



## Watch Party Host Training

Thank you for serving as a Watch Party host. Watch Parties are in-home gatherings that will take place all over our city on Sunday. They are spaces where families, neighbors, and friends are welcomed into homes for worship, teaching, fellowship, and sharing a meal.

If you're a little nervous about hosting a Watch Party, rest assured: we're *all* new to this. Our whole church is in an unexplored territory as we worship together in homes across the city. So you don't need to be a watch-party expert. You just need to **love people, worship God, and lead your guests to take the next step.**

### ***Love People***

#### **1. Invite broadly.**

Before the service, invite your family, friends, neighbors, and community to join you to watch the service.. Everyone knows that we are in a unique season and that most churches are not meeting in person. So keep the invitation super simple: “Hey! We’re having a few friends over to watch our worship service on Sunday morning at 10 am. If you’re free, I’d love for you to come join us.”

Don't just invite your Christian family and friends. Use this unique opportunity to invite family and friends who may not otherwise join you for a worship service (because odds are, *they are free*).

#### **2. Welcome warmly.**

It takes some risk for guests to show up at your home. Just a few small steps can go a long way in making them feel at ease. When guests arrive at your home, greet them warmly at the front door. Give them one of the best possible morning time blessings by pouring them a warm cup of coffee. Make sure they have a place to sit and/or stand to worship. And make sure to clean up your space, just like any other time when you're welcoming guests.

But even more than *what* you do to welcome your guests, it's much more important *how* you do it. Above all, focus on welcoming them with the gentleness and kindness of Christ.

## ***Worship God***

### **3. Set up the kids for success.**

If you have kids, or if families with kids attend your Watch Party, then congratulations—your home has now become a MercyKids location. This is an amazing opportunity for the kids in your home to encounter Jesus in a unique way.

If your invitees have children, you can let them know that we have a MercyKids service streaming at 9:15 am. Invite them to join you to watch this service together. Discipleship happens best in relationships, so participate along with the kids in this service — even in the silly things!

When the MercyKids service concludes, invite the kids to join the adults for worship during the main service. Once the sermon starts, use the Lesson Activity Pages and the Growing in Worship note-taking sheets for elementary learners to keep kids engaged in learning. You can access all of these resources on our [MercyKids@Home page](#) by using the **password 2Timothy1:7** (because this is copyrighted material, please do not share these materials or post this password). You can also email Mandy Foster, our MercyKids Director, at [mandy@mercycharlotte.com](mailto:mandy@mercycharlotte.com).

This time can be an incredible boon for true multi-generational, corporate worship. Embrace the presence of children and invite them into the space, just like Jesus did (Luke 18:16).

### **4. Before the service, prepare your guests.**

Preparing your guests for what they should expect during the service will go a long way in breaking down the barriers of intimidation, fear, and discomfort.

If you have someone who is new to church or Jesus, say something like, “Thank you so much for coming. The service will have some songs and a sermon that explain the good news of Jesus. We’ll watch and listen together, and if you have

any questions during the service, don't hesitate to ask! After that, we'd love for you to stick around to eat."

## ***Lead Your Guests to Take the Next Step***

### **5. Continue the conversation over a meal.**

If you have the ability, we would encourage you to host a simple lunch or brunch after the worship service. If you have other Mercy members coming to your Watch Party, feel free to split up the load by having others pick up food from the grocery store or a restaurant (think a COVID-friendly potluck). Use the mealtime to ask your guests good questions about their experience in the worship service:

- What did you think when the pastor said, " ... "?
- Was the worship service similar to what you've seen or experienced before?
- What were your main takeaways from the message?

In addition to questions about the service, if you don't know your guests well, be sure to ask them about their story, background, family, and interests as well.

### **6. Share your testimony and the good news.**

The best gift you can give to your guests is the *gospel*. A simple way to transition into the gospel is to share your testimony over the meal.

Start by telling them **your story**: who were you before Jesus saved you? How did Jesus save you? How has he changed your life since?

Then transition into **God's story: the gospel**. You can use the framework of creation, fall, rescue, and new creation. For more information about how to share your testimony and the gospel, see our [Evangelism Equip guide](#).

### **7. Give them the next step.**

Before your guests leave, help them take the next step. They should walk away from your Watch Party knowing what they should do next in their walk with Jesus and/or commitment to the church. Here are a few options:

a. *Come back next week*

Their next step could be as simple as coming back next week to the Watch Party. If you sense that a guest is hesitant, shy, or afraid — instead of intimidating them, give them a baby step, and simply invite them to come back again. You can also encourage them to bring a friend with them next time.

b. *Repent and believe in Christ*

Your Watch Party could be where God chooses to rescue! If you are sharing the gospel over the meal and sense that the Spirit is moving in the heart of one of your guests, talk to them after the group meal and call them to repent of their sins, believe in Christ, and be saved. In this case, there is a clear next step *after* this step: *baptism*. Email your campus pastor ([rashard@mercycharlotte.com](mailto:rashard@mercycharlotte.com) or [joey@mercycharlotte.com](mailto:joey@mercycharlotte.com)) to let us know.

c. *Join a community group*

It could be that your guests are followers of Jesus that are disconnected from the church. In addition to inviting them to next week's Watch Party, encourage them to join a community group. If your group has the space, welcome them into your own—or you can email [becky@mercycharlotte.com](mailto:becky@mercycharlotte.com) to connect your guest to another group.

## **FAQs**

### **1. How many people should I invite?**

While we recommend Watch Parties between 10-20 people, you can decide the appropriate group size based on your space (also keep in mind the need to maintain some social distancing within your space). If your space can accommodate 20 people, feel free to invite 20 people. Let *hospitality* be your guide—how many people can you lovingly welcome into your home?

## 2. **What if worshipping with my guests is awkward?**

While the goal of Watch Parties is to invite non-Christian friends, family, and neighbors, every Watch Party will look different. Some Watch Parties will include guests who are very familiar with church services. Some Watch Parties will include mostly Mercy members. We hope that *many* Watch Parties are filled with those far from God who would not otherwise attend a worship service.

Your job as a Watch Party host is to help your guests hear the gospel and grow in Christ. This means that, if you have non-Christian friends and family at your Watch Party, it may be *most helpful* for you to simply listen to the worship songs and sermon with them so that you can have a conversation about the service over lunch.

Again, we're all brand new to this space—and there is an abundance of grace for the awkwardness. Do your best, with the Spirit's help, to guide your guests toward the gospel.

## 3. ***Other Questions?***

You're not alone in this! Please do not hesitate to reach out to [joey@mercycharlotte.com](mailto:joey@mercycharlotte.com) with any questions about hosting a Watch Party. We would love to help you host in any way that we can.