

HONOR GOD FIRST

Does your family get too much candy for Halloween?

Don't despair! Seize the moment to teach your kids about the joy of giving to God. After your kids return home with their candy, set out three large bowls. Label one the Giving Bowl, one the Savings Bowl, and the other the Eating Bowl. (As an alternative, give each family member his or her own set of three labeled bowls.)

**GIVING
BOWL**

**SAVINGS
BOWL**

**EATING
BOWL**



SIT TOGETHER and share Proverbs 3:9 with them, "Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce." (NLT)

EXPLAIN that each of us can honor God with the first part of our time, talents, money, or possessions. Explain that they can choose to put as much of their candy in each bowl, but to honor God by first putting a portion in the Giving Bowl.

DISCUSS goals for the Giving Bowl such as: donate to troops, give to an elderly neighbor, or deliver to a local ministry. Discuss goals for the Savings Bowl such as: Keep to share later with friends, save for an upcoming holiday, or freeze for a future sporting event. In the Eating Bowl, invite them to put their favorite candies they want to eat that night.

Resources

***My Happy Pumpkin: God's Love Shining Through Me* by Crystal Bowman (Ages 4 & Under)**

Small children will eagerly open this pumpkin-shaped board book to discover the delightful story and colorful illustrations by artist Claudine Gévy. Author Crystal Bowman describes a fun fall tradition—carving a pumpkin face and adds a twist that helps preschoolers grasp the concept of God's life-changing love for them. Just like we scoop out all the slop found inside a pumpkin, God makes us clean on the inside too.

***A Pumpkin Prayer* by Amy Parker (Ages 2-5)**

Teach your little ones to be grateful for God's blessings with this adorable board book that's in the shape of a pumpkin! The first in the Time to Pray series, children will learn to celebrate the abundance of the harvest season through charming illustrations and sweet rhymes that are perfect for little ones.

Christian Origins of Halloween, Pamphlet

Turn Halloween into something positive in your family and neighborhood. Many Christians are under the mistaken belief that Halloween, or more specifically All Saint's Day, was established for the purpose of Christianizing a pagan holiday called Samhain. But Halloween actually started as a Christian festival, not the other way around.

***Redeeming Halloween,*
By Kim Wier, Pam McCune**

Celebrate Halloween without selling out! Balance love with conviction, while creating treasured childhood memories for your children. Here is a guide to fun, guilt-free ideas on everything from costumes and decorating hints to original party suggestions.



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Halloween@Home



A Guide for Christian Families

Of all the holidays celebrated in our culture today, Halloween brings up some of the most questions and concerns among Christian families. You might know that its origins are centered around pagan rituals and demonic activity even if you do not know the exact details. You may feel uncertain about what level of participation you should involve your family in on the days leading up to Halloween as well as on the night of October 31. It may reassure you to know that many Christian families and churches choose not to celebrate Halloween. Other families and churches, however, celebrate this holiday by hosting an evening of carnival games or handing out candy to the kids. Whichever you prayerfully decide to do, look for teachable moments so that you can be intentional about keeping Christ at the center of your family during this holiday season. This guide provides a variety of ideas. Try one or more with your family this year.



Pumpkin Carving

Make your pumpkin an expression that reminds your kids of God's transforming power.

- 1) Remove the top of your pumpkin and scoop out the pulp. As you do, talk with your kids about the way God reaches inside of us and cleans out all the yuck that is in our hearts.
- 2) When planning to carve, use symbols that will speak of God's characteristics. For example: a cross reminding us of His sacrifice, a heart reminding us that He is love, a circle to remind us that He is eternal, a shining sun or burning flame to remind us that Jesus is the light of the world, or an ichthus ("the fish symbol") to remind us of the fellowship of believers. See what else your kids can come up with!
- 3) Place a light inside and talk with your children about how God places His light inside us so that it will glow for the world to see. (For Scriptures to guide your conversation while carving your pumpkins together, get the recipe card, "Holidays Pumpkin Parable," from the @Home Room.)

Pumpkin Greeters

Invite teens and adult family members to decorate a host of pumpkins to put outside your front door to greet friends, visitors, or trick-or-treaters. Use permanent markers to write favorite Scripture verses in large fancy letters on plastic decorative pumpkins from a craft store or real pumpkins from the pumpkin patch.

Bible Heroes Costume Parade

Fill a laundry basket with costume accessories such as old dresses, pants, shirts, wigs, sandals, boots and lengths of fabric. Invite children to dress up as favorite Bible heroes and march in a costume parade around the house. Play lively kids' praise music as you march from room to room. End the parade by reading about one hero's story from the Bible, then invite volunteers to perform the story as a short skit or play.

A Welcoming Light on Halloween Night



- ✱ Politely greet trick-or-treaters at your driveway or porch.
- ✱ Make sure that your home and walkway are well lit.
- ✱ Play kids' praise music (which isn't so loud as to impose on the neighbors).
- ✱ Put up cheerful decorations and banners reminding kids, "Have fun," "Be safe," "Jesus loves you," and "God is good."
- ✱ Smile and say "hello" to adult chaperones. If you recognize any faces, introduce yourself by name and ask theirs.
- ✱ Give kids lots of enthusiastic feedback on their costumes.
- ✱ Hand out kid-friendly tracts that share the Gospel with even the very young.
- ✱ Tape labels on candy you distribute with verses such as "Those who know Your name trust in You, for You, O Lord, have never abandoned anyone who searches for You." (Psalm 9:10 NLT) "Lord, You alone are my inheritance, my cup of blessing. You guard all that is mine." (Psalm 16:5 NLT) "I will bless the Lord who guides me." (Psalm 16:7 NLT) "I know the Lord is always with me. I will not be shaken, for He is right beside me." (Psalm 16:8 NLT) These can also be downloaded on our website athomecalvary.org click on campaigns.
- ✱ This one night can establish a reputation for your home as a beacon of light and joy.

God's Word is Sweet

Use leftover candy from Halloween to fill up an empty jar.

Label the jar with Psalm 119:103, "How sweet your words taste to me; they are sweeter than honey." Invite family members to memorize Bible verses in the days ahead. For each verse they memorize, give them a sweet treat!

Blessing Jar

Fill a large jar with Halloween candy.

After dinner each night, pass the jar around from family member to family member. As each person takes out a piece of candy, stop and invite each of the other family members to say a positive word of encouragement or affirmation to bless them. Do this together each night to give a verbal expression of value to each family member. Your kids might like it so much that they'll want to fill the jar up with another bag of candy when the Halloween candy is gone!