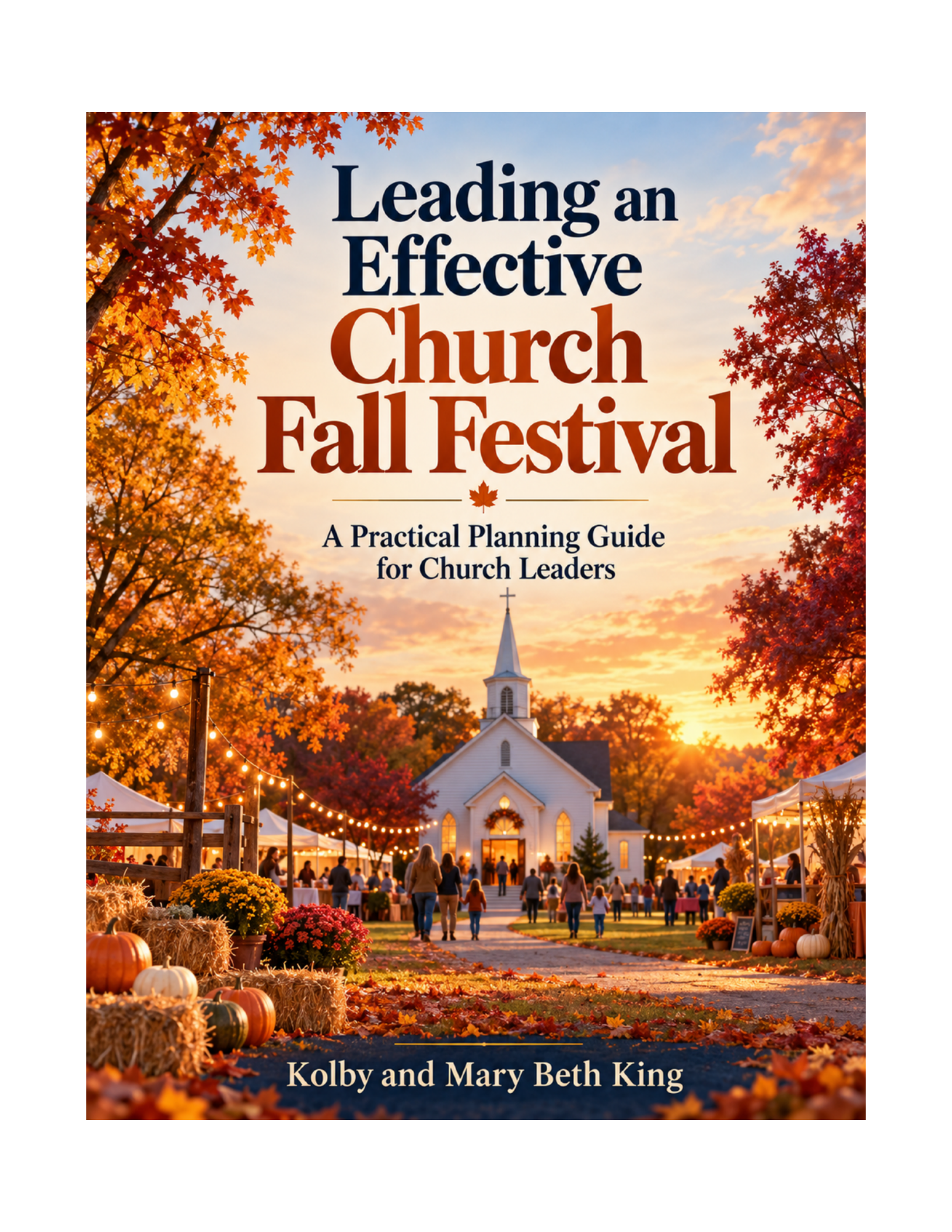




Leading an Effective Church Fall Festival



A Practical Planning Guide
for Church Leaders

Kolby and Mary Beth King

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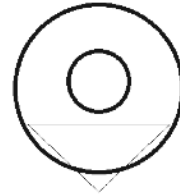
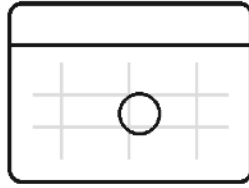
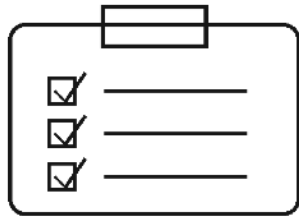
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ThreeThirtyMinistries.com/books

Quick-Start Checklist



Use this checklist to begin planning your Fall Festival. The sections that follow will help you think through each item in greater detail.

- Define the event's primary purpose.
- Select the date, location, and event format.
- Establish the budget.
- Recruit coordinators and volunteers.
- Choose games, food, and activities.
- Create a safety and emergency plan.
- Prepare the Gospel strategy.
- Train volunteers.
- Collect candy and other donations.
- Promote the event.
- Plan follow-up before the event occurs.

Planning Timeline

Three Months Before

- Set the purpose, date, location, budget, and event format.
- Recruit key coordinators.
- Reserve inflatables, equipment, vendors, or community partners.

Two Months Before

- Recruit volunteers.
- Choose games, activities, food, and special features.
- Begin outside promotion.
- Confirm insurance, safety, and facility requirements.

