

## Easy Ideas for Entertaining

Just because the Christmas gifts have been opened and put away, doesn't mean the celebrations have to stop. In fact, entertaining after Christmas and New Year's is a great idea. There is certainly less stress and friends and family usually have more time.

I have an antique drop leaf table in my living room and it's the perfect spot for setting out food or drinks when friends or family are over. Depending on how much room I need, I put up one or both leaves. When everyone has gone, the leaves are dropped, the lamp is replaced and it takes up very little space. Consider a drop leaf side table when shopping for a piece of furniture that can serve double duty.

### Tis the Season

This set up is great for Christmas morning. (Who doesn't like to start the day with sweets?) Just because the day has passed, is no reason to pack away the holiday dishes. Remember the 12 Days of Christmas? Keep on celebrating.

A striped table runner sets the color theme (\$2.99 at Goodwill). I found a complete set of poinsettia dishes priced at \$.49-\$.99. The milk glass cake stand holds cookies today and appetizers tomorrow or even a birthday cake next month (a bargain at \$2.99). Add your own decorations and the look is complete. I filled the silver and glass compote with red and white ornaments and a spindly Charlie Brown tree.



I have purchased so many napkins at the various stores over the years, my collection is quite colorful, but you can't go wrong with white. The napkin rings are vintage pieces from my own Christmas collection.

If I'm entertaining a bigger crowd, the second leaf goes up and I have room for a breakfast buffet.

## Ring in the New Year

New Year's Eve parties can be low key and elegant. Using the same table, I swapped the red runner with silver placemats. You could even use a piece of sparkly fabric. The silver ice bucket keeps the bubbly chilled. The champagne flutes were a gift from friends, but be sure to scour the glassware section at Goodwill because you never know what you might find. Stemware doesn't have to match, so you can set a great table with a variety of glasses.



The napkins are the same as the Christmas brunch. The silver rings were another find. Napkins rings are great items that you can mix and match. Pick a color or finish and buy all you find. It's easier to find two or four of a kind. Fold the napkins the same way at each place setting and no one will know the rings don't exactly match.

The snow flake plates were \$0.99 each and the crystal candle sticks were a great buy at \$9.99 for the pair. I even found the silver wire tree at Goodwill. This icy table setting is complete with sparkly stars and cut glass ornaments. 2009 is sure to be a great year when ringing it in such an elegant way.

My wish for you is a wonderful, happy and healthy New Year.