



Planning a Guest at Your Table Program

By coordinating a Guest at Your Table celebration for your congregation, you help participants of all ages nurture lasting connections to UU principles, build awareness about social justice and human rights, and strengthen UUSC's work. Thank you for joining us in this special tradition!

Program History:

Guest at Your Table has been an important part of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, and of UU culture, since 1975. UUSC's program started after the Institutional Advancement Director Warren Salinger travelled to the Netherlands and was inspired by a similar organization's program, entitled "Gast aan Tafel," to educate its supporters about its work and raise vital funds using colorful boxes the whole family could contribute to together.

Program Materials:

The box is an important component of Guest at Your Table. Typically, boxes are handed out at the kickoff date and kept at participants' dinner tables (or other gathering space) for the duration. While the box is there to collect your loose change and bills and encourage online giving, it also serves as an important physical reminder of the work UUSC and our partners are doing to defend human rights around the world. The *Stories of Hope* brochures are another key component. Here is where you will find four inspiring stories about UUSC's partners! Keep a copy near your box.

Suggested steps for planning the program:

- 1) **Set your dates.** Many congregations launch Guest at Your Table the Sunday before Thanksgiving, but please schedule worship activities for the time that best suits your congregation. UUSC accepts Guest at Your Table gifts through the entire church year, so do not feel limited to the holiday season. Most congregations celebrate Guest at Your Table for four to six weeks, ending with a special worship service or other activity to collect the donations.
- 2) **Find inspiration and learn about UUSC's work.** Learn about this year's guests, who are featured in the Stories of Hope booklets, and on the Guest at Your Table poster!
- 3) **Order materials.** If you are planning the program for your congregation, UUSC suggests "one per household" as general guidance – one Guest at Your Table box, Stories of Hope booklet, and membership envelope per family or household, rather than one per individual. Materials will arrive within 8 days of ordering. If you need to arrange rush shipping, please contact Jay Pacitti at jpacitti@uusc.org or (617) 301-4351.
- 4) **Plan your service or event.** Most congregations kick off Guest at Your Table during a worship service. Some start with a simple pulpit editorial explaining the program and UUSC's vital human rights work, some dedicate an entire worship service to Guest at Your Table. If you are not planning a worship – perhaps you are organizing a coffee hour, meal, or other gathering – our downloadable resources can still get the conversation going.
- 5) **Wrap up the program.** Depending on how you run your program, you may want to use a [tally sheet](#) to track donations. If you have collected cash from Guest at Your Table boxes or a plate collection, you can use our tally sheets so that UUSC can properly thank every person for their support of Guest at Your Table. If you have checks or membership envelopes that participants have already filled out, you can leave those off the tally sheet. Please batch all tally sheets, cash, checks, and membership envelopes and send to the following address:

UUSC – Guest at Your Table
PO Box 808
Newark, NJ 07101-0808