

Whatza Cookin' ?!

Setting the Stage:

Scan the content of this skit and become familiar the characters. Choose animated children, youth and adults to personify these roles. Whatza Cookin' is designed to set a culinary context for celebrating the Seasons of the Church Year. It features a catering service with a full menu of special offerings to highlight the reasons for each season. A cadre of chefs will be recognized and further utilized to facilitate the "Whatza Cookin'" Learning Centers. You may wish to choose the same people to play both roles.

Cast:

Greg or Gretta, the Grocer	An expert in health foods who personifies the free spirit of the sixties (Color code: Green)
Chef Sven or Svilla	A renowned Scandinavian chef (Color code: White)
Ms. Merri Mary or Melvin	A domestic goddess known for her designer line of culinary and homemaking essentials (Color code: Sage Green)
Firecracker Fred or Fran	A flamboyant personality who views spicy food as the ultimate in fine dining (Color: Red)
Chef Constance or Cornelius	An arrogant chef extraordinaire (Color: Blue)
Ned or Netta, the Cook	A basic, burger flipping, no frills lunch cook (Color code: Purple)
Bernie or Bernice	A dramatically eccentric little character (Color code: Black)
Sam-for-all-Seasons	The Coordinator of Whatza Cookin' Catering Service

Props:

Use two 6' - 8' tables - covered with plastic white tablecloths to represent an industrial-strength kitchen counter. You might also decorate the gathering area beyond your stage with balloons in the colors of the Church Year to make it look like its ready for a celebration. Photo copy the Whatza Cookin' Catering sign design (located in the Stirrin' Up A Celebration PDF files) onto an overhead transparency. Use an overhead projector to enlarge the design for display in the center of your stage.

The chefs may be dressed in shirts identifying the color of the season they represent. They may also wear hats and other accessories to personify their character. A chef hat pattern is available in the Stirrin' Up A Celebration PDF files. You might also place identification cards and large bowls or kettles with wooden or paper Stirrin' Spoons to define a work station for each chef. Bernie will need a small portable fire extinguisher to carry around.

Script:

(As the scene opens, the chefs are at their stations preparing specialty or signature dishes for the New Year celebration.)

Sam: Hi there, I'm Sam-for-all-Seasons and I'd like to welcome you to Whatza Cookin' Catering. Let me assure you that we are committed to helping you make the most of all your occasions for celebration! In fact, we've invited chefs from all over the world to join us in making this New Year celebration your most memorable! I mean we're not talking about just any new year here! This one goes way beyond the countdown of another 365 days! It marks some key events in history that still shape our hearts and lives today!

Bernie: Ew! Don't burn it, now! Don't ruin it or confuse it!

Sam: We haven't even turned the burners on yet, Bernie!

Bernie: I know, but I'm already getting a little "hot under the collar" trying to figure out what we're actually cookin' for! I mean, I usually wait until after Christmas to celebrate my new year. And now, you've got us going on a whole other event at a completely different time of year!

And, (with dramatic presentation) If you confuse it - you'll ruin it and that's just about as bad as burning something while you're cookin' it!

Sam: I see what you mean, Bernie. But, we're not trying to change the date or celebration of a new calendar year – when the hand on the clock that strikes twelve and the ball drops at Times Square!

Bernie: (Sigh of relief) Well! That's a relief! 'Cuz that's a sizzlin' good time in itself!

Sam: We're talking about a special way of looking at the days, weeks and seasons of a regular year!

Bernie: Ok! (Dramatically) I'm back at my boiling point! We're headed right for 9-1-1! You keep this up and you're going to end up with a really big mess! WHAT, exactly, ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!!

Sam: I'm talking about an outline or cycle throughout this time that is recognized by a lot of Churches.

Bernie: Oh, boy! Here we go! They're always coming up with something extra to think about!

Sam: It's just a way to help people associate the life and ministry of Jesus with their own faith and daily life.

Bernie: Oh -I get it! – (Putting his hands on his hips in total disgust) NOT!

Sam: Well, stick with me, Bernie, because that's just what we're here to help people do!

Bernie: Really?

Sam: We're providing an opportunity for people of all ages to celebrate the beginning of a new year in the church! We're hoping that it will help them understand and appreciate the importance of walking with Jesus everyday throughout a regularly scheduled year. Here! Grab a pencil and a menu card and you can join our guests in collecting information that will help them understand the meaning of this new year. to collect some information that might be helpful as you try to figure out what I'm talking about.

