

Hostess Guidelines

Thank you for being an Advent by Candlelight hostess!

Setting a table and serving a dessert may not sound like much, but because of your work, hundreds of women can attend an evening of fellowship and fun as we look ahead to the birth of our Savior. Thank you! You make Advent by Candlelight possible!

There are many details here! If you don't find an answer to your question, just ask!

Who Can Host? Anybody who'd like to attend and who'd love to set a table/make a dessert can host. Ask a friend to help out and pool your resources. Some ladies like to decorate, others like to bake. You do not need to be a St. Lorenz member to host. Cute remark made at a recent Advent by Candlelight by a young mom: "I love to get out my nice things and decorate a table like this. But what's really nice is that I can do it here and I don't have to clean my whole house!"

Sign-Up Process If you are hostessing, feel free to invite friends to sit at your table. We also need hostesses who are willing to leave room for "new friends", ladies who use the sign-up process. (Ladies can reserve seats via online reservations.) We know from the experience of other churches that many women would never get invited if all the seats were filled only through hostess invitation. The sign-up process is a great way to meet new ladies and to give them the opportunity to attend our event. Thank you so much for supporting this.

When can you set up? Any time after 1:00 Sunday. The gym doors will be open all day.

Refrigeration Refrigerators/freezers in the school are available for use. Many desserts are served at room temperature.

Table Size, Seats The tables and chairs will be set up for you. The table is 30" x 72". This is not a very wide table! 8 seats, or a squishy 10 if you put two seats on each end. If you want to make a tablecloth, you'll need 2-1/2 yards of 45" material. We will also have a roll of white paper tablecloth and you can help yourself to that.

Flexibility If your dessert flops, improvise or let SaraLee help you out. This evening is to be a relaxing time of fellowship; there's very little that HAS to be done a certain way.

Invite! Get the word about the sign-up posters, or ask ladies to attend. If you're table is full, let them know about the sign-up process. After 17 years, we are still hearing ladies say, "I haven't come because nobody invited me." What is easy for some is not so easy for others, so help them along with a friendly invitation.

Timeline The sooner we know you'll be hostessing, the better. But, if you can't commit early, just let us know anytime throughout November. We will add tables as long as there is room to do so. At www.stlorenz.org, click on Ministries, then Advent by Candlelight to register.

Centerpiece Every table should have candles. The gym will be dimly lit, so be aware of "lighting up" your table. Try your centerpiece out at home. Smaller candles in votive holders spread the light around the table. Pinterest has tons of ideas! You may want to share the Christmas story, using a focal point like an Advent wreath, angels or nativity scene. Or simply make your candles be the centerpiece. We only ask that you please leave Santa at home, as he and his elves already get much attention.

Safety Use caution in keeping ribbon, tissue paper, garland, greenery and all other decorations away from the flames. Make sure that any candles placed near the guests are enclosed (like in a votive holder). Also be aware of hot wax and how it may drip.

Hostess with the Mostess You set a table and make a dessert for those at your table. Also important: be ready to greet your guests with a smile and a welcome. Encourage introductions around the table, if needed. Pray for those who will be attending.

Nametags If you think the people at your table may not know each other, feel free to make/bring nametags.

What about drinks? In recent years, some hostesses have prepared, say, a flavored coffee at home and brought it in a thermal container. Another used a punch bowl as her centerpiece and served pretty red punch. This is fine; we have no objections. But no alcohol, please, lest some be offended.

Plain or Fancy? There's no need to go to great expense to set your table. If you have china and would like to use it, this is a great opportunity for many to see your beautiful dishes. But paper products are fine, too. Today, with such a great variety of color and pattern, paper products can be easy and fun. Or, mix the two: bring your fancy teacups but use disposable plates. Serve coffee in paper cups, but ice water in wineglasses. Use whatever is convenient and affordable for you. The charm of so many tables is the wide variety of settings! Some will be elegant and sophisticated, some will have a homespun country flair, some will be whimsical, some will be plain and simple. All will be beautiful!

What We Provide For You

Flavored Decaffeinated Coffee

Sugar for your sugar bowl

Creamer (whole milk)

Ice & Ice Water

Hot Water for Tea

Things You Should Plan to Bring

Centerpiece with Candles

Lighter

Tablecloth

Serving Utensil

For the 8 at your table (includes you):

Place settings, silverware, napkins

Most hostesses offer a hot drink and ice water, but if you want to serve punch or cider, that's fine.

Optional:

Carafe for Hot Coffee, if using. We have some extras to share!

Pitcher for Ice Water, if using. We have some extras to share!

Creamer & Sugar Bowl, if needed

Nametags, if desired

Candy, Nuts

If serving tea: Teabags, Hot Water Carafe

TV Table or Small Side Table to hold Dessert

Basic Schedule for the Evening

Times are approximate! Many hostesses set their table early in the afternoon and then return for the program.

5:45 – 6:00

We suggest that you be in the gym for final preparations like filling the water glasses, coffee carafe, creamer and sugar, lighting candles. And visiting each other's tables!

6:25

Gym light are dimmed. Hostesses gather round for a prayer.

6:30 – 6:40

Doors open; guests move from hallway to gym.

6:40

Table viewing/visiting.

6:55

"Please take your seats" announcement. Make introductions around the table.

7:00 – 8:00

Program lasts about an hour or so.

Out of respect for the speaker and those around you, please do not serve dessert during the program.

8:00 – ?

Serve dessert and beverage to your table. Everybody visits. Sometimes the dessert fellowship lasts another hour! Ladies may also get up and take another look at the tables or visit the book table. Some tables are cleaning up while others continue to chat. No hurry.