



Halloween Opportunity

According to national polls, about 80 to 90 percent of children go trick-or-treating each year. This means that Halloween is an opportunity to reach millions of kids with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. As Halloween approaches, parents often ask me, "Should we participate in Halloween?" Others ask, "How can we impact our neighbors on this night this year?"

While it would be nearly impossible to verbally explain the Gospel with every child who comes to your door, tracts provide a simple way to share the Gospel with even the largest of crowds. By distributing tracts along with candy you can provide each and every child that comes to your door with an evangelistic presentation.

The words of Jesus found in Matthew 5:14-16 can give some direction in this. It reads, "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." Thank you for "letting your light shine" in such a way.

Have fun. Christians should be the example of joy at any season. Jesus was the kind of guy you would invite to a party.

You Can Make a Difference

Leave Your Light On

By leaving your light on, you are opening the opportunity to share the Gospel with potentially hundreds of children. Normally attracting this many people to an evangelistic event would take weeks of planning and be very costly, but at Halloween it is as simple as a flick of the light switch. Put simply, leaving your light on could possibly be the most effective evangelistic effort you could make all year.

Some Basic Guidelines

Pray! - Pray for your neighborhood, the children, parents, and strangers that will pass down your street. Pray for God's blessing on neighboring churches that are hosting outreach events on this night. Pray that God will make you and your home a lighthouse in this darkened world.

Wearing a Costume?

Here are some guidelines to follow if you choose to dress up this Halloween night.

- As a believer, you want to do “everything as unto the Lord”. You also have a desire to honor and glorify your Savior in all that you do. In light of this, avoid scary, embarrassing, or disgusting costumes.
- Make certain that whatever the costume or make-up you choose you look your best because you are an ambassador of Christ. Makeup should be neat, clean, and safe. Avoid the thrown together or unkempt look.
- Costumes that can start positive conversations that could lead to the gospel:
 - Bible person, place, or thing
 - Historical figure
 - Animal
- Write and rehearse a short testimony or story that goes with your costume. That way when people acknowledge how cute or interesting you look, you can come back with a brief but poignant explanation of what or who you are which will give them something to think about.

Candy Alternatives

Parents of small children will be pleased when you pass out something other than sugary sweets at Halloween. Consider small toys, temporary tattoos, stickers, twirly straws or gift certificates to a nearby family attraction.

Non-food options:

Temporary tattoos
Stickers
Playdoh
Pencils
Small pads of paper
Fancy erasers
Pencil toppers
Crayons
Coins (pennies, nickels, dimes)
False teeth
Superballs
“Slime”
Kazoos or other small musical instruments
Tiny decks of cards
Origami paper & instructions
Bubbles

Healthier food options:

Granola bars
Cereal bars
Pretzels
Packets of instant hot chocolate
Raisins
Fruit snacks
Pre-packaged trail mix
Pre-packaged cookies

Ideas for those who are simply handing out candy:

- Hand out great candy and a Gospel tract. The tract has an invitation to Follow the Star on the back.
- Smile, get happy, and hand out genuine compliments with the candy and tract. A kind word concerning a costume or behavior will go a long way with the child and their accompanying adult.
- Don't be too in-your-face preachy. This is the only night all year on which children will come to your door asking for something good. Do not "scare" them off with obnoxious or offensive preaching delivered under the guise of witnessing. Jesus said, "Let the little children come." He didn't say to force them, scare them, or trick them into the treat of salvation.
- You may also want to have some fun Christian children's music playing on your front porch.
- Happy non-scary decorations on your lawn or porch can have a positive impact on your neighbors.
- Make certain that your sidewalk and porch are well-lit and free of debris.

Planning for the Mini Fall Festival – Light Up the Night Style

Find some helpers:

Invite members of your Community Group, neighbors, friends, and grandparents. If your location has been listed in the FBC foyer, you will get the names of those who signed up emailed to you. Contact them and give them specific details for your event. Have some adults come early to help set up. You can be as simple or as elaborate as you want.

