

All Treats, No Tricks:

Tips for Making Halloween Fun for Everybody

Many churches use Spooky Season as an opportunity for community outreach through fun-for-the-whole-family activities like Trunk-or-Treats, Halloween parties, and harvest festivals, and we at CORE (Commission on Race and Ethnicity) are here 🍂 for 🍂 it 🍂. Whether you're organizing an event with your church or just trying to be the best neighbor possible when giving out candy at home, here's some tips for a great holiday.

1. More Casper, Less Exorcist

We all have that friend (or are that friend) that enjoys being scared. That's not true of everyone, though, especially young children. It's best to avoid decorations that are overly gory or that make sudden noises or movements. Strobe lights should also be avoided, as they present problems for people with epilepsy and other sensory processing issues. Opt instead for something both cute AND seasonally appropriate. Unless you know your audience and their level of comfortability with Super Scary Stuff, it's best to play it safe.

2. Be Appropriate with Costume Considerations

Be mindful that your costume isn't offensive to other cultures or beliefs, and doesn't mock or ridicule those who may be different from you in any way. While you can't control what your guests wear, it is important that you and any other church staff and volunteers dress thoughtfully. Avoid costumes with masks that cover the entire face, as this makes it difficult to communicate, especially with people who already have difficulty hearing. Also, avoid any costume that perpetuates harmful racial or ethnic stereotypes.

3. Create a Safe and Accessible Space

If handing out candy at home, avoid asking people to step inside your home to get treats. Step outside onto the porch, or, for even more accessibility, station yourself at the end of your driveway and/or near the sidewalk so kiddos don't have to climb steps to get to you (see below). If hosting at church, choose the most accessible space possible for your event. If at all possible, avoid stairs, narrow hallways and doorways, and any other rugged terrain. And, of course, be mindful of [Indiana Annual Conference MinistrySafe protocols](#). Post signs that it is a safe space!

4. Be Mindful of Allergies

Having an allergic reaction is absolutely not the trick we have in mind when we go trick or treating. In addition to your favorite candies, make sure you have dumdums on hand (as they are free of all of the most common childhood food allergies) as well as non-food treats (yoyos, bracelets, crayons, etc.). This goes for church events as well as handing out candy at home.

5. Mind Your Business

Someone in your community seem "too old" to be trick or treating or dressing up in costume? Is a child not saying "thank you" or making eye contact? Give them a treat anyway, and keep any potential judgmental thoughts to yourself! You never know what people are going through, and there's no harm in welcoming anyone who wants to share in the fun, both at church and at home.



Diversity, Missions, and Justice Ministries
of the United Methodist Churches of Indiana

