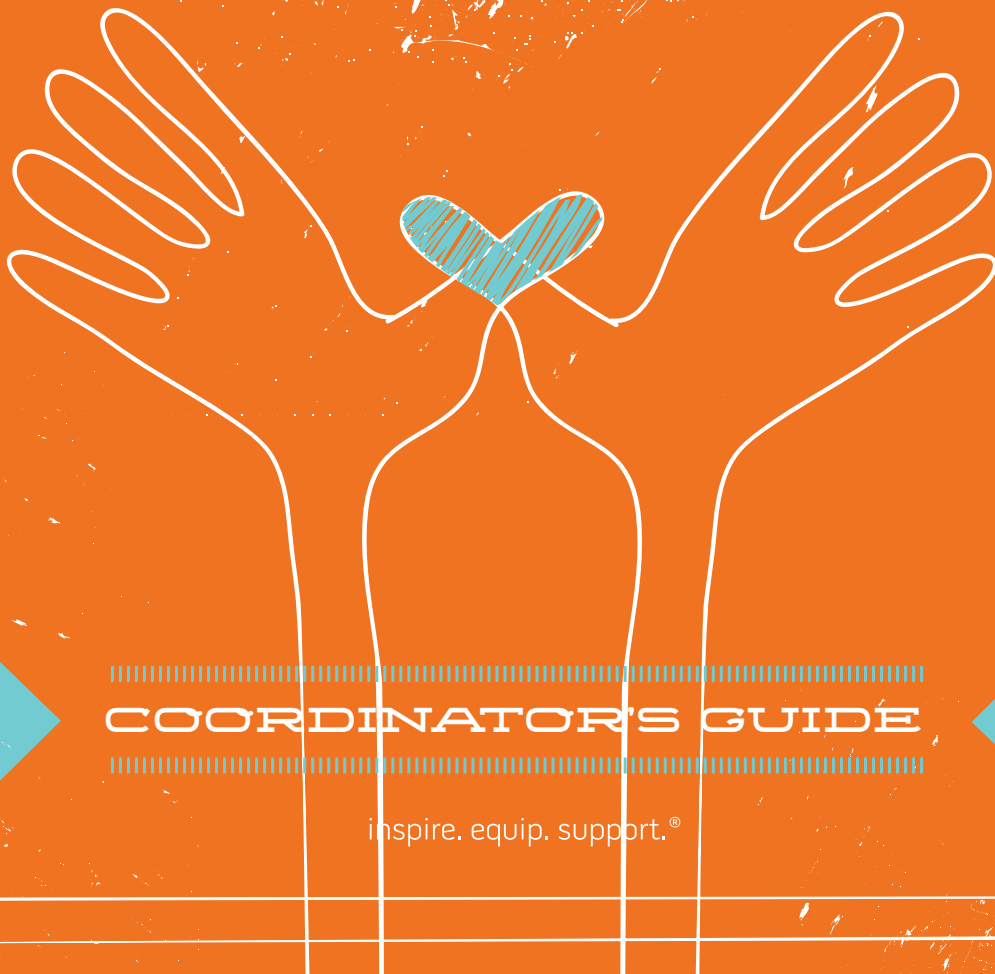




FAMILY
EMPOWERED
EVENT

CELEBRATE



COORDINATOR'S GUIDE

inspire. equip. support.®

FAMILY EMPOWERED EVENT: CELEBRATE

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INSPIRE

My husband and I were married a few years ago. Our wedding ceremony was memorable, but the highlight of our special day was by far the reception. It was everything we dreamed it would be: a delicious meal, a DJ playing our favorite music, and an entire evening set aside to celebrate our marriage with our dearest friends and family. After months of wedding preparation and anticipation, we were finally able to relax and begin to enjoy our new life together as husband and wife.

Since then, every year on our anniversary we pause and celebrate that milestone event. We may not throw a huge party with two hundred guests, but we make sure to set aside quality time to remember God's faithfulness to us as a couple and the ways He has worked in and through our marriage. We pull out photos and reminisce about our past adventures. We laugh about silly moments that we shared and cry over challenges that we overcame. We look forward to our future together with excitement, recognizing God's faithful presence with us.

Last year, God gave us another reason to celebrate when we welcomed our daughter into our family. We have already begun to graft her into our family traditions and model for her that we are a family who takes time to celebrate God's faithfulness in our lives. With a baby, celebration is easy; every discovery, from rolling over for the first time to clapping her hands, feels like a precious gift from God.

As we raise our daughter, we will continue to mark life's milestones, anniversaries, and birthdays. We will also celebrate the ways, both small and large, that God is at work in our family—from His daily provision for our needs to the ways that He is changing our hearts.

Celebrate is an opportunity to start a new tradition in your family—taking time to give praise to the One who is worthy of all praise. You don't have to wait for a special anniversary or birthday to celebrate God's faithfulness. Celebrating can be done on a monthly, weekly, or even daily basis!

EQUIP

In Psalm 145:6-7, David encourages us to remember and celebrate God's character and His works:

They will tell of the power of your awesome works,
and I will proclaim your great deeds.
They will celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

This pattern is evident in Scripture from the very beginning. In Genesis, the great Creator God paused on the seventh day to remember His work and celebrate that "it was good." Passover commemorates God's great work in delivering His people from bondage in Egypt. The law regarding the Sabbath acknowledged the need for us to suspend our human activities and remember the holiness of God.