Be sure to have a good supply of candy and FBC gospel tracts. You'll be given tracts and candy from the donations being collected. There is no such thing as being over prepared.

Welcome every child as if he/she was Jesus Himself. Some kids will return to your event again and again throughout the evening. Love on them every time they arrive.

Ideas

Hot Cider – Heat Cider or Hot Chocolate in a crock pot and let the smell of Fall fill your yard and warm chilled parents and kids alike.

Light up your Yard – If you have some halogen work lights or if you know someone who does and will loan them to you, flood your home with light. "You are the light on a hill."

Make-a-Treat - Set up a table where children can make their own treats. Cookie decorating is probably the easiest make-your-own treat to set up

Movie - Set up a TV and DVD with a fun kid's movie playing. Several chairs or hay bales can be spaced as seating for this.

Play Christian Music – Background music is always a nice touch. Play your favorite Christian contemporary music out in your yard.

S'mores – Put a portable fire pit in your front yard and provide the sticks and ingredients for s'mores or just roasted marshmallows. Always have an adult attend to the fire.

Game Ideas

Apple Balance Race – Have a couple of kids balance an apple on top of their heads and race across the yard and back.

Bean Bag or Candy Toss – Make a target out of anything and give each child a piece of candy for hitting anywhere close.

Hula Hoop Toss – Give each child a turn at tossing a Hula Hoop over a target. Award candy for every good try.

Lollipop Toss – Poke numerous holes in the bottom of a card board box with a large nail. Flip the box over and push lollipops into the holes. Canning jar rings work well to toss at the lollipops. Let each kid toss until they ring a lollipop and win.

Trick-or-Treat Bag Bean Bag Toss - Purchase trick or treat bags that can stand on their own. Add candy and assorted prizes to the bag to give it some weight and add some tissue paper so the top remains open and the kids can't see what is inside. The kids line up at a throw line and Trick or Treat bags are scattered about in front of them. The kids then are given a bean bag to throw for one of the treat bags. If they get it in the treat bag, then they can pick up that bag, if they miss they try again.

Pumpkin Bean Bag Toss - Purchase a variety of plastic pumpkins (5 is a good amount). Add a little weight to the bottom so the bean bags don't knock them over and set them haphazardly at varying distances from the throw line. Add point values to each pumpkin. The further away the higher the point value. Each child gets 3 bean bags per turn and throws the bean bags at the pumpkins. After the throw you score the points and give them a prize.

Candy Corn Guess – Fill a jar with Candy Corn and figure out how many pieces are in the jar. Let the kids guess and give prizes for anyone willing to guess.

Doughnuts on a String -Tie a length of rope between two trees. With children standing under the rope, tie pieces of ribbon to the doughnuts (one per player) and then to the rope so the treats hang slightly above mouth level. Have players start on the count of three. Instruct each to eat an entire doughnut -- no hands allowed -- without letting it fall off the ribbon. The first to finish wins.

Find the Pumpkins – Hide mini pumpkins or gourds around your yard. Award a prize to those who find them. Re-hide as often as needed.

Pin the Face on the Pumpkin - Any child who has played Pin the Tail on the Donkey will pick up this game quickly. Cut out eyes, noses, and mouths from black construction paper. Use double sided tape and give a set of cutouts to the player. Place a large pumpkin on a low table or a bench. With blindfolded player starting four feet away (little ones may stand closer), instruct them to walk toward the pumpkin and create a jack-o'-lantern face (without peeking).

Pin the Stem on the Pumpkin – Just like pin the Tail on the Donkey. You know how to play!

Pumpkin Bowling - Supplies: 3 small pumpkins, 10 - 2 liter soda bottles filled with a pint of water to give the "pins" some weight. The small pumpkins are the bowling balls. Kids that do not get a strike receive another attempt to bowl a strike. If they knock over any pins they receive a prize if they do bowl a strike they receive a better prize.

