

Holidays on a budget workshop

1. Entertaining and Family Time

God will produce a great harvest of generosity in you. Yes you will be enriched so that you can give even more generously. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they break out in thanksgiving to God. II Corinthians 9:10-11

- Have people over for hot chocolate and game night and ask everyone to bring their favorite game
- Put out a puzzle for everyone to work on while they enjoy cookies and cocoa
- Invite families to go caroling at a nursing home and then gather at your home for a potluck afterwards
- Throw a holiday party and serve an easy, one pot meal of chili or stew to your guests
- Hold a wreath- or decoration-making party
- Gather for a ladies' coffee party and make a Christmas countdown garland for children
- Don't forget- your family is just as important as your guests
- Put out an advent calendar (www.adventcelebration.com) and intentionally set aside time with your family to connect and reflect on the reason for the season
- Start your own holiday traditions (for ideas, check out *The Adventure of Christmas* by Lisa Whelchel) like playing the Christmas tree game or driving around and looking at lights as a family.
- Record your holiday plans, including family time, on the calendar so you don't overbook or over-stress
- It's okay to say no. Quality time is important and you need to budget it wisely
- Have ingredients on hand for a simple spread for unexpected company

2. Decorating

You crown the year with your goodness, and your paths drip with abundance. They drop on the pastures of the wilderness, and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys are also covered with grain; they shout with joy, they also sing. Psalm 65:11-13

- Incorporate everyday items you have around the house into your decorating schemes (fill a pretty bowl with apples and use it as a centerpiece, display items on cake stands and in pitchers, turn S&P shakers into mini vases, turn ice cream sundae dishes or goblets upside down and put tea lights on them)
- Find fun items at thrift stores, dollar stores and on Craig's List to use in your decorating
- Make decorations with found items- pinecones, magnolia leaves, pine or holly branches
- Get ideas from websites like marthastewart.com, realsimple.com and amazingmoms.com
- Make your own garland using ribbon, wooden cutouts and glitter applied with watered-down glue
- Elevate centerpieces to create dimension and height using upturned bowls or boxes covered with cloth
- Create ambiance with lighting using candles or homemade wineglass tealights (for pattern visit: <http://www.curbly.com/DIY-Maven/posts/6058-diy-wine-glass-lampshades#>)

3. Giving

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.

II Corinthians 9:15

- Set a total budget for gifts and fit your list of gift recipients within that number. Use cash to pay for your gifts so you don't overspend.
- Put together a themed gift for a family or individual – movie night, spaghetti night, flower potting kit, letter writing kit, tool box...
- Give gifts of service- babysitting, car washing, baking, errand running or spending time with an elderly friend or relative
- Make one big donation (sponsor a child or family) and give hand-made cards to friends and family sharing this gift and letting them know you've done this in their honor. Include a photo of the sponsored child if possible.
- As a family, select a cause or family to bless anonymously
- Put dry ingredients for home made bread or muffins in a jar and tie a ribbon around it with the recipe attached
- Make the receipt of gifts a joyful experience by having children follow clues or a string of yarn through the house to find their present.
- Create a photo collage or album
- Plan a special evening for your husband where you can totally focus on him

Recipes

Ann's Punch: Hot Punch for holiday gatherings

1 cinnamon stick
1/3 cup brown sugar
1 ½ tsp whole cloves
6 cups pineapple juice
6 cups cranberry juice
3 cups water

Heat through and serve hot. Can remove cloves and cinnamon stick as you serve, or beforehand.

Bake for neighbors and friends – Cream Cheese bread is a family Christmas specialty and makes 4 large loaves or 8 small. This is fairly simple and goes a long way for minimal cost and best of all it freezes well.

Cream Cheese Bread

Makes 4 loaves

Scald 1 cup sour cream. While cooling add ½ c butter, ½ cup sugar, 1 tsp salt, let butter melt in and blend together. Set aside to cool

In separate bowl mix ½ cup warm water and 2 pkgs dry yeast – let sit for a few minutes. Add to cooled mixture along with 2 eggs, beaten in.

Add 4 cups flour and make dough, (can add 2T more) dough will be sticky. Refrigerate covered overnight.

The next day separate dough into four balls. Roll first ball into approx 13 x 9 rectangle on lightly floured surface. Spread with ¼ of filling, leaving 1/2 " at the front and side edges. Roll up as you would for cinnamon rolls. Seal edges tightly and tuck sides under and pinch to seal. Place on greased cookie sheet. Repeat with remaining three balls. Place X cuts on top of dough (about 5) then cover and let rise until double. Bake at 375 for 12 – 18 minutes – until golden brown. Time will depend on your oven. Cool and glaze. Can make 8 mini loaves instead of four.

Filling

2 8 oz pkgs cream cheese, softened, 2 tsp vanilla, and ½ cup of sugar. Mix well and spread on rolled out dough. Glaze: 1 ½ powdered sugar, half and half and 2 T butter. Mix powdered sugar, butter and enough cream to make spreadable. Drizzle over cooled cream cheese loaves.

These freeze well. Wrap in saran wrap and foil. Do not glaze until defrosted.

Mom's Hot Crab Spread

1 8oz package cream cheese, softened
1 T milk or light cream
1 tsp worstershire sauce
1 tsp lemon juice
1 tsp grated onion
1 7 1/2 oz can crab meat, drained

Mix ingredients until smooth and place in small baking dish – (I use a glass dish that can also double as the serving dish) and bake at 350 for 15 minutes. Serve with ritz or other favorite crackers. Can also bake with slivered almonds on top

Aunt Alice's Shrimp dip

8oz pkgs cream cheese

1tsp grated onion

1 tsp horseradish

Garlic salt – shake in a bit to taste

7 T milk

2 cans shrimp, drained.

Mix ingredients and refrigerate several hours and serve chilled with crackers or veggies

Becky's Yummy Chicken Hotdish

Serves 6

3 – 4 cups cooked chicken, cut into cubes

1 can cream of chicken or cream of mushroom soup

1 8 oz can water chestnuts, drained

1 small can mushrooms, drained

½ cup celery and ½ cup onion, sautéed

½ cup milk

½ cup mayonnaise

1 16ozpkg frozen broccoli cooked lightly and drained

1 8oz pkg Pillsbury crescent rolls

½ cup shredded Swiss cheese

Slivered almonds

Combine chicken, soup, water chestnuts, mushrooms, sautéed onion and celery, milk, and mayonnaise, fold in broccoli. Place in bottom of greased 9 x 13 pan. Spread out crescent dough to make a blanket on top of chicken mixture and sprinkle with cheese, top with a few slivered almonds.

Bake at 375 for 25 minutes or until golden brown.

Lori's Pumpkin Roll

350 for 15 – 20 minutes

Beat three eggs at high speed for three minutes; gradually add 1 cup of sugar, stir in 2/3 cup of pumpkin and 1 teaspoon of lemon juice.

In separate bowl mix together: ¾ cup of flour, 1 tsp cinnamon, 1 tsp ginger, ½ tsp nutmeg, and ½ tsp salt. Fold into egg mixture. Pour into greased and floured jelly roll pan. Bake until golden and sides are pulling away a bit. Check at 15 for doneness.

Turn cake out onto towel dusted with powdered sugar and roll up, let cool.

Frosting 1 cup powdered sugar, ½ tsp vanilla, 1 8 oz package cream cheese, and 4T butter. Beat and chill slightly.

When roll is cool, unroll and spread with frosting. Roll up and dust with powdered sugar. Chill

Kim's Sausage Dip

- 1 brick of neufchatel cheese (8oz)
- 1 can of diced tomatoes, drained (12-15 oz)
- 1 tube of sausage

Procedure Brown sausage in skillet and drain fat. In separate bowl, heat cream cheese and mix in tomatoes. When sausage is browned, add it to tomatoes and cream cheese mixture. Place in oven at 380 deg until dip is heated through. Optional: broil for 3-5 minutes to brown the top.

Christi's Chocolate Bark

- 1cup chocolate morsels – any kind
- 8 – 10 hard candies (cinnamon discs, lemon drops, raspberry, butterscotch, peppermint, etc.)

In processor, chop candies

- Melt chocolate in microwave
- Mix in candy; reserve some for top
- Spread on waxed paper-lined cookie sheet
- Top with reserved candy
- Freeze until set
- Break in pieces – Pack.

Flavor combos:

- milk or semisweet chocolate with butterscotch candy
- milk, semisweet, dark, or white chocolate with peppermint