

REC WEEK IDEAS

Many of the following REC week ideas could be improved simply by increasing the time limit. Consider how early you'd like guests to start showing up and how late you'd like them to stay. Don't worry about keeping the same time constraints that you have during your FOCUS and STUDY seasons.

AT REGULAR MEETING PLACE:

Favorite Things Party:

This idea comes from small group participant, Melissa Swenson. Small group participants are encouraged to bring their favorite food, their favorite drinks, wear their favorite clothes, and bring their favorite games (if they have a favorite game).

The small group then divides into small groups (sometimes by gender) and chooses a game to play together.

Video Game Party:

Get a couple of TVs and some video game consoles that are great for group games. You could go old school and play N64 Mario Kart & Super Smash Bros. Or use a WiiU, Nintendo Switch, Xbox One or PS4. Offer as many consoles as you have available.

This should be combined with finger foods and snack foods. Don't forget to bring drinks.

Holiday Party

Sometimes our REC weeks will coincide with Holidays. Think about hosting a Halloween Party, a Valentine's day party, a Thanksgiving Party, or a Christmas Party. Each Holiday will have it's own unique ideas to play off of.

Spruce it up:

- Encourage guests to come dressed in themed attire. Have a costume contest.
- Provide a Photobooth station by hanging a backdrop, having props available, and using a camera with a wireless remote.
- Google relevant holiday games for groups
- Have Holiday themed drinks and foods
- Decorate accordingly!
- Pumpkin Carving, cookie making, gift exchange, operation Christmas child shoebox, and much more.

Game Night

Host a game night and tell your small group members to bring a few of their favorite games. Try splitting the small group into smaller groups if you want the games to go faster or have too many people.

Spruce it up:

- Consider having a lot of appetizers/finger foods available for your guests
- Invite guests to bring snacks to share
- Or combine this idea with a Potluck

Paint Night

Depending on your group, a paint night could be a great way to spend the evening. Although this activity might get pricey. If you were to DIY a party paint night, you could expect to pay around \$15.00 per person.

Social Artworking provides a great Pattern Pack that includes Complete Design Instructions, Reusable Patterns, and Transfer Paper. Each pack costs \$4.95 and you need one per person. Afterwards you'll want to make sure you buy enough canvas and enough paint. It might not be a bad idea to have small group participants pay for their own supplies.

Spruce it up:

- Don't forget that your guests will get hungry and thirsty
- Turn on some background music

If these seems like too much work you could check out <https://www.brushstudio.net/> and register your group for a class (\$35 per person).

Craft Night

Here's how to host a great craft night for cheap. 1) Come up with a craft idea that you're comfortable teaching or ask one of your members to do this. 2) Send out an email list of all the supplies that your people will need to bring. 3) Encourage members to bring their own crafts to work on if they're not into the idea you've chosen or if they've got something else they'd like to work on instead. Make sure you have plenty of space and plenty of outlets/extension cords if you're using something like glue guns that need to be plugged in.

Spruce it up:

- Bring simple kid friendly crafts for the kiddos
- If you want to turn this into a service event, google charities and organizations that accept homemade donations. Consider Bridget's Cradles, Project Linus, and Warm-Up America (Accepts donations of small knitted or crocheted squares which are in turn combined by the organization to make a larger afghan).

Ice Cream Sundae Party

Host an Ice Cream sundae party. Bring plenty of different flavor ice creams. Don't forget to get dairy free options too if any of your group members have allergies or preferences. A topping bar is essential. Get creative and be generous. Have an assortment of fruits, candies, sauces, and cones.

Spruce it up:

- Have each guest bring a tasty but out of the ordinary topping
- Cookies and brownies make great bottom layers.
- Put each topping in it's own glass/ceramic container, store the ice cream in a large open bucket (with a thick layer of ice to keep it cold)
- Have a contest and vote on the best ice cream sundae creation

Ice Cream Float Party

Host an Ice Cream sundae party BUT provide an assortment of old fashioned looking glass bottled sodas (orange, rootbeer, cream soda, strawberry soda, etc). Bring plenty of different flavor ice creams. Don't forget to get dairy free options too if any of your group members have allergies or preferences. A topping bar is essential. Get creative and be generous. Have an assortment of fruits, candies, sauces, and cones.

Spruce it up:

- For float recipes and décor ideas check out: <http://www.oliviascuisine.com/ice-cream-float-bar/>
- Don't be shy about getting creative. Know your small group too. Kombucha? LaCroix? Cold brew coffee? All of these could be great tasting and fun alternatives.

