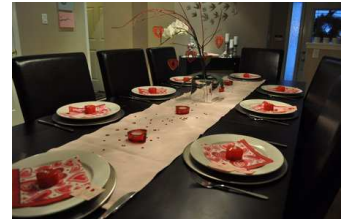


Valentine's...simple but sweet!

Decorating and Dinner ideas adapted from lifeisaparty.ca(Dannielle Nicolle)

A fun Valentine's idea for your women's group where everyone cooks their own meal (pizza) and dessert is from the store or local bakery. Add in a quick trip to the dollar store and you will have everything you need to make your Valentine's Day program a party!

Set up and decorations: Head to your nearest dollar store for a few simple Valentine decorations or maybe you keep a collection of decorations on hand. Set the tables using a pink runner or tablecloth with some fun Valentine's napkins. Make place cards using Valentine's or plain pink paper. Place a chocolate heart or candy filled container on each plate. Use tea lights as centerpieces and sprinkle table with Valentine confetti.



Dinner/Refreshments: Serve veggies and dip and then make your own pizza. Use a mini heart cutter to cut out heart shaped pepperoni. For dessert serve fruit and cream cheese dip and you could pick up a Valentine cake at your local grocery store.



If you want to develop this theme into a full program add these fun idea which are adapted from a program by Major Jessica Bassett, USA Eastern Territory

Sing a long: Songs 43 through 55 in The Salvation Army Song Book focus on love. Choose some of the women's favorites for a time of singing

Games:

Guess the number of valentine's candy in jar.

Musical Hearts: This game is played like musical chairs but the participants stay seated. Pass around a heart (pillow, bean-bag, or cardboard) while the music plays.

Devotion:

Read John 3:16-21

Each February 14 we celebrate Valentine's Day, a day when sweethearts express their love for each other. One story about how this celebration got started concerns a priest by the name of Saint Valentine who lived in the 3rd century when Emperor Claudius II ruled the Roman Empire. The emperor was having a difficult time getting young men to join his military leagues. He believed Roman men did not want to leave their lovers or families and become soldiers so he decreed that no one could get married. Saint Valentine strongly opposed the emperor's edict and secretly married couples. For this, he was condemned, flogged and beheaded. On the day of his execution, he sent a farewell message to the one he loved and signed it, "From your Valentine." This phrase has been used ever since on Valentine's Day.

People search high and low to find love, many times in all the wrong places and in the wrong way. The word love is used so frequently that you wonder if there is any real meaning behind it. Do people really know what love is? There is One who says to each of us, "I love you truly" and really means it. God! There is no question about His love for us. A song found in The Salvation Army Song Book, #48 "God's Love to Me is Wonderful" teaches us just how much He loves us. (Sing this song at this point in the devotional.)

The Scripture read earlier is the greatest love story ever told. Jesus suffered at the hands of sinful men. On our behalf He was flogged, spit upon, stripped of His garment, crowned with thorns and nailed to a cross. The Mel Gibson movie "The Passion of the Christ", available on DVD, shows these events in graphic detail. Christ died for us, not as a group, but individually, as was demonstrated by the plea of the thief on the cross beside Christ. "'Remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' Then Jesus answered him, 'I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in paradise'" (Luke 23:42,43). Christ died for each of us so that we could one day join Him in paradise.

Saint Valentine showed great love as one human for another. Jesus showed divine love, the love of God for all mankind.

Prayers from the heart: Give ladies heart shaped sticky notes and have them write one word love letters to God or prayer concerns and place them on a door or a mirror, etc. Conclude with prayer.

