

TAKING PHOTOS OF YOUR BLOCK PARTY

Photos are a great way for you to celebrate and remember your gathering, and it's one way—as a church—that we can also share the stories of how you were on mission in your neighborhood. Here are some simple best practices that will help you tell the best story through your photos while showing kindness and respect to your guests and vendors.

PHOTOS TO NOT TAKE

Let's start here, even though it's less fun. It's important that when taking photos, we honor our guests and the photos they may or may not want taken of themselves—whether it's a preference or for safety.

Please do **NOT** take the following images:

- **ALCOHOL:** Avoid taking photos of guests holding alcoholic beverages unless you ask permission.
- **CHILDREN:** Do not take pictures of children at your event without permission from their parents or guardians, especially if you're aware of any kids with a foster, adoption, or custody situation in attendance.
- **SWIMWEAR:** Particularly in the warmer months or at Block Parties with water activities, do not take photos of adults or kids in their swimwear.

BEFORE THE EVENT

Once guests arrive and the party gets started, these are the photos you will wish you would've taken beforehand—so why not just get them in advance?

- **FOOD:** Aim instead to get as many photos as possible before the food arrives or as it's set out. It's better than photos of half-eaten dishes later!
 - If you have a reason to showcase any alcohol (such as with a wine or beer tasting), take closeups of bottles in the ice bucket, the arrangement at the bar, the menu board, or drinks as they are about to be served.
- **ENVIRONMENT:** Walk around the space after the setup is done but before guests arrive. Get close-up photos of the environment you've set and any decor that shows the hospitality you've put into hosting your party! This can be anything from table centerpieces to balloon arches—whatever you have that showcases the theme of your gathering, if you have one.

- **THE HOSTS:** Which is you! Take a quick photo of yourself and any co-hosts you have before the party gets started, just to store the memory. We promise it'll be a better photo than one of you all during clean-up.

DURING THE EVENT

- **GUESTS:** The people at your party are the star of the show. Seek out tight, small group photos of two to four people. Let people pose and smile for the camera, and you can even ask them to do so if they're not naturally getting into position. They'll be happier with the image and more likely to let you use it for posting.
 - If you aim for a more "candid" style of photography, feature one or two people at a time. This focus will help prevent the photo from being too busy or distracting.
 - Remember, people do become more self-conscious and pose when there is any hint that a camera is focused on them, so be mindful of their privacy and step away if it seems like they're having a more private conversation.
 - See "Photos to NOT Take" above.
- **GROUP SHOT:** If you have all or most of your expected guests in attendance at once, gather a group shot and prepare to share it with anyone in your community or on your block when they ask!
- **VENDORS IN ACTION:** If you've hired a food truck, face painter, or any other fun vendor, get pictures of your guests interacting with them and the fun experience they've provided for your party! Be aware, they may ask you for the photos later.

BASIC PHOTO TIPS

Get a range of both horizontal and vertical photos, and consider the third setting of square images if your camera permits that.

If you are tempted to "zoom in" with the basic camera setting on a smartphone, stop. This feature will result in less quality resolution when you print or post that picture. Instead, get physically closer to the photo subject or scene.

If you see something interesting that could make a good photo, even if it doesn't fit that assignment, take the picture anyway. You never know if it's useful later on!

MOST IMPORTANTLY...

Remember to not spend the whole event behind your camera. Block Parties are about connecting with your neighbors and making connections, first and foremost. So while you'll want some photos to remember and celebrate, let them take a back-burner to your main role—connecting with people.