



# Habitat Gingerbread House

This is a good holiday activity that encourages creativity. It also provokes thoughts in participants' minds about their homes and how the holidays would be different if they did not have the homes they do.

## Setup:

- Make sure the participants bring a ½-pint carton to make their house. Have a couple on hand in case someone forgets to bring one.

\*Note: A school cafeteria may be a good place to look for a large amount of empty ½-pint cartons.

- Make sure the participants bring a 1'x1' cardboard or wood base for their house. Have a couple extra on hand in case someone forgets to bring one. (See pictures on next page for an example house.)

## Materials:

- Cardboard or wood (about 1'x1') for each participant
- Aluminum foil (to cover cardboard or wood)
- Clean and empty ½-pint milk carton for each participant
- 3 1/2 full graham crackers for each participant (A full graham cracker can be broken up into 4 sections.)
- Icing or frosting
- Toothpicks
- Marshmallows and a few bags of preferred candy for decorating

## Activity Steps:

- Instruct the participants to cover the cardboard or wood base with the aluminum foil and help them if needed.
- Completely open the top of the milk carton to make sure it is completely clean. Tape the top back together to make the roof shape. The outline of the milk carton should resemble a pentagon or home plate.
- Using the frosting to secure the milk carton to the base.
- Attach half graham cracker sections with frosting to each of the four sides of the milk carton for the walls of the house.
- Break 1 ½ whole graham crackers into quarters. Use these to make the roof using frosting. Each side of the roof will be composed of three-quarter sections of graham cracker. The roof should resemble a wedge shape when complete.
- Decorate the house and the base with the candy and frosting.

\* Note: Use the graham crackers to make fences for the front. The toothpicks and marshmallows can be used to make snowmen.

### **Additional Activities:**

- The completed houses could be auctioned or raffled off with the proceeds going to the local Habitat for Humanity affiliate, Habitat for Humanity International or an international affiliate. This event could also be coordinated with the affiliate in your area.
  - Local Habitat Affiliate - [www.habitat.org/local](http://www.habitat.org/local)
  - Habitat for Humanity International - [www.habitat.org/donation](http://www.habitat.org/donation)
  - International Habitat Affiliate - [www.habitat.org/intl](http://www.habitat.org/intl) to find a country and then designate that when you give at [www.habitat.org/donation](http://www.habitat.org/donation)
- Have a contest for the most creative/colorful/festive house. For fun, have someone from the affiliate or Habitat for Humanity homeowner judge.
- Donate the houses to local Habitat for Humanity affiliate homeowners or volunteers. This would require the collaboration of the local Habitat for Humanity affiliate.
- Give them away as holiday gifts to family or friends and talk about Habitat for Humanity as well.

# Pictures of Finished Houses

Habitat for Humanity Gingerbread House



# Discussion Questions

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During the activity help lead a discussion about housing with your group of youth. The following questions will help focus their attention and facilitate a useful discussion. Feel free to pick and choose questions or add any others in order to make the activity more personalized for your group.

- Did those words or images remind you of anything else?

\*Note: The images or words may remind them of another time they used teamwork. This question is reflective and everyone might not be able to or feel comfortable answering it.

- How do you decorate your house for the holidays?
- What is something special that your family or friends do during the holiday season?
- How would you feel if your home was half the size it is now or if you had to share it with another family? How would this change your holidays?
- What makes your house special to you?
- How do you think people who receive Habitat for Humanity homes feel about their homes?

\*Note: Discuss sweat equity and interest free mortgage. Homeowners actually put in hundreds of hours on someone else's house before they start building their own home. Homeowners pay for the materials to build their home but not the labor, since they build it themselves, and then they receive an interest-free mortgage. This makes the homes more affordable for Habitat for Humanity home recipients.