

Dance Programs

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Providing dance entertainment for groups that dance infrequently is an opportunity to share the fellowship of dance with those we entertain. Some view these events as opportunities to recruit for the modern square dance activity, some do NOT. A one-night party is a single period where the hosts and the participants attend to enjoy the music, dance, and fellowship. Social enjoyment is the only objective. An introduction to square dancing event like a free night, open house, chili supper, or first night of class, is an event where the hosts want to influence the participants to join the activity by dancing more frequently and the attendees are attempting to identify if this recreation is something they want to do with their discretionary time.

Each leaders' skills will influence the material they will include in each type of event. Shown here are programs for a one-night party, a community dance and an SSD square dance.

Dance Parties: Are organized by individuals or organizations to provide entertainment for attendees excited to attend to be entertained, to enjoy each other's company and the music. They didn't come to be permanently engaged in an activity that requires a lot of commitment or knowledge. With enjoyment in mind the entertainer must prepare a wide variety of material that is easy for the participants to execute to great music. Using modern square dance terms, the English language, and a variety of formations we can provide entertainment that overcomes gender imbalance and numbers that are not a multiple of 8.

Community Dances: Are typically organized by individuals or organizations to provide entertainment on a more frequent basis than the dance party and provides a social experience for slightly more experienced dancers. They typically enjoy the natural patterns of both dances they have done before and patterns that are new. The entertainer must carefully balance too much simplicity with too much complexity. Some view community dances as events where traditional material is danced to live music in contra or square formations. Others view that community dances can use recorded music with traditional material, contemporary material and a wide variety of formations that might include squares, contra lines (3 couples, 4 couples, long lines), Circle contras (Sicilian, Circassian, single), two/three couple sets, etc. We can execute these dances in the style of English Country dances with English Country dance music, square dances with traditional/contemporary music, contras with traditional/contemporary contra music, mixers, line dances, and more.

Social Square Dances (SSD): Are typically event where the participants desire to dance regularly with their friends. This program today is primarily square dances with other dance forms to spice up the evening. Many SSD dances include square dance level rounds and determined by the skills and experience of those attending. Other community dances could be included to spice up or provide additional variety to SSD dances.

Any event that draws a community together for dance enjoyment can be thought of as a square dance. The frequency that a group gathers ends up determining the skills of the participants. Some dance once in a lifetime, some dance every few years, some dance every year, some dance every month, and some dance more frequently. No matter how often a person dances regularly, everyone builds experience over their lifetime and brings that experience to every event they attend.

Some callers start an entertaining evening with a single large circle of people without partners, move to couples in a large circle, then a scattering of couples throughout the dance hall, merging of the couples into small circles of 2 or 3 couples, then merging of these small circles into larger circles of 4, 5 or 6 couples. And finally, using Sicilian circles of couples, trios, along with contra lines, we can accommodate all who desire to dance. The common theme is the square dance basics, the native language of the group, good music and a caller to provide entertaining direction.

When we provide an event that meets or exceeds the entertainment needs of those attending, we set the stage for some of them to eventually being interested in increasing their involvement. The result is easier recruitment to the MWSD activity.

For any dance event the core 12 basics of the Community Dance Program (CDP) form the foundation from which the event can be created. Community or limited basic events may use any list as the program for an evening of dance or they can add basics that provide for the group's entertainment.

Sample One Night Dance Program

A dance program could include squares with a limited set of basics, or you could include a variety of formations with an even more restricted/limited set of basics.

- **Big circle** – Basics: Circle L/R, Forward/Back, Arm Turns, DoSaDo, Swing, Prom
- **Squares** – Figures: Circles, Stars
- **Circle Mixer(s)** – Lancash Barn Dance, Patty Cake Polka, Jiffy Mixer
- **Solo Dance(s)** – Cupid Shuffle, Electric Slide, Rocky Mountain Scramble, Popcorn, Cha Cha Slide, Copperhead Road
- **Squares** – Figures: Solomon Levi, Divide the Ring
- **Trio(s)** – TBC Trio, Clap Dance for Three's, Do-Ci-Dizzy
- **Contra(s)** – No Name Contra, Virginia Reel, Tunnel Contra
- **Children's Dances** – Children's Polka, 7 Jumps, Cry of Celts, Birdie/Chicken Dance, Hokey Pokey, Toody Ta
- **Other Dances** – Ding Dong Daddy, Phrase Craze
- **Ending(s)** –
 - Simple goodnight: Single circle ... say announcements ... allow anyone to say a special thank you ... all raise joined hands and all say goodnight.
 - Singing goodnight: "Good night ladies, good night gentlemen, good night everyone, we have to leave you now Merrily we roll along, roll along, roll along, merrily we roll along, o'er the deep blue sea."

Sample Community/Limited Basics Dance Program

A dance program for this kind of evening is built on the skills and knowledge of those that usually attend. For decades there have been groups that meet monthly to enjoy a potluck dinner with their friends and then dance for 1-2 hours. In some situations, every dance is done in a square formation, but more often a variety of formations are used to enjoy the dance. Below is a sample program for this kind of event.