One Month Before

- Finalize the event layout.
- Gather supplies, candy, prizes, and printed materials.
- Confirm the Gospel presentation and follow-up process.
- Prepare volunteer assignments and training.

One Week Before

- Train volunteers and communicate assignments.
- Confirm rentals, vendors, and community partners.
- Organize supplies by station.
- Review the weather plan and emergency procedures.
- Pray for the event, volunteers, and families who will attend.

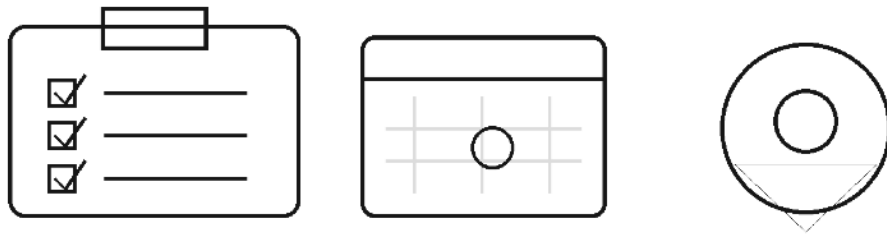
Event Day

- Set up and inspect every area before guests arrive.
- Gather volunteers for final instructions and prayer.
- Welcome families, serve them well, and share the Gospel clearly.
- Record guest information, prayer requests, and follow-up needs.

Within One Week Afterward

- Follow up with guests, prayer requests, and spiritual decisions.
- Thank volunteers, partners, and donors.
- Evaluate the event and record recommendations for next year.

Fall Festival Planning Guide



PURPOSE

Why are you having a Fall Festival? Determine your main purpose.

- To make a good impression on the community
- To get people to come to your church building
- To share the Gospel and plant seeds
- To share the Gospel and see salvation decisions at the event
- To get a Gospel tract into each family's home
- To get information on families in the community
- To connect with parents through their kids
- To provide a safe Halloween alternative to trick-or-treating

Everything in your event should further your purpose and your purpose needs to be laser-focused. The answers to the questions below should reflect your main goal. If something doesn't advance your purpose, is it necessary? Never have an event simply because that's what you do every year.

KIND OF EVENT

What kind of event do you want to have?

- A "Come & Go" event
- An event with games where you expect families to stay throughout the event. If so, what do you have planned to keep them there? Are you going to use giveaways or family competitions—i.e., "In 20 minutes, we're going to have a pie-eating competition," etc.?
- A Fall Festival that is mainly volunteer-led games
- A Fall Festival consisting mainly of inflatable games rented from a party company
- A "Trunk or Treat" event

Where do you plan to have your event?

- Inside
- Outside
- Both inside and outside

- At the church
- At another location in the community
- An event in partnership with other organizations and businesses in the community

Offsite considerations: If you have your event away from your church, you will most likely encounter more people, but there are also a few extra matters to consider...

- **Signage** – How will people know that your church is hosting the event?
- **Bathrooms / Diaper changing areas** – Not all events need these, but you want to have them if you plan to have families stay for a certain amount of time.
- **Food** – If there is food, will you have hand-washing stations?
- **Transportation** – How will you move your equipment and supplies to the location?
- **Electricity** – Are you allowed to use electricity? Is there a charge for using the electricity? Do you need generators? How many outlets are there? If you are using inflatable games, be sure to check with the place you are renting them from to make sure you have enough power available.

When do you plan to have your event?

- On Halloween night
- On the Saturday before Halloween
- On the Sunday or Wednesday before Halloween
- *(You might want to check around to avoid conflicts with school functions, ball games, other Fall Festivals and community events.)*
- What is the best time to accomplish your main purpose?

What is your weather plan?

- What will you do in case of rain, high winds, cold weather, or severe weather?
- Can the event move indoors, be postponed, or be canceled?
- Who will make the final weather decision?
- How will changes be communicated to volunteers, vendors, and guests?

What are you going to call your event? What sets your event apart from others?

- Are there other Fall Festival events in your community?
- Should you have a name that sets yours apart?
- Do you need a logo?
- Do you want your volunteers to all have T-shirts to identify them as helpers?
- Do you want your volunteers to have name tags?
- Should your staff have a different kind of T-shirt or name tag to set them apart?

What is your budget for the event?

SAMPLE EVENT FORMATS

These examples can help you choose a format that fits your purpose, church, volunteers, and budget. You do not need to use every idea in this booklet to lead an effective event.

Simple Fall Festival

- 10–15 volunteer-led games
- Candy bags or prizes
- Simple food or refreshments
- Gospel tracts for every family
- A clearly identified prayer or spiritual-conversation area

Standard Fall Festival

- Volunteer-led games and rented inflatables
- Food, family activities, and stage features
- Guest registration or a giveaway drawing
- A Gospel presentation or Gospel-sharing stations
- A planned invitation and follow-up process

Community Outreach Fall Festival

- A highly visible offsite or highly promoted community event
- Partnerships with local organizations or businesses
- Family registration, prayer requests, and guest information
- Trained Gospel-conversation volunteers
- A clear Gospel presentation
- A specific follow-up team and next-step invitation strategy

SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PLANNING

IMPORTANT SAFETY NOTE

Several activities below involve darts, candles, slingshots, choking-size food, physical contact, water, etc.. Churches and event leaders are responsible for evaluating every activity and deciding whether it is appropriate for their participants, facilities, and circumstances.

