

Perfect Kids' Party for Halloween!

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INTRODUCTION:

These Halloween party games and ideas are intended for Preschool – 2nd Grade children (ages 4-8 years). However, older elementary age children (3rd-5th grades) will enjoy them as well, especially if you modify them slightly for the older children.

Middle School and High School students often enjoy preparing for these events ahead of time. Halloween parties offer them opportunities for service projects for the younger children, and give them a chance to have fun in a safe, wholesome atmosphere as well. Consider asking teens to help with snack preparation, decorating the room, walking with younger children through the games, preparing the games, and helping with the games.

GENERAL INFORMATION on GAMES:

- Set up ahead of time.
- Have at least 1 adult or older Youth helper for each game.
- Run the games simultaneously.
 - Except for games you may wish to run only for a short time, such as the Apple Swing, or the Fishing Pond.
- Give out very small treats or gifts at each game.
 - You may wish to have some larger treats if someone does especially well or “wins” a game.
 - Everyone wins something if they participate!

CHOOSING A LOCATION:

If you have a choice of locations for your event, look for someplace like a large open classroom without lots of desks and chairs. Move furniture around if necessary. Take out any extra distractions that you can. (For instance if you are using a room with lots of toys and playthings along the wall, either drape them or take them out of the room.)

If you intend to have snacks, make sure that there is a place for the children to sit and eat quietly. It may be best to have these in a different room or off to the side.

Access to water is a plus. If there is a sink in your area, you will be better able to help clean up messes, get water for drinks, wash hands, etc.

PRE-PARTY ACTIVITIES:

Here are two fun ideas that are especially great if participants arrive early or have to wait a few minutes before the event starts!

- **Decorate Treat Sacks** – Give out small white sacks (or paper sacks) and let the children decorate and personalize their sacks with markers or crayons. Put names on them and keep the sacks straight during the party. No one wants to go home without their own sack of candy!
- **Photos** – Take photos of the children in their costumes, or with their treat sacks. Obtain permission from parents and get contact information so that the photos may be mailed or e-mailed home later! *A nice note sent home with an enclosed photo is a great way to welcome children and parents to visit again in the future!*

Halloween Party Snacks

Remember that for Little Guys... **“It’s all about the Candy!”**

That doesn’t mean that your snacks have to be the typical “Trick-or-Treat” goodies! In fact, the parents who have to take these youngsters home later may be pleased you didn’t give them lots of candy!

However, **don’t be a spoil sport!** The idea is to show the children that you can have safe, wholesome fun together as a group at Halloween. Just use your common sense!

A WORD ON SNACK SAFETY:

- Most churches and other organizations that work with children already have rules or guidelines in place regarding the distribution of snacks to children. Check with your church and follow their guidelines.
- Be aware of any food allergies the children may have. Obtain information on food allergies for each child from parents or guardians ahead of time.
- **Do not include nuts of any kind in any snacks!** Nut allergies are common. Also, choking dangers are increased with the use of nuts in snacks.

Drinks should be water based and cool. *(Actually water will be best with the treats!)*

Remember traditional treats like **candied apples and popcorn balls**. These are so rare now that they really make a big hit. If you have a Youth Group involved they can help make these ahead of time as a group project for the event.

For fun individual snacks in a bag, try your own version of the recipe below...

Autumn Pumpkin Smash *(A fun Trail Mix at Halloween!)*

Mix together:

Pretzel Sticks

Tiny Marshmallows

Dry Cereal *(Ex: Fruit Loops, Cheerios, etc.*

Plain M&M’s *(No Nuts! ...Did I already say that?)*

One package of those little orange sugary pumpkins they make at Halloween and nobody ever gives out because now everything has to be individually wrapped these days... *(You know the ones I mean!)*

Place portions in individually sealed sacks for each child.
Make sure everyone gets a pumpkin!

Halloween Party Games

CUPCAKE WALK (or Candy Walk)

Set Up: Write numbers (ex. 1-10) on full sheets of paper or construction paper. Decorate as you like. Cover front and back with clear contact paper. Tape the papers to the floor in your classroom in a circle. Write the same numbers on strips of paper. Put paper in hat or bowl. Have fun music available to turn on and off during the game.

During the Game: Invite children to stand on the numbers. Start music. Children walk around circle in the same direction. When music stops they stop on a numbered page. Draw a piece of paper out of the "hat". Read the number. The child on that number wins a cupcake or a larger piece of candy. Other children get a small piece of candy.

NO-NOSE THE CLOWN or (No-Nose the Pumpkin)

Set Up: Draw the outline of a clown's face on a large piece of paper. Do NOT draw the nose. Put an "X" on the face where the nose should go. Decorate as desired. (For Halloween, you may decide to draw the face of a Jack-o-Lantern, which gives you "No-Nose the Pumpkin" instead of "No-Nose the Clown".) Out of heavy cardboard cut out a nose. (A 2 inch circle for the clown, 2-3 inch triangle for the pumpkin.) Put Sticky Tack or a rolled up piece of painter's tape on the back of the nose, so that you can easily put it on and off the face. Use tape or Sticky Tack to put the face up on the wall at eye level for your students. Have a large handkerchief to use as a blindfold.