- **Mixer** to start off the evening, so everyone can meet
- **Single circle** with partners ... dance simple sequences that use circles, Arm Turns, DoSaDo, Promenade, evolve to small circles of 4 couples, start using choreography for

heads/sides or odd/even numbered couples. You are testing to see what the folks know or don't know.

- **Squares** ... with 4 couple sets call some promenade and ladies chain sequences
- **Circle Mixer** – Lancash Barn Dance uses forward/Back stars, circles, DoSaDo
- **Squares** ... there are a multitude of routines that use the CDP calls, the basic 1 calls, the full basic list calls, the SSD calls. Depending on the skills of the group is where you program for those attending.
- **Contra(s)** – many alternate duple or improper duple dances use the core square dance basics
- **Sicilian Duple** (2s facing 2s around a big circle) – Grand Star Circle, Dip and Dive for Jillian
- **Sicilian Trios** (3s facing 3s around a big circle) – there are many dances that use the core basics that provide entertainment, e.g. Docey Dizzy uses only circles and DoSaDo. Clap Dance for Threes uses circles, stars, arm turns and a clap sequence.
- **Line Dances** – many communities like to have solo dances included in their programs, this could be any dance of 32 or fewer steps that the group enjoys. Examples: Copperhead Road, Electric Slide, Rocky Mountain Scramble

Note having a wide variety of dance material that uses a common core of dance terminology will allow you as an entertainer to craft an event that those attending will remember. If you are a square dance caller, you have the basis for an unlimited set of material for your dancers. In a Sicilian circle you have a couple facing a couple, what can 4 people do with a limited set of calls. Let's say we only can use the CDP core basics, here is a Sicilian Circle routine: Circle Left (8), Circle Right (8), Ladies Chain (8), Ladies Chain back (8), Ladies DoSaDo (8), Men DoSaDo (8), Veer Left (4), Veer Right (4)

Depending on the venue and the group, the caller/entertainer may want to use either traditional or contemporary music. Experience and knowledge of the desires of those attending should guide you in the music selection. If you are calling at a dude ranch, they probably want traditional music, if you are calling at a church picnic they will want music suited for a church environment/could be contemporary/could be gospel. If you're calling for a youth camp contemporary music may be the ticket. Below are some alternatives that work. Use good judgement!

Dance Party Variations: Community/Church/Barn Dance – Contemporary Music

- Big circle – Figures: Circle Left/Right, Forward/Back, Arm Turns, Swing, Prom
 - Contemporary music: Honeycomb Fiddler, Boogie Beat, Funky Town
 - Traditional music: Beaumont Rag, Cross the Mountain, Flop-Eared Mule
- Squares – Figures: Circles / Stars figure, Solomon Levi figure, Divide the Ring figure, Push/Pull figure
 - Contemporary music: Rachel, Thumping Banjo, Takes Two
 - Traditional music: Steve Green, Hell Broke Loose in Georgia, Bile the Cabbages Down, New Chinese Breakdown, Yellow Creek
- Singing Squares
 - Contemporary singing call with an opener, break, closer, and figures that match the program
 - Traditional singing squares: Just Because, Solomon Levi

- Circle Mixer (s) –
 - Lancash Barn Dance – Contemporary: I’m From the Country, Traditional: Lancash Barn Dance
 - Patty Cake Polka – Patty Cake Polka
 - Jiffy Mixer – Contemporary: Hit the Road Jack, Walk Don’t Run, Traditional: Jiffy Mixer
- Solo Dance(s)
 - Boot Scootin’ BoogieBoot Scootin’ Boogie
 - Cha Cha SlideCha Cha Slide
 - Copperhead Road.....Copperhead Road
 - Cupid ShuffleCupid Shuffle
 - Electric Slide.....Electric Boogie
 - Rocky Mountain Scramble.....Pop’s Hoedown, Wildman
- Trio(s) –
 - TBC Trio – San Antonio Stroll or any good singing call
 - Clap Dance for Three’s – Clap Dance for Three’s or any 64-count tune
 - Do-Ci-Dizzy – Contemporary: Just Dance by Lady Gaga, Traditional: Fletcher’s Folly
- Contra(s) –
 - No Name Contra – any 64-count reel
 - Virginia Reel – Virginia Reel
- Children’s Dances – Children’s Polka, 7 Jumps, Birdie/Chicken Dance, Hokey Pokey, Danish Dance of Greeting, Toody Ta

Resources:

- CALLERLAB CD Journal published by Committee for Community & Traditional Dance (CCTD)
 - CD JOURNAL INDEX available at <http://www.callerlab.org/CDP-Choreography>
- CALLERLAB dance resource site: www.DANCES.CALLERLAB.org
 - CD JOURNAL LINKS ... http://dances.callerlab.org/?page_id=740
- CALLERLAB teaching resource site: www.TEACHING.CALLERLAB.org
- Dancing for Busy People by Bob Howell, Calvin L. Campbell and Ken Kernen ... contact Calvin Campbell, calcampbl@gmail.com.
- Lloyd Shaw Foundation ... www.lloydshaw.org