

# Take to the streets for the Coronation.

## Join the party...

Our most effective mission will happen when we form partnerships with people who are already doing good things. It's likely that your community will already be planning events - if this is the case, don't organise something else, just join the party!

If you're joining in with an existing event, here are some ideas about ways to be present:

- Get involved in inviting people – knock on every door in your neighbourhood!
- At the event, hold a space for conversation and listening, put some sofas or comfy chairs out and put up a sign indicating that the space is relaxed and safe – you could also indicate that prayer is available.
- Offer free food and drink – don't charge for things, that's not what this is about!
- Offer something creative that celebrates community like making a neighbourhood mural or making a video with vox-pop interviews.

## Plan a party...

If nobody is planning anything already, then it's your opportunity to get the ball rolling – but do this with other community groups and organisations. Here are some tips and suggestions:

### Planning team

Behind a good Street Party is a team who have planned the day, invited the street to the celebration and who are committed to caring for everyone who comes so they will all enjoy the day. Gather a few people on a planning team who are passionate about community – it doesn't matter if they're not all Christians.

**Will you have a rota on the day** to control any road barriers, be on teas & coffees etc?

### Early details

Is this a party for your street, neighbourhood or wider community? Will it be literally in the street or at a venue? If it's outside, do you have the support of the nearest neighbours? Will you require power or water? What about toilets?

Which day of the long weekend will it happen and from what time? How structured will it be – will you have a set time to eat (afternoon tea or a barbeque?) or will it be more of a drop-in? Are there many older folk who will require seating? Will you have music on the day? If so, what type and who will organise and run it?

What if the weather is wet? Do you have an alternative venue? Do you have shelter? Do you need gazebos?

### Food

Is the Street Party offering a meal or snacks? Do you want people to bring a contribution? Will you have a drinks table available for sharing? Will you serve tea and coffee? Will alcohol be present? If alcohol is being sold you will need to contact your local council to apply for a Temporary Event Notice (TEN). Make sure any food is hygienically prepared and presented and beware of food allergies.

### Activities

Plan for food, drink, and activities that will foster a sense of fun and belonging. Plan some activities to break the ice – something a bit competitive is a good idea! Try to involve all ages. Gradually you'll notice people are moving from engagement to community – from 'me' to 'us'. Play games, encourage dancing, get creative. As a final activity, take a group photo of this "historic" day and find a way to ensure everyone in your street receives a copy.

## **The role of the MC**

Find someone from your street or your community who can act as the Master of Ceremonies for the day. The MC treats the crowd like family, makes everyone feel at ease and answers questions. They let people know what is ahead, helping people prepare to get involved. It is helpful for the MC to have a PA system with a microphone.

## **Practicalities**

Street parties on quiet streets that don't affect the wider road network count as small events. Read the details on your local council website as most councils require between 4-6 weeks notice. You can apply for a road closure if the road is purely residential. Consult everyone who lives in a house or runs a business which will be affected by the road closure; it is your responsibility to make sure they are aware of the proposals and are happy with them. Make sure the street or area is left clean so there is little to complain about afterwards. Try not to run the Street Party late or allow it to get too noisy.

Children should be in the care of a parent or guardian at all times. Keep a watchful eye and let common sense prevail. Take photos of the day, but check with people they are happy for photos to be taken and shared – it is illegal for photos of children to be taken without permission. Insurance is not compulsory for a neighbourhood event but make sure you are well planned and have assessed all possible risks. Public Liability insurance is available for as little as £50.

## **What you need**

Where will you get tables or chairs? Will people bring their own garden furniture or is there a local parish hall or church where you can borrow what is required? Will you need decorations, bunting, cutlery, plates, tablecloths, serviettes etc? What resources do you require for the games and activities – are you having prizes? Have a first aid kit available but parents should also be on hand to deal with any problem arising with their child.

