

THE ENRICHMENT PROJECT

Badge Program

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PARTY BASICS

Steps

1. **Event vs. party.**

While you could use the event planning badge set, parties tend to be low key and more fun! Often you'll have one or two people planning and carrying out all planning and activities of the party. If your party would benefit from the more detailed event planning steps, feel free to peruse those Enrichment Project badge programs.

2. **Theme or purpose.**

Determine the theme and / or purpose of your party. Everything else you plan will fit into this category. You might want to plan a birthday party with a pirate theme or a princess tea party just for the fun of it. You can also choose to use the theme of a holiday or historical event. Often the theme will help lead you into activities that support it.

Note: The Enrichment Project has released some badges that can be used for party / event themes. See supplements below for examples.

3. **Preconceptions.**

Every type of party will have its own traditions and preconceptions. It is best to address those early. For example, a New Year's Eve party immediately brings to mind champagne, noisemakers and fireworks. While you may want to break the mold, be aware that your attendees will expect certain colors, decorations or even activities that fit with a theme. If you plan on going outside of these preconceptions, be sure to communicate that early.

4. **Search the Web.**

Explore the Web to find out what others have done that fit with your theme. Make notes of ideas you like, screen shots of sites, pins or any other way to document what you find.

5. **Brainstorm.**

With your theme in mind, review the preconceptions and what you found on the Web. Bring in your own ideas of what fits into your theme. Track everything you'd like to do.

6. **All about location.**

Much of what you plan will also depend on location. If you're outdoors you can have more attendees, but may need to adjust due to weather conditions. If you're indoors, you may need to eliminate active games. Everything from decorations to activities can be affected by where you hold your party. Keep this in mind as you move to the next step.

7. **Save the best, discard the rest.**

Look through your brainstormed ideas. Pull the ideas that you think would work best. You can help trim the list by asking these questions:

- Can I duplicate what they did or adjust the idea so I can do it?
- Do I know someone else who would be willing to do this at the party?
- Do I have enough people to do the activity?
- Do I have the knowledge / skills to do the activity (or willing to learn)?
- Is the cost reasonable to follow through with this idea?



Party Basics

You want to throw a party, but don't know where to start? Of course, knowing the date and budget are the first steps, but that's the easy part. You could take the easy way out and reserve a venue that runs the parties for you. Instead, let's explore the basics to creating your own party.



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- Is this appropriate for the age / ability of my attendees? (Younger kids have shorter attention spans.)
- Will these activities fit into the time / theme I have available?

8. A little extra.

Determine how many will be attending your party. Plan on at least one extra set of everything. Wind can carry away your special napkins and plates. A lost goody bag can lead to many tears. By planning for extras early, you'll save yourself headaches later.

9. Decorations and props.

Decorations from balloons to paper plates all need to fit your theme. You could go with a color scheme (like pink for princesses), but you might also go for a more specific item. When my oldest wanted a PowerPuff Girl themed party, I couldn't find anything for this. I ended up creating my own decorations by designing plastic canvas patterns of the characters and stitching them.

10. Invitations and thank yous.

Most of us prefer to purchase matching invitations and themes. If you cannot find invitations and thank you cards to fit your theme, you may end up making your own. If so, do a test with your envelopes to make sure the cards fit into them. Check out the badge program "Card Making Basics" for more information on making your own cards.

NOTE: Be sure to leave enough time before your date to allow these to be sent and incorporated into everyone's schedule.

11. What to bring?

Is your party one where you expect attendees to bring gifts? If so, let your attendees know. You might want them to instead bring something specific like a can of cat food for your local shelter that will be donated after the party.

Alternatively, you may want your attendees to come dressed a certain way or bring an item that they'll use during the party. For example, you might want girls to dress up as princesses before they come to the party. Perhaps you want everyone to bring wings for a fairy-themed party. This adds to your theme without costing you a lot of money.

12. Games.

The types of games you'll play will depend on your location and the ages of your attendees. Be sure your games fit your theme. A "pin the tail on the donkey" might be "put the carrot nose on the snowman." Instead of playing "BINGO", play "FAIRY." It's the same game idea, just adjusted to fit a different theme. Renaming or reimagining popular party games can allow you to use pre-made items at a party store. In addition, you can adjust carnival games for your parties. See "Carnival Games" badge program for more information on those types of games.

Plan on giving out prizes for your games? Keep these to your theme as well.

13. Other activities.

Music, dancing and other activities can be included where they fit into your theme. In fact, you may just want a dance party! Be sure to test your items to make sure everything works. If you need to, make a list of all the items so you don't miss anything. I pulled a bunch of dance songs for a Brownie dance party and put them on a CD . . . I didn't test it first and a couple of the songs didn't burn correctly.

14. Let's eat!

You can't have a party without food. From sweet treats like cake and candy to appetizers, your theme and participants will determine the food you serve. Feel free to rename foods to fit your theme as well. List the foods you would like to serve.



15. **Crafts to make and take.**

Planning to do a craft? If so, be sure to have extras. You'll want to do the following:

- Test the craft to make sure you have all supplies / tools
- Determine if all steps can be done by your attendees
- Adjust any steps to make them more accessible
- Provide a sample of what they are making (two if you have a large group)

16. **Extra goodies.**

Whenever I do an event or party, I have "extra goodies" that I always bring with in case I need something at the last minute. The items I normally have include:

- Blue Painter's Tape
- Scissors
- Blank Paper
- Sharpies
- Extension Cord / Power Strip
- Three-Prong Adapter

17. **Saying goodbye.**

You'll know your party is a success if your attendees want to stay. Help extend the party by allowing them to take home some of the decorations, props, prizes or even have a goody bag for them. Be sure what you give follows your theme as well.

Supplements

Fairy badge set

Girl Scout Traditions badge set

Harry Potter badge set

See latest badge list for possibilities

Sites to Explore

www.kidactivities.net/category/Parties-Ideas-and-Activities.aspx

www.kidactivities.net/category/Parties-Themes-to-Brainstorm.aspx

www.bhg.com/party/birthday/themes/party-planning-basics

kidsparties.about.com/od/partyplanningessentials

allrecipes.com/howto/party-planning-101

catchmyparty.com/inspirations_and_themes

voices.yahoo.com/50-creative-event-party-themes-5891886.html

collegelife.about.com/od/cocurricularlife/a/25-College-Party-Themes.htm

www.realsimple.com/holidays-entertaining/birthdays/party-themes-for-kids-0000000058783/#6

Check out [Iarajla's Enrichment Project](#) to start your own adventure.