

**Topic:** Cultural Gathering

**Abstract:** This is a narrative about my religious faith, a cultural gathering and a strong loving family. The determination of making a wonderful experience for my daughter's Baptism. You will get an insight of the food we make, the gathering events that happen, the *piñata* experience and the *bolo* experience too. In our Mexican culture anything that you celebrate turns out to be a very fun, enjoyable and exhausting event but at the same time you find that all our people share what they have, bring other to participate and most importantly lend you a hand when you need it.

**Key Words:** Baptism , daughter, *Catolicos*, Mexican tradition, Culture, Celebrate, *Piñata* , *Bolo*, Raza, Family

**Ethnic Designation:** *Mexicana*

**Cultural Category:** Social Practice

### *El Convivio/The Gathering*

My daughter was about to be 8 months when we decided to get her Baptized. Faith for our family is very important not because it is just "*tradicion*" in the Mexican culture or because people encourage us to be *Catolicos* or "make us", as others would say, but it is something more than just that. I do believe that God has giving his life for every single one of us, and he wants to guide us to be good people, he does not force us to make the right decisions yet he gives us a choice and this is what I have chosen for myself, have him be the one who guides my life and do what he asks of me. Baptizing my daughter is a way to give her that strength and assuredness

that no matter what the world says, education or media there will always be someone at her side, God and no one can take that away from her.

We had just one month to get everything that was needed for the baptism. The *Padrinos*, the preparation classes, the baptism date, her white little dress, her candle, her children's Bible, and a Rosary and her "little" thanks giving party. The "little" party was not so little after all, exactly fifty invitations were passes out and a couple hours later I had no just fifty guests at my home but one hundred fifty, the majority parishioners, members of our church.

The *Bautismo* was schedule to be at ten in the morning. When we arrived at the parish, everything was set to go. We heard the first reading, sang a psalm, professed our faith and next came the Baptism, we were full of enthusiasm and joy. When we had finished the Rite of Baptism we took pictures all together. Took pictures of my daughter with her grandparents, her aunts and uncles, her cousins, and her not so aunts, uncles and cousins, you name it even the neighbor.

As we drove up to the drive way into our garage friends and families had already helped us put up all the decorations, placed all the tableware on the tables out in the backyard. Still working on cooking the food for the "*convivio*" one of our dear friends came to drop off the jumping house and some games he had prepared for the kids that were coming. A couple of hours went by, and we had written in the invitation that everything were to start "a las dos de la tarde." As it always happen with our *raza* some got to our home on time but the majority, you know .....they are a "little" late.... Just a little, all were there at four.

As everyone would approach my daughter to squeeze her with a hug and put lipstick on her forehead and cheek from all the kisses, our guests would bring a present and a plate of food they had made. Some brought chicken *mole*, *enchiladas*, *flautas*, *pozole*, *gelatina*, *chicharrones*,

*arroz con leche*, you name it, lots and lots of different Mexican foods. After a while both of the tables we had put out for the food were excessively full of all that food they had brought. The food we made were *tacos de azada, al pastor, lengua y tripas*. We also made a little bit of *birria de rez, arroz y frijoles*. Everyone took a plate and started to serve whatever they like and wanted to eat. They had a variety of food to choose from. Many came up to the “buffet” for seconds and a few for thirds.

After the “comida” we gathered all the children to hit the famous “piñata” a piñata is a figure made of paper like newspaper glue, tissue paper, and other things that I don’t recall at the time, but it hangs from a rope, two people hold the ends of the rope, go on top of something like a tree, a lifted truck, even on top of the roof of the house and move it around for the kids to hit and hit with a wood stick. My husband and I had filled up the piñata with lots and lots of Mexican candy. This candy were *paletas con chile, chicles, rellenitos*, and we also added *tostitos, cacaguates* , and *naranjas*. All the children were yelling and jumping of excitement because they wanted to be the first one to hit the *piñata*. We formed a line from shortest to tallest so everyone had the opportunity to hit the *piñata*. Half way through the line a seven year-old boy broke the *piñata* and suddenly all the kids started running everywhere to pick up the candy that fell from the *piñata*.

After the coast was clear we passed a hat around for the “bolo”, when everyone puts in change like quarter and dimes even one dollar bills and five dollar bills to throw up in the air so kids can catch the money and also pick up those that falls on the ground, pretty much free money. Adults may also participate in this “bolo.”

As the party ends there is a little music to dance too and everyone goes home. In our Mexican tradition anything you celebrate and do turns out to be a very fun and exhausting event

too. But what is wonderful of our culture is that everyone shares what they have, bring others to participate and lend a hand when you need it. Although the majority of us are not very good on been on time, which can be something we can work on independently, I surely know that every family will bring their children into whatever they are practicing as a faith and as a culture. We are the examples of our children and they will follow our leads. This blessed experience I would not have traded it for any other. I enjoy and respect the way that I was raised.