Breakfast Party

Host a breakfast party. Breakfast for dinner is an awesome meal. Don't forget Orange juice, coffee (regular and decaff) and milk. You could also consider various bagels with various cream cheese options, muffins, and other pastries. Don't forget bacon!

Spruce it up:

- Go potluck style with the pastries and drinks
- If you do waffles, pancakes, or French toast, consider having an awesome topping bar.

AROUND TOWN:

Como Zoo/Converatory:

Thanks to the Pearson, White, Kinde Small Group for this one. Consider going to the Como Zoo and or Conservatory.

Spruce it up:

- Consider offering a donation on behalf of your group so members won't feel awkward about donating or not donating or wondering if other members will judge them if they don't donate.
- Plan ahead and go during a time when you can catch an animal show/feeding
- Picnic tables are available on a first-come-first-serve basis in Como Park's West Picnic Grounds, located across Midway Parkway near the Palm Lot parking lot and Como Town. Grassy areas are

also available and approved for picnic use! Food and Beverages are not allowed inside of any buildings unless it's specifically designated for food (like the café area).

- Adult programs are available for \$15 per person
- Kids Programs are also available for \$15 per person. Some kid programming is Free (Little Explorer Thursdays)!
- Group tours of the zoo are available for \$35 per person (takes place before the zoo opens to the public) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSVZ2N23LXE>
- Group tours of the conservatory are available for \$15 per person

Serve at Feed My Starving Children:

The Pearson, White, Kinde Small group went to a packing session at Feed My Starving Children. Afterwards they went out to a restaurant together.

<https://volunteer.fmssc.org/register/site/FindPackingSession.aspx?&l=3&mode=0#.WfscJ2hSxPZ>

Review the FAQ before going and remember to wear closed toed shoes. Volunteers are not allowed to wear jewelry.

Each site is handicap accessible and has sit-down jobs available

Go Bowling

Invite your group bowling (make sure it's something that each of your group members is physically able to do). Reserve a few lanes to next each other if possible/necessary.

Spruce it up:

- Consider going cosmic bowling (This usually takes place after dark with black lights and music)
- Scope out your bowling alley ahead of time to figure out the food and drinks situation

Can Can Wonderland

Check out CanCan Wonderland in St. Paul. It's a place for adults who are kids at heart. Their after 9PM crowd is 21 and older. They have vintage arcade games, ping pong, air hockey, pinball, and more. They also have an artist designed indoor mini golf course, food, and drinks. Definitely check out their website, gather the right info, scope the events section to make sure nothing conflicts, and do your homework!

<https://www.cancanwonderland.com>

Malt-T-Melt

This outdoor golf course also serves malts (and other ice cream treats), coffee, and a small selection of hot food. You can also rent bikes and/or bring your own food.

The Basilica of St. Mary

You might already know: This is the oldest Basilica in America. You can enjoy a self guided tour for free or arrange to have a 15 minute tour from a docent (also free). You can also plan to attend a concert. Go

to www.mary.org and check out the “plan a visit” page. It will definitely be worth it to schedule as sometimes various events might conflict with your plans (like weddings).

Cathedral of St. Paul

Guided tours, approximately one hour in length, are offered at the Cathedral of Saint Paul with a Cathedral docent Tuesday through Friday at 1:00 p.m. (except holy days and civil holidays). A suggested tour donation of \$2 per person is always welcome, and will be used to support the Cathedral. Donations may be made at the Tour Desk in the main church. The tour begins near the front pews and the center aisle of the Cathedral.

Visit the Minneapolis Institute of Art (MIA)

This museum is free and offers free hour long public tours as well. They also have a family center for younger children to burn off some energy and enjoy kid friendly books and toys. There are also private restrooms and nursing rooms available. You can also eat at the café or the restaurant together.

Visit the Walker Art Center

Be sure to plan ahead of time and take advantage of free admission days (if possible) or visit the free sculpture garden (if it's warm enough). You can also check out the artist inspired mini golf (visit the website from pricing info and deals). <https://walkerart.org>

\$3 Movies at Cinema Grill

Check out <https://www.cinmagrill.com/on-screen/> for cheap movies and see if there's something your group would like to watch. Make sure you check out the parents guide to decide if it's appropriate for your people. Cinema Grill also brings food to your table while you watch the movie. How cool is that?

Outdoor:

Bonfire:

This idea was submitted by Ed Idarraga. Have a bonfire with your friends. Build a firepit out of rocks or bricks, buy a firepit, or borrow one from a friend.

