

# Table Setting Contest Guidelines



*Do you know that you can be a designer each time you set the table? A designer chooses and arranges things according to a plan for beauty and order. A neat, interesting, clean and attractive table setting makes any meal more enjoyable. Actually, there is more than one way to set a table. The usual way to set a table is to put all the dishes, flatware, and food on the table before anyone sits down. When there is company or for a special meal, part of the food and dishes may be left in the kitchen and served later. Diners at a buffet or a picnic may fill their plates and glasses before they are seated. The way to set your table depends upon the way the meal is to be served. Be creative and have fun.*

**Select a Theme:** What is the occasion, a family dinner, a holiday, or lunch with friends? Select a theme that fits the occasion. Possibilities can run from a fishing party sack lunch to a formal Mother's Day dinner.

**Table Appointments:** Include any item used to set a table; tablecloth, placemats, dinnerware, glassware, flatware, and centerpiece. Choose table appointments to fit the occasion and carry out the theme. Paper plates, plasticware, and paper napkins may be used for a picnic but they would not be appropriate for a formal dinner.

**The Table Cover:** Is the background for the food and table appointments placed on it. It protects the table and makes for less noise. Placemats or tablecloths may be used. Sometimes the table is left bare. Choose a cover that is appropriate for the occasion and the other table appointments. You may match or blend colors and textures in the dishes use something quite different for contrast.

\* One place setting is to be displayed. Include table covering, dinnerware, stemware, flatware, centerpiece and menu.

\* Color texture, design and creativity are important.

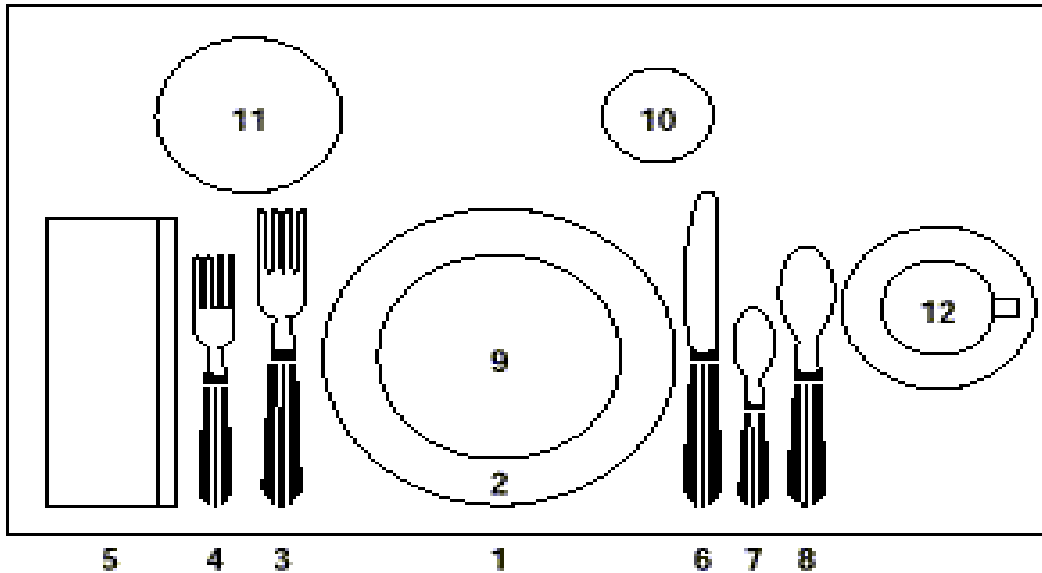
**The Place Setting:** Allow at least 20 inches for each person's dishes. This is called a cover and each cover is set exactly the same. A cover contains the dinnerware and flatware for the meal served.

- 1) Put the plate, china, pottery paper, glass, etc., in the center of the cover about one inch from the edge of the table. If a table is not used at the event, placemat may vary.
- 2) Place the knives and spoons on the right side, the forks, silver, plastic, etc. on the left about one inch from the plate and one inch from the edge of the table. Turn the cutting edge of the knife towards the plate. If there is more than one piece in each cover, such as one dinner fork and a salad fork or one teaspoon and a soup spoon, place the one that will be used first outside the other.
- 3) Napkins folded into oblongs are placed next to the forks. The fold of the oblong should be to the left so it opens like a book. Decorative and creative folds are encouraged. Placement of the napkin may vary.
- 4) The first beverage glass is placed about one inch above the tip of the knife. If serving more than one beverage, place additional glass (es) to the right of first glass in order served.
- 5) If coffee or tea is served, the cup is placed on the saucer and set to the right of the spoon one inch from the edge of the table. Have the handle pointing to the right.
- 6) Salad and dessert bowls may be placed left of the forks and napkin or at the top of the fork.
- 7) When selecting your cover, include a dish for each course. Placement may vary according to how and when food is served.

**The Centerpiece:** Should be coordinated with the table appointment and be appropriate for the occasion. If a centerpiece is used, it should not obstruct anyone's view. Centerpiece candles are not to be lit.

**Menu:** When planning a menu, first decide on the main dish. Select appropriate vegetables, appetizer, soup or salad. Add a bread, dessert and beverage, if desired. Use the Food Guide Pyramid to plan nutritious meals. Breakfast, party, and picnic menus should contain two or three food groups. Other meals should contain at least five food groups from the Food Guide Pyramid, available at the 4-H Office, FCS1094#. Participants are encouraged to develop interesting and creative menus. For example, you might name a food to fit your theme.

**Attire:** Participant's attire should correspond with the theme/occasion of their table setting.



- 1---The napkin should be one inch from the edge of the table.
- 2--- The plate is always in the center of the place setting.
- 3---The dinner fork is placed at the left of the plate.
- 4---If a salad fork is used, it is placed to the left of the dinner fork.
- 5--The napkin is placed to the left of the fork, with the fold on the left. It can also go under a fork or on top of the plate.
- 6---The knife is placed to the right of the plate with the sharp blade facing in towards the plate.
- 7---The teaspoon is placed to the right of the knife.
- 8---If a soup spoon is needed, it is placed to the right of the teaspoon.
- 9---The soup bowl may be placed on the dinner plate.
- 10---The drinking glass is placed at the tip of the knife.
- 11---If a salad plate is used, place it just above the tip of the fork.
- 12---The cup or mug is placed to the top right of the spoons.