During the Game: Talk like you are a worker at a carnival and say something like this:
"Step right up folks and meet No-Nose the Clown! You can see right away why he's called No-Nose, 'cause poor old No Nose has got no nose! That's right folks! Step right up! Let's see who'll be the first to help old No-Nose get a Nose!"
Hand the child the nose with the tape or Sticky Tack. Blindfold the child. Face the child toward the wall where the clown face is hanging. Allow the child to put the nose on the poster. Remove the blindfold. Give treats depending on the following points:

Position of Nose on the Paper:

Not on Paper	Do over
On Paper anywhere	One point
On Face anywhere	Two points
On X at all	Three points
Covering all the X	Three points and bragging rights!

One point = one very small treat
Two points = two very small treats
Three points = one slightly larger treat

BALL TOSS

The premise is that you have 3 balls which you toss into 3 different buckets.

Ahead of time:

Choose the balls and the buckets. While it is possible to throw any size ball at any size target, obviously some combinations will work better than others! Test out your options thoroughly ahead of time. The idea is to make it challenging (but doable) for children this age (4-8 years). Bean bags which you toss into empty gallon ice cream buckets will work great. Also, old tennis balls or small rubber balls can work as well. If you don't mind setting them up over and over, you can even have them toss the ball at cans, etc.

Set Up:

Use masking tape or painter's tape to mark off a line on the floor behind which the child is to stand. Line up the buckets. I like to line them up in a line stretching away from where the child is to stand. This makes some shots more challenging than others.

During the Game:

Allow the children to stand behind the line and try and throw the ball so that it lands and stays in the bucket. Award points on some fair scale based on the way you have the buckets lined up. Make sure each child gets a token for simply participating.

Example for Points:

No balls in a bucket	Do over immediately (perhaps closer)
One ball in a bucket	One point
Two balls in anywhere	Two points
Three balls in anywhere	Three points
One ball in each of the buckets	Five points!! (And bragging rights!)

Frisbee Variation

If the children in your room are a little older, and if you have enough room, you can do a Frisbee Toss. This is fun! You only have to mark off the targets on the floor with tape. Play and score as above!

How to make a Bean Bag!

Here are some easy instructions for making your own bean bags quickly and easily.

- 1.) Obtain 3 old clean socks.
- 2.) Fill each sock with 1 – 1 ½ cups of dried beans or rice.
- 3.) Tie off the sock tightly in a knot just above the beans.
- 4.) Cut off the extra length of the sock about an inch above the knot.
- 5.) Now you have 3 bean bags in time for your carnival!

If you store these in a dry place in a sealed plastic bag, they will probably last forever! Then you can use them again next year!

FISHING BOOTH

The fishing booth is a classic Halloween game, and the simple is that it is fun, easy to do and absolutely mesmerizes small children.

Set Up:

- Set up a screen of some kind, behind which an adult can sit or stand comfortably.
 - A light blanket thrown over a piece of rope works great.
- Have a selection of treats or small gifts available behind the screen.
- Provide “fishing poles” long enough to reach over the blanket
 - You can station a helper in front of the blanket to help with this process.
 - The pole should be light and be free of anything like a reel or tackle.
 - You can easily use a long wooden dowel for this.
- Tie a piece of yarn or twine about 4-6 feet long on to the end of the pole.
- Tie a clothespin to the end of the yarn.

During the Game:

An adult sits or stands behind the screen. The helper in front of the screen helps the children as they take turns fishing. The adult behind the screen attaches candy or prizes to the clothespin and gives the line a gentle tug. The child “reels in” the prize.

APPLE SWING

This is like “dunking for apples” but cleaner! This one is really good to do at almost the end of the party. It helps folks settle down a little and enjoy watching the others!

Set Up:

Wash and dry at least one apple for each child coming to the party. (Leave the stems!) Cut some 12”-18” pieces of string and tie one to each apple stem. Store the apples until game time.

During the Game:

Invite children to participate. Have them place their hands behind their back. Hold the apples up by the strings attached to the stems, so that the apples hang about an inch or so above the children’s noses. Let the children attempt to get the apples without using their hands. (They may bite the apples.) Use each apple only once and only with one child. Snip off the strings. The children take the apples home or discard them.

GUESSING GAME (Classic Fun with Candy)

Have a clear container with a known number of pieces of candy in it. Have it full enough that the pieces can’t be counted from outside the container. Place the container with the candy in the room. Have the children write down their best guess at how many pieces of candy are in the container. Later, read all the guesses out loud (don’t say names). Then announce the actual number of pieces of candy! The winner is the person closest to the actual amount. Announce the winner! The winner takes the prize home or gets to choose the first pieces of candy out of it. Divide up the rest!

A Word on Halloween Party Costumes

Whether you're having a "Fall Festival" or an old-fashioned "Halloween" Party, it's best to have a few guidelines about costumes. Talk to the children ahead of time and send a note home to parents regarding any rules you may establish.

Generally it's a good idea to ask the children not to wear scary costumes. This includes both the children who will attend the party and those who are scheduled to be helpers. Inevitably someone will ask, what do you mean by scary?

So, I tell them... "Oh, you know... No dripping blood."

Usually they laugh and get the idea. Over the years, I have had very few problems with people dressing inappropriately for a children's Halloween party.

If people ask why they can't wear just anything they want, explain that you don't want any of the Little Guys being frightened. That typically convinces them.

If someone does show up in an inappropriate costume, despite your best efforts, simply ask them to remove the offensive part of the costume. *(I have confiscated a few scary masks in the past, which I typically returned right after the party.)*

Parents are very helpful in making sure costumes are appropriate. Involve them as early as possible, so that they can plan accordingly.

The idea is to have the atmosphere as fun and wholesome as is reasonably possible. These positive experiences will stay with the children and their families for many years to come!