Spruce it up:

- Bring Smores supplies and consider bringing extra topping ideas (Peanut butter cups, Nutella, Peanut butter, Cookie dough, chocolate marshmallows, chocolate graham crackers, oreo cookies, etc).
- Have warm drinks. Hot cider, hot chocolate, Hot coffee.
- Decorate: String up lights, hang bunting,
- Don't forget to provide seating and marshmallow roasting sticks!

Picnic at the Park:

This idea comes from Ed Idarraga. Go to a park for a picnic.

Spruce it up:

- Bring plenty of picnic foods (fresh veggie salads, cold pasta salads, fruit salads, chocolate chips, meat on skewers, sandwiches, pretzels, chips, pinwheels and rollups, etc.)
- Bring plenty to drink (water, lemonade, Lacroix, and Sparkling Cider)
- Bring Yard Games (Ladder Toss, Cornhole, Bocce Ball, Croquet, Spikeball, Frisbee, etc).
- Consider bringing a piñata, sand toys, water balloons, or other fun activities for children.

Cookout at the park or at your home:

Go to a park that has grills and pavilions or picnic benches. Scout out your location ahead of time. Waite Park has a lot of grills and picnic benches to utilize. As well as: Baseball Field, Basketball Court, Football Field, Horseshoe Pit, Playground/Tot Lot, Soccer Field, Tennis Court, Sand Volleyball Court, and a Wading pool.

Spruce it up:

- Bring plenty of cook out foods, have guests bring some too!
- Bring drinks
- Bring Charcoal, lighter fluid, a lighter, grill brush, tinfoil, Grilling Utensils, and paper/plasticware
- Consider bringing a piñata, sand toys, water balloons, or other fun activities for children.
- If you do this at home consider bringing yard games (Ladder Toss, Cornhole, Bocce Ball, Croquet, Spikeball, Frisbee, etc).
- Consider inviting people to bring their dogs and bringing dog biscuits and water bowls and leads.

Go For a Hike

This idea comes from Ed Idarraga. Consider going on a hike with your small group. Minnehaha falls might be one option. Or head to Fort Snelling State Park and “Hike the Pike” – a 4 mile hike around Pike Island.

Spruce it up:

- Activities for kids might include a scavenger hunt (a list of things to find and collect in nature: feather, Different shaped rock like a heart or a triangle, acorn, pinecone, mushroom, flowers, moss, etc.) Or hold a competition (who can find the biggest leaf?) or
- Encourage photography
- Go Geocaching! Treasure hunt with your small group using a GPS and coordinates. There’s usually a log that you can sign as well as items that you can take and replace with gifts of your own for the next person. Feel free to google “Geocaching” to find out more!
- Bring bags, trash picker tools, and gloves. You can your small group can spruce up a trail together while you hike!
- Bring fun trail foods like beef jerky, trail mix, and plenty of water!
- Small Group leader, Ed Idarraga, suggests discussions could be included about the habitats of the animals, the indigenous people who lived there, other history and even the geology.

Outdoor Concert

My neighbors in PA invited my wife and I to an outdoor concert complete with beer, cigars, and desserts. We're not suggesting that your small group provides beer and cigars and if you've got an "in" with a local band who would enjoy an opportunity to practice then go for it. At this particular event the band was all instrumental. They played a song and then spent time mingling and hanging out and then they'd play another song.

Spruce it up:

- Charge money for tickets, invite outsiders, and give the proceeds to a charity of your choosing
- Buy CDs from the band to give to each small group member as a way of saying "thanks"
- Skip the local band and ask worship leaders from the church to provide an outdoor worship concert (no guarantee that they'll be available).

Movie on the lawn

The Church has a few projectors. All you'd really need is a sheet to stretch onto the side of your house (or borrow a screen from the church), some blankets for sitting (as well as some lawn chairs) and a laptop, HDMI cable (or other appropriate cable) and a laptop/DVD/Blu-ray Player). Make sure your movie choice is appropriate for your audience.

Spruce it up:

- Bring movie snacks (popcorn, candy, soda) and set up a self-serve table
- Have blankets for people to drape themselves with in case it gets chilly
- Consider having a bonfire

Play Kickball

Make sure each of your members is physically able to do this. Go to a park with a kickball and a baseball diamond and have fun. Encourage people to not take it too seriously. There's going to be a wide range of skills and abilities so the important thing is fun not competition. Make sure the teams are as even as possible. This means don't pick team captains but instead choose teams that you think will be even. If you've chosen teams and they seem unbalanced, feel free to shuffle people around after you assess.