



SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS
Affiliated with National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A., Associated
Country Women of the World and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service
SCFCL website: <http://www.scfcl.com>

Leader Training Guide

Feeding Groups at Church

Objective: To safely serve food for groups of people gathered at church functions.

Lesson Overview/Introduction: When church gatherings take place, there are often large numbers of people, large amounts of food, and an inadequate method for controlling food temperature or cross contamination. This lesson will address ways churches may deal with those issues.

Approaches that will result in safer meals are, first, controlling the amount of time perishable foods stay at room temperature and, second, making sure no bacteria are accidentally introduced to any food after it has been prepared and delivered to the church.

Focusing on these three points will help your church meals be as safe as possible.

1. You can prevent bacteria from being introduced to the food by washing hands and making sure the kitchen is clean.
2. You can control the temperature of the food until it is eaten by the church members.
3. You can provide the necessary tools for the safest possible take-out plates.

Point #1 Prevent bacteria from being introduced to the food by washing hands and by making sure the kitchen is clean..

Consider creating a "Meal Committee" at your church if one does not exist. This group of individuals should be responsible for assembling and organizing the food as it is delivered to the church. The less food is handled at church, the less chance for any accidental contamination; so a small meal committee might be a good idea for your church. Everyone on the Meal Committee should understand how and when to properly wash their hands when working with food. Here are the correct steps:

1. Wet your hands with warm water.
2. Use regular or anti-bacterial soap and work up a very sudsy lather. **SCRUB** vigorously over the entire surface of the hand, including between fingers, making sure fingernails are clean. Scrubbing is the key to lifting and dislodging grime and bacteria.
3. Rinse all suds completely away with warm water.
4. Use disposable paper towels to **COMPLETELY** dry hands. Moist hands are more easily recontaminated.

You are now ready to lay bare hands on food **OR** place gloves on hands. Always make sure you wash hands correctly before using gloves.

Gloves are a good choice when used properly. Make sure they are single use, food service gloves and that they are used for **ONE TASK ONLY**, then changed. Here are examples of when

to change gloves: after handling raw meat, after clearing dirty dishes from a table, after handling money, after using cleaners/chemicals of any kind.

Your church kitchen food contact surfaces should be cleaned and sanitized. Any surface where food will touch should be sanitized with either a commercially available sanitizing product or a homemade bleach sanitizer. When using commercially available sanitizers, read the directions carefully. Instructions vary widely from product to product and directions must be followed or the product will not effectively kill bacteria. Some products are combination cleaner and sanitizer. Take special care to follow the directions on these products to ensure a true sanitizing effect.

Directions for making Low Cost, Effective Bleach Sanitizer:

1 teaspoon regular bleach + 1 quart water in a spray bottle with a tight fitting lid. This mixture will remain usable for 1 week. Spritz the surface to be sanitized until moistened then allow to air dry.

Need bulk amounts? 1 tablespoon regular bleach + 1 gallon water can be used for sanitizing dishes, utensils, pots, or other kitchen equipment. Allow items to air dry. Avoid drying with dishtowels (they are notorious for harboring bacteria and often recontaminate dishes).

Point #2 Control the temperature of food when it reaches the church to prevent bacterial growth. When dealing with perishable foods such as meats, eggs, cooked vegetables, or dairy products, it is necessary to keep the temperature COLD (below 40°F) or HOT (above 130°F.) Leaving perishable foods at room temperature more than 2 hours allows time for bacteria to begin growing to high levels. Any perishable food reheated and served hot should be heated to 165°F for safety.

Plan to do the following when food will be held longer than 2 hours before the meal is served:

Keep food in cold storage (40°F or less) and serve it cold.

Keep food in cold storage (40°F or less,) reheat it until it is hot and steamy (165°F) then serve it.

Keep food in hot storage (130°F) and serve it hot.

How to keep food cold (40°F or less) until it is served:

Place foods in the refrigerator. Plan ahead to make as much room as possible in the church refrigerator. Clean out unneeded items so that maximum shelf space is available. Make sure the temperature of the refrigerator is 34-38°F.

Extra Coolers with adequate ice: An adequate supply of coolers with ice can be used to store foods that cannot be placed in the refrigerator. A full cooler keeps items cooler longer. Use plenty of ice or frozen gel packs to nestle around the items placed in the cooler. Ask members to bring in coolers or consider the church purchasing several.

Pans of ice: A plate of food nestled in a bed of ice will adequately chill perishable foods until the meal starts.

How to keep food hot (130°F) until it is served:

Use Available Oven Space: Pre-heat oven on lowest setting and place all racks in oven to accommodate maximum number of food items.

