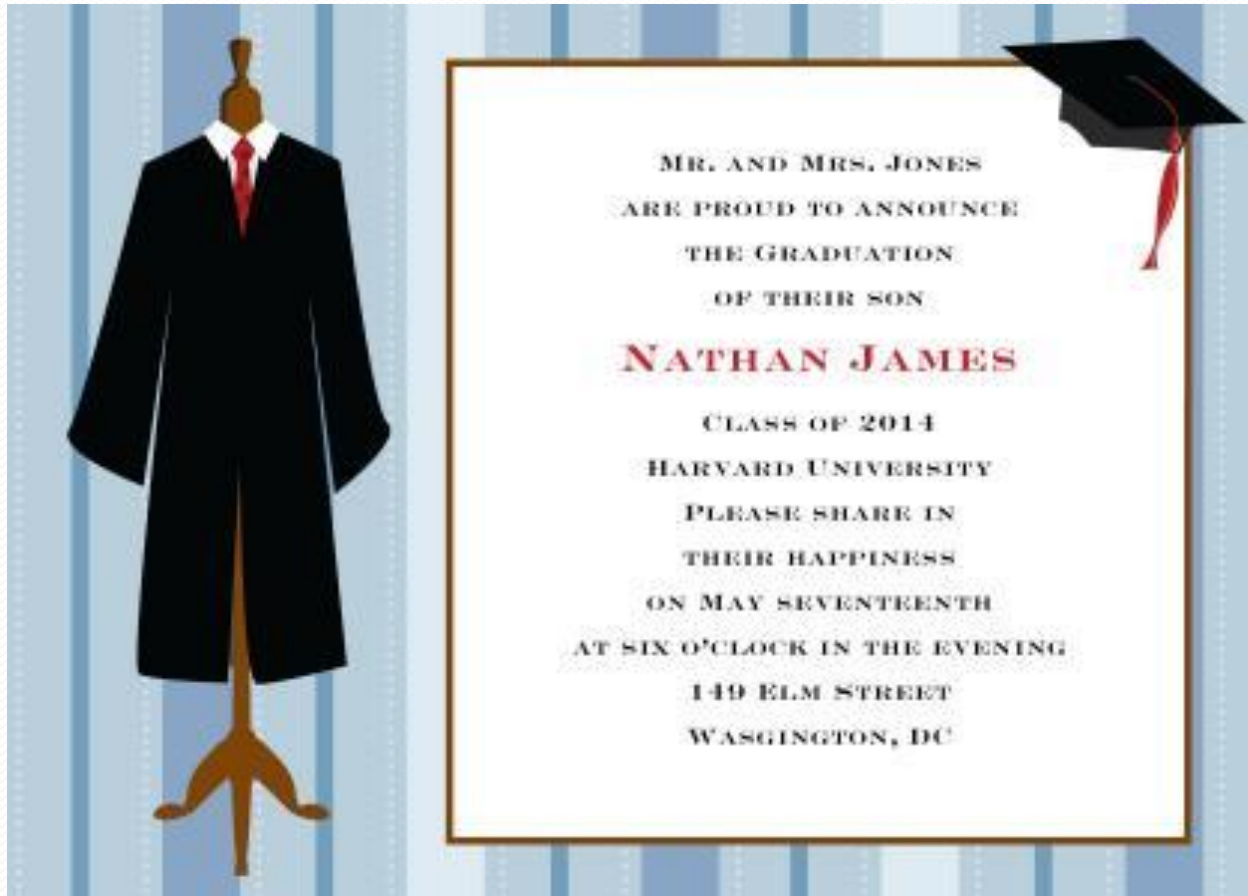


Invitations



How do we respond to an invitation?

- Excitement (All-in)
- Hesitation
- Obligation
- What excuse can I come up with?
- We want to share in the celebration/event.
- We are not sure how the event is going to go or who we would be there.
- We have to go because its family or they came to our event.
- We do not want to give up our time or we have better things to do.

God's Invitation

- God has sent each person an invitation to accept Him as their God and to serve Him each day.
- Our reward for accepting His invitation is an eternal banquet in heaven.
- What is our response?



The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

- Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: ² “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. ³ He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.
- ⁴ “Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’ Matt 22: 1-4
- God has everything prepared for us. We just have to accept the invitation.
- God prepared the way for us through His plan of salvation.
- God sacrificed His only son, Jesus, allowing us to enter heaven.

The Response to the Invitation

⁵ “But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. ⁶ The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. ⁷ The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

⁸ “Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. ⁹ So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ ¹⁰ So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

Matt 22:5-10

- So many people ignore God’s invitation and allow other parts of their lives’ to be important.
- Some people respond with anger when told of God’s love and mercy.
- God wants all people to accept His invitation, but He will not allow us into the banquet if we have constantly rejected Him.

An All-in Response

¹⁶ As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.

¹⁷ “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” ¹⁸ At once they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹ When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰ Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him. Mark 1: 16-20

- The first disciples accepted Jesus’ invitation without hesitation.
- They left behind their business and families.
- God invites us each day to serve Him and help others to draw closer to Him. Are we all-in to God’s invitation?

Hesitant or Lukewarm Responses

- ¹⁸ “But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’
- ¹⁹ “Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’
- ²⁰ “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’
Luke 14: 18-20
- What excuses do we make for not putting God first in our lives’?
- How do you think God feels when He gets lukewarm responses and excuses from the people He loves and wants to spend eternity with?
- So, because you (Church of Laodicea) are **lukewarm**—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. Revelation 3: 16

Obligatory Acceptance

¹⁶ Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?”

¹⁷ “Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.”

¹⁸ “Which ones?” he inquired.
(Matt 19: 16-18)



Do I really have to do that?

Jesus replied, “You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony,¹⁹ honor your father and mother,^[a] and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’^[b]”

²⁰ “All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?”

²¹ Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

²² When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. Matt 19: 18-22



More is Expected

- The young, rich man thought he was doing well with God's invitation. He was following the rules. However, he was not acting out of love, but out of obligation. When asked to do a more difficult task to show true acceptance of God's invitation, his acceptance wavered.
- As we grow in our faith, God expects us to do more with His invitation to follow Him. Are we willing to accept God's expectations and continue to show our gratitude for His invitation?

Prepare to Enter the Feast

¹¹ “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ¹² He asked, ‘How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?’ The man was speechless.

¹³ “Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

¹⁴ “For many are invited, but few are chosen.” Matt 22: 11-14

- Even though all are invited, our lives must reflect our worthiness for heaven.
- The Devil also invites us to an eternal “feast.” Our life choices tell God which feast we would rather attend.
- On Judgement Day, God will decide our worthiness to enter His banquet. May our lives reflect our gratitude and love for receiving an invitation and may we accept our invite with an all-in response.