- Use age-appropriate activities.
- Provide close adult supervision.
- Consider allergies and choking hazards.
- Follow rental-company instructions for inflatables.
- Confirm insurance requirements.
- Keep first-aid supplies and an emergency plan available.
- Replace or modify any activity that cannot be conducted safely.

Review every game, rental, food item, and event area before guests arrive.

- Follow all manufacturer and rental-company instructions for inflatables and equipment.
- Confirm insurance, facility, and local safety requirements.
- Keep first-aid supplies readily available and identify who will respond to injuries.
- Create an emergency plan and communicate it to key leaders.
- Consider food allergies, choking hazards, sanitation, and hand-washing needs.
- Protect electrical cords, generators, open flames, tools, and other hazards from guest traffic.
- Establish procedures for lost children.
- Provide adequate lighting in parking areas, walkways, game areas, and restrooms.
- Replace or modify any activity that cannot be conducted safely.

PROMOTION

How are you going to promote this event OUTSIDE the church?

- Posters around town
- Newspaper
- Mail-outs
- Emails
- Fliers for your kids to give out
- Business card information to distribute (Could you put a link to the plan of salvation on the back?)
- Yard signs
- Banners
- Facebook
- Community Facebook groups
- Instagram
- Short promotional videos
- Text-message invitations
- A shareable digital invitation for church members
- Your Google Business Profile
- School, neighborhood, or community groups where permitted
- Your church website
- Through other community organizations
- What are other ways you can promote inside your community (not just inside your church)?

True Story: The Power of Good Promotion

A church in Arkansas once asked us to help them rethink their Fall Festival and develop a more effective strategy for reaching their community. After reviewing the event, we offered a number of suggestions, but there was one area where we believed a few simple changes could make a dramatic difference: **promotion and visibility**.

The church sat at a busy intersection, so we encouraged them to take full advantage of the traffic already passing their property every day.

About 10 days to two weeks before the event, they began promoting the Fall Festival on their regular church sign. But we knew that after driving past the same message for several days, many people would eventually stop noticing it.

So, the week before the festival, we suggested adding large 4' × 6' banners along each of the busy roads bordering the church property. This gave drivers something new to notice and reinforced the message that something special was coming.

Then, on the day of the event, we recommended taking the promotion to another level.

Before the morning traffic, the church lined its property with yard signs carrying short, easy-to-read messages:

**FREE • FAMILY FUN • JOIN US • CANDY • FREE • GAMES • INFLATABLES • FREE
• YOU'RE INVITED • TONIGHT 5-7pm**

(Notice that we included FREE multiple times.)

We also suggested moving the festival outside to a parking lot that was clearly visible from the street. Their tallest and largest inflatables were positioned where passing cars couldn't miss it, and the tractor pulling the hayride traveled close enough to the road for drivers to see families enjoying the event.

There was a simple strategy behind all of this: **People may see a fun event happening, but that doesn't necessarily mean they know they're invited.**

Instead of letting hundreds of people drive past wondering, *What's going on over there?*, everything about the church property communicated, **Something fun is happening here—and you're invited!**

The results exceeded anything we expected.

This church had never had more than about **250 people** attend its Fall Festival.

That night, **more than 1,000 people came.**

They ran out of parking. Cars filled the church property, people parked across the street and at a nearby gas station, and families were walking toward the festival from every direction.

But the greatest result wasn't the attendance.

Six people gave their lives to Christ that night.

Good promotion isn't simply about getting a bigger crowd. It's about removing barriers, extending a clear invitation, and helping people take that first step onto your property—where relationships can be built, the Gospel can be shared, and lives can be changed.

THE EVENT

Do you plan to register people who attend your event?

- Is this mandatory or will you gather family information by encouraging people to register for a drawing?
- If you plan to register guests, how will you create a pleasant first impression and avoid a long line?
- What will you do if lines get long?
- Do your volunteers need to check in?
- How can they avoid long lines?
- If lines get long, should volunteers distribute something small, such as chocolates, while other volunteers engage families in conversation as they wait?

What information do you want to collect on families?

- Name
- Address
- Phone
- Email
- Kids' names
- Ages
- Church home
- Prayer requests

Will you be giving out candy at your event?

All candy should be individually wrapped. If kids will be eating candy at the event without their parents, you also need to be aware of food allergies.

How do you plan to collect candy?

How do you ensure that all the candy you are giving out is safe?

- Do you only take candy from church members?
- Do you receive candy from people who come to the event?
- Is this a concern?
- What do you do with candy that doesn't meet your safety standard?

How will kids get the candy?

- **At the games** – How do you make sure this is fair? Will you train your volunteers how to give consistent amounts (i.e., one handful per kid, three pieces of candy per kid, etc.)? How will you refill games running low on candy? How do you portion candy to make sure you don't run out, or is it okay if you do run out? What will you do with leftover candy?
- **In a candy bag** – Will each kid get a candy bag instead of getting candy at the games? If so, can you put a few coupons from local fast-food restaurants inside along with some church information and a Gospel tract?

How do you plan to share the Gospel at your event?