## **Follow up**

Always plan with the end in view. What are your dreams for your street or neighbourhood? What will be the next way that you will connect with the street? Could you set up a new way for the community to stay in touch, e.g., with a WhatsApp group. Expect your street to be different after the party. There might be more conversations on the street, an increase in car waving as people drive by or a thank you note in the letterbox.

## **Extend the invitation to EVERYONE**

What can you do to make sure the whole neighbourhood can come along, especially those who are lonely, isolated, or marginalised in some way? In what way can you make sure the invitation is extended to the whole community? How can you help people to feel they are wanted?

Invitations work best when they are issued in person – knock on every door in your street to ask them to come. It might be easier if you keep track of who has received an invite. Give each person a hardcopy invitation covering what food or drink to bring, possible road closures, wet weather plans and a contact detail.

Extend the invitation to your neighbours' family and friends. This inclusivity allows people to bring someone along and gives the Street Party a "family feel".

Consider the ways you might invite the following groups of people to participate:

- Homeless folks or those living in hostels or temporary accommodation
- Elderly people or those living in care homes or assisted accommodation
- Those who are neurodiverse or who might find loud parties or new people stressful
- People who have recently moved to the area, especially those who might be migrants or refugees.
- People who live on their own or who are single parents, or who might feel lonely or isolated.
- People who are struggling financially who might be worried the Party will cost them money.

## Pray

When we join in with God's mission, it's essential we're praying about it! How can you pray for this in the lead up as individuals or a team, could you offer prayer at the event, and can you pray together afterwards for the people you've met? Here are some ideas:

- Pray together as a planning team – even if it's a team of diverse or no faiths there might be appropriate ways you could incorporate prayer at the beginning of the meeting.
- Ask a group of Christians to be praying regularly about the event as a specific prayer team.
- Pray for your neighbours regularly, by name if you can.
- Offer prayer as part of the event. This might mean by opening with a prayer, or saying grace before eating. Or, it might mean holding a space somewhere for quiet time, reflection, listening and prayer. If you're going to offer prayer as part of your presence make sure the team are trained for this – it's important to do this in a way which is sensitive and safe.

## Share your faith

We take our whole selves out onto the streets in celebration – we don't have to bottle up our faith and leave it safely at home. It's possible that those who live nearest to us may not realise we are Christians. Community parties are a chance to be bold in our faith sharing. We talk a lot about needing to be better at evangelism, well, when we get to know our neighbours, God will give us opportunities to share our faith. We need to be intentional. Our neighbourhood is where God has placed us.

### Live distinctively

By living distinctively we can model to others what it means to be a follower of Jesus. This is our Christian witness. Be warm and welcoming, sensitive and caring, listening to people's stories – to which of your neighbours are unwell, have been recently bereaved, who the single parents are, who are carers etc. We must be full of compassion and where we can help our neighbours, longer term, we should do this, be it providing meals during illness, driving neighbours to hospital appointments or helping them with shopping, or providing a listening ear. Each time we step outside our front door and choose to connect in some way, through conversation or kindness, we reveal the light of Jesus.

### Speak about faith

This might feel very uncomfortable for us - perhaps we fear rejection, ridicule or simply worry that we are just not equipped to do it. But remember, God is with you, at work in the lives of your neighbours, just waiting for you to join in. And healthy evangelism is about building relationships and listening to others while being completely yourself as a Christian – this is something we are all equipped for. Look out for opportunities to talk about faith. You will sense if people want to talk more or if they are eager to finish the conversation. You can easily go back to the weather, your street or other areas of interest. It's important to find the right balance of authentic and intentional, knowing when to offer prayer or invitation. As you get to know your neighbours, you could ask questions such as:

- "Have you ever been to church?"
- "What do you think about spiritual things?"
- "Have you ever had a spiritual experience?"

### Connect with the Church

If you're there as a team from Church, with a stall or formal presence, then you can offer giveaways or worship or prayer on the streets. As you get to know your neighbours, it might feel right and appropriate to invite people to discuss faith further, or to come along to prayer or worship in a church or outreach event. It's helpful to have something to give out with information on.