

Hospitality

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever listened to a story and tried to guess what would happen next? If so, you were “anticipating” or “thinking ahead.” Likewise, you can anticipate the needs of others by considering their situation with a willingness to help. When your neighbors prepare to go on vacation, you could offer to water their plants or feed their dog. As you plan dinner for guests, you could consider their food sensitivities and preferences. Listen to the Holy Spirit to discern and anticipate the spiritual needs of others as well. When going out, you could bring tracts to share with those who need the Gospel. You could offer to pray for your waitress, an elderly neighbor, or a newcomer at church. Anticipate others’ needs and look for ways to reach out to those whom God brings into your life.



The Shunammite Woman Prepares for a Guest

HOSPITALITY

Cheerfully sharing food, shelter, and spiritual refreshment with those God brings into my life

Hospitality Overview

What Is Hospitality?

Read aloud and discuss what hospitality means and how it applies to life.

The operational definition of *hospitality* is “cheerfully sharing food, shelter, and spiritual refreshment with those God brings into my life.” The New Testament word for “hospitality” means brotherly love to others, including those who were not family. In Bible times, people invited weary travelers to eat and rest in their homes before continuing a journey. Hospitality can still be practiced today! You can befriend others and invite them to a meal, game night, or Bible study. Since the spirit of hospitality is to welcome people into your life wherever you are, your family could invite someone to join your picnic, church event, or outing. Share God’s love without expecting a favor or invitation in return. Do not exclude nonbelievers from your hospitality; rather, take the opportunity to give them Jesus’ love through your words and actions. You can be kind



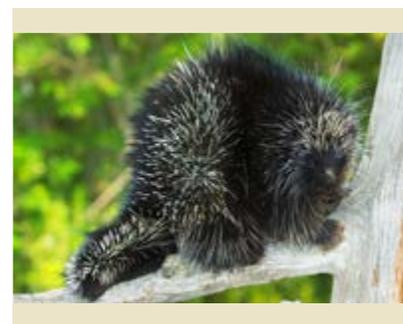
Hospitality is often demonstrated through loving preparations to warmly welcome others into one’s life and home.

The opposite of *hospitality* is *unfriendliness*. Because an unfriendly person focuses primarily on himself, he easily overlooks others’ feelings, desires, and needs. He doesn’t welcome newcomers and may avoid most people because he is overly concerned with what

and respectful to an unbeliever without approving of his sin or false beliefs. Hospitality starts at home by practicing good manners, caring for each other, and working together to prepare for guests.

others think of him. Or he may be exclusive, meaning he will be unfriendly unless he really likes someone. Perhaps he has been hurt and avoids people, or doesn’t know *how* to befriend others. He may fluctuate between thinking “I don’t care if I’m alone” and “I wish I wasn’t so lonely.” Rather than share what he has, the unfriendly child clings tightly to his possessions. As a result of his selfishness, others avoid him and he misses out on enjoyable friendships. Unfriendly people are not experiencing and expressing the love of Jesus, the Friend Who gave His life for them. (See John 15:13.)

Hospitality was first demonstrated by God when He created the world and provided for the needs of mankind. He gave Adam and Eve a place to live and food to eat and fellowshiped with them in the Garden. This fellowship was broken when sin entered the world. However, God offered to meet mankind’s greatest need—forgiveness—through Jesus’ payment for sin. When we trust Jesus, we are accepted in Him, the beloved Son. God then welcomes us as His children. He gives us everything needed for life and godliness while He prepares a place for us to live with Him in Heaven. During our time on earth, God wants us to meet others’ needs as an expression of His love and hospitality toward us.



Just as people are repelled by the sharp quills of a porcupine, unfriendliness repels potential ministry and friendships.

Hospitality in Scripture

As you read and study God's Word, see Who He is, and allow Him to work in you, your life will become a radiant expression of Him. God will be glorified as His character is seen in you.