Bernie: But you hired me to stir up my best dish along with the rest of these chefs!

Sam: I'm sure you'll have your chance, Bernie. Let's meet some of the other chefs at work today. Is your pencil ready? Listen up!

(Bernie proceeds to find a place to sit and gesture appropriate times to make note of the colors, seasons and meanings on the menu card.)

Sam: Our first Chef is Greg the Grocer.

Grocer: Hi Sam, I'm actually more into the health food deli scene, but hey, it's great to have all the ingredients I need just an aisle or shelf away.

Sam: What are you stirrin' up for this New Year celebration?

Grocer: (Tossing crumpled green paper in a large bowl) I'm preparing a mixed green salad with homemade organic croutons and full-bodied Balsamic Vinaigrette

Sam: Well, that sounds great! But, I just have to tell you that they look alot like the greens my grandma used to have me pull out of her garden!

Grocer: Peace, love, and no conflict, baby! They are all in harmony with nature, Sam. They have been nurtured by the natural goodness of sunlight and un-tampered soil.

Sam: Groovey! Incidentally, I think it's way cool the way you coordinate your clothing with the color of your menu offering! Why have you chosen to feature this color today, Greg?

Grocer: It's all a part of celebrating this whole New Year deal, Sam. I've been chosen to honor one of the five seasons they have identified within it.

Sam: Ah yes! And which seasons are you representing?

Grocer: Epiphany, of course! It invites people to consider Jesus as the light of their world as they look for God's provisions for growth in faith and community. And, when people think about growing, Sam, they think of green - which brings me back to my healthy GREEN salad.

Sam: Yes! Of course! (Aside) Even so, my grandma still used to just call them weeds. (Then, bringing closure to the conversation) Ok! Carry-on! Our next Chef is Sven from Oslo...Is that Oslo, New York or Norway?

Sven: Vell, I'll tell ya, Sam, I've been to New York and I can tell ya - it's a nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there if I could spend all the rest of my waking days in Norway!

Sam: Whatcha cookin' Sven?

Sven: I'm preparing my signature dish. It's a flavorful creamy white soup with potato sausage and a Parmesan cheese garnish. It's a perfect dish to celebrate those special days that only come around a few times a year.

Sam: Hmm...It looks like an extremely pale delicacy to be sure!

Sven: Everything else pales in the sight, Sam! I'm representing some of the most popular days of celebration in the life of Jesus and the Church year! They are set apart as "holy-days" for honoring the amazing role Jesus played in our salvation. The rich white soup reminds us of the simply pure and priceless gift of Jesus' birth and resurrection.

Sam: You're right! No color or spice could make those days any more significant. You've also coordinated your clothing with your menu offering!

Sven: Ya sure, ya betcha! White is the only color that could qualify to represent these days.

Sam: Our next chef is Ms. Merri Mary, host of her own weekly program of domestic bliss. Miss Merry Mary, what is your Culinary Green Light Special for this day.

Merri: Well, Sam, today I am preparing a vegetable medley au gratin, using root veggies from my own garden and cream and cheeses from the milk of my own herd.

Sam: Wow! You do it all Mar!

Merri: I'd also like to mention that I'm baking it in a dish, today (holds up a piece of bake wear) that I made from the clay I found on my farm, downstate. They were featured on my TV show and placed in the Bake-mart flyer as a sale item with my very own homemakers stamp of approval.

Sam: Sounds very down-home, delicious and...profitable, Mar.

Merri: That's why I'm so known for what I do, Sam. But, my menu offering, today, is made to honor the teachings and activities of Jesus. They are highlighted in the season of Pentecost. And, just like my veggie dish, they have a hearty way of sustaining us and providing us with insight and nutrition for growing in faith and community.

Sam: I couldn't have said it better, Mar! Our next chef is ...

Fred: (Interrupting) Howdy pardner! My friends just call me Firecracker Fred, Sam! The special spice blend I've created has given me known notoriety!

Sam: How so?

Fred: It puts a "wham" (Punches one hand with the other to accentuate) in dishes that leaves a lasting impression on any wagon that circles 'round the open range.

Sam: What are you spicing up today?

