



REUNION PLANNING GUIDE

The Holy Family Alumni Office is here to support your reunion planning process and assist with various aspects. We encourage classes to start planning nine to twelve months out from their anticipated reunion date. A meeting with the Holy Family Alumni Office and the lead planner or reunion committee is strongly encouraged to start the planning process and make sure all details are taken care of.

Holy Family Alumni Office: development@holyfamiydbq.org or 563-582-5456 ext. 255

Step 1: Form a committee

Get a handful of people involved! They can help find “missing” alumni, promote the reunion, make decisions, help set up and check people in. If you have a very large committee (more than six people), we suggest appointing a chairperson that is the primary contact with the Holy Family Alumni Office and is the point person.

Suggestion: Create a Class Facebook page and add all classmates you can find. If there are some you can't find on Facebook, be sure to make a list of those individuals so they are sent a mailed invitation.

Step 2: Gather ideas - when, where and what

Some classes choose to send a survey out via the Alumni Office SurveyMonkey account while other classes create a Facebook page and create a survey there. Other classes allow the committee to make decisions without a survey. If you are sending out a survey, be sure to ask preferred month, suggestion on locations and thoughts on appetizers or a full meal.

“When” Suggestion: The Saturday of Wahlert’s Homecoming Weekend is strongly encouraged. The Alumni Office will host an all alumni social the Friday of Homecoming Weekend which is great for those coming from out of town as it becomes a two-day event. Classes that host two day events tend to do an informal gathering on Friday night and Saturday is the big reunion.

“Where” Suggestion: There are many great venues in Dubuque and the area that work well for reunions. Classes should consider whether a dinner is preferred, appetizers only or no food at all. The Alumni Office can help with creating a list of options.

“What” Suggestion: Each class is a bit different and some have obvious tendencies and preferences. We have noticed that many classes prefer the appetizers/cash bar option and having more of an open house feel so people can come and go as they please. Also, consider adding in a specific time and church for mass, a tour of Wahlert, golf outing or family friendly activity in addition to the main reunion. Don’t over plan the weekend as you want to be able to enjoy it and not be running the whole day.

Step 3: Create a budget

All classes have a class account at Holy Family. Any remaining reunion funds are held over for the following year. Some classes have a negative balance and progress needs to be made towards the black with each reunion. The Alumni Office can let you know what your class has for funds.

Get estimates for all your potential costs so they can be factored into registration fees.

Potential costs:

- Printing and mailing invitations
- DJ or Band
- Food – appetizers, meal (+gratuity!)
- Bar – cash, drink tickets or host
- Decorations
- Giveaways
- Nametags (if not using standard)
- Room or Facility Rental
- Design and printing of update booklet
- Photographer for a group photo
- Transportation

Suggestion: Create your budget and stick to it. The Alumni Office can work with the reunion planners to get estimates, determine how much food is needed.

Step 4: Make final decisions

Make the final decisions and sign contracts. Holy Family will take care of all contracts and money transactions via your class account. Also, decide how much the cost is per person so the Alumni Office can create your registration form for collecting money.

Suggestion: The reunion committee or lead planner should meet with the Alumni Office to make sure all decisions and details determined ahead of time and communicated to vendors.

Requirement: All financial transactions will be through Holy Family and the class account. This allows the class to enjoy tax exempt status with vendors as well as added security and audit protection.

Step 5: Update classmate Information

The Alumni Office will provide a class list with current email, phone numbers and addresses to the lead class planner. There will be some people we have classified as “missing” since we do not have current information. Reach out to fellow classmates to see if someone has current information on them and make a post in your class’ Facebook group.

Note #1: This information is not shared with others for confidential reasons.

Note #2: As a new policy, before an alumnus is marked as deceased in the Holy Family database, we will need to see a copy of an obituary to prevent incorrectly marking someone.

Note #3: Please share all new contact information you uncover with the Alumni Office.

Step 6: Get the word out!

Marketing #1: The Holy Family website. Each reunion class has a page on the Holy Family website which will be updated with your class’ reunion information, deceased classmates, missing classmates and the reunion registration form.