From God's early history with His people, He required celebrations (feasts) to be part of the natural rhythm of life for Israel. The New Testament record shows that Jesus and the early church observed these celebrations as well. While we are not bound to keep these feasts, knowledge of them enhances our faith. The rich symbolism of feasts gives testimony to the character of God demonstrated in His good work on our behalf:

1. The Sabbath (Leviticus 23:3): A perpetual celebration of worship and rest to mark God's finished work, first in Creation and then in the redemptive work of Christ on the cross.
2. The Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:4-8): A celebration of God's miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt foreshadowing His ultimate deliverance of us from the bondage of sin.
3. The Feast of First Fruits (Leviticus 23:9-14): A remembrance of the trustworthiness of God.
4. The Feast of the Harvest (Leviticus 23:15-22): A celebration of God as the Abundant Provider and Sustainer of His people.
5. The Feast of Trumpets (Leviticus 23:23-25): A celebration of God's faithfulness to His covenant promise.
6. The Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:26-32): A remembrance of God's righteousness that demands a sacrifice.
7. The Feast of Tabernacles: (Leviticus 23:33-43) A celebration of God's blessings.

The biblical models inform how the community intentionally stops in order to gather together to remember specific things God has done—both at home and in their communal times together—and joyfully worship Him because of who He has been, is, and will be. During these times, we will tell and proclaim how we have seen God at work in our lives and offer joyful worship in celebration.

We believe that God ordained this kind of rhythm because active remembrance cultivates relationship; God wants us to look back and recognize His faithfulness, intense love, and personal interaction with His people individually and as a community. When we pause to remember, we honor our relationship with God. He speaks and we can respond with celebration.

SUPPORT

Experience informs leadership. In preparation for your church celebration consider designating a staff meeting to remember and celebrate God together. You may choose to bring some treats or order lunch. Encourage people to share stories of God's faithfulness in the last season of ministry. Celebrate the victories and be intentional about creating space to have fun together. Take a trip to a bowling alley, a local theme park, or host your own game day. Whatever the equivalent of "fun" is to your team, spend some time engaging in it together. This will give first-hand experience to your staff as they lead the church.

PHILOSOPHY & VISION OF FAMILY CELEBRATE

The goal of Family Empowered Event: *Celebrate* is to throw a party to celebrate God's faithfulness. As the Church, we want to be people who recognize that God is living and active in our lives. Not only do we need to stop and recognize how God is at work, but we also need to celebrate what He is doing. If God is in the business of celebrating, we should be too!

WHY CELEBRATE?

Sometimes in the midst of *being the Church* we focus on the somber aspects of being a Christian. We've been conditioned by our culture to think that church is mostly about being serious, singing weighty songs, and offering contemplative prayers. Reality is, church is about joy and celebration as well as reflection and deep emotion. As followers of Christ, there is much to celebrate! We serve a God who is faithful and who brings us great joy every day simply in the fact that we get to know Him. That in itself is worth celebrating. The goal of Family Empowered Event: *Celebrate* is to remind the church of the importance of celebrating God and His faithfulness in our lives on a daily basis. It is a time for us to stop and remember and celebrate God for who He is and what He has done. Family *Celebrate* is an opportunity for churches to practice the art of celebration by throwing a party to celebrate God's faithfulness.

WHAT IS IN THIS RESOURCE?

This resource includes a step-by-step outline of what a Family Empowered Event: *Celebrate* could look like in your church. It provides the values and vision, a sample timeline you can use as a guideline while creating your own event, a multitude of ideas you can use to customize to fit the unique personality of your church, as well as a *Celebrate* Family Resource for your families to take home.

Included

- Introduction video
- Coordinator's Guide
- Promotional and follow-up materials
- "Celebrate" Family Resource

VALUES OF FAMILY EMPOWERED EVENT: *CELEBRATE* |||||

Highlight the year: There are natural pauses throughout the year where a Family *Celebrate* experience would be appropriate. It is best to attach it to the end of a large church event like VBS, a church campaign, the end of the school year, or the end of summer. Whenever you choose to have your event, be sure to build off the momentum of something that needs to be celebrated.

Storytelling: God continues to use His people to put His glory on display and show the world how He is constantly at work. Storytelling allows an opportunity for people to share what God is doing in their lives and encourage the family of believers.

Centralized: Family *Celebrate* is an ideal opportunity for the entire faith community to come together and celebrate what God has done. Creating a corporate celebration allows for energy, stories, and ownership of how God has been at work in the lives of the faith community.

Replicable: *Celebrate* is meant to inspire families and give them something they can take home and model in their own homes.

Food: One of the ways God's people remembered and celebrated during the festivals was by feasting. Food is a great way to bring people together. Consider making this a free event to encourage maximum participation.

Fun: Sometimes we place a great emphasis on serious reflection and forget to celebrate the joy that we have in the Lord. With this attitude, sometimes we miss out on simply having fun and celebrating together. Make sure that the element of fun is key in your church's Family *Celebrate* event.

Questions to ask before you celebrate: Remember, your church is unique and may require its own version of the Family Empowered Event. Here are some questions you might want to ask before you begin to plan the event:

- ***What are our values?***
- ***How does our church currently celebrate?***
- ***What are the milestones that our church currently celebrates and how can we build upon those?***
- ***What kinds of resources does our church have that we can use for the Family Empowered Event?***