- By having a “Help Desk” or prayer station or a place where people can ask spiritual questions
- By making sure that everyone leaves with a Gospel tract. *(A great way to accomplish this is to put it inside their candy bag and give the candy bags to the children as they leave. Our informal studies have shown that if you do this, the tract will usually make it home either to the family’s kitchen or the child’s bedroom.)*
- By using a tract that is easy to understand and appealing
- By inviting an engaging children’s speaker to share the Gospel in a fun and creative manner
- By using volunteers in your church who are trained and equipped to share the Gospel in a fun and creative way
- Through puppet shows
- By having people share salvation testimonies at the event
- By having certain people wear a different kind of T-shirt that identifies them as someone guests can approach with spiritual questions. *(At one event, we gave certain leaders “Ninja” T-shirts and told people to find a “Ninja” if they had any questions about God or life or if they just needed someone to talk to or pray with. These “Ninja” shirts are for sale at 330ministries.com.)*
- Are you going to share the Gospel in an ongoing way throughout the event? *(i.e., a stage area where there is always something being shared about God, His love, and salvation.)* Or, are you going to stop everything at some point and bring everyone together for a presentation?

GOSPEL AND FOLLOW-UP PLAN

- How will every guest have an opportunity to encounter the Gospel?
- Who is trained and prepared to have spiritual conversations?
- What Gospel resource will each family take home?
- How will you respond when someone wants to know more about salvation or makes a decision to follow Christ?
- What guest information, prayer requests, or follow-up needs will you collect?
- Who is responsible for follow-up?
- When will follow-up occur?
- What specific service, ministry, or event will families be invited to attend next?
- How will you protect the privacy of the information families provide?

Are there ways you want to engage the people who attend your event with Bible stories?

- Through different games
- Through a drama
- Through activity stations
- Through competitions such as a coloring competition, etc.

Are you going to give your volunteers name tags to identify them? Are you going to give your staff different name tags to identify them?

Do you want your volunteers to have T-shirts to identify them? T-shirts aren't a necessity, but they do look good and also create a reminder as your volunteers wear them around town. When people who attended the event see the shirts, it reminds them of the event and your church. Having your volunteers pick up their shirts early is also a great way to get them to come to a training session.

VOLUNTEERS

How are you going to recruit volunteers for your event?

- Individually
- By recruiting Sunday School classes or existing ministries or teams (such as the men or women's ministries, the deacons, the choir, the student ministry, etc.)
- Are you going to have someone recruit for you such as a Volunteer Coordinator? Do you want to recruit other coordinators as well—i.e., a Game Coordinator, a Promotion Coordinator, a Follow-Up Coordinator, a Food Coordinator, a Candy Coordinator, etc. and let each Coordinator recruit his or her own team?

What kind of training do your volunteers need?

Who will assign volunteers to their locations, responsibilities, and service times? How are you going to communicate this to them?

Who is going to create the layout for the event—which game goes where? Who will choose the games?

How are you going to communicate expectations to your volunteers?

I used to lead a meeting for all our volunteers the Sunday night before the event. At the meeting, we would also give them their event T-shirts and name tags. The main reason for this meeting was NOT for them to learn what they would be doing or when but to express the purpose for the event and to encourage them to smile and look for opportunities to have conversations with people they don't know, etc. We also had other, more specialized training for those who might have the opportunity to lead someone to Christ and for our prayer team.

VOLUNTEER TRAINING CHECKLIST

Before serving, every volunteer should:

- Understand the purpose of the event.
- Know when to arrive and where to report.
- Understand the assigned responsibility and how to perform it safely.
- Wear a name tag, T-shirt, or other identifying item if one is provided.
- Welcome unfamiliar families instead of gathering only with friends.
- Know how to respond to safety concerns and emergencies.
- Know where to direct spiritual questions, prayer requests, and lost children.
- Keep the assigned station supervised.
- Understand what guests are being invited to do next.
- Know whom to contact when help is needed.

Do your volunteers all need background checks?

FOOD

What kind of food do you want to have at your event?

Do you want to have snack activity stations where kids can create their own snacks?

Is the food free or are you going to sell it? (If you are going to sell food, the you will need to adjust the signs saying FREE to Food is Available.)

Are you inviting any vendors from the community to come and sell food at your event?

If so, how are you making sure that you don't have the same kind of food for sale from more than one vendor? It's always bad when one vendor shows up to sell a food item and someone else is giving it away for free with a coupon to their restaurant!

ATMOSPHERE

What do you want the atmosphere to be like during your event?

Is there a theme?—i.e., “Of all God’s creatures great and small, God loves you the most of all.”

Are you encouraging your kids to wear costumes?

Here is an example of where your purpose meets reality... If you say, “Wear Bible costumes,” but you also say that your purpose is to reach lost families, you’ve created a contradiction. If you want to reach lost families, don’t require Bible costumes. It’s okay to say, “Wear family-friendly costumes,” but also realize that lost people and even saved people will still show up with all sorts of costumes. This is where you need to remind your volunteers of the event’s purpose and help them remember what matters more—the person or the way the person is dressed.

Do you need background music playing? Who is overseeing this?

Do you need special lights? Do you need outside lights? Will it get dark during your event?

Do you want people walking around making balloon animals? Doing small hand-illusions?

Are there going to be ongoing puppet shows, competitions, announcements, etc.?

Do you want signs that express that your church cares, that you are glad they are here, and that they are always welcome? Like many amusement parks, you could also use riddle signs or joke signs posted throughout the event. Each sign can include a Scripture verse and a related biblical truth.

