

Creative Community Nights & Continuing Volunteer Development

Ideas for Community Nights and Community Time!

- **Session on program founders:** Learn about the person/people who began your program! You may have more in common with them than you think!
- **Alum panel:** Invite local alums to your house and ask them to share stories from their year with you. Get some ideas on what you can do after your year of service!
- **Covenant night:** At the beginning of your year, spend a night deciding what you would like to commit to as a community. How will you grow together and support each other this year? Formalize your agreement with a covenant signed by everyone in your community.
- **Mid-year check in:** Half-way through your year, spend a night talking about what you have learned individually and as a community. What will be your goals for the rest of the year?
- **Catholic Social Teaching:** Bring one of the best kept secrets of the Catholic Church to light! Pick one specific theme to focus on or have each member of your community present a different theme to the group. How can you incorporate Catholic Social Teaching into your ministry?
- **Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racism Training:** With the help of a local anti-oppression or anti-racism trainer, examine your own privilege and potential biases.
- **Exploring spirituality through painting:** Have one member of your community select a prayer for you all to say together. Then spend time quietly painting, seeing where the Spirit leads you.
- **Catholic Worker:** Discuss the life and work of Dorothy Day. Visit a local Catholic Worker and participate in one of their dinners or “clarification of thought” discussions.
- **Simple living discussion:** Reflect on how your community has been reducing their carbon footprint(s) and living simply. You could include time for everyone to begin cleaning out their closets!
- **Enneagram/Love Languages/Myers Briggs Test:** Taking this (or another similar assessment) can be a great way to start a conversation about your personalities and how you interact with others. It is a fun way to learn more about yourself and can be a huge help in addressing conflict within the community.
- **Affirmations:** Take some time for each person to write down/brainstorm things that they really appreciate/admire about your other community members. Then share them with that person and the rest of the group. This is a great end of the year activity but can be helpful during mid-term struggles too.

- **Larger community nights:** Invite individuals from your local area into your home for dinner. These could be neighbors, co-workers, spiritual leaders, or individuals that you serve (keeping in mind appropriate boundaries of course).
- **Have an electricity fast:** After sundown, turn off your TV, radio, telephone, etc. Exceptions can be made for clocks, refrigerators, and other appliances which can be left on, but not utilized. Use the time to sit by candlelight and chat, read quietly in the same room, maybe go to bed early. Talk about the difference you feel in the pace of life without electricity.
- **Theme nights:** Think about doing a golf night with argyle sweaters, borrowed golf clubs, and set up a mini golf course around your house. Have an 80s night with stretch pants, teased hair, and a great soundtrack in the background.
- **Free movies, concerts, theater at local parks:** Local parks offer many free movies and concerts at parks all over town, including all kinds of music, Shakespeare in the Park, dancing, and more!
- **Have fun exploring the local arts community!** Find free admission at local Art Museums – some art museums are always free or have weekly or monthly free nights! You can also find local author readings, free lectures, or guest artist performances through the local libraries and universities.
- **Explore area faith communities and spiritual events,** including Taize, local labyrinths, meditation nights, and Advent and Lenten services.
- **Spend time in nature:** Hike through the woods, on a beach, or up that big hill in your city. Enjoy the snow with free skating or sledding down hills in a local park. You could even find a place to star gaze together!
- **Skill sharing night:** teach and share your skills! Learn your knit! Or swing dance or Zumba! Or make jam and can it! We all have so many skills and ideas to share, and it's a fun way to learn new skills!
- **Arts and crafts night:** can always create a great time, especially around times of the year you want to give cards and gifts. Enjoy making your own piñata?!
- **Share your life story:** Divide your life into three sections by age. Share a significant event from each time frame.
- **Additional thoughts:** Take turns planning fun community events so everyone gets a chance to share their vision and passions. Have tech-free times each day and week or limit teach-time intentionally as a community.

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