



INTRODUCTION AND PARTY INVITATIONS

Looking for a unique idea for a birthday bash where everyone has a “reel” good time? Consider a movie-themed party—it's easy to pull off and can work for children of many ages, depending on the type of movies you choose to highlight.

Little ones love flicks that feature favorite cartoon characters like *The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie* or *The Cat in the Hat*, while blockbusters like *Spider-Man* and *Harry Potter* work well for older movie fans.

Movie Ticket Invitations

Your first move: spread the word about your child's upcoming birthday party. You can notify his or her friends by sending out invitations made to look like movie tickets. Here's how: simply cut pieces of construction paper or poster board into about 5" x 8" rectangles. Write “Admit One” across the top of each invitation and give the details about when and where the party will take place with cinema-themed phrases such as:

Now Playing: David's 8th Birthday Party

Showtime: 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

You can even take your film theme one step further and invite guests to come dressed as their favorite movie character. This gives kids an opportunity to get creative and use their imagination to come up with a clever costume. Plus, it will give partygoers something to talk about as they arrive and check out the other “stars” in the room.

DECORATIONS

Set the stage for your big screen bash by decorating the party room with movie posters and setting out a bunch of director's chairs for guests to sit in.

Create a “Friends Walk of Fame” by laying out stars cut from poster board and decorated with the name of each guest on the floor.



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Roll out a red floor runner for your guests to walk on leading to the front door.

In addition to the decorations, here are the main items that you'll need:

- A TV (the bigger, the better) and VCR or DVD player for showing a movie
- Enough seats or floor space for guests to sit to watch the movie
- A counter or table to act as a concession stand
- Movie theater-inspired snacks like popcorn, pizza, and candy
- Classic movies

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Showing a movie—whether it's one your child hasn't yet seen or a classic he or she loves to watch over and over—is the perfect activity for this Hollywood shindig. You can either have your guests select their edibles from the concession stand and eat before the movie starts, or let them nosh as they watch the movie.

- When the movie is ready to roll, usher your child's guests into the viewing area. Let them “sit back, relax, and enjoy the show.”
- For young children, you may choose to end the party shortly after the movie's final credits roll.

For specific movie themes, here are some examples:

Willy Wonka

A nostalgic movie that is great for all ages! The songs will have everyone singing along, and you can play out this theme with movie tins full of candy for party favors.

Lady And The Tramp Italian Theme

Who can forget the iconic spaghetti scene from *Lady And The Tramp*? Luckily, pizza delivery is the #1 kid's party food and a red-and-white-check motif is classic Italian décor. They're all easy to prepare for your party.

Super Hero

Super hero movie themes are simple, as there are plenty of decorations specific to *Batman*, *Superman*, or *Spider-Man*. Add to the atmosphere by hanging metallic stars from the ceiling with fishing line.

Pirates of the Caribbean or Sea Themes

For older kids, a *Pirates of the Caribbean* party with adventurous food and nautical décor is ideal. For a younger crowd, go with a sea-themed movie such as *The Little Mermaid* or *Finding Nemo*.



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Harry Potter

Harry Potter is a favorite for kids of all ages: who doesn't love the magical adventures of Harry and the gang? For party favors, give guests a simple magic trick or a collapsible wand with a list of spells. Ask everyone to come as his or her favorite magical character and stop the show with a magician at the movie's intermission!

Older kids have longer attention spans and would probably also enjoy playing some movie-themed games. A perfect pick is charades. Divide the children into two teams and see which team can guess the most movie titles as their team members act them out.

Another idea: play movie trivia with questions about popular films you and your child come up with in advance of the party. Give the winner a small Oscar-like statue.

Finally, end the afternoon by having the birthday boy or girl give an awards show-inspired speech to thank his or her fans (friends) for helping to celebrate this special occasion. It's a great way to build important public speaking and performance skills.

PARTY MENU

Your choice of food is another great opportunity to play up the movie theme. If your party has a fairly big budget, you can rent an old-fashioned popcorn cart to park in the backyard and serve popcorn from. For more modest budgets, microwave popcorn served in red- and white-striped cardboard buckets works just as well. Other must-haves are pizza, nachos, and a selection of sweet treats.

For a fun twist, arrange the food on a table to resemble a theater concession stand and have each guest come to the counter to get his or her food. You can even forgo a birthday cake in favor of birthday cupcakes that can be easily distributed at the concession stand.

PARTY FAVORS

For specific movie themes, here are some examples:

- Sunglasses
- Star stickers
- Candy bars
- Items related to the movie you view

Send thank you notes to all of your guests to thank them for a star-studded time!



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