EASILY FORGOTTEN DETAILS

Are you going to have a nurse or first aid kit on hand? Who is overseeing this?

Do you want to invite community organizations to be at your event, such as the police or the fire department?

How are you inviting people to church? What specifically are you going to invite them to?

What is your plan for follow-up? What is the next step?

How are you going to thank your volunteers?

How are you going to evaluate your event? Did you fulfill your purpose?

Do you need a setup team or a cleanup team?

Do you need any printed materials in a different language? What kind of people live in your community? Is your event set up mainly for them or for the kind of people who attend your church?

How can your kids be involved in the ministry of the event?

- By praying for the event
- By sharing their salvation testimonies at different times during the event. (*Even lost adults will many times stop to listen to a child.*)
- By helping prepare items you need for games or activity stations
- By inviting their friends
- By folding the tracts that are provided with this packet. (Please take time to have them pray for the people who will get the tracts too.)
- By giving them extra tracts to pass out if they go trick-or-treating or if they give out candy from their home
- By having them help with food, cleanup, setup, etc.
- By having them lead songs or do puppets during the event

POST-EVENT EVALUATION

Complete this evaluation while the event is still fresh in everyone's mind.

- Did we accomplish our primary purpose?
- Approximately how many people attended?
- How many families were new to our church?
- How did guests encounter the Gospel?
- Were Gospel conversations, salvation decisions, or prayer requests recorded for follow-up?
- What worked especially well?
- What caused confusion, delays, or frustration?
- Were there any safety concerns or incidents?
- Did we have enough volunteers, supplies, food, candy, and parking?
- What should we add, remove, or change next year?
- Who needs to receive follow-up, and who is responsible for it?
- How and when will we thank volunteers, partners, and donors?

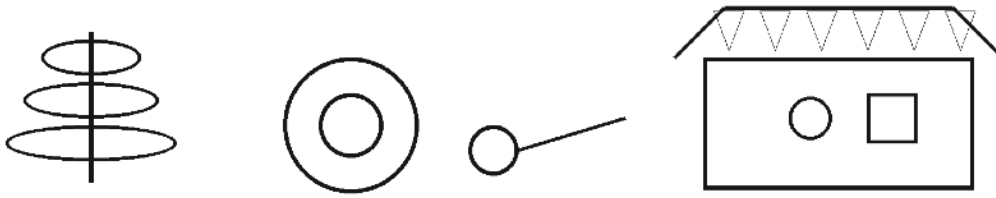
Sample Event Supply Checklist

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Tables and chairs | ☐ Candy, prizes, and refill supplies |
| ☐ Extension cords, power strips, generators, and cord covers | ☐ Hand sanitizer and hand-washing supplies |
| ☐ Signs, tape, zip ties, scissors, and basic tools | ☐ Cleaning supplies and paper towels |
| ☐ Trash cans and liners | ☐ Flashlights and extra batteries |
| ☐ First-aid supplies | ☐ Drinking water for volunteers |
| ☐ Name tags and volunteer T-shirts | ☐ Weather-related supplies |
| ☐ Registration forms, pens, and clipboards | ☐ Radios, phones, or another way for key leaders to communicate |
| ☐ Gospel tracts and take-home information | ☐ Copies of the event layout, volunteer assignments, and emergency plan |

Additional Supplies

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Games & Activities



We are always looking for new game and activity ideas and will be updating this list as often as we can to make it the greatest resource possible. If you use games and activities that you don't see listed here, please email us at resources@threethirtyministries.org. Thank you.

Key Notes:

- Play the games before your event to make sure you and your volunteers understand them and are able to identify any issues that may come up during the activity.
- Take costumes into consideration as you plan your event.
- Choose activities that fit the ages, abilities, and number of participants you expect.
- Provide adult supervision and appropriate safety equipment.
- Adapt or remove any activity that cannot be conducted safely in your setting.

Category Guide: Each category below includes a short planning note to help you quickly identify where the activities may work best. These notes are general guides. Church leaders should evaluate every activity for their own participants, facilities, supervision, and safety requirements.

GAMES

Carnival Games

Planning Note: Many of these work for all ages, indoors or outdoors, and can be adapted for smaller children.

Musical Hats – Like musical chairs but kids are passing a hat around a circle. If you are holding the hat when the music stops, you are out and a chair is removed.

Skee Ball Toss – You can find instructions online with diagrams if you want to build your own or set up your own style of skee ball.

Clothespin Drop – From nose height, see if kids can drop a clothespin into a wide-mouth jar.

Penny Drop – Put a small jar (like a baby food jar) inside a larger jar. Fill it with water and let kids try to drop a penny into the water and into the smaller container. It's a lot harder than it looks.

Egg Spoon Walk – Carry an egg or preferably a wooden egg on a spoon around a cone and back. For extra fun, let two kids race.

Bottle Knock Down – Have kids roll a ball (like bowling), toss a beanbag, or even throw a baseball, depending on the kind of bottles you are using. Lots of variations.

Musical Chairs – Play musical chairs.

Cakewalk – Kids love cakewalks because who doesn't like winning a big food item?

Duck Game – Put floating ducks in a kiddie pool with prizes listed on the bottom.