The Character of God

We see examples of hospitality in God's character in the following ways:

- **God provided for His prophet Elijah in the wilderness by sending ravens to feed him.**
(See I Kings 17:4.)
- **God provides for His own and reveals His goodness even to their enemies.**
(See Psalm 23:5.)
- **God satisfies the spiritually hungry.**
(See Psalm 107:9.)
- **Jesus provided spiritual food as well as physical nourishment for His listeners.**
(See Matthew 5:1–2, 14:14–20.)
- **Jesus offered “living water” to a sinful woman to refresh her thirsty soul.**
(See John 4:9–10, 13–15.)
- **Jesus is preparing a place in Heaven for believers, and He will receive them to dwell with Him.**
(See John 14:2–3.)
- **The Holy Spirit welcomes believers to partake of the “water of life.”**
(See Revelation 22:17.)

HOSPITALITY KEY VERSE

“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” HEBREWS 13:2

Hospitality in My Life

Now let's examine some ways God wants us to live out hospitality daily.

- **To whom does God instruct me to be hospitable?**
(See Luke 6:30, Luke 14:12–14, Romans 12:20, I John 3:17.)
- **How can I extend hospitality to Jesus today?**
(See Matthew 25:31, 40.)
- **What are two ways I can meet the spiritual needs of other believers?**
(See I Thessalonians 5:11.)
- **What effect should my hospitality have on those who receive it?**
(See Hebrews 10:24.)
- **When I practice hospitality, what attitude pleases God?**
(See I Peter 4:8–9, Colossians 3:23.)
- **Why should I lovingly welcome others, including those from cultures other than my own?**
(See Leviticus 19:33–34, Romans 15:7.)
- **What simple act of hospitality will most definitely be rewarded by God?**
(See Matthew 10:42.)

Bible Story

The Shunammite Woman Prepares for a Guest

After the prophet Elijah was taken to Heaven, his helper, Elisha, carried on Elijah's ministry. During a conflict with the Moabites, three Israelite kings followed Elisha's counsel, and the Moabites were miraculously defeated. God also sent Elisha to minister to the common people. Once, a poor woman requested Elisha's help when her Godly husband died. If this widow failed to pay her husband's debts, her home and children would be seized by creditors. Elisha told her to borrow many containers from her neighbors and to then pour her remaining oil from her small jug into the borrowed containers. As she poured, God worked a miracle and multiplied the oil

to fill all the containers! The widow then sold the oil, paid her debts, and had money left to live on. Often Elisha would travel great distances, teaching in the schools of the prophets across the land. Whenever the prophet passed through the small village of Shunem, an affluent, influential Shunammite couple hosted him for dinner. One day, the wife was inspired to extend greater hospitality to this prophet. Which of his needs did she anticipate? What request did she present to her husband? Would God bless her for the hospitality she offered to His prophet?

Let's read the Bible story in II Kings 4:8–17 and then discuss the following questions.

- 1. What did the Shunammite woman anticipate that Elisha would need during his travels? Did Elisha ask her to meet this need? (See II Kings 4:8.)**

What is one need that you can anticipate that someone you know may have today? How could you meet this need?

- 2. How frequently did the woman prepare a meal for Elisha when he came through her town? (See II Kings 4:8.)**

What ongoing needs in your home can you cheerfully meet to encourage your family and your guests? What extra tasks might you take on or assist with when company is coming?

- 3. Whom did the woman ask before offering Elisha a place to stay? (See II Kings 4:9–10a.)**

Why is it important to check with your parents before inviting someone to come to your home? What task can you volunteer to do before company arrives?

- 4. What furnishings did the woman plan to place in the prophet's room that he might appreciate? (See II Kings 4:10b, c.)**

What items might you thoughtfully place in a guest's bedroom and bathroom before they visit? How can you contribute to a restful, pleasant atmosphere in your home?

- 5. When Elisha's servant asked the Shunammite woman how they could repay her kindness, how did she reply? (See II Kings 4:12–13.)**

When you extend hospitality to someone, should you anticipate repayment or gifts? Why or why not? (See Matthew 6:3–5, Luke 6:35.)

- 6. What did Elisha's servant anticipate the couple would desire? How were the woman and her husband rewarded by God for their generous hospitality? (See II King 4:14–17.)**

What will you discover when anticipating and providing for others' needs? (See Acts 20:35.)

Memory Verse

Hebrews 13:2

“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”

HEBREWS 13:2

Memory Verse Game: Knock, Knock, You're It!

Select one child to sit facing a wall with his back toward the others, who are seated in a semicircle. Have the other children slowly read the verse aloud together. As each word of the verse is said, starting with the child on the left, have the children take turns raising and lowering their hands. While the children are reciting the verse, the one with his back to the others chooses when to knock on the wall. When he knocks, whoever was raising his hand at that moment switches places with the “knocker.” Continue until everyone has the verse memorized or until each person has had a chance to be the knocker.

