



INTRODUCTION AND PARTY INVITATIONS

What do you get when you combine children, dirt, and planting? A kid-friendly party with plenty of flower power! Kids love getting their hands dirty, so a planting party is the perfect way to celebrate spring and mark your little one's birthday. The best part: the enjoyment and learning continue after the party is over, as the kids watch their seeds sprout into beautiful blooms.

Set the tone for your flowery fête by sending out **Floral-Themed Invitations**. You can buy pre-made invitations with flower designs or make your own with white poster board and markers. Cut the poster board into the shape of butterflies, flowers, or ladybugs. Use pipe cleaners to make stems for flowers or antennae for butterflies or ladybugs. Don't forget to tell your guests to come dressed in clothes that can get dirty!

To add more flower power to your invitations, attach them to a packet of seeds. Ask your guests to bring the seeds to the party for the spring planting.

DECORATIONS

To prepare for your spring planting party, stock up on these must-haves:

- Potting soil
- Seeds, bulbs, or flowers
- Small flowerpots
- Shovels
- Gardening gloves

Ideally, the weather will be nice and you can set up shop at a picnic table outside. If rain moves the party indoors, newspapers or brown butcher paper (the kind that comes on a big roll) on a large table will work just as well.

Fill yellow helium balloons to represent sunshine, while tying green, pink, white, purple, and blue balloons to the backs of chairs to represent flowers and grass.

Continue your spring planting theme by setting out or hanging paper flowers. Use



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fishing line to hang the flowers so it looks like they're floating. You and your child can cut out and color the paper flowers in the days leading up to the party.

Set the table where your guests will eat with floral-themed paper plates, cups, and napkins. Another easy decorating move: sprinkle real or faux flower petals on the dining table or rip green tissue paper into shreds and spread it on the table to resemble grass.

Finally, use new and thoroughly cleaned plastic watering cans to serve drinks. Fill each watering can with a kid-pleasing beverage such as lemonade or fruit punch. Kids will get a kick out of seeing you pouring their drinks from the watering cans!

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

When the kids arrive, provide them with small watercolor sets and white butcher paper. Let them go out into the yard and paint pictures of the beautiful flowers, trees, or birds that they see there. After everyone has arrived and created a watercolor masterpiece, set it aside to dry.

Digging in the Dirt

The day's main event: Creating personalized pots and planting seeds or bulbs. Depending on the length of your party, you can either provide kids with pots ready for planting or have them customize their pot by painting it with their name and favorite decoration. If you're letting the kids paint their own pots, consider doing it before lunch. That way, the paint can dry while the kids eat and will be ready to go when your budding gardeners start planting.

Once you're ready to move onto the planting phase, give each child the following supplies:

- A kid-size pair of gardening gloves
- A small shovel
- Seeds
- Potting soil

The kids can use their shovels to scoop up potting soil to fill their pots and cover their seeds. The choice of seeds is up to you. It can be exciting to watch seeds bloom in the days and weeks following the party. Or, for instant gratification, buy flats of annuals like pansies or impatiens that kids can plant and enjoy right away. Once the planting is finished, help each child water his or her miniature garden.

If you have room in your yard, purchase a tree and have the kids plant it with you. Discuss the importance of trees for the environment while you plant.



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If you have time after the planting, start a game of Pin-the-Wings-on-the-Butterfly. For this garden-inspired take on the classic kids' party game Pin-the-Tail-on-the-Donkey, substitute a poster of a butterfly (you or your child can draw it in advance) and give each child a paper pair of butterfly wings. Whoever gets their wings closest to the right position wins!

Other fun games to enjoy are wheelbarrow races and leap frog.

If you have multiple pairs of binoculars, do some bird watching.

PARTY MENU

Your spring fling wouldn't be complete without an assortment of tasty treats. Mini sandwiches like peanut butter and jelly, ham and cheese, or tuna are sure kid-pleasers. To emphasize your garden theme, use cookie cutters to slice sandwiches into shapes like flowers or butterflies.

Serve fruit kebabs with various favorite fruits skewered on a stick. For additional fun, use small flower and butterfly cookie cutters to create cool fruit shapes.

Sunflower seeds coated in chocolate are a fun spring treat.

For dessert, serve a cake in the shape of a flower—daisies and sunflowers are two good options—or cupcakes decorated with colored icing to resemble vibrant blooms. A fun serving suggestion: place cupcakes (still in their cupcake papers) or small paper cups full of ice cream inside little plastic terracotta pots.

Another option: Serve up mud pie—a sweet treat kids love. To make your mud pie, put chocolate pudding in small cups and sprinkle it with crushed chocolate sandwich cookies. Top it off with a few candy gummy worms.

PARTY FAVORS

Make **Paper Maché Eggs** for the kids to find in the party area before they depart to take home as a spring party favor.

Blow up small balloons. Cover each balloon with paper maché made of liquid starch and newspaper strips. When the paper maché is dry, stick a pin in it to pop the balloon. Cut out a hole large enough to fit small goodies inside. Fill your egg and seal the flap with either paper maché or tape.

Paint the eggs with tempera paint in a variety of spring colors. Write the kids' names on the eggs so they can find and take theirs home.



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In addition, the kids can take home their watercolor pictures and the pots they decorated during the party.

Take pictures of the kids planting their flowers during the party and send them in your spring planting thank you notes.



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