

Meri Squares Square Dance Club

A Merry Club!

How to be an Angel

With a new season upon us, and an influx of new dancers just around the corner, we want to remind you that you are ALL angels to the new dancers. But what does that mean? And how should we act as angels?

First and foremost – be FRIENDLY! We want them to feel like they are part of Meri Squares from the very first time they step in the dance hall. Remember – ANY square dancer is just a “friend you haven’t met yet.” Walk up to them and say Hello – show them you want to be their friend. You never know who might turn out to be your new best friend!

On Party Nights and during the last tip of the night, when we all dance together, make sure all the new dancers are dancing. Never leave a new dancer sitting on the sidelines during a tip that is specifically for them! Also, don’t fill the squares with all Mainstream dancers and leave the new dancers dancing in a square altogether. Be sure the new dancers are well distributed amongst all the squares. Dancing with the experienced dancers – YOU!! – is the chance for them to see that the calls Wendy taught them that night are not as difficult as they seemed when they were dancing without angels.

If a single new dancer is bold enough to approach you and ask if you will be his/her partner for a dance, consider it an honour!!! But if you already have a partner for the next tip, say “No” in a friendly manner – and say “But I’d be happy to be in the square with you!” ENCOURAGE them and help them do the best they can. They will be nervous, but smile a lot and be friendly.

When you dance with them, they WILL need your help from time to time. Be nice – and gentle - about it. Don’t push or pull or grab. They will already feel badly about making a mistake. Help them gently and explain that we ALL make mistakes from time to time, so “don’t feel bad. No one is perfect.” Don’t make them feel like a second-class citizen because they made a mistake. YOU make mistakes from time to time, too! ☺

Let John or Wendy know if a dancer is having problems with a specific call. They can review that call during the next tip. Although you mean well, it is not a good idea for Angels to “teach” during a break. Let John and Wendy be the teachers. You help more by being observant and keeping them aware of those who need help!

Do not talk in the square when John or Wendy is giving instructions. Learning to listen to their commands requires concentration. No one can listen to two people at the same time. All should be listening to the Caller. New dancers need to learn this ‘early on’, so please set the example.

Some dancing styles that experienced dancers have adopted (eg: twirls, short-cuts) are not appropriate for new dancers. All Basic moves should be kept in pure form. All the calls should be executed EXACTLY as John and Wendy teach them. The ‘frills’ can be added later on.

Lastly, never hesitate to dance with them, talk with them during breaks, encourage them, reassure them, praise them!! Let them fully experience this great activity and quickly know that they are TRULY welcome in the Meri Squares, the best club on the planet!!