



Centerpieces on a Budget

SGMP Central Florida Chapter



Do's and Don'ts of Centerpieces



Do's

- **Do keep it simple.**
 - They should be eye-catching, but not overpowering.
- **Do let your guests converse.**
 - Design your centerpieces so that your guests can see one another when they converse across the table.
 - The rule is to keep your centerpieces under 14 inches in height.
- **Do add details.**
 - If your centerpiece is simple, you can add more flair to the table with place cards, favors, flower petals or confetti.
 - Just be sure to not overdo it with too many details.
- **Do use sweets.**
 - Chocolate favors or colorful jars of candy placed around the room are great ways to pep up guests and have them mingling before the reception gets underway.
- **Do shop around.**
 - You never know what will inspire you and what's available unless you shop around, and online is the best place to start! Many online retailers will also offer bigger discounts.
- **Do use your senses when designing your centerpieces.**
 - If you want your centerpieces to deliver a lovely fragrance, fill vases or bowls with aromatic flowers like roses, jasmine, chocolate daisies, lavender and gardenias.
 - Tantalize your guests' taste buds by placing three different- sized bowls with Jordan almonds, chocolates and mints in the center of the table. You can even coordinate the candy's colors to complement your décor.



Don'ts

- **Don't stray from the theme.**
 - Though it's okay to stray a bit, you don't want to have an outdoor beach-theme in the middle of December, or you'll have the guests shaking their heads in confusion.
- **Don't try to have it all.**
 - You want centerpieces, table runners, confetti, place cards, favors, menus, printed napkins and tulle on your chairs.
 - Sometimes, less is more so don't try to overdo it with the decorations. Stick with a few that are the most important to you.
- **Don't crowd the aisles.**
 - You want the aisles to look pretty, but don't use over-sized arrangements and too much ribbon or tulle.
- **Don't compromise safety.**
 - Make sure your decorations don't conflict with each other.
 - For instance, paper lanterns and candles set close to each other is probably not a good idea for safety reasons.
- **Don't save the DIY for last.**
 - If you're planning on making your own decorations, don't save it until the last minute.
 - You want to have plenty of time to mend any mistakes.
- **Don't go crazy with color.**
 - Color livens up a celebration, but too many bold colors will have your event looking like a circus.
 - Stick to two colors or use shades of one color for a fool-proof look.
- **Don't feel obligated to follow rules or traditions.**
 - Feel free to throw caution to the wind and follow your eye.



Best Practices for Centerpieces



Best Practices

- Let one person at each table take home the centerpiece.
- Surround your tables with warmth by the simple inclusion of candles as part of your centerpiece design.
- Centerpieces with seashells always bring a tropical ambience to beach-themed receptions.



Best Practices

- Make a sample centerpiece and take it to the venue you will be using.
 - Bring along any table linens/dishes you will be using and set up a table.
 - Adjust the lighting to simulate the party conditions and step back.
 - Does the centerpiece create the mood you wanted? Is it tall enough? Is it too short? Does it need to be wider or longer?
 - Next, Sit down at the table.
 - Can you see the other side of the table?
 - Will it interfere with conversation?
 - Does it create a focal point for the room? Or just the table?
- Remember, don't use scented candles for the tables.
- Adding rose petals (fake or real) to any table adds elegance



Best Practices for Candle Centerpieces

- **Avoid scented candles:**
 - Your candle competes with other smells (food, alcoholic drinks and flowers.)
 - Some of your guests might have a wild aversion to scents or an allergy that you aren't aware of.
 - To avoid a mishmash of smells and scents and to keep your guests happy, stick to plain, unscented candles.
 - Exceptions:
 - Beeswax candles, with their natural, wonderful smell.
 - A get-together with a few, very familiar people. You know whether they can tolerate scents and which ones they like.
 - Your centerpiece has candles and strawberries. Certainly, with fruit centerpieces, use candles with natural, organic fragrances. But keep it subtle.
 - It's summertime. You're holding an outdoor event. Midges and mosquitoes are a problem in your area. You burn candles with citronella oil in them.
- **Keep the centerpiece above or below eye-level:**
 - Your guests want to see and speak to each other without having to peer over or around objects.
 - Use a low arrangement on the table.
 - Otherwise, use a candle and flower arrangement which is on a tall, thin support, above people's line of vision.
- **Shelter your candles:**
 - If there is any possibility of a draught, use hurricane or votive holders.
 - Flickering, smoking and dripping candles are distracting and unattractive.
- **Use hard, long-burning candles:**
 - Your candles need to burn for the length of the event.
 - Hand dipped tapers, usually, don't have the additives necessary to harden them and make them burn longer.
 - Keep your candles in the fridge before the event.
 - Dry them off thoroughly (especially around the wick area) before burning them.
- **Support candles properly:**
 - Support tapers well or have them in hanging chandelier candelabra, so that they aren't knocked over.



Centerpiece Ideas



Dollar Store Centerpieces

- For a classic look, simply arrange pillar candles of varying heights in the center of each table.
- Take glass bowls and fill each with water. Add a drop of food coloring to coordinate with your colors, and float several tea lights in each bowl.
- Purchase plain flower pots of varying sizes. You can then paint these or leave them plain. Fill with fake greenery and flowers, candy, or anything else. Miniature painted flower pots also make great favors.
- A pair of tall candles in holders looks striking, especially when garnished with greenery and fake flowers.
- If you are using cut flowers for the reception centerpiece, dollar store vases look just as pretty as more expensive ones, especially when tied with a coordinating ribbon.
- For each table, place a single pillar candle in the center of a small mirror and surround with fake flowers and greenery.
- Place a single large basket or several small baskets in the center of each table. Tie a ribbon or bow around each basket. Fill with candy.
- Purchase plain Christmas tree balls in your reception colors, then arrange in glass bowls on each table.
- You can also find “garnishing” items like glitter, tissue paper, colored foil papers, and tinsel. These are usually cheaper at the dollar store than at craft stores.



Mother Nature

- Some of the best decorations can be obtained for free from the great outdoors!
- Natural elements work especially well for a reception themed around the season.
 - In winter, collect tree branches and paint gold. Then embellish with greenery and ribbons.
 - For the spring months, try placing bunches of wildflowers in vases on each table.
 - Comb local beaches for pretty seashells and display in bowls with colored sand.
 - Finally, pine cones, gourds and pumpkins, and freshly gathered fall leaves are perfect for the autumn months.



Get Crafty

- If you wield a hot glue gun like no one's business, then you can have some luck cutting centerpiece costs by getting crafty. Here are two centerpiece craft ideas that can be made quickly and easily:
- Tissue Paper Flowers.
 - Purchase craft tissue paper in colors that coordinate with your reception. You will also need wire pipe cleaners. Begin with four sheets of tissue paper. Fold the sheets in half, and make angled cuts from the outside corners to the center. Then, “lettuce” the edges. Turn two of the pages so that they overlap, and twist the center to form a stem. Take a pipe cleaner and bend the top to make a loop. Secure the loop by twisting shut. Insert the stem into this loop, and secure with clear tape. Arrange these flowers in vases.
- Miniature Topiaries.
 - Begin with a small ball of floral foam. Use hot glue to entirely cover the ball with moss, greenery, and fake flowers. Insert a painted dowel or a natural branch into the ball, and stick the entire topiary into a flower pot containing another piece of floral foam. Cover the base with florist's moss.