Heated Holding Cabinets: These narrow and tall free-standing, electric units are used to keep food hot. They have many shelves and hold multiple pans of food. These items are food service grade equipment.

Insulated Pan Carriers: These large, WELL INSULATED boxes are designed to keep hot food piping hot for hours. They are non-electric and the same size as very large coolers. These items are food service grade equipment. Cambro is a well known name brand pan carrier.

Coolers: Least expensive option and readily available in most every discount store. Coolers designed with more insulation and tighter fitting lids hold heat the longest. There are two ways to keep food hot in coolers:

Option #1 Clean and scour bricks. Wrap them in aluminum foil and heat them in the oven. Wrap the hot bricks in old clean bath towels (to prevent damage to the cooler) and place them in the bottom of the cooler. Place pans of hot food in the cooler on top of the towel wrapped bricks. Keep the lid of the cooler closed as much as possible for maximum heat maintenance.

Option #2: Pour approximately 3 inches of rapidly boiling water in the bottom of the cooler. Close the lid and allow the cooler to warm. Dump water; fill hot cooler with pans of hot food. Keep lid of the cooler closed as much as possible for maximum heat maintenance.

Crockpots: When kept on the low setting, crockpots maintain the temperature of food adequately (be careful not to overload a circuit with multiple small appliances plugged into a single circuit).

Make sure to use a food thermometer to ensure the temperature of the food is maintained at 130°F or above.

Point #3 Provide the necessary tools for the safest possible take-out plates.

Once the meal is served, church members often want to make to-go plates for themselves or others in the community. Providing Styrofoam hinged lid boxes can make the to-go plates less prone to contamination during transit. Another option includes providing adequate overwrap (plastic wrap or aluminum foil) for disposable plates.

Also, consider providing plenty of markers for labeling to help members avoid the danger of leaving their plate unrefrigerated too long. Or, use pre-printed labels that include information such as: "Refrigerate immediately. Eat or discard within 3-5 days."

Lesson Summary: Food left without temperature control for extended periods of time is at high risk for growing large amounts of bacteria and causing foodborne illness. Food handled by large numbers of people is prone to contamination. Food is safest when kept at the correct temperature and handled by the fewest people with the cleanest hands in the cleanest kitchens.

Suggested Activities:

Calibrate thermometers- Using thermometers to ensure food is at the correct serving temperature is a smart idea. To make sure your thermometer gives a true reading, it should be calibrated periodically. Here's how: Fill a 1-quart container with a 50/50 slush of water and ice (crushed ice is best.) Place the probe of the thermometer in the slush and wait 30 seconds for a final reading. If the thermometer does not register 32°F, do one of the following while holding the probe in the ice water:

For DIGITAL thermometers, press the reset button if there is one. Otherwise, change the battery. For BI-METALLIC thermometers, grip the face of the thermometer and turn the calibration nut at the very top of the probe (under the dial readout.) As the nut turns, the readout needle will turn. Adjust the temperature to 32°F.

Proper Handwashing with Glo-Germ Supplies- Fluorescent powder or lotion plus a blacklight can be used to demonstrate "germs" on hands. Most Food Safety Extension agents have these supplies. Check with your local agent to find out if the supplies are available for loan. Sprinkle powder or rub in lotion on hands. View hands under the blacklight (in a dark closet or dark room) to see the quantity of bacteria that can build up on hands over the course of a day if hands are unwashed. Alternatively, allow one person to sprinkle their hands and then shake hands with other members to demonstrate the ease of how contamination spreads from hand to hand contact. Follow these activities with proper handwashing and view hands under the blacklight again to see if any traces of "bacteria" remain.

Suggested Materials: <http://www.scdhec.gov/administration/library/ML-025206.pdf>

http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/food/food_safety/handling/hgic3540.html

http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/food/food_safety/handling/hgic3544.html

http://www.foodsafety.wisc.edu/consumer/fact_sheets/Cleaners_Sanitizers.pdf

Lesson Prepared by: Rhonda Matthews, County Extension Agent & SCFCL Foothills District Advisor, Clemson University

Lesson Review by: Kimberly A. Baker, MS, RD, LD - Food Safety Associate; Food2Market - A Food Entrepreneur Assistance Program, Clemson University, kabaker@clemson.edu
Dr. Susan Barefoot, Professor Emerita & Extension Program Team Leader Food Safety and Nutrition, Clemson University, sbrft@clemson.edu

Sources/References: <http://www.scdhec.gov/administration/library/ML-025206.pdf>

http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/food/food_safety/handling/hgic3540.html

http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/food/food_safety/handling/hgic3544.html