

How To



host a wine and cheese night



This guide will help you to plan your Hope25 event.

Purpose

A Wine and Cheese Night can help you bring together people to talk, share, and have a great night while also hearing about Jesus and the ministry of your church.

Planning

Team

You will need to form a team to help plan this event. It does not need to be difficult, but having a team ensures buy-in and accountability and helps to deal with any issues that may come up during the event.

You will need to delegate some parts of the event to people outside the team. Your team will also need to consider how you will communicate about this event so that people within your congregation feel equipped, empowered, and safe, inviting friends and family to it.

Before the Event

When you have gathered your team, you will need to decide:

- What will be a suitable date and time to host the event?
- Where will you host the event? Will it be in your church? Your hall? Outside?
- Will you have a speaker or several speakers? How will you share the hope you have in Jesus during the event?
- How will you communicate about the event? Flyers? Social media? Website? Posters or banners? In your local newspaper?
- Will you charge for the event? How much will it cost? Do you know any people or businesses who might want to sponsor the event or donate wine, cheese or crackers?
- Will you also have non-alcoholic wine for those who prefer not to drink?
- How will you ensure you know what dietary requirements you must provide for?
- Will you be tasting different wines or simply having wine available? If you are tasting, you will need to provide information on the wines and ensure that you have enough glasses for people.
- Are there any rules, laws, or guidelines you must follow for this event? Will you limit the amount of wine that people can have? Do you need to encourage people not to drive to your location?
- How will you follow up with people after the event?

Content

While you want this night to be relaxed and for people to meet one another and spend time together, you will also need to think about how you share the hope of Jesus with those who attend. Here are some options that you might use to share the hope of Jesus with people who attend the event.

Testimonies: Try inviting between one and three people to share their faith stories and tell people about the hope they have in Jesus.

Gospel Presentation: You may choose to have a short Gospel talk. Ensure you have selected an engaging speaker who speaks clearly for those unfamiliar with the Christian story.

Hope Presentation: You may choose to have a presentation about some of the work of our parish and why that work exists. Many people in our communities are not aware of the ministries of the church in the broader community, let alone why we engage in these ministries. You could also include stories from people who are involved in these ministries.

Depending on your congregation's gifts and skills, you could also consider creative options. If you have a poet, you might use poetry to share throughout the evening. You could include musical performances that talk about hope. You can think as simply or as creatively as you like.

Ensure that your presentations are appropriate lengths and that people have somewhere to sit or lean while they are being presented. If your church has small round tables, they might be good to use. Alternatively, you could ask church members to bring coffee tables or small tables that can be used during the evening.

Communication

Three key areas of communication will be essential to hosting this event.

1. Within your team, you will need to ensure that your planning team is on the same page and able to share any necessary documents with one another.
2. Within your parish, ensure that your parish knows what is planned and is joining in prayer for the event. Also, invite friends, family, and neighbours to come to the wine and cheese night. You can communicate internally through parish email updates, notices during services, information in pew sheets, and any other form of contact your parish uses.
3. With your community and invitees, it is often more accessible to invite others to an event if they have something to give. Consider a postcard-sized invitation and some information on your parish webpage. Ensure that anything you hand out has the date and time of the event and the church website. You might need to include a dress code (so that people know if the event is formal) and indicate that it is for over 18's. To get the word out, you might consider:
 - a. A letterbox drop in your local community
 - b. Giving cards to each member of your parish community and encouraging them to think of two people they can pray for and invite to the service.

Problem-Solving

What if...

When hosting an event, we must always be ready for the unexpected. What will you do if one of your speakers gets sick? What's the plan if more people than you expect attend the event? Will it be a problem if tech doesn't work on the night? Do you have accessible access if someone shows up with a wheelchair or walker? What will you do if you have someone who drinks too much? What will you do if a person trips over or is injured - who will be your first aid person?

Working in a team makes problem-solving easier. You have a group of people available to help if anything doesn't go according to plan. Work together to solve any issues that come up in the evening.

Paths Forward

What now?

When we try new things, we change. After your wine and cheese night, there are two key groups to consider as you chart a path forward:

Your existing congregation

Some of these people have stepped out in faith and been involved in organising, hosting, or speaking at the wine and cheese night. Some have invited friends or family to an event where their faith will be shared. This is exciting and worth celebrating. Remember that it often takes multiple invitations and experiences with faith before people respond and are encouraged. Some people in your parish may have stepped out in faith to try something new. How can these people continue to be supported as disciples of Jesus?

Guests

Some people without contact with your parish or church may have attended this event. Hopefully, you have given them the option to share if they are interested in hearing more about the ministries of the church, about faith in Jesus, youth and kids programs, etc. Please ensure you have prepared a team to help follow these people up, have a coffee with them and talk about what they are interested in. This is an opportunity to build relationships. Think about what you might do next to help people take the next step, whatever that next step is for that person.

Implementation Plan

Firstly	Secondly
<p>Choose when to have your event.</p> <p>Decide on the location and shape of the wine and cheese night.</p>	<p>Communicate internally and externally.</p> <p>Help people think about who they might invite and provide them with tools to invite others.</p> <p>Ensure that everything that needs doing for the wine and cheese night has a name next to it.</p>
Thirdly	Finally
<p>Get all of the food and drink that you need for the event. Then host it and have fun!</p> <p>Deal with any issues that come up with care and compassion, knowing that God works in our weakness.</p> <p>Be welcoming, caring and loving as you greet people.</p>	<p>Think about what happens next.</p> <p>After the wine and cheese night, how will you support people in their discipleship of Jesus?</p> <p>Who needs to be followed up?</p>