

General Mini Mystery Theater Information

Decorations/Atmosphere: Brainstorm with your team. Make sure each volunteer knows who is responsible for what and when. With each script, decorations will be suggested. YOUR TEAM will run with the ideas and make them fabulous! Remember, there are people in your group who have talents and would be absolutely thrilled to help with a specific task, like decorate a cake, build a major prop, loan an item, ...

Each table will need a copy of the table game and pens. This game creates a great way for guests to mingle. Each person should have their own copy of the accusation card to complete. Playbills with character descriptions, cast, helpers, and itinerary can be used as a guide for the audience members.

Welcome! When your guests arrive, they enter a different world. Every actor is in costume and in character. *(Consider using name tags – but not on stage.)* They answer only to their stage names. Have them scattered around the room ready to interact with the guests. This get-acquainted period should last about 30 minutes. During this time, guests mingle, snack on appetizers, play interactive games, etc. *(Note many people will arrive early and hungry which is why appetizers are recommended. They can be placed at tables.)*

Host: Find a great host who can guide the audience through the evening. The host should explain what the audience needs to do at each stage of the event. Remember, for many of your guests, this will be their very first mystery dinner experience. The host should be as concise as possible.

Basic Schedule: *(This is for 30-minute script.)*

6:30 – 7:00	Doors Open / Mingle / Play the suggested table game / Get Drinks / Eat appetizers
7:00 – 7:10	Give Official Welcome by the Host – Explain how the evening will work / Give Blessing
7:10 – 7:45	Eat Dinner / Complete and Collect table game / Restroom break
7:45 – 7:50	Host gets attention and explains for audience to <u>turn their chairs</u> toward the stage.
7:50 – 8:20	Present the Drama <i>(A crime will occur.)</i>
8:20 – 8:30	Complete the Accusation Cards and Turn them in / Eat Dessert
8:30 – 8:35	Present Final Scene which Solves the Crime
8:35 – 8:45	Announce the Winners <i>(Ex: Table Game, Best Cupcake, Door Prize, Clueless, Who-Dun-It)</i>
8:45 – 8:50	Say Thanks <i>(Ending with time for people to mingle is ideal.)</i>

Accusation Cards: Each audience member individually completes his/her accusation card. They are turned in before the final scene is presented. As the final solution scene is presented, the cards are reviewed back stage. Winners are those who name the guilty person and answer questions correctly.

"Who-Dun-It" Winners: The winner gives the BEST answers. Since mini mysteries have fewer cast members, more guests will answer the how/why questions correctly. Let the guests know that some were close, but you selected the very best. You may decide to have several small prizes for many winners. And if there are many children present, you may want to plan ahead and give them all a small prize.

Clueless Award: It's fun to present this award at every dinner theater. Tell the guests ahead of time that they could win the "Clueless Award"! It goes to the person who is the furthest from guessing the correct suspect and reason for the crime – like someone NOT listed among the characters. There are some people in the audience who will enjoy having fun with this one! Read the best ones and give a funny prize.

Thanks: Write down the names of everyone who was involved and thank them. Chances are - if you don't write the names down, you'll leave someone out.

Pictures: Don't forget to take pictures all evening long. You'll want photos of the décor, the audience, the kitchen staff, the actors, etc. Use the "motion" setting to get better pictures of movement on stage or take pictures during dress rehearsal.