Pumpkin Penny Pitch - Carve out a pumpkin (or two, or three) and line the inside with plastic or aluminum foil. Place the pumpkins a couple feet away. Give each player ten pennies. Every time a penny goes into the pumpkin, a piece of candy is won.

Pumpkin Putt-Putt – Carve a hole out of the side and bottom of a pumpkin, so when it sets on the ground a golf ball can roll into the hole. Place your pumpkin on a sidewalk or driveway. With a couple of golf balls and a putter, you are ready to play Pumpkin Putt-Putt.

Pumpkin Roll – Put a Hula-Hoop in the yard and instruct the kids to roll a pumpkin into the hoop. Award a prize to all who try.

Treasure Chest - Fill a container with birdseed and place 10-15 pennies in the seed. Allow each child 20 seconds to find as many pennies as possible. Award players based on the total amount of pennies they have found.

What do I say?

You might be wondering about what you should say as you hand out candy and tracts or if someone asks you why you go to such effort on Halloween.

When you hand a child or an adult an FBC Gospel tract you could say something like:

“Here you go, this is some good news for you, and on the back it tells you about a wonderful Christmas activity for your family and a great coupon for frozen yogurt.”

Or

“This is the best treat you’ll get all night, and on the back it tells you about a fun activity for your family this Christmas and a great coupon for frozen yogurt.”

If they refuse, or hand it back, BE POLITE! Don’t tell them you cannot take it back. And do not start preaching to them. They have a choice. Be congenial and remember the way you act while witnessing has a tremendous effect. See: 1 Thess. 2:3-10.

If someone asks you why you are doing a LUTN event in your yard let them know that you are taking every opportunity to let the light of Jesus Christ shine in this world. Explain the LUTN tract to them and if they need further explanation ask them if you can show them with a Bible how they can be sure that they will go to heaven. If they say yes, here are four verses that will help you explain the gospel:

Romans 3:23 – We are all sinners

Romans 6:23 – The penalty for our sin is death

Romans 5:8 – Christ died for you

Ephesians 2:8-9 – You can be saved through faith alone

After walking through the scriptures ask *“Would you like to trust Christ as your Savior?”* If they say yes, you can lead them in a simple prayer like this *“Dear God, I know that I am a sinner. I know my sin deserves to be punished. I believe Christ died for me and rose from the grave. I trust Jesus Christ alone as my Savior. Thank you for the forgiveness and everlasting life that I now have. In Jesus name, amen.”* Assure them that there is nothing about this prayer that saves them. It is faith in Christ alone that saves them from the penalty of sin.

Follow-up is key! Invite this new believer to church. Invite them to investigate an online resource like godlife.com with you, or read through the Gospel of John with you.

Pray that God will continue to open doors in the lives of the people that you will meet.

Things to Avoid

- Scary costumes, decorations, or entertainment must be avoided. Clowns or costumed characters in your yard will tend to scare off smaller children. If you must have one of these, make certain that he/she is neat, clean, and attractive, and has a human counterpart. Make sure that he/she allows children to approach him/her rather than the other way around. Clowns and large costumed characters should not invade a child's space.
- Hard selling the Gospel on this night will not endear you to your neighbors. Consider this a drink-of-water kind of ministry. Blessing children and families will bring a return.
- Making this a complicated event ruins it for you and the kids. Do not stress out over this. You can do as much or as little as time and finances will allow.
- Poorly lit or cluttered walkways. Make sure that when children step on your property that they can get around without tripping over boxes, bags, or buckets.
- Foods that might cause an allergic reaction. We know that most anything could do this, but there are some common foods that rise to the top. Peanuts should not be served in any form.

Final Thought - After the Light up The Night

After the dust settles from the throngs of costumed children walking through your yard, gather the people who helped you and pray for those who came to your yard. Count the left over FBC gospel tracts and email Scott Santmier (scotts@fbcva.org) with an approximate count of how many visited. If you have a camera, go ahead and take some pictures so we can see how you presented your event. If you have time, a quick summary of your evening would be great too. Anything you share can help us better prepare for next year and share ideas with first-timers in the years to come.