Fred: Today I am making the "best in the west" chili beef stew. It's simmered out on the open fires with my special Wham! (Punches one hand on the other to accentuate) Spices until it pops with flavor! My Wham! (Punches one hand with the other to accentuate and then shakes his hand to acknowledge the mounting pain from his exuberant gestures) spices are for very special days that need to be commemorated in very special ways. (Shakes out his hand again to draw attention to illustrate the impact of his spices.)

Sam: And which days would they be Fred?

Fred: Well, I guess they'd be your days of special celebration in the Church Year, like Pentecost and Reformation Sunday! They aren't di-rectly a part of Jesus' life or ministry, but they are dynamic events in the life of the church. My Wham! Chili Beef stew brings a certain spice to this celebration of the church year just like these special days do!

Sam: I think I need a little of your Wham! to spice up my days, Firecracker Fred!

Fred: Ye-ha! That'll be \$29.95 for bi-monthly deliveries - unless you got a few cattle to trade!

Sam: Hold your horses there, friend, I mean Fred. I've got a few more chefs to recognize.

Fred: Much obliged! (Tips his hat) Hang in there, pardner!

Sam: Now, I'd like to introduce Chef Constance, who has been is known for her significant preparations and exquisite presentations.

Chef C: Why yes, of course. And today, I am making a very delicate chocolate gnash to fill the third layer of my multi-layer dessert cake. You will simply quiver with anticipation as you watch this creation evolve.

Sam: I can hardly wait!

Chef C: But that's the point! This dish is meant to illustrate the importance of the season of preparation and anticipation in the Church Year. Advent marks the beginning of another Church year as people observe Christ's life and ministry one more time! Even so, it's often overlooked as people

wait impatiently for Christmas! So, just as my very special cake-which requires many days to make, it celebrates the importance of preparing our hearts for Jesus' birth.

Sam: Once again, a beautiful presentation based on very careful preparation! And, last, but not least is ...ah...Ned, the Cook. And what will your contribution be?

Ned: (In a sad, monotone voice) Oh, I'm just making some flat bread (Rubs his hands together for Emphasis.) with no leaven, sweets or spices; no frills are necessary. I'm just trying to keep it real, Sam, that's what it's really all about.

Sam: That doesn't sound too appetizing or appealing, Ned.

Ned: Nope. It wouldn't do what it's supposed to do if it did, Sam. It's supposed to help us appreciate the season of Lent – a time of sacrifice and simplicity as we remember Jesus' amazing sacrifice of His life for our sins. Many people eat plain food during Lent, or give up soda or chocolate.

Sam: I'm starting to get the feeling. (Turns to Bernie) Bernie, how are you doin'? I think it's time to acknowledge the event you represent.

Bernie: Yup! But, I have no menu offering to share because it's more a matter of the heart, Sam. (Sighs as he removes his hat and places it over his heart.) This day confirms that, no matter how hard we try, we will never be all that God intended us to be! As chef's, we're bound to spill, drop or ruin it or burn something, at some point. And, as people on earth, we're going to sin and stand in dire need of remembering the events of Good Friday. And so, I think we just need to pause for a moment to acknowledge this reality and thank God for the Last Supper Jesus offered his disciples to give them the ongoing opportunity to experience the significance of his death and undying love and forgiveness.

Sam: Does this day have anything to do with the fact you're wearing black?

Bernie: Yes, Sam, it does. It's meant to represent the very sad day that Jesus died on the cross for our sins.

Sam: I understand. Bernie, thank you.

(Turning to the audience of participants)

Well, there you go! Have you noticed that each of the dishes described provide a full meal or menu for celebrating a new Church Year - the Green Salad and veggie dish, the hot beef stew, the bread, the potato white soup and delicious dessert? Even so, none of these dishes alone or together will fill us the way the seasons of the church year can nurture our faith in Jesus. The Church Year stands alone as a cycle for learning about the life of Christ and the gifts God has given us to share.

Bernie: I'm getting hungry just thinking about all this! When does the celebration begin?

Sam: As our chef's continue their preparations, you are invited to sample the special "food for thought" at each of the Whatza Cookin' Learning Centers. Grab your Stirrin' Spoons and "Reasons for the Seasons" Planning Guides as you proceed to discover some of the key ingredients of this New Year celebration!