

PREPARING A Spiritual Feast

By Manuel Emilio Ciriaco

When I was called as first counselor in the bishopric, sacrament meeting attendance in our ward had dwindled. As a bishopric, we decided to fast fervently and pray to Heavenly Father to give us the wisdom to know how to strengthen the members.

The Lord inspired us to emphasize the sacrament meeting as a spiritual feast, so we came up with a way to invite the members, their friends, and their neighbors to come to sacrament meeting and experience a spiritual feast. We made invitations that said, “Come and hear, see, and feel the presence of the Lord in a spiritual feast” and gave them to each of the members, including the young men and young women.

We also prepared a small ward choir of eight voices. We prayerfully selected spiritual hymns and speakers and invited members to help with the reverence of the occasion.

Everything was ready for the spiritual feast! Attendance that Sunday included 42 investigators and less-active members. At the second spiritual feast, there were 64 investigators and less-active members. Three months later we could no longer fit in the chapel, and six months later our ward had grown so much that we were preparing for it to be divided into two wards.

We learned that treating sacrament meeting as more than just a Sunday meeting but as a sacred experience gave us a marvelous opportunity to invite our loved ones to come unto Christ through a sacred spiritual feast.

Our preparation to improve the quality of the spirit and reverence of sacrament meeting helped improve the attendance of the people who had never imagined feeling joy by coming to see, feel, and find it in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. ■

The author lives in the Dominican Republic.

HOW CAN WE HELP MAKE THE SACRAMENT A MORE SPIRITUAL ORDINANCE?

- Preparation can begin at home as families discuss how to improve their experience with the sacrament.
- Priesthood holders who administer the sacrament can do so reverently, knowing they represent the Lord in sharing the sacrament with the members. Those who bless the sacrament can make the prayers a sacred communication with God, not just repetition of words.



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