Marketing #2: Facebook. The Alumni Office will periodically post about your reunion on the Wahlert Alumni Facebook page. This can then be shared into your class’ Facebook group or the pieces may be sent to you to post.

Marketing #3: Emails. The Alumni Office will send out emails to your class with the information and reminders to sign up.

Marketing #4: Invitations. It is up to the class whether or not to mail an invitation and if it is a postcard or letter. The printing and mailing of an invitation is at the class’ expense. If the class does not mail an invitation to everyone, those that are not on social media need to receive a mailed one. If the number is less than 10, Holy Family will assume the cost. If it is more than 10 people, the class account will be charged for printing and mailing. The Alumni Office can create an invitation if the class wishes.

Marketing #5: Personal contacts. Call people and see if they are coming! People are more likely to come if they get a personal call, text or message asking if they are planning to come.

Step 7: Decide on decorations and other reunion materials.

- **Memorial Boards:** The Alumni Office can create a small 8.5”x11” memorial board that lists deceased class members. If larger, the class is responsible for any additional costs such as posterboard.

- Nametags: The Alumni Office will provide sticky nametags for all who have registered plus some extras. If the class wants to do pin or lanyard nametags, the class is responsible for the additional expense.
- Decorations: The Alumni Office has some decorations that can be used on a first come, first serve basis. They will need to be returned in the condition they were provided.
- Reunion Update Booklet: The Alumni Office can assist with the creation of a class update booklet for the reunion. If there are more than several photos included (ex. wanting all senior photos in booklet), this will need to be created by someone other than the Alumni Office.
Cost Alert! The extensive design, printing and mailing of a booklet is at the class' expense.
- Slideshow of old photos: This will need to be created by a classmate or third party as the Alumni Office does not have an extensive collection of photos for each year.

Step 8: Preparing for the reunion

Most catering numbers are requested one week before an event. The Alumni Office can help with turning in catering numbers and deciding on final menu selections. If there is quite a bit of set up, the week before is a good time to find additional people to help and determine how materials will get from the Alumni Office to the reunion. The week before, the lead planner will find out who from the Holy Family Alumni Office will be attending their reunion.

Suggestion: RSVPs are key to making sure we have plenty of food! It is very important for people to register ahead of time or at least verbally tell someone they will be coming with cash to pay at the door. Facebook events are not a good estimate of who or how many are attending.

Step 9: Reunion time!

A representative from Holy Family will arrive 15-20 minutes prior to the start of the reunion. The representative from Holy Family can help with registration if needed, run any last minute errands and make sure everything is running smoothly. He/She typically arrives 15 minutes before the reunion starts and stays for the first 30 to 45 minutes.

It is asked that at least one person from the reunion planning committee arrives 15-20 minutes early as well especially if there is food being provided.

Suggestion: Separate the nametags of those who have paid and those who need to pay. Those who have paid can be laid out for the person to grab. Those that need to pay are kept with the registration person so they can collect the money first.

Step 10: Reunion wrap-up

- Make sure all invoices from all vendors have been submitted for payment.
- Return any decorations or materials including money from pay at the door to the Alumni Office within 2 days of the reunion.
- Send any notes to the Alumni Office to keep on file for the next reunion.

- Decide if any remaining class funds should stay in account or be donated to a Holy Family scholarship.
- Send any classmate information updates to the Alumni Office.

General Planning Timetable

9-12 months before

- Form a committee
- Meet with Alumni Office
- Survey classmates
- Begin trying to find “missing” classmates (ongoing process)
- Brainstorm ideas and request quotes

6-9 months before

- Develop a budget
- Confirm date and venue and submit deposits
- Determine registration fees
- Save the date via Facebook, Email, Holy Family Website

3 months before

- Mail invitations

2 months leading up

- Continue to promote your reunion through Facebook, emails, word of mouth, phone calls

1 week before

- Final meeting or call with Alumni Office
- Gather all materials that will be used – yearbooks, decorations, slideshows, nametags, memorials
- Turn in final catering numbers
- Print attendee list – clearly list who has paid and who needs to pay

The Wahlert Alumni Office is happy to assist class reunion planners as much as we can. That being said, if a class does not have a person step forward to help with planning, a reunion will not be solely planned by the Alumni Office.

Alumni Office contact information:

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