

# Hospitality

## CHECK-IN & ARRIVAL

It is important to provide participants with a convenient place to be enthusiastically welcomed when they first arrive. This is also a great opportunity to hand out any important information, name tags, materials, or swag. Use neat and welcoming signage to direct participants to your check-in area and clearly mark your entrance, gathering area, parking lot, and exit. If volunteers are available to greet people and answer questions, this can also go a long way to starting your event off right. Never assume that people will know what to do or will be comfortable jumping right in. Your signage, organization, and positive attitude can help to create a good first impression and all say a great deal to participants about the care and preparation that has gone into your event.

## NAME TAGS

Never assume that people know each other's names or will remember them. You might have participants who rarely attend events and at least some of your participants may be meeting for the first time. Name tags are usually a necessity. Plus, they can be fun, provide a memento, and communicate critical event information. For example, participants' pronouns can be listed on their nametags and the event schedule can be printed on the back or included in a badge holder. Name tags are a way of silently communicating to a participant that you have prepared for them, you care about them, and you SEE them. A good name tag adds polish and practical information to any event.

## EVENT SCHEDULE

There is a fundamental human need that most folks have, which is to know what to expect during an event. Providing an event schedule that is printed, portable, and polished will help your gathering run smoothly. Hand schedules out upon arrival & display them around your venue. Use the free graphics and style guide available on the Triennium website to help create a cohesive design.



*At the end of each day, you may want to spend a few moments reviewing the schedule and noting any changes. Engagement in an event from your participants will deepen exponentially if they feel welcomed, named, cared for, and directed.*

## MEALS

When it comes to meals, think about how to best cater to the ages, dietary needs, and preferences of your participants. If your site provides food, talk with them about ways to customize menus for your participants and theme. This might be something as specific as a special menu for a theme party, or as simple as having a family style meal one night instead of a buffet. If your event is for youth and young adults, create a meal schedule that does not start at the crack of dawn and consider providing late night snacks.

Capture any dietary preferences or allergies as part of registration and communicate this information to whoever is providing food. Most camps, conference centers, and hotels can accommodate special dietary needs. However, a little conversation in advance will help ensure everyone's dietary needs are met and may even result in some more fun and flavorful options. You may also want to encourage participants with specific dietary needs to bring along supplemental snacks just in case.

The table where you eat can be one of the most enjoyable and memory-making places at any event. It is where stories are shared, memories are exchanged, and goofiness happens. The PYT Connect Recreation Guide includes a section on table games as a way make meals more fun and to help build community. These games are also a way to “break the ice,” encourage laughter, and help slow down the high-speed dining that often accompanies teenagers (if you know, you know).

### Fun Food, Beverage & Meal Ideas

Here are some ideas for youth – or just those who are young at heart! Not all of these will work for every event or site. Note your venue's rules about outside food.

- **Late-Night Snack Bag**
  - For example, hot chocolate mix, marshmallows, stirrers, and a cookie.
- **“Make Your Own” Buffet**
  - Macaroni and cheese bar, taco bar, pasta bar, baked potato bar, etc.
  - This is an easy and fun way to meet different dietary needs.
- **Surprise Coffee/Tea Delivery**
  - Leave a hanging door-knob menu with check-box options.
  - Prepare and deliver these drinks on the final morning of your event.
  - This could be a fun surprise just for the adult leaders.
- **End of Day Pizza Party**
  - Surprise groups with a pizza delivery during their end of day practice.
  - Order lots of cheese and pepperoni pizzas.
  - Remember gluten-free and dairy-free pizza options as needed.
  - Provide cold, caffeine-free drinks like lemonade and water.



- **Theme Meals**
  - Pajama Party theme with breakfast for dinner.
  - Gala Dinner theme with special invitations, costumes, and a more formal sit-down meal.
  - Movie Party for fun or as a group study option with on-theme foods.
- **Mix Things Up**
  - Outdoor picnic or other venue change.
  - Have participants sit at different tables with new people.
- **Simply eat and be together.**
  - Consider at least one meal that does not involve games or structured activities.
  - Some of the best memories and connections are made this way.
- **Share group snacks.**
  - Invite different groups to each bring a snack to share.
  - Encourage them to bring something that represents them or their community or is related to the theme.

## **BREAKS & FREE TIME**

Intentional breaks and free time are important to consider when planning an event. A break is a brief pause in between activities during which participants are encouraged to stretch, move around, get some fresh air, and rest their active minds for a moment. Free time is a specified amount of time for participants to rest or do a preferred activity, often away from the main event spaces.

Participants benefit from this time to talk, relax, debrief, and get to know each other without instruction or direction. If possible, include some self-directed options for folks who might be more introverted, prefer to stay active, or benefit from a little bit of structure. For example, set up an art station, reading nook, group graffiti wall, prayer center, or board game tables. Your site may have built-in options, such as a guided walking path, a basketball court, or a place to swim.

## **EVENT EVALUATION**

Create an evaluation for participants to fill out at the end of your event. Providing a way for participants to offer feedback is a faithful way of demonstrating that they and their experiences matter and are taken into consideration. This is an important way of truly SEEing someone!

It can also be a very helpful tool for planning future events. There are simple digital survey options like SurveyMonkey or Google Forms that are easy to use and are inexpensive or free. Paper surveys are also helpful, just keep in mind that someone will need to review and compile the feedback manually.