



Involving Young People at Mealtime

The shared meal at Room In The Inn is the most important experience during the evening. It is while we sit down together at the table that stories are shared, a few moments of respite from the day can be found, and people are made to feel at home. There are many ways that young people in your congregation can be involved in creating a hospitable environment, even if they aren't able to be present for a Room In The Inn meal.

Involving children and youth

- Instills the value of service to others
- Helps shape positive attitudes for the future
- Provides community-building for groups within a congregation
- Gives a special experience to guests who are often separated from their own children



IN ADVANCE

- Make sack lunches
- Decorate sack lunch bags
- Make placemats and table runners
- Make table decorations
- Bake sweets for dinner
- Make snack bags for guests (late night snacks!)
 - Chex Mix
 - Rice Krispy Treats
 - Trail Mix
 - Chocolate Chip Cookies

DURING DINNER

- Allow children to “take orders” at dinner time
- Children can take guests’ dirty plates for them
- Kids can offer drink refills
- Bring a dessert tray or cart around to guests
- Help guests with mobility difficulties to carry plates and drinks to the table, especially if you are serving buffet-style

THINGS GROUPS CAN COLLECT TO SHARE

- Purchase or bring leftover Girl Scout cookies for an evening treat
- Bring in leftover Halloween candy or make treat bags that can be handed out to guests or at Room In The Inn’s downtown Campus



Affordable Hospitality Options



The hospitality shared during the evening meal is central to the Room In The Inn experience. We understand that cooking for a crowd can get a little pricey. There are a few vendor options in the Nashville area that can help your congregation provide quality food while making the budget stretch a little further.

Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee

Second Harvest partner agencies are able to acquire nutritious, first-quality items at a fraction of their typical cost. 501 c3, tax-exempt organizations that serve those in need are eligible to become partner agencies. This can include Room In The Inn congregations. Partner agencies must apply, host a short site visit, and attend an orientation session.

Information is available at secondharvestmidtn.org/agency-zone/ or by calling the Agency Relations Manager at 615-329-3491.



Restaurant Depot

Restaurant Depot is a national chain membership store. The good news is that membership is free! It is a good place to buy in bulk at reasonable prices and features a wide selection of quality foods. You can register for the free membership online and then present your congregation's tax-exempt certificate at the store.

restaurantdepot.com

Restaurant Depot - Nashville

111 Oldham Street, Nashville, TN 37213
615-252-2233

Nashville Cash & Carry

Cash and Carry is a great place to purchase food service products at wholesale prices. No membership is required. They are willing to make special orders which are typically ready for pick up by the next day. There are some excellent frozen options that would work well to have on hand for a dinner emergency.

nashvillecashandcarry.com

Nashville Cash & Carry

5001 Charlotte Avenue, Nashville, TN 37209
615-298-2250

Meals are a great time to share some creative hospitality with your Room In The Inn guests. A fun theme adds to the experience and makes the meal more enjoyable for volunteers and guests alike. The ideas presented here are simply a starting place for your own imagination!



The Italian Feast

Main Course: Spaghetti

- Meat sauce or meatballs and marinara for vegetarians

Sides: Salad & Garlic Bread

- Offer choice of salad toppings or two different salads

Dessert: Tiramisu, Italian Ice, Cheesecake

Drinks: Tea, Lemonade

Additional Hospitality:

- Shakers of parmesan cheese on tables
- Checkered tablecloth
- Candles & Soft Background Music

GAME NIGHT

The Meal:

- Heavy Appetizers
- Chicken wings or boneless bites
 - Choice of flavors and sauces
 - "Extras" like celery or carrots
- Pizza Rolls
- Chips with Nacho Cheese
- Chili dogs & Tater Tots
- Meatball Sub Sliders

Dessert: Homemade cookies, cakes, pies, football cupcakes

Drinks: "Real" sodas offer choice and are a special treat

Additional Hospitality:

- Decorate the dining room with game day colors
- Colored plastic tablecloths, napkins & plates from the dollar store
- Set up buffet style like you would a tailgate party
- This works well for Monday Night Football, Super Bowl Sunday, or any time there's a big game



Fair Food

The Meal

- Bratwurst with grilled peppers & onions
- Offer an alternative like chicken sausage
- Corn Dogs
- Curly Fries with Nacho Cheese
- Grilled Corn on the Cob (off the cob for easier eating!)
- "Walking Taco" / Frito Pie

Dessert: Funnel cake with toppings, Apple Pie, Caramel Corn

Drinks: Different flavors of lemonade

Additional Hospitality

- Checkered tablecloth
- Balloons
- Games: cornhole, simple carnival games



"Build Your Own" Dinner

One Possibility: Taco Salad

- Ground beef or beans
- Lettuce, tomato, cheese, sour cream, salsa, jalapenos
- Volunteers can make homemade salsa in a friendly competition
- Offer the toppings separately on the tables as a "build your own"

Other "Build Your Own" Meal Ideas:

- Pizza
- Hearty Sandwiches (meats & cheeses with toppings)
- Baked Potato Bar
- Hearty Salad Bar with grilled chicken or steak