, as they are simple and bake unattended, and we can get back to playing! I feed them something simple, like hot dogs or pasta, that can be ready in a few minutes. This really gives my son a chance to practice drawing others out and preferring them instead of being the “little entertainer” in a room full of accommodating adults. Dorah¹

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