Fishing Game – Two styles: Have kids fish over a wall where volunteers hook on prizes or have kids stand over paper fish with a magnet on them and let kids use a fishing pole with a paper clip attached to pick one up. The prize listed on the back is what they get.

Ball or Balloon Pit – Hide prizes in a ball or balloon pit and have kids go on a hunt. Or, have a prize written on the ball and let the kids choose one. Or, have the prize listed on a piece of paper inside the balloons and let the kids pop the balloon to discover their prize.

Competition Games

Planning Note: Best for elementary-age children and older. These games need clear rules, active supervision, and adequate space.

Tug-of-War – You can get a soft rope at Lowe's or Home Depot or order an activity rope online.

Flag Tag – This is a great game that kids love. You can buy real flag tags at www.usgames.com or use bandanas to make your own one-on-one or two-on-two flag tag. Give kids one or two flags and once they are pulled, they are out of the game.

Samurai – Use pool noodles to play "Samurai." For all ages, you can play "tournament style," where two competitors both have pool noodles and the first touch wins. If you use this style, let kids play for the best two out of three. Or, play "freestyle." This is better with older kids since you simply give them 20 seconds to "beat the living snot out of each other." No intentional headshots are allowed. Some unintentional ones may happen, so have a referee nearby to tell them when to go, when to stop, and to break them up if they move in so close that someone might accidentally catch an elbow. Also, have kids remove their glasses, earrings, and anything else that might not do well during the game.

Tic Tac Toe – Set up a large Tic Tac Toe game square where kids toss a bean bag to choose their next place. You can also use either kids or volunteers for the Xs and Os if you want to play "Human Tic Tac Toe."

Four Square – The old game has made its comeback. Post rules and let kids play throughout the night. If you want to make a competition out of it, have a referee keep count of how many times each person is in the "King's Square." The champion of the night is the player who remains in the King's Square for the most consecutive rounds.

Sports Games

Planning Note: Best in open areas. Adjust distances, equipment, and goal heights for different ages and abilities.

Putt Putt

Bowling – You can even use toilet paper rolls and a pumpkin for this.

Soccer Kick – It's great to have kids kick into a goal. You can even do this inside!

Basketball Shoot – To accommodate all ages, provide goals at several different heights.

Football Toss – All you need is a football and a target, such as a hanging tire or hula hoop.

Javelin Throw – Use a pool noodle to see who can throw the “javelin” through a hula hoop.

Volleyball Serve – Put a hula hoop on the ground and see who can serve the volleyball into it.

Races

Planning Note: Best outdoors or in a large indoor space with a clear course, safe surface, and supervised finish line.

Potato Sack Race – You can buy these online from a variety of places.

Hopper Races – These can be bought from many stores but also at www.usgames.com.

Inner Tube Races – Go to the store for some inner tubes. Have kids put one on, and maybe some flippers and goggles and race to an area where they do an activity such as 5 jumping jacks and come back.

3-legged Race – You can order Velcro bands to fasten partners' legs together or make your own.

Pumpkin Sweep – Sweep small pumpkins along a course using brooms.

Target Games

Planning Note: Establish a marked throwing or shooting line, keep spectators out of the target area, and use age-appropriate equipment.

Dodge the Shot – Have kids dodge something that is shot at them. This could be anything from a Nerf gun to a squishy ball to a pool noodle. Depending on what you use, be sure to give them appropriate eye protection.

Shoot the Moving Target – Have kids shoot at something that is moving. This can even be a volunteer or two.

Grape Toss – Throw grapes, popcorn, or cereal like Cheerios into someone's mouth.

Play Human Battleship – This is great over a volleyball net where you can hang a sheet or a divider between the two sides. Then let the kids take turns tossing something over to the other side. If it hits a person, they are out.

Ping Pong Ball Hit / Toss – Try to toss or bounce a ping pong ball into a container or try to knock a ping pong ball off of a 2-liter bottle.

Nerf Gun Shoot – Take your best shot at dangling empty soda cans.

Horseshoes – Set up a fun game of horseshoes. Your adults will probably even enjoy this one. But remember, you'll still need a volunteer at the game to explain the rules. A lot of kids won't know how to play.

Water Guns

Candle Squirt – Set up a candle and have kids extinguish it. Have extra dry candles ready to replace it. Eventually, it will be too wet to relight.

Face Squirt – Tired of shooting at candles? Then take 10 shots to shoot a volunteer in the face. Youth volunteers are a natural for this one!

Squirt Ping-Pong Balls off a Table – See if they can squirt them off the table or off two-liter bottles.

Basket Pitch – Set out some baskets and toss something into them. If you want, you can even toss bread—It's the perfect bread basket!

Sock Darts – A sock dart is a sock that has a tennis ball pushed to the toe. Sling it around and see if you can land it in a target (a hula hoop works great as a target).

Shoe Toss – The same idea as the sock darts but have kids take off a shoe and see if they can throw it into the target.

Toss/Throw Games

Planning Note: These are easy to adapt for most group sizes. Use soft objects whenever possible and provide enough distance between stations.

Throw an apple through a cutout horse's mouth

Toss Candy Corn into a pumpkin

Ring Toss – Set up some stakes or bottles and see if your kids can hook them by tossing a ring. Rings can be made of plastic or rope or bought either locally (like swimming rings) or online.

Dart Throw – Be careful with this one! Put a bunch of balloons on a piece of wood and see if the kids can pop them with a dart.

Bean Bag Toss – All you need is a beanbag and a target.

Water Sponge Throw – How far can you throw a wet sponge? Or, maybe you're trying to hit a target. Or, maybe you're throwing it against a wall to create a certain design with colored water.

Catapult Throw – Create a simple catapult and see how far or accurately kids can shoot different items. A catapult can be made as easily as giving the kids two plastic spoons and putting one on top of the other.

Frisbee Toss Variations

Distance Throw

Ping Pong Ball Toss / Blow – There are all sorts of games throwing, bouncing or blowing a ping pong ball.

Goldfish Bowl Toss with Ping-Pong Ball – Toss a ping-pong ball into a goldfish bowl.

Crafts

Planning Note: Good for all group sizes and especially useful as a quieter activity area. Choose washable, age-appropriate materials.

Make a paper boat that floats

Make paper airplanes – Have volunteers on hand to show them how to make several variations.

Paint swirling

Make masks using paper plates

Sand art

Make your own paracord bracelet

Go visit Hobby Lobby and brainstorm great, simple, family craft ideas.

Bible Story Games

Planning Note: These activities can connect the event to Scripture. Make sure the explanation is accurate, clear, and understandable for the children participating.

David and Goliath – Give your kids a slingshot and let them shoot marshmallows at a Goliath cutout.

Lion's Den – Set up a lion's den and let your kids experience what Daniel experienced. Be sure to include some audio roaring.

Jonah Box – Set up a dark box that smells like fish for a Jonah experience. Have kids who are willing to get inside.

Pin the Beard on King David

Moses Cupcake Walk

Lazarus-Mummy Wrapping – Wrap kids in toilet paper and explain how Jesus raised him from the dead.

There are lots of other Bible stories that can be fun and engaging at a fall festival. Just be creative and have fun.

Card Deck Activities

Planning Note: Low-cost activities that work well indoors or in a quiet area. Avoid small loose items around very young children.

Throw 5 cards into bucket

Attempt to throw a card into a cut watermelon

Card Houses – Give your kids a bunch of card decks and see who can make the best card house. Or maybe this isn't a competition but just a station where kids and families can visit and stay as long as they want.

Skills Games

Planning Note: These work well as individual challenges. Adjust each activity for age and provide close supervision where tools or balancing are involved.

Shave a Balloon – Put shaving cream on a hanging balloon and see if kids can shave it without popping it. (However, be careful since razors are sharp.) For a safer variation, just use toy razors and let the fun simply be the shaving. No popping needed.

Tightrope Walk – Create a tightrope (close to the ground) and let kids take the challenge.

Haystack Hunt – Hide something small in a haystack and let kids hunt for it.

Feather Balance – You can get some peacock feathers from Hobby Lobby. See who can balance one on one finger the longest. On their nose? On their foot?

Hula Hoop – Discover who can keep going for 1 minute or even 5 minutes.

Balance Beam – Just use some sturdy blocks and a 2x4 piece of wood. See who can walk all the way across it.

Candy Grab – Give kids one chance to reach into something and grab a handful of candy.

Donut Dangle – Dangle some small donuts and let kids have fun getting a dangling snack from the air. If you play this game, you'll have to restock it often. For convenience, tie strings to the donuts in advance. It is also best to use the small donuts you can buy in bulk packages.

Bubble Wrap Walk – See who can walk across bubble wrap without popping any bubbles.

Apple Swinging – Three tries to bite a hanging apple with no hands. This is an alternative to apple bobbing. Each participant should take the apple they used when they are finished.

Block Stacking – Give your kids a bunch of blocks and see how tall they can build a tower. It's a blast to set aside a large area with several thousand blocks. Some kids will spend half the night just building and creating. Have some chairs nearby where parents can sit and watch, and post signs to let them know that adults can build too.

Domino Line – Give your kids a bunch of dominoes to see what kind of "knock-down" designs they can make.

Jump Rope – How long can you go without a mistake?

Staring Competition – That's right, the first one who blinks is out!

Strength Challenges

Planning Note: Best for older children, teenagers, or adults. Match participants appropriately and supervise each challenge closely.

Arm wrestling

Leg Wrestling

Thumb Wrestling

Hammer Hit – There are many ways to create a target that kids can strike with a hammer. For example, have some preset nails and see how far kids can drive them in with one hit.

Finding Games

Planning Note: Easy to adapt for different ages and group sizes. Use objects that are safe to handle and large enough not to create a choking hazard.

Treasure Hunt – In a sand-filled aquarium or small sandbox, let your kids go on a treasure hunt. You can also use packing peanuts.

Wisdom Challenges – Set up a Riddle Station and see if your kids can figure out the answers.

The lists above are not an exhaustive list. These categories and game ideas have been provided to give you a springboard for creativity in organizing and creating games of your own.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Planning Note: Requirements vary widely. Consider space, cost, sanitation, animal handling, age restrictions, and the number of volunteers needed.

Balloon Animals

Face Painting – Along with face painting, give out Gospel stickers (www.orientaltrading.com) or have a fingernail decorating station for the girls.

Pony Rides

Petting Zoo – If you have a petting zoo, also give kids a way to clean their hands.

Tractor/ Hay Rides

Cookie decorating

Make edible bracelets from Fruit Loops

Hay Maze – Build a maze out of hay bales. We’ve seen some good ones. You can even Google a maze online to have a map for your volunteers to set it up.

Bubble Blow Variations – There are lots of games with bubbles. You can have a setup where kids blow big bubbles. I’ve seen a setup where a child could make a large bubble around himself by standing inside a tractor tire containing bubble solution and pulling up a bubble-making hoop with a rope. You can use “bubble guns” to blow a steady stream of bubbles or to blow bubbles on top of each other to see who can build the biggest bubble tower. And what kid doesn’t like just blowing or catching regular-sized bubbles? At your event you could set up an entire area with a variety of bubble stations.

Family Competitions

Planning Note: These work with groups of many sizes and can create natural gathering times. Explain the rules clearly and consider food allergies and sanitation for eating activities.

Pie-Eating Competition – No hands needed. Give your volunteers trash bags to cover themselves, maybe a shower cap and some goggles, and use their faces only to see who can eat the most pie in 45 seconds.

Bubble Gum Blowing Contest – One minute to blow the biggest bubble.

Jell-O Eating Competition – Again, no hands needed. Give your volunteers trash bags to cover themselves and use their faces only.

Beautiful Feet – Fill pans with Jell-O and put marbles inside and have volunteers see who can get the marbles out most quickly.

Guess how many pieces of candy corn or jelly beans there are—or anything else you want. This is a good thing to give away at the end of the evening.

Marshmallow Sculptures – Use marshmallows to make sculptures. You might even give away some marshmallow guns. You can also do a lot of other activities with marshmallows—everything from throwing them to a lick-and-stick competition to see if

they can stick their marshmallow to the ceiling. (You actually don't have the kids lick them—just let them dip their fingers in a glass of water.)

Balloon Room – What kid wouldn't like a room full of balloons! Just make sure to tell kids not to pop them, at least, not until it's time to clean up.

Hand Shadow Room – Give families flashlights with which they can make shadow animals. You can also use a Shadow Room where someone traces participants' shadow outlines on paper attached to the wall.

The Ultimate Simon Says – See who can stay in until the end.

Dice Roll Game – Roll a die that has different challenges on each side. It's like using a Physical Activity Cube. Whatever it lands on, that's what the kids do.

Family Talent Show Area

Random Drawings / Giveaways – Have random giveaways throughout the event. This is a great way to have families fill out information cards. Many businesses will also donate items for this, especially if you ask a month or more in advance.

Family Photo Booth – You can rent these or have your own picture-taker. You can even just set up an area where families can take their own pictures.

Costume Contest – Lots of ways to do this: Have kids entering the competition in different age categories walk across a stage area. Or, have a picture-taking station and announce the winner the following Sunday morning along with a viewing or video of all the kids' pictures.

Make an Obstacle Course

Sucker Tree – Come pull a sucker out of the Sucker Tree.

Tunnel of Fun

This doesn't have to be elaborate but something fun for the kids to crawl through. It can even be made from big boxes.

Special Features

Planning Note: Post presentation times, provide adequate viewing space, and make sure each feature supports the purpose and atmosphere of the event.

Superhero Storytelling – Post times for your own superhero or Bible character to tell a story.

Illusions – Set up an area for illusions and fun magic tricks. You can even post times for each presentation. You can find great Gospel illusions online at ThreeThirtyMinistries.com/gospel-illusions.

M.A.S.H. Unit – Take cut and torn strips of cloth to bandage all the kids who come to the M.A.S.H. Unit and tell you about their “fake” injuries. By the end of the night, you’ll have bandaged kids all over the place.

Themed Ideas

Planning Note: A theme can unify decorations, games, signs, and volunteer clothing. Make sure activities remain welcoming and fair to every guest.

You can have a lot of fun with themes: For a Western, you can have a sheriff place participants in a pretend jail, with a fun challenge they must complete to be released. Or, make some boys knights and crown some girls as princesses. Whatever you do, make sure it is fun and fair for all and that nobody feels left out or shows favoritism. Choosing people in random ways is both easy and exciting.

Set up your event with different worlds such as:

Creation Station

Exploration Point

Ninja Master

Critter Corner

Sports Center

Riddle Room

Pumpkin Decorating Contest

Have a LEGO Building Competition—Let kids make their creations at home and display them at the event. Just make sure to guard these creations—LEGOs are expensive!

Piñata-Busting – Every half hour, have a fun way of choosing volunteers to bust a piñata.

Emergency Vehicles – Invite the police, fire department, or an ambulance to be your special guests.

Drawing / Coloring Contest – You can have one during the event or before the event and display all the pictures at your Fall Festival.

Hair Coloring – Kids love getting their hair colored, but be sure to get their parents’ permission for this.

Gospel Tattoos – Yes, you can buy Christian “fake” tattoos and use them along with face painting.

Identi-Kid – Set up a station where parents can have their kids fingerprinted. There are organizations online that sell kits for parents that hold all their kids’ information. These usually include booklets on safety too.

Rentable Ideas

Dunk Tank

Slime Machine

Cotton Candy / Popcorn Machine

Caricature Drawings

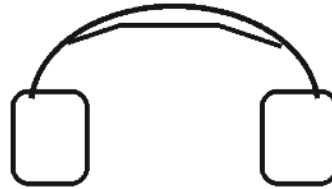
