

2009-2010 Party Coordinators:

Hello and thanks for volunteering to coordinate a holiday party for your child's class this year!

Hopefully, this will give you the general guidelines, my expectations and some ideas and suggestions for planning your class party.

Parties are scheduled during the last 45 minutes of classtime on the following dates. Parent Programs are scheduled the last hour of class time. The children will still attend class during regular class times on those dates. Families are invited to come and join us during the specified party time only. In the past, younger siblings have been welcome to join us and we have utilised 3-4 adult volunteers to help with crafts, serve food, and assist with games during the party. You may want to figure in a few siblings in your plans for goodies, cups etc.

Unless specified, you are welcome to plan and bring your own projects and activities for your child's party. If you want to offer the same activities we've done in the past, that's fine. If not, feel free to do your own thing. Of course, I'm available for help. If you want to put together games and food, I can provide some crafts, but you will need to let me know ahead of time. If I do not hear from you, I will assume that you are organizing and bringing the supplies and activities for your party.

If you want to contact the other parent volunteer(s) who will be planning a party for another class and work together, that's fine. I can give you their names and email addresses or phone numbers.

If you want to ask for volunteers from your class, that's fine. Or, if you want to meet with me for ideas and then plan and provide the party activities on your own, that's fine too.

I will include each party on our monthly calendar that goes home to all the families, but you will need to notify families if they are expected to help during the party or bring something to contribute to the party. If you have specific details about your class party that I should include in my monthly newsletter, please let me know by the last Monday of the previous month.

This year, we will offer:

- *Halloween parties Oct. 29 and 30
- *Pilgrim parties Nov. 24 and 25
- *Christmas parties (Squirrels & Chipmunks) Dec. 17
- *Winter Parent Program (Raccoons & Beavers) organize refreshments only Dec. 18
- *(EVENING) Winterfest parties Jan. 26 and 27
- *Valentine's Day parties Feb. 11 and 12
- *Spring Parent Program-St. Patrick's Day theme (Raccoons & Beavers) organize refreshments only March 17
- *Easter parties April 1 and 2

During the party, it works well to offer several different activities during the first 20-25 minutes, so the children can move around from one to another. This avoids long lines and too much waiting. A total of 4-5 activities is probably plenty for a 45 minute party.

I would like all of the children to come to the table together at the end of the party to eat (the last 20 minutes or so), so please plan your refreshments to be brought to the table at the end. This allows some time for all of them to share their snack together, helps to wind things down for dismissal time, gives us a chance to clean up crafts and other activities, provides parents a nice opportunity to take class pictures and allows me to make some announcements, in preparation for going home. I also like to balance parties with some time for small group activities and some time for all-class experiences.

Possible activities you might include:

- *one or two games (fish pond, “cake walk” or march around the pumpkins game using prizes instead of cakes, bean bag toss, bat bowling, ring toss) I have all the supplies for these. If you want to use them, please let me know ahead of time.

- *one or two crafts (I can help with the ideas and supplies for these, or I can provide them, if you prefer)

- *holiday-related storytime

- *holiday songs or dances

- *special guest to share and tell about different cultural traditions or holiday celebrations

- *collection or community service project to donate to others (food drive for the food bank, gifts or food to give to a needy family, holiday party items for a family shelter, etc.)

- *refreshments-something simple, not too sweet or gooey and not too messy, please- a make-your-own treat like decorated cookies, trail mix, cookie cutter sandwiches, jello blocks works well- I have suggestions for these, if you need them.

In the past, I have asked families to help provide some of the party supplies, but you can do this any way you’d like. You can post a notice in our front entryway, with the supplies written on post-it notes or tags for the parents to choose, if they want to. Or, you can send out an email to all the families in your class and ask them to provide an item for your party. I will purchase whatever supplies are not provided by parents. We can always use holiday-related stickers prior to and during class parties for making crafts, placecards and placemats to use during parties.

If you want to ask for donations of decorated holiday cups, napkins and tablecloths, that’s up to you. I have some vinyl tablecovers you can use, if you want to. I always have plain, white paper plates we can use. In the past, parents have enjoyed providing matching holiday-related paper products. This makes the party table look really nice, but it isn’t necessary. Stickers on

plain cups work well as an alternative.

I've found that it's helpful if paper products, tablecloths, game prizes and stickers are sent in prior to the party and food supplies are sent in the day of the party. I can set out a labeled bag to collect your party supplies, if you want me to. If you want to come in 30 minutes early to set up or decorate, that's fine. If not, our usual room decorations and child-created crafts usually serve as our party decorations.

You can offer prizes for games if you want, but it isn't necessary. Children can enjoy playing games just for the fun of it too! You can send home a party favor or goodie bag, but this is up to you.

In the past, we have "performed" a couple of songs for the families during some parties. You will need to let me know if you want to include this.

I really appreciate your help with holiday parties this year. I hope it's a fun experience for you. The children really enjoy these! Don't hesitate to call me, if you have questions about any of this or you need ideas. If I can provide any supplies, suggestions or anything else, let me know.

"Teacher Vicki"
503-682-3284 (school)

For Halloween parties, children and families are encouraged to wear costumes for the party. The children may either wear their costume all day at school that day or bring it in a bag to put on for the last 45 minutes. If it's not too cold, we sometimes go door to door to our close business neighbors, wearing our costumes, to give a treat to them. All of the children will be making a decorated treat box (in their classes) to take their party prizes and goodies home. I have supplies for a spider web toss, if you want to use that.

For Pilgrim Parties, I am providing three of your activities to be completed during the party-pilgrim hats, collars and pine cone turkeys. The children will be wearing their hats and collars during the party. You can organize ingredients for a pilgrim "feast" to go with this, if you want. MWF classes will also be making pilgrim placemats in class to be used at the party.

For Valentine's Day parties, the children will be bringing valentines for their classmates. If you would like them to pass these out during the party, that's up to you.

For Christmas parties, the children will be drawing a name to exchange gifts with someone in their class. We have invited Santa in the past. You can arrange this if you want.

For Winter and Spring Parent Programs, the children will be performing for their families. So, all we need help with is cookies or fruit and drinks, cups and napkins.

For Easter parties, we've sometimes made bunny ears and tails to wear during the party. We can make these in class, prior to the party, or you can include these as part of the craft projects during that party, if you want. You can also set up egg dyeing or an egg hunt, inside or out, if you want. I have lots of plastic eggs, if you want to use them.