Las Posadas

A Handbook For Churches
Created by Fiesta Cristiana
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction: It’s a Party!</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background: What is Las Posadas?</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How we got started at Apex/Fiesta Cristiana</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Basic Outline of Activities</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Suggested Schedule</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembling Needed Resources</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Music</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Musicians</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Costumes</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Battery-powered Candles</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Piñatas</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Publicity</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Organizing Volunteers</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Preparing Las Posadas Kits</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Resources (Internet, Books)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Press Release</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample News Article</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample FAQs for the Church</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Poster/Advertising Slide</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Newspaper Add</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Lesson Plans</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Songbook</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction: It’s a Party!

In the beginning was Las Posadas!

Indeed, the story of Fiesta Cristiana, the Spanish speaking faith community of Apex United Methodist Church in Apex NC, started in 2008 with Las Posadas celebrations. Since then, Las Posadas has been celebrated faithfully at Apex United Methodist Church by our Spanish-speaking members along with our English speaking members and others in the Apex community. Families with their children assemble each night for nine nights to anticipate the birth of Jesus Christ.

To guide others outside of Apex to have as much fun as we have had with this Advent celebration, we have assembled this handbook. It contains an outline of activities and resources for churches, families, and other small groups. It is free of charge, and may be reproduced without permission.

This Las Posadas handbook is just one way to help bring together people of different backgrounds, cultures and languages. From church fellowship halls to family dinner tables, this is a wonderful and practical way to get involved in making North Carolina a more welcoming place for all of us who live here.

During these last 5 years of over 50 celebrations, we have discovered that Las Posadas is all about practicing hospitality in an atmosphere of celebration. In practical terms, it’s fun for children, it’s great food, it’s making new friends. In theological terms, it reminds us that Advent is about a God who reaches out radically to all of us in the incarnation.

We hope that this toolkit will help other churches, whether they are ready to begin coordinating a Las Posadas celebration this year or in the years to come. We would especially like to thank all of the host families who over the years have opened their homes to set an example of hospitality.

*Jose Luis Villaseñor* (Pastor) and *Janet Portzer* (Lay Member)
Fiesta Cristiana, November 2013
Updated November 2014
Background: What is Las Posadas?

Posadas originated in Spain and was later brought to the New World. In Mexico, Las Posadas is celebrated for nine days, from December 16th through the 24th. Las Posadas commemorates the difficult journey of Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem as they looked for a place to rest. The word “posada” means refuge or inn.

Traditionally, the Posada celebration takes place in a home or in various homes. At each house, Mary and Joseph ask for refuge through a song. The pilgrims traveling with Mary and Joseph sing with them. Initially, the innkeepers refuse the Holy Family because they don’t recognize them.

Finally, the innkeepers recognize Joseph, the carpenter from Nazareth, and his wife Mary, the future mother of the “Divine Word” and they welcome them inside. Demonstrating hospitality at its finest, the innkeepers hold a party that includes time to socialize, eat, and break a piñata filled with trinkets and sweets.

While Las Posadas is celebrated in many different ways today, the theme of hospitality remains vital. Some communities celebrate all nine traditional days, while others opt for one, or two or more nights that symbolize the entire event. For some communities Las Posadas will be entirely in Spanish, while others will use multiple languages. Some churches have embarked on a Posadas celebration to help connect with new Latino neighbors.
How we got started at Apex/Fiesta Cristiana

When we started researching the Mexican tradition of celebrating the nine days before Christmas, we had no one who had experience with Las Posadas, but we wanted to attract families of Mexican and other Hispanic heritage to our church. Today our congregation is made up of Spanish-speaking people from more than 10 countries, joined together to share celebrating this Advent tradition with our English-speaking congregations and other members of our community.

TIPS:

If Las Posadas is new to you, we suggest Googling “Las Posadas.” YouTube is another great source, especially for Posadas music.

Perhaps you will be lucky and have people in your community or congregation who grew up celebrating Las Posadas. You will likely rekindle warm memories when you call on them for advice on how to celebrate.

A Basic Outline of Activities

You can celebrate just one night of Las Posadas or follow the tradition and celebrate every night from December 16th through December 24th. You may choose to celebrate the 9th night in a more traditional Christmas Eve service.

At Apex UMC, we have celebrated in different ways on different years, depending on the number of volunteers, other activities on the same nights, and the interests of our varied participants.

Our best combination has been one or more “Community Posadas” where everyone from our community celebrates a night together including a potluck format for the food. We have had good experiences partnering with community organizations to hold the party at their location, with caroling through the Apex downtown.

For the other eight nights, individual families or groups of families and friends have their own Posadas activities in their own neighborhoods. Their celebrations can either be advertised to the church community as a whole or be “invitation only” events, depending on their preferences and the physical limits of their party space.

Although Las Posadas have traditionally focused on children and families, we have typically had adult participants as well. We have even had “adults only” Las Posadas celebrations.
A Suggested Schedule

*Suggested schedule to include young children. (If you celebrate all nine nights, you will be out on many school nights.)*

6:00 pm. Participants assemble in a church hall or other facility to dress in costumes to depict the participants in the Nativity. *See costumes, page 13.*

The musicians also assemble, warm up, and decide where to store instrument cases. *See music and musicians, pages 10-12.*

Each participant collects a battery-operated candle and a song sheet. The evening’s leader explains the schedule, where the group is headed, and emphasizes safety considerations.

6:30 pm. Walk or car pool to the host location. In the Mexican tradition, you might move from house to house in one neighborhood, asking for shelter at a series of homes before being admitted to the “inn.”

At Apex, we sing Christmas carols at neighborhood houses or shops, but then do all our pleading for shelter at one house. We are finally invited into the same house. This simplifies planning and is still lots of fun. Every night is slightly different with adjustments made to ensure that everyone is safe, depending on traffic and lighting, and also on the weather, which in central North Carolina can be warm or freezing, rainy, snowy, or even icy.
6:45 pm. The hosts will gather inside the host location, and the costumed visitors or pilgrims gather outside the location. If caroling or a street parade is involved, the pilgrims will gather first at the beginning location and sing a variety of favorite carols. *See Music, page 10.*

After arriving as a group at the host location, the pilgrims knock and sing the first verse of *Las Posadas Navideñas.* Then the prospective hosts and their friends answer. We typically sing in Spanish but give the words in English to our participants so everyone understands.

Because the six verses can take a long time – 12 verses when you count the response from the hosts – we typically sing verses 1, 2, 5, and 6, especially when it is cold or rainy outside.

7:00 pm. The hosts open their doors and the song changes to *Entren, Santos Peregrinos,* which is sung repeatedly, faster and faster each time, until all the pilgrims are inside.

The candles, song sheets and costumes are collected. Everyone’s outer wear is removed and temporarily stored. As soon as everyone is ready, a short, participatory lesson for children is conducted, usually using a small nativity to act out the story.

Typically we talk about why Mary and Joseph are traveling for nine nights, and what we are looking forward to on Christmas Eve. We may talk about the stable and the animals, the shepherds and the Magi and what it all represents to us today.

We also emphasize a theme, and sometimes the children do a little artwork to help them remember hospitality, welcoming strangers, hope, love, or depending on the maturity of the group, aliens and immigration. Each lesson is accompanied by a short Bible verse and a small handout to emphasize the evening’s lesson.

Sometimes our hosts read a children’s book with many photos, or these use the lesson we provide. *See lesson samples in the Appendix at the end of this handbook.*

7:15 pm. Participants line up for drinks and snacks. Hosts may cook in their own family tradition or experiment with making traditional Mexican Posadas dishes including ponche, antojitos, and tamales. *See Volunteer Food Preparers for food ideas, page 18.*
7:45 pm. The climax of the evening for the children is breaking the piñata. Depending on the size of the crowd and the location, we sometimes have two piñatas, filled with candy. See Assembling Needed Resources/Piñatas, page 15.

We encourage the children to line up in order of size, and we let the little ones go first. The very small children do not wear the blindfold.

What works well in a small space is to put a tarp on the ground or floor under the piñata where the candy will fall. One adult supervises the blindfolded child with the stick or small bat while another adult moves the piñata up and down as each child swings. At least one other adult is needed to make sure the rest of the children stay out of range of the stick, generally making sure the hilarity does not get out of hand.

These adults can also help when the piñata spills, helping the older children share the candy with the younger ones, and encouraging all the children to pick up the broken piñata pieces and candy wrappers.

8:00 pm. The hosts are thanked and everyone departs except the hosts’ clean up crew who help put the home/other location back in order and return the candles, costumes, and song sheets.
TIPS:

Every year is a bit different, depending on the weather and how the calendar falls, when school vacation starts, what other community activities are taking place.

We like to have a “community” potluck posada at the local arts center on a Friday night.

We often have the "ultima posada," the ninth night, celebrated at church on Christmas eve.
Assembling Needed Resources

Our first advice is to plan ahead. We often recruit volunteers in September, order costumes and other materials in October, begin publicity in November, and set musical rehearsals to begin right after Thanksgiving.

a. Music

i. Pick a number of carols to sing. At Apex, we like *Al Mundo Paz/Joy to the World, Noche de Paz/Silent Night* and *Angeles Cantando Estan/Angels We Have Heard on High*. If we have time, we also sign *Venid Fieles Todos/O Come, All Ye Faithful*. These “old favorites” are known by many in both languages and are typically in hymn books and song books. Your church musicians can tell you how your organization handles the musical copyrights.

We print the words for the carols in English and Spanish in our evening handout, which we include in the *Las Posadas Kits (see page 16)* and try to recycle/reuse on each night we celebrate.

We have also tried to do multiple verses of the carols, which can work if you have enthusiastic and/or talented singers and there is enough light to see the words.

We sometimes do different carols on different nights, depending on the skills of our musicians, the preferences of our participants, the host location, and the temperature outside.

ii. The two traditional Posadas songs are *Las Posadas Navideñas* and *Entren, Santos Peregrinos*. *See the Appendix for details.*
Las Posadas
Entren, santos peregrinos

We initially learned these songs by listening to them on YouTube. The first takes a bit more practice than the second which is short and sung multiple times with the same words.

We recommend a rehearsal or two with your musicians (see below) and some key song leaders who can then teach the rest of your participants.

We also have had fun on each of the nine nights as we assemble and put on costumes with a casual singing session to teach everyone the songs.

b. Musicians

Depending on the musical skill of your community, you have various options:
i. Guitar players are probably the best, because they can usually walk and strum and the instruments are not as susceptible to low temperatures.

If the guitarists can read music play directly out of the hymn book/song book or play by ear, you are in luck. At Apex, our guitar players often prefer to play the carols in the key of C, making the chords easier in the cold and dark.

We recruit several guitar players for each night, for camaraderie and to have a player at each side or end of our pilgrim group so everyone can hear the music, especially when we have a very large group or a group that is strung out down a sidewalk. More experienced players help newer players. With multiple players, we do not have to worry if someone gets sick or has too much homework on school nights and suddenly cannot participate.

ii. We have also had great success with violins, saxophones, and a variety of brass instruments providing the music. We have had one of church musicians transpose both the carols and the Posadas songs. However, when the night is very cold, music making is hard work, especially for the brass.

iii. Recorded music works well, too, especially if there are not sufficient musicians on nights when your community has several Posadas parties or when your musicians all get the flu!

iv. Don’t forget that you need music at the host house as well as with the pilgrims. We have found recorded music is easy to use inside and gives the hosts confidence as they turn on the volume on their speakers so the pilgrims outside can hear them.
c. Costumes

**TIPS:**

We began by borrowing costumes from our church's drama department.

As well as a good supply of angel wings for the little ones, we also got larger, adult costumes that are more apt to fit over winter jackets.

We recommend having plenty of rope belts to use to "hike up" the longer costumes on shorter participants.

Our best supply for inexpensive costumes is Oriental Trading Company. Their costumes are stretch so they fit many sizes of participants. Don't forget to check with your education department – they may have an account so you can get free shipping.

Many of our participants are happy just to wear a hat, so we've purchased multiple halos, donkeys and even reindeer hats.

We have made many shepherd hats, too, by purchasing cloth and tearing it into the right size head coverings with ties – no sewing required! These costumes are the easiest but in our experience not as popular with the children.
A good source for inexpensive king hats, to be worn by both girls and boys, is Oriental Trading Company. We have also tried more “authentic” Magi hats, but the children relate best to the shiny gold crowns.

We also pay no attention to how many kings or shepherds or angels we have; we let the children decide what they want to wear. Year in and year out, angels and kings are the favorites. We recruit a Mary and Joseph to lead the procession and find that our adults are happy to help us out here. We also recruit someone to be a donkey and another person to be an angel to accompany the Holy Family ahead of the crowd. Many times we have had a mix of ages in these roles!

Make sure to plan plenty of time for the children to make up their minds on which costume to wear. Don’t be surprised if they can’t decide or change their minds after you work hard to get them perfectly situated!

Also don’t be surprised if anyone doesn’t want to wear a costume. We welcome participants no matter how they wish to participate.

d. Battery-powered Candles

**TIPS:**

We buy these at the local dollar store.

Plan that they will get dropped by young and older alike and be sure to stock extra batteries.

Make sure that your cleanup crew unscrews the bulbs at the end of the evening to preserve the batteries.

Depending on how much caroling you intend to do, or on how far your parking is from your host’s location, you may also want to encourage adults to bring flashlights, or to provide them to your adult participants.
e. Piñatas

**TIPS:**

We buy our piñatas either from a local woman who makes them by hand, or from the local Hispanic food store.

Any kind of piñata will do, but we prefer the traditional 7-star variety used in Mexico at Las Posadas.

The children love to collect the candies in the points of the star when they are knocked off the piñata base.

The biggest challenge with piñata breaking is finding a high place to hang them. When we’re at a home, we use trees or string a heavy rope.

We have also had good luck in public buildings using tall step ladders, with an adult standing on each ladder, each holding the rope from which the piñata hangs.
The store where you buy the piñatas may also have special sticks for breaking the piñatas, or you can improvise with a small wood branch, a cutoff broom handle, or a specially cut stick. You can also reuse your piñata sticks every night and every year.

Be sure to recruit enough adults to organize and blindfold the children, to raise and lower the piñata rope, and to keep the waiting children from getting in the way of the wildly swinging piñata stick. Older youth are great helper with breaking the piñatas but still need an adult to organize them and supervise.

f. Publicity

TIPS:

We make sure our Las Posadas activity (December 16 – 24) gets on the church calendar early every year, so when the Advent and Christmas publicity begins, Las Posadas are there too.

We also assemble Fact Sheets with the particulars for the current year and distribute those at a variety of church activities, also making them available on our website, starting in November. We
find our FAQs are particularly helpful to our Anglo participants who are not familiar with the custom of Posadas, but we make the FAQs available in Spanish, too.

We have found that our local newspapers are really great at providing a reporter and photographer and covering at least one of our nightly celebrations, and we have also had good luck providing stories and photos in news releases to the smaller weekly papers.

We also send out emails to our congregation close to the event, so people can make impromptu plans to attend, based on the weather and their children’s homework load.

We also encourage the people who regularly attend our celebrations to bring their friends and families.

We have enjoyed creating posters to be displayed at the library, the local art center, and the Latino groceries. Our community partners have publicized Las Posadas in their own media.

See samples in the Appendix at the end of this handout.

g. Organizing Volunteers

i. Hosts

The hosts are responsible for:

• securing a location for the party and a few friends and family members to sing the Posadas songs when the pilgrims approach, begging for lodging
• doing the lesson or recruiting someone to do it
• providing the food, usually with the help of volunteers
• obtaining and hanging the piñata
• running the piñata breaking or recruiting volunteers to do it
• cleaning up and returning the Las Posadas kits to the organizers for use on another night

TIPS:

We have found that the size of the house does not matter although sometimes small groups have hosted their evening’s event in the church fellowship hall and that works well, too. We have had teen classes celebrate Las Posadas during Sunday School. For many years one of our preschool classes also dedicated one of their class days to Las Posadas. We have also taught the tradition of Las Posadas at public schools.
Another way we have shared the tradition with great results by distributing Posadas Kits *(see below)* and the hosts conduct the event as they wish. Perhaps the events vary in their authenticity but we know that the important part is to anticipate the birth of our Lord and Savior, and to appreciate the journey of Mary and Joseph.

Some years we have many more hosts than Posada nights, so we can have more than one celebration each night.

**ii. Food Preparers**

We have had every variety of food and food preparers, with some families sharing the responsibility with another family, or when at larger events, we ask everyone to bring a dish to share.

Our families with Mexican heritage have enjoyed providing ponche and tamales and on a few occasions even buñuelos (the quintessential posada dessert). Our Anglo families have enjoyed trying out Mexican dishes, either with recipes from local cooks or from those they have found on the web.

Families of Hispanic heritage with no history of a Posadas celebration have provided dishes from their own native countries and in the process, they have shared how Christmas was celebrated when they were young. **TIPS:**

Meatballs, hotdogs, cheese & crackers, fruits and vegetables, all work really well, specially when the children are often too excited to eat if they know there is piñata candy to come.

A dessert is typical. Simple is good. We have enjoyed red and green Oreo cookies and diet Coke.

**iii. Pilgrim Leaders**

Someone must take charge each night, organizing the pilgrims as they get their supplies, put on their costumes, and get directions for the night’s destination home or other facility.

This individual or small team can also make sure all the supplies are collected, including costumes, at the end of the night for use the next night or year.

**iv. Musicians**

See the notes on page 10 and 11 about music. Musicians are critical to the evening’s success.

**v. Publicity**

These roles could be played by several volunteers.
**TIPS:**
In addition to before the event publicity, you’ll want to have some take photos each night.

You may want to assemble the photos and publish a report for your church/group after the event.

**vi. Administrative Support**

Be prepared by planning staff time or recruiting volunteers for buying supplies, making copies, assembling Posada Kits (below), publishing the nightly schedule, managing unexpected events like inclement weather.

**h. Preparing Las Posadas Kits**

We have typically assembled “posadas kits” to distribute to hosts who expect to run their own Posada celebration, what we call in Spanish a “Posadita” (a little posada). Each kit is designed for about 30 people.

Knowing how many kits and how many people to anticipate is the hardest part of the planning. Sometimes we have to collect kits from nights earlier in the celebration to use later in the celebration, and we have been known to make emergency trips to the local dollar store for more batteries.

The kits include:

- A variety of costumes including hats and robes
- Song sheets with carols and the two Las Posadas songs, all in English and Spanish
- Battery-powered candles and flashlights
- Suggestions for the evening’s lesson
- A CD of the songs so your host family can practice

**TIPS:**
Host families during community events also receive a kit so that they can learn the music and have everything that they need to participate of the celebration.
Other Resources

INTERNET
There are all kinds of good resources online. Just Google “Las Posadas.” YouTube is a great source for music, particularly.

Both songs are on this YouTube site: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6nwzpI-6UE

BOOKS
We have chosen stories from this collection of children’s picture books for nightly lessons.

- *Room for a Little One – A Christmas Tale* by Martin Waddell, copyright 2004 (English)
- *A Baby is Coming, Un niñito viene* by Daphna Flegal, copyright 1996 (English and Spanish)
- *Carlos, Light the Farolito* by Jean Ciavonne, copyright 1995 (English)

These picture books explain the Las Posadas celebration for children.

- *Las Posadas* by Jennifer Gillis, copyright 2002 (Spanish)
- *Las Posadas – A Hispanic Christmas Celebration* by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith, copyright 1991 (English)
- *The Night of Las Posadas* by Tomie dePaola, copyright 1999 (English)
Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[DATE]

Old Tradition Becomes New in [CITY]

For the first time this year, the [CITY] community will celebrate [HOW LONG? NINE DAYS, ONE NIGHT, ETC.] of Las Posadas, locally sponsored by [YOUR CHURCH].

This year for the first time, the Latino community in [CITY] will do the same. Beginning [DATE] and continuing each evening for [NUMBER] days, they will conduct a “walking Christmas pageant” in downtown [CITY]. Both Latinos and non-Latinos from [YOUR CHURCH], and the wider community will be participating.

Children dressed in the roles of Mary, Joseph, the angels, and even a donkey will reenact the Christmas story of Mary’s and Joseph’s difficult journey to Bethlehem. The children and the accompanying adults will sing Christmas carols as they walk to a near-by house, seeking shelter. Each night ends with a party, celebrating the new-found lodging or “posada” for the parents-to-be. Traditional foods and piñatas for the kids are part of each gathering. Six of the eight host families are Latino.

“This is a chance for [YOUR CHURCH] to celebrate this special season together with the many Latinos in the church’s immediate neighborhood,” explains [PASTOR’S LAST NAME]. [GIVE ONE OR TWO SENTENCES ABOUT WHY YOUR CHURCH IS INVOLVED. EG: The Posadas ritual is one that we’ve been looking forward to for a number of reasons. It tells the Christian story, and by some accounts dates back 500 years to the time of the Spanish conquest of Mexico. Also, it’s a great time to focus on hospitality. In the posada tradition, everyone who knocks on the door is welcomed into the home.] In addition to Las Posadas, the church hosts computer classes for Latino families, English as a Second Language classes, and a Latina women’s group.

[MAKE IT PERSONAL:] “I’m originally from El Salvador myself,” notes [PASTOR’S LAST NAME]. “So organizing Las Posadas is new to me, too. But we’ve had great response from the students who attended our computer and ESL classes. Many of our students will be leading us, sharing their traditions.”

[OFFER KEY DETAILS, INCLUDING DATES AND TIMES:] [YOUR CHURCH’S] new Christmas celebration begins nightly in the church parking lot at [TIME] December 16th through December 23rd. Services on December 24th in Spanish begin at 5 p.m. in the church’s sanctuary.

Contact: [FULL CONTACT INFO HERE, INCLUDING CELL PHONE IF POSSIBLE]
Sample News Article

Newcomers' old ways welcome

By Yonat Shimron - Staff Writer (Raleigh News & Observer)

APEX -- Not being the aggressive type, Mary stood back while Joseph, a few angels and an errant Wise Man knocked on the door. "In the name of heaven, I beg you for lodging," the group was taught to say.

But on the first evening of Las Posadas, the rite in which the Gospel theme of "no room at the inn" is recreated, there was a bit of chaos, and the lines got muddled. It's hard to corral about 50 children of all ages to play their parts, especially in a ritual that's new to most of them. Fortunately, many of these children will have a chance to do it again.

For nine nights, Apex United Methodist Church will hold festivities recreating the trials of Mary and Joseph in their quest to find a place to stay before Jesus was born. Las Posadas is a widely celebrated Mexican tradition, and with more Mexicans living in the Triangle, the church's Latino ministry decided to try institute the tradition.

"We've been trying to send a message to the Latino community that they are not only welcome, they are welcome as they are, with their traditions," said the Rev. Jose Luis Villasenor, pastor for community and Latino ministries at Apex United Methodist.

At a posada this week, about 80 mostly Hispanic adults and children arrived at a designated house clutching electric candles, flashlights and a printed script. They begged for refuge from the cold and were initially denied. But unlike in the Gospel story, the host relented and welcomed them inside for food and fellowship.

Sixteen church families agreed to host parties for the "pilgrims" this year, double the number of volunteers from last year. That's a lot of partying but also an opportunity to internalize the Christmas story. "My children have been prepping for this for an entire month," said Norma Corpus of Apex, whose son dressed as a Wise Man and daughter, as an angel.

Three years ago, members of Apex United Methodist decided they wanted to stay in downtown Apex instead of building a larger facility farther out. Soon afterward, the congregation hired Villasenor - a native of El Salvador and a graduate of Duke Divinity School - and set about building a bridge to the burgeoning Hispanic community, many of whom had taken up residence around the white clapboard church.
Sample News Article (continued)

For more than a year, the church has been offering ESL and computer literacy classes, plus an adult Bible study and a children's music program. Three months ago, it started monthly services in Spanish. More than 170 people attended in November.

The Las Posadas ritual was one Villasenor wanted to try for a number of reasons. It tells the Christian story, and by some accounts dates back 500 years to the time of the Spanish conquest of Mexico. Also, Villasenor liked its focus on hospitality. In the posada tradition, everyone who knocks on the door is welcomed into the home.

"We're still growing in our understanding as to what it means to welcome one another," Villasenor said. "Some people are willing to take the risk and open their doors." At Wednesday night's posada, adults mingled, eating pupusas, a pancake made of cornmeal and stuffed with cheese, beans or ham. Meanwhile, children whacked an outdoor piñata.

Salvador Padilla, an Apex mechanic who attended Wednesday, said that in Mexico, the best posadas are those held in the countryside. Many of those country dwellings are very humble, and it is therefore common for Mexicans to see the posada as a symbol. "The posada," he said, "is your heart."

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FAMILY OF FAITH COMMUNITIES
POTLUCK LAS POSADAS
Friday, Dec. 20 (6:00-8:00 p.m.)
Meet at 6:00 p.m.
at: Apex UMC Discipleship Center
100. S Hughes St. • Apex, NC
Travel at 6:30 p.m.
to: The Halle Cultural Arts Center
237 N. Salem St. • Apex, NC
Bring a dish to share
(sweets, cookies, cheeses, chips & dips, etc.)

Join Us For Other Community and Potluck Las Posadas Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>Meet at 6 p.m. at:</th>
<th>Travel at 6:30 p.m. to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, Dec 16</td>
<td>100 S. Hughes St. Apex, NC (Discipleship Center 300)</td>
<td>914 Towhee Drive Apex NC 27502</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Dec 18</td>
<td><strong>Potluck Las Posadas at 1st Cary UMC:</strong> 117 S Academy St, Cary, NC 27511 <em>(Meet at 5:30pm)</em></td>
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<td>Saturday, Dec 21</td>
<td>100 S. Hughes St. Apex, NC (Discipleship Center 300)</td>
<td>1015 Seagram St. Apex NC 27502</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td><strong>Potluck Las Posadas at Peak UMC:</strong> 1200 N. Salem St. Apex, NC (Meet at</td>
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WHAT HAPPENS DURING LAS POSADAS?
Las Posadas recreates the Gospel theme of “no room at the inn” (Luke 2: 7). Through Posadas, a group of pilgrims will dramatize Mary’s and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem and their quest to find shelter before Jesus was born. There are angels, shepherds and even a donkey as part of the traditional procession. Participants will be invited to live into the Gospel message of welcoming the stranger.

WHERE DO I GO?

COMMUNITY LAS POSADAS EVENTS (HOSTED AT A DESIGNATED HOME):

- On December 16th, 21st, and 23rd, participants will gather at the Apex UMC’S Discipleship Center (100 S. Hughes St. Apex NC 27502) starting at 6:00 p.m. From there, they will caravan in vehicles to a designated house where the Posada will be held.

POTLUCK LAS POSADAS EVENTS:

- For the Potluck Las Posadas, December 20th, participants with gather at the Apex UMC’s Discipleship Center starting at 6:00 p.m. This night we will process to the Halle Culture Arts Center on Salem Street in downtown.
- For the Potluck Las Posadas, December 18th at First Cary UMC, participant will gather at 1st Cary’s fellowship hall (117 S Academy St, Cary, NC 27511) starting at 5:30 p.m.
- For the Potluck Las Posadas, December 22nd at Peak UMC, participants will gather at the Peak (1200 N. Salem St, Apex, NC 27502) starting at 6:00 p.m.
- For the Last Night of Las Posadas, December 24th, participants will gather at the Apex UMC’S Discipleship Center starting at 6:00 p.m. This night will be a candlelight service, with music and a potluck Christmas dinner.

WHO IS INVITED?
All Community Posadas and Potluck Posadas celebrations are open to everyone. Families enjoy being able to bring their children and friends from out of town to the celebration.

HOW MANY PEOPLE COME?
Normally 30-60 people attend, although some nights can draw even more people. A lot depends on the weather, day of the week and the number of people the host family has invited to come.
DO I HAVE TO SIGN UP?
No sign up is necessary. If you would like you can let organizers know you are coming by sending an email to: joseluis.villasenor@fcapex.org However, this is totally optional.

WHAT TYPE OF FOOD IS PREPARED?
Expect to be surprised and to try new foods. Traditionally, in Mexico people have tamales and “ponche” drink. Locally, families serve food typical of their country. It is also coming to have appetizers like sweets, cookies, cheeses, chips, etc.

SHOULD I BRING FOOD?
For Community Posadas this is not a requirement. However, if you do want to bring food to share please contact the host family ahead of time. For the Posadas Potluck bringing food is part of the celebration and strongly encouraged.

WILL THERE BE TIME TO PRAY AND/OR HAVE A SPECIAL LESSON?
Yes. As people enter the home singing, they will meet for a short lesson and prayer.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE WEATHER IS BAD?
We will follow the church rules for bad weather. To find out whether we’ve had to cancel, call the church at 362-7807.

IF I HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS, WHO CAN I CONTACT?
José Luis Villaseñor. (919) 362-7807 Ext. 294. Joseluis.Villasenor@fcapex.org
En Esta “Navidad”
CELEBRE LAS POSADAS

16-24 DE DICIEMBRE
6 - 8 P.M. APEX, NC

ww.fcapex.org/posadas; Tel. (919) 362-7807 Ext. 300
www.facebook.com/FiestaCristianaApex
"Las POSADAS y NOCHE BUENA"

Celebre el TRADICIONAL PEREGRINAJE de José y María a la ciudad de Belén 16 al 23 de diciembre 6:15 PM

Además: El 24 de diciembre, SERVICIO DE NOCHE BUENA, a las 5PM en el Santuario de la Iglesia

IGlesia METODISTA UNIDA DE APEX

100 South Hugues St. Apex, NC 27502
Tel. 919.362.7807
Sample Lesson Plans

We sometimes hand out a lesson outline. Other years we have prepared detailed plans. We also have had a handout for children, and a handout for adults.

**TIPS:**
Make the lesson fit the host’s interest. A short and simple lesson is typically the best.
Provide a translator if needed.
Our handouts have typically been both in Spanish and in English.
The best programs are action-oriented, with coloring for the children and/or questionnaires/quizzes for people to complete.

Sample 1:

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**Texto Bíblico:**  Lucas 2:16

**Comentario Bíblico**

En Lucas 2:16 se nos dice que unos pastores encontraron en Belén a María, Jose y a Jesús acostado en un pesebre. Esta imagen es comúnmente conocida como La “Sagrada Familia.” ¿Por qué será que llamamos a estas tres personas sagradas? Obviamente que estamos hablando de una familia muy especial. Pero para Dios todas las familias son especiales y sagradas.

Jesús en su ministerio en la tierra dijo que su familia son los que hacen la voluntad del Padre. El nos enseno que la voluntad de Dios es que toda persona goce de santidad, comunión y una vida en plenitude. El núcleo sagrado en donde la persona se desarrolla como ser social que recibe amor y contribuye a la construcción de una nueva sociedad es la familia.

**Meditación**
A los Hispanos-Latinos se les conoce como gente que valora mucho la familia. Hay buena razón para esto puesto que existen dentro de esta comunidad prácticas de inclusión de los niños en toda la vida social, respeto por los ancianos, lazos estrechos con la familia expansiva y con la familia política, “adopción” de otros como parte del núcleo íntimo, etc. Al mismo tiempo, por diversas razones sociales, económicas y políticas, muchas familias Hispano-Latinas se ven limitadas en alcanzar los niveles de vida que Dios quiere para todos.

Que estas Posadas cuando recordamos con cariño especial a la “Sagrada Familia” compuesta por Jose, Mario y el Nino Dios, sea también un tiempo de aliento y de inspiración para fortalecer hogares fundamentados en amor y respeto. La familia es la estructura básica de la comunidad en la cual personas reciben sostenimiento en amor mutuo, responsabilidad, valores, atención y fidelidad.

Sample 2

¿Qué significa la palabra Posada/What is the meaning of the word Posada?

- a. Volcán/Volcano  
- b. Barco/Ship  
- c. Casa/House

¿Cuál es el Evangelio que dice que “no había posada” para María y Jose? Which Gospel says that there was “no place at the inn” for Mary and Joseph?

- a. Lucas/Luke  
- b. Marcos/Mark  
- c. Mateo/Matthew

¿Dónde origino la celebración de Posadas?/Where did Posadas originate?

- a. México  
- b. España/Spain  
- c. Italia

¿Dónde origino la quiebra de Piñatas?/Where did Piñatas originate?

- a. México  
- b. España/Spain  
- c. Italia

¿Cuál es el mensaje de Posadas?/What is the massage of Posadas?

- a. Hospitalidad/Hospitality  
- b. Comer/Eat  
- c. Caminar/Walk
Sample Songbook

TIPS:

We print our songbook in booklet form where each page is 5.5 X 8 inches, stapled in the middle. We reuse the songbook night after night, collecting them at the end of each evening.

Inside on the first few pages are the special calendar or schedule for the nine days including the time and place for various events.

Most importantly are the word to the carols and the special posadas songs.

Every page is in Spanish and English.

*We have the songbook available in Word as a separate document, if you would like to have a copy to use as a starter for your organization.*
The Posadas Song:
This song, sung in Spanish in question-and-answer form, reenacts Mary and Joseph’s quest for shelter in Bethlehem. To sing the song properly, one group stands outside and sings to be let in, while a group inside answers no. The door is eventually opened amid smiles and festivities. It’s customary to hold candles while singing. The lyrics to the posada song are widely available on the Internet, on iTunes, YouTube, etc.

See the Posadas lyrics on page 33 with an English translation of the verses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Español</th>
<th>Dentro</th>
<th>Outside Singers</th>
<th>Inside Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fuera</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dentro</strong></td>
<td><strong>Outside Singers</strong></td>
<td><strong>Inside Response</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>En el nombre del cielo os pido posada pues no puede andar mi esposa amada.</td>
<td>Aquí no es mesón, sigan adelante Yo no puedo abrir, no sea algún tunante.</td>
<td>In the name of Heaven I beg you for lodging, for she cannot walk my beloved wife.</td>
<td>This is not an inn so keep going I cannot open you may be a rogue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>No seas inhumano, tennos caridad, que el Dios de los cielos te lo premiará.</td>
<td>Ya se pueden ir y no molestarme hace mucho frío y no me he de parar.</td>
<td>Don't be inhuman; Have mercy on us. The God of the heavens will reward you for it.</td>
<td>You can go on now and don't bother us, because if I become annoyed I'll give you a thrashing.</td>
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<td>Venimos rendidos desde Nazaret, yo soy carpintero de nombre José.</td>
<td>No me importa el nombre, déjenme dormir, pues que yo les digo que no hemos de abrir.</td>
<td>We are worn out coming from Nazareth. I am a carpenter, Joseph by name.</td>
<td>I don't care about your name: Let me sleep, because I already told you we shall not open up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posada te pide, amado casero, por sólo una noche la Reina del Cielo.</td>
<td>Pues si es una reina quien lo solicita, ¿cómo es que de noche anda tan solita?</td>
<td>I'm asking you for lodging dear man of the house. Just for one night for the Queen of Heaven.</td>
<td>Well, if it's a queen who solicits it, why is it at night that she travels so alone?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mi esposa es María, es Reina del Cielo y madre va a ser del Divino Verbo.</td>
<td>¿Eres tú José? ¿Tu esposa es María? Entren, peregrinos, no los conocía.</td>
<td>My wife is Mary She's the Queen of Heaven and she's going to be the mother of the Divine Word.</td>
<td>Are you Joseph? Your wife is Mary? Enter, pilgrims; I did not recognize you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dios pague, señores, vuestra caridad, y que os colme el cielo de felicidad.</td>
<td>¡Dichosa la casa que alberga este día a la Virgen pura. la hermosa María!</td>
<td>May God pay, gentle folks, your charity, and thus heaven heap happiness upon you.</td>
<td>Blessed is the house that shelters this day the pure Virgin, the beautiful Mary.</td>
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Upon opening the doors, the tune changes, the pilgrims enter, and all sing these final verses in unison:

*Enter, holy pilgrims,*  
*receive this corner,*  
*for though this dwelling is poor,*  
*I offer it with all my heart.*