"A Little Tea, If You Please" Jane Austen's 250th Birthday Celebration Tea

Glenn McNairy Branch Library

Young Adult

|

Adults

"A Little Tea, If You Please" Jane Austen's 250th Birthday Celebration Tea

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$51-100

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Byline

Madeline Anglin, Adult Programming Librarian, Greensboro (N.C.) Public Library, Glenn McNairy Branch

To Jane Austen, nothing was better than a good cuppa tea. This teatime program celebrated her 250th birthday with crafts, games, scones, sandwiches, and, of course, tea!

Advanced Planning

This program connects the library to the community and community members to one another through a themed tea mixer featuring games/trivia, crafts, music and the tea party itself. It also has ties to the collection, as we have many books set in the Regency era that we can recommend and have on display. I started planning around a month and a half in advance, purchasing the puzzle, paper tea cups and saucers early. Then, I began making the handouts and designing the trivia and games about three weeks in advance.

Marketing

I promoted it on social media through the library's accounts, posted the event on several local online calendars, sent flyers to local community centers, a couple of local bookstores and other library branches. We had a display in our branch with a flyer, books and mini teacups. The program had around 20 attendees, which is high for our adult programs, so it was very successful. However, I would consider advertising at coffee shops and more bookstores next time.

Budgeting

- Teacups and Saucers – $17.99
- Cookies or Mini Cakes – apx $20.00
- Sandwich Tray – apx $25.00
- Bookmark Making – 3D Printed in house, plus stickers $5.99

- Puzzle – $17.99 (I'd suggest not purchasing the puzzle unless you also have a puzzle program or can use it more than once, or want to use it as a prize for trivia. It wasn't played with much.)
- Tea and Creamer – apx $15.00
- Various printed materials - apx $10.00

Day-of-event Activity

The purchase and setup of food and drink, as well as the setup of games and crafts, were mostly completed the day before, but could also be done on the same day. I was by myself for setup and had a coworker as support during the event, taking pictures and getting me anything I needed, but not running any games or other tasks.

One unexpected challenge was that our large coffee maker's cord was missing, so I had to resort to using the tiny staff kitchen kettle to have hot water for tea. I kept having to refill and reheat it, but that wasn't a huge issue, just a bit annoying. The crafting wasn't as popular, so consider offering snacks and crafting, or snacks and trivia, but not both.

Program Execution

I had a display area featuring a brochure showcasing books and movies from our collection based on Jane Austen or the Regency era, as well as some of the books and films discussed. I had several passive print-outs for the patrons to play, such as "What's my Regency era name generator", a "Which Austen Character Am I?" quiz, and a Jane Austen wordsearch.

As the patrons came in, I urged them to complete the themed "Get to Know Me" bingo (with squares like "find someone with a bookish tattoo" or "find someone who's read all of Austen's works"), and when they did, they received a 3D-printed teacup bookmark that they could decorate at one of the craft tables.

The other craft table featured DIY paper fans, created using printed copies of pages from Austen's works and letters, to give them an old-fashioned look. Some patrons

worked on the crafts, while most sat around the tables I had set up for snacking and played bingo, followed by the trivia game.

A patron donated a fancy copy of *Pride and Prejudice*, so we used that as the prize for the trivia game. 20 people attended, and all of them told a few other coworkers and me that they had a great time. It was mostly older adults, with a few 20-and 30-somethings, and two teenagers, one of whom was one of the only people who dressed up, besides myself, in a proper brocade waistcoat. I think the goals were achieved, though I wish more of the materials I gathered had been checked out.

Advice

The crafting wasn't as popular, so consider offering snacks and crafting, or snacks and trivia, but not both. The passive handouts were also super popular. Perhaps make dressing up a more fun feature by offering hats. Make sure to plan your food in advance, in case something goes wrong, but don't pick it up until the day of the event. I had to order the sandwiches a day in advance, but if you make your own, that works too.

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

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