Doers of the Word: Hebrews 13:2

In the blank below, write how this verse could be applied in your life, e.g., “treat others as I would You if You were my Guest,” “warmly welcome visitors,” or “make our guests’ visit enjoyable.”

“Dear Lord, I yield to You and am willing to apply this verse. Help me to _____

_____.

I ask that You would develop hospitality in my life. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

When the Lord gives you an opportunity to apply this verse, write it in your journal to later recall God’s working in your life.

Word Puzzle

Word Search

Instructions

Enjoy meditating on and thinking about the words of the hospitality key verse and definition as you find them in the word search below. The underlined words are hidden horizontally, vertically, diagonally, or backwards. (Answers can be found on page 12.)



Hebrews 13:2

“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”

Hospitality

Cheerfully sharing food, shelter, and spiritual refreshment with those God brings into my life

If finding the underlined words is too difficult or frustrating for your child, assign only a few words to find, such as “God” and “life.” Younger children could point to the ABCs. Older children may enjoy the extra challenge of finding all the words of the verse instead of only the underlined words.

Activity

Blueprint Preparations

Supplies:

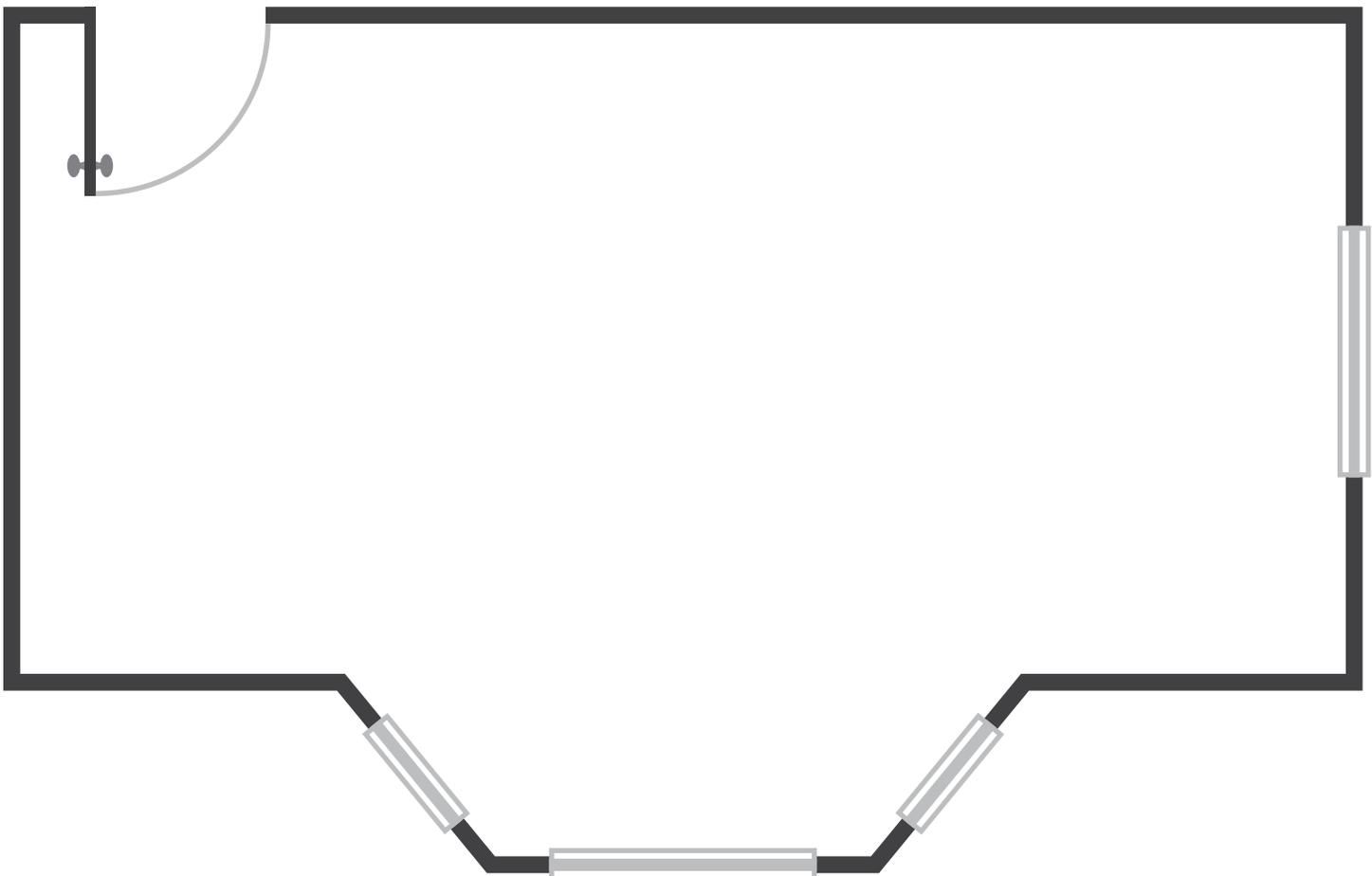
- A photocopy of the “blueprint template” from page 13
- A photocopy of this page
- Scissors

Instructions

The Shunammite woman considered what Elisha would need and furnished his room accordingly. Imagine your blueprint represents a guest room as you cut out the furniture from the template. I will give you a list of various guests you may be hosting. Anticipate what these guests might need that could be placed in this room. Select specific furnishings and arrange them on top of the blueprint to best meet your guests’ needs:

- A grandparent visiting for a month
- A missionary staying for one night
- A couple needing an afternoon to pray about a decision together
- Children napping or playing for an afternoon
- A college student studying for a final exam
- A family experiencing homelessness for a week due to a crisis situation
- Elisha staying at the Shunammite couple’s home (See II Kings 4:10.)

If you were a guest, how would you like this room to be furnished? By considering what you might appreciate, you can better anticipate what others might appreciate. As you prepare to host, ask yourself: What else might I include to accommodate my guest? What items may need to be removed in order to declutter my home?



Explaining Salvation to a Child

Christ Our Righteousness

You will need the following items: sticky notes, pen, and a white bed sheet.

The Bible tells us about God. He is the Creator of the universe and He is holy. God loves us and created us to have fellowship with Him. (See [Revelation 4:11](#).)

Select a volunteer who would not mind standing to represent the sin of all people. Romans 3:23 says, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Sin is anything we think, say, or do that breaks God’s Law. Can you name some examples of sin? As the children answer, write their examples on sticky notes and place them onto the volunteer’s clothing (e.g., speaking unkind words, stealing, disobeying, doing good with wrong motives).

Because we have all sinned, and God is holy, we are eternally separated from Him. However, because God loves us so much, He sent His Son, Jesus, Who died on the cross to pay for our sin and Who rose again to conquer death! Now we can have fellowship with God forever

through Christ. (See [John 17:3](#).) If we accept God’s gift of salvation, Christ’s blood cleanses us from sin, and His righteousness is put upon us! (See [II Corinthians 5:21](#).)

Remove the sticky notes and wrap the white sheet around the volunteer to represent Jesus’ robe of righteousness.

Isaiah 31:10 describes what has happened this way: “My soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness. . . .” In Romans 10:9–10, we are told how we can accept this gift: “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Are you trusting in Jesus Christ for your salvation? If so, your sins are forgiven and Christ is living in you!

Your new, inward identity is one of righteousness in God’s eyes. The more you realize that you are a new creature in Christ and walk in the Spirit, the more your outward actions will demonstrate Christ living in you. Just as the Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 2:20, you can also say, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” God gives us eternal life—sweet constant fellowship in the Spirit with our Savior—and then His righteousness is seen in us for His glory. (See [John 15:4–10](#).)

In a Nutshell

1. God created all things ([Colossians 1:16](#)). God is holy ([Leviticus 19:2](#)). God loves us ([John 3:16](#)).
2. Our sin separates us from God ([Romans 3:23](#)).
3. God sent His Son, Jesus, to provide the way for our sins to be forgiven and for fellowship with Him to be restored ([Ephesians 1:6–7](#)). Jesus accomplished our salvation through His
4. We can do nothing to earn salvation. It is a free gift from God that we receive by faith ([Ephesians 2:8–9](#)).
5. We receive that gift of salvation by confessing with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing in our heart that God has raised Him from the dead ([Romans 10:9–10](#)).

Hymn History

“Make Me a Channel of Blessing”

Sing “Make Me a Channel of Blessing” and read about the hospitality proclaimed by the hymn writer, Harper G. Smyth.

Music ministry is one avenue of hospitality! Harper G. Smyth is an example of someone who used his musical talent to bring spiritual refreshment to others.

After completing his musical training in New York, Mr. Smyth became a performing member of the prestigious Metropolitan Opera House. After performing for two years, he left the Opera House. He then traveled to Indianapolis, and later to Atlanta, to direct church choirs.



Euclid Avenue Baptist Church in Cleveland, Ohio, was where Mr. Harper G. Smyth served as choir director from 1913 until his death in 1945.

Mr. Smyth also served as the song leader for one of D. L. Moody’s key evangelists who ministered at the 1893 World’s Fair in Chicago. The music minister’s strong voice led the crowd in singing, preparing their hearts to hear the Gospel. He enthusiastically fulfilled his task, thrilled to know he was preparing people to receive spiritual refreshment. Indeed, his music ministry was a form of Christian hospitality.

Ten years after his ministry at the World’s Fair, Mr. Smyth wrote the hymn “Make Me a Channel of Blessing.” The words clearly expressed his life’s desire and drive:

*Is your life a channel of blessing?
Is the love of God flowing through you?
Are you telling the lost of the Savior?
Are you ready His service to do?*

Later, Mr. Smyth moved to Cleveland, Ohio, and became music director at Euclid Street Baptist Church. For more than thirty years, he ministered there. He also willingly accepted other ministry opportunities. For example, in 1924, he led the singing at the Republican National Convention. He was involved in the ministry of the Salvation Army too. Mr. Smyth’s life was wholly dedicated to serving God, even to his last breath: Mr. Smyth was leading U.S. Army inductees as they sang when he suffered a stroke and entered God’s presence.

Truly, Mr. Smyth was a channel of God’s blessing to others. His voice studio trained people to sing for God’s glory. His church solos and choir directing led others in worship. In addition to imparting spiritual refreshment through his musical endeavors, he provided physical food and shelter to needy folks through his ministry with the Salvation Army.

Hospitality brings blessing to both the recipient and the giver! Some ways to show hospitality include inviting friends to share a meal with you, visiting the sick, and offering someone a place to rest. Extending hospitality to strangers is possible by serving through a prison ministry, at a homeless shelter, or at a charity.

Mr. Smyth’s hymn closes with a warning:

*We cannot be channels of blessing
If our lives are not free from known sin;
We will barriers be and a hindrance
To those we are trying to win.*

Let’s heed this warning by asking God to purify our hearts so that we may joyfully practice hospitality!

Make Me a Channel of Blessing

Harper G. Smyth (1873–1945)

Harper G. Smyth (1873–1945)

1. Is your life a chan-nel of blessing? Is the love of God flow-ing thro'
 2. Is your life a chan-nel of blessing? Are you bur-dened for those who are
 3. Is your life a chan-nel of blessing? Is it dai - ly tell - ing for
 4. We can-not be chan-nels of blessing If our lives are not free from known

you? Are you tell - ing the lost of the Sav - ior? Are you
 lost? Have you urged up - on those who are stray - ing The
 Him? Have you spo - ken the word of sal - va - tion To
 sin. We will bar - ri - ers be and a hin - drance To

read - y His ser-vice to do?
 Sav - ior Who died on the cross? Make me a chan-nel of blessing to-day,
 those who are dy - ing in sin?
 those we are try - ing to win.

Make me a chan-nel of bless-ing, I pray; My life pos-sess-ing,

my ser-vice bless-ing, Make me a chan-nel of bless-ing to-day.

Shunammite Woman Prepares for a Guest



“Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither. And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber . . .” (II Kings 4:10–11).

Word Search Answer Key

N M H C M Z K A Y L Y V B L
D C Y E M O S B A X I J R V
C O T P B P E N N K Q G I M
B J I N M R D O G Z Y N N U
D P L W E O E F E L K I G N
E V A H L M E W L A S A S A
X L T M U T H U S U T T T W
Y T I O F G F S R T B R R A
W H P F T R Z H E I J E A R
K Z S D E N I A T R E T N E
N G O E G S I R L I F N G S
K O H F R B W I E P W E E A
F C T H O S E N H S R F R O
U Q C W F R U G S S U I S Z

Hymn History Bibliography

Reynolds, William J., *Hymns of Our Faith*, Broadman Press, Nashville, 1964, pp. 97, 410.

International Who's Who in Music and Musical Gazetteer, edited by Cesar Saerchinger, first ed. 1918, NY, Current Literature Publishing Company, p. 599.

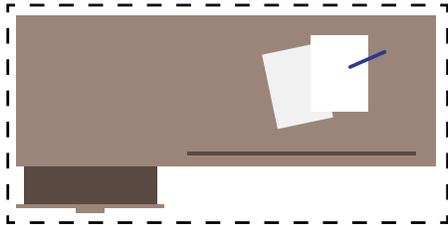
Recommended Resources

- *2021 Biblical Character Illustrated Calendar*
- *Hymns for the Family* CDs (“Make Me a Channel of Blessing” is sung to piano accompaniment on Volume 2.)
- *The Power for True Success*
- *Understanding Spiritual Gifts*
- Character Cards
- Character Cards Memory Game
- *Character Sketches*, Volumes I–III
- *Achieving True Success*
- *The Power of Hospitality* by Chuck and Kathie Crismier
- *My Heart, Christ’s Home* by Robert Boyd Munger
- *Developing Your Home Into a Ministry Center* CD by Anne Hogan
- “The Principles of Hospitality” (message by Larry Guthrie, available at embassymedia.com)
- “Entertaining God” (message by Doug Small, available at embassymedia.com)

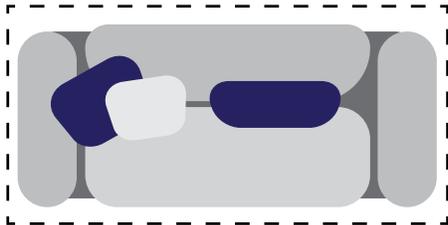
To view these resources
and many more, visit us at:

store.iblp.org

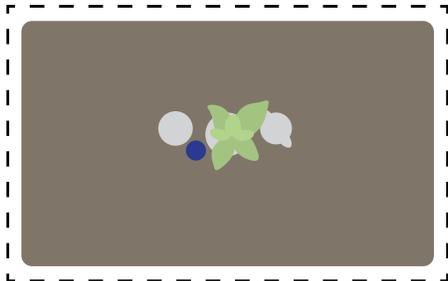
Blueprint Template



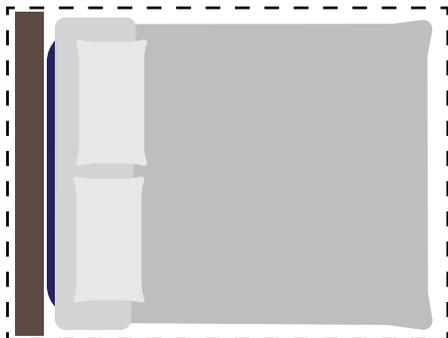
Desk



Couch



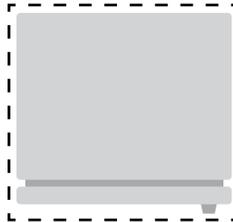
Table



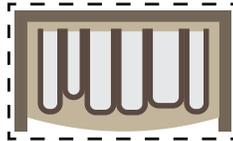
Bed



Computer



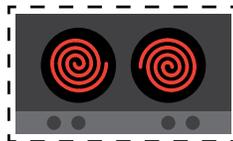
Refrigerator



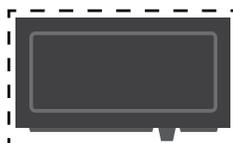
Bookshelf



Toy Box



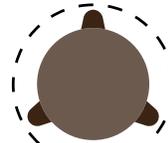
Stove Top



Microwave



Stool



Stool



Stool



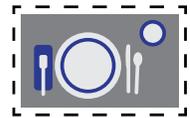
Stool



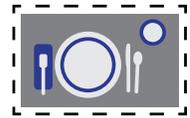
Candlestick



Lamp



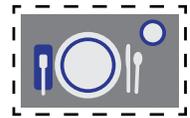
Place Setting



Place Setting



Place Setting



Place Setting