

You Are Invited



- Theme:** Everyone is invited to God's celebration. Proper 23 (28) Yr. A
- Object:** Party invitations, party hats and favors. Perhaps a cake to share with the children.
- Scripture:** Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. Matthew 22:9-10 (NIV)

Have any of you have ever given a party? Of course you have! We have all given a party at some time. Perhaps it was a birthday party, or a slumber party. Maybe you had a picnic or a costume party. No matter what kind of party you give, it is a lot of work to get ready for a party, isn't it? First, you have to decide what kind of a party you are going to have. Then you have to go out and buy the decorations or make them yourself. You have to plan what games you are going to play and make sure that you have all of the proper equipment for the games. Next you have to decide what you are going to serve and go to the store to buy refreshments. After you have made all the plans, you make a list of who you are going to invite and send out the invitations.

Have you ever planned a party and sent out the invitations, but no one showed up? Oh, I hope not! If that happened, how do you think it would make you feel? Would you be angry? Would your feelings be hurt? What do you think you might do?

Jesus once told about a king who threw a party, but none of the people he invited showed up for his party. In Jesus' story, the king was going to have a party for his Son who was getting married. Since he was a king, and this was his only son, you can imagine that it was going to be quite a celebration and it was a tremendous honor to be invited!

All of the plans had been made, the food was prepared, the invitations had been sent. The day of the celebration came, but no one showed up! The king sent his servants to see where the people were and why they had not come to his celebration. The people all began to make excuses about how busy they were.

The king was very upset, so he told his servants to go out into the streets and invite everyone they saw to come to his son's wedding celebration. They did exactly what the king told them to do and the Bible tells us that the wedding hall was filled with guests.

In this story, the King is God and, of course, Jesus is His Son. God is going to have a great celebration for His Son in Heaven and we have all been invited. I can't imagine why, but some people will turn down God's invitation. You've been invited -- I hope you will accept God's invitation.

Dear Father, thank you for inviting us to join you in your heavenly celebration. If there are any here today who have not accepted your invitation, we pray that today will be the day. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

EXCUSES GAME: Have children sit in a circle with a big ball! A child will toss the ball to another player and give an excuse that they can think of. The child who catches the ball will then give an excuse and roll or toss the ball to someone else, etc. Children will begin to realize how funny excuses sound. Begin to tell the story.

TEACHER WITH EXCUSES: The teacher can start the class with EXCUSES, such as I can't take attendance because I don't like this pencil, I can't write on the chalk board because the chalk is too short, or I can't get your construction paper because my back hurts, I can't open this can of cookies because the lid is on too tight, etc. Children will begin to get the LESSON VERY QUICKLY!

THEME IN CHALK: Write our theme today on the chalkboard but leave out many letters for children to guess at during the lesson. After someone has guessed the theme words of MAKING EXCUSES TO GOD, let children write their own names on the board if they have ever made excuses.

R.S.V.P. 2 GOD BOOK MARKER: Children can cut out letters R - S - V - P and glue them to another piece of paper in the shape and size of a book marker. Give children markers to write the 2 GOD and write Matthew 22:1-3. Hole punch the top and let children put a ribbon in the top of the book marker.

BIBLE INVITATIONS: Give children pages to staple together to form a BIBLE (the cover can be a colored piece of construction paper and the pages can be white. Children can write one of the invitations from our lesson, on each page of their BIBLE INVITATIONS (written on the cover of their "Bible"), such as Rev 22:17, Matthew 11:28, Matthew 19:14, Matthew 16:24, Hebrews 4:16, John 6:35, Isaiah 1:18, Isaiah 55:3, Psalm 101:2, Mark 10:14 and John 7:37.

PLAY DRESS UP: Give children choices of dressing up like a KING, or a Bride or as servants. After being dressed up, let them recite and try to memorize the verse. Take a picture of the kids all dressed up to put in a frame the next week! The teacher could have a large poster board with the Bible verse written out on it, to have the children hold while taking the picture.

Excuses! Excuses!



Theme: Making excuses to God - Proper 23(28) Yr. A

Object: An invitation

Scripture: Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. Matthew 22:1-3

Look what I have. It's an invitation to a party. A friend of mine is having a birthday party and has invited me to come. Look what it says at the bottom of the invitation... it says, "R.S.V.P." Do you know what that means? (The term R.S.V.P. comes from the French expression "répondez s'il vous plaît", meaning "please respond".) It means that my friend wants me to reply to the invitation and say whether I will attend the party or not.

Sometimes people who receive an invitation to a party don't want to go, so they make up excuses. Here are some excuses they might use:

I've had a bad cold and I just can't seem get over it.
I think we are going to visit my grandmother.
We are having a test at school and I need to stay home and study.
I have to go to soccer practice.
Mom said I have to babysit my little brother.

Making excuses isn't new. Even back in Bible times people made excuses. Jesus once told a story about a king who threw a party, but none of the people he invited showed up for his party. In Jesus' story, the king was going to have a party for his son who was getting married. Since he was a king, and this was his only son, you can imagine that it was going to be quite a celebration and it was a tremendous honor to be invited!

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Can you guess who the King was in the story that Jesus told? It was God. I'm sure you know who his Son was in the story. Right, it was Jesus.

Jesus has sent you an invitation. You will find his invitations in here. (Hold up a Bible.) The Bible is full of invitations from Jesus. He says, "Whoever is thirsty, let him come and take the free gift of the water of life." (Rev. 22:17) He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28) He says, "Let the little children come to me, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14) Jesus has invited us to come to him, and yet, some people are still making excuses.

Father, thank you for Jesus, your Son. We thank you for his invitation to come and receive the free gift of life which he offers. Without making excuses, we say, "Yes, Lord, Yes!" Amen.