

Module 3: Please Wait to Be Seated! Gathering Activities - “Special Guest” Check-in

The “Special Guest” Check-in is designed to be one of two activities to engage participants as they gather. Participants will pick up “Happy New Year” Party Packs and Planners.

The Leader’s Notes for this activity, along with any needed preparations and supplies are outlined below. A Program Planning Grid (PDF file) is available to assist you in coordinating the details and tasks involved. You may wish to display a sign to distinguish between the gathering activities and the learning centers. A “Please Wait to Be Seated” sign design (PDF file) is provided for this purpose. You may wish to print the name of the activity on the bottom half of the sign.

Approximate time: 5 minutes

Equipment and Supplies:

- [Church Year wheel](#) (PDF file)
- [“Reasons for the Seasons” Party Planner A-F](#) (PDF file)
- [“Happy New Year! Logo labels](#) (PDF file)
- [Chef’s hat nametags](#) (PDF file)
- [Stirrin’ Spoon pattern sheet](#) (PDF file)
- [Stirrin’ Spoon reference sheet](#) (PDF file)
- [“Please Wait to Be Seated” sign design](#) (PDF file)
- Copies of the [Stirrin’ Up a Celebration menu card](#) (PDF file)
- Bags, with or without handles
- Pens or markers
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

Leader’s Notes:

Scan through the activity outline and adapt your plans to honor the time you have scheduled for your overall event. You may wish to recruit a few people to assemble the “Reasons for the Seasons” Party Planners. Pages A-F will need to be copied back-to-back and assembled into 5 ½ x 8 ½ booklets. The “Happy New Year” Party Packs are meant to collect the crafts and other learning materials participants may receive. You may copy and glue them onto the bags or simply use self-adhesive labels.

Plan to give each family/participant a “Stirrin’ Spoon” to create a sense of continuity between the theme and the individual program offerings. If you choose to make paper spoons, you may want to photo copy the pattern onto lightweight cardstock or adhere it to poster board to give it a sturdier presentation. You might consider printing the phrase “Whatza Cookin’?!” on the base of the spoons as you prepare colored-coded strips of cloth or crepe paper to attach to the spoons at each learning center.

Chef hat nametags or actual paper chef hats may be used to identify the participants as “guest chefs.” Cut the sheet into four nametags. A chef hat pattern is available in the Stirrin’ Up A Celebration PDF files. The Stirrin’ up a Celebration Menu Cards may be distributed and used during the large group celebration to help participants associate the chef with the season they were intended to represent. Cut the menu sheet into two cards.

Activity:

As participants arrive, you might ask them to think about how they celebrated the beginning of the last calendar year. Did they wish people a “Happy New Year?” Did they go to a special party or celebration? Did someone cater a special meal?

Introduce this event as a celebration of a different kind of “new year.” Refer to the Church Year Wheel as you remind them that the church has designed its own seasons to stir our hearts and minds to more fully understand and appreciate God’s presence and activity throughout the year. It invites us to think of the life and ministry of Jesus as we walk through a calendar year.

Refer to the “Stir-factor” sheets in the “Reasons for the Seasons” Party Planners. Point out that they have been designed to highlight the seasons of the church year featured here and they suggest ideas for celebrating each one of them at home. Encourage participants to take a “Happy New Year” Party Pack to collect crafts and things at this event that will make their celebrations at home more meaningful and fun.

Invite participants to grab a nametag and a spoon before they get a “taste” of what the church year’s all about at the Taster’s Choice Learning Center. Display the “Stirrin’ Spoon” reference sheet as a table tent and refer to it as you pray that God will stir their heart and minds to more fully appreciate God’s presence in our lives throughout the year. Note that the spoons will help us “stir up” some things to remember about the seasons of the church year. (Include a time for making or trying-on chef hats if you’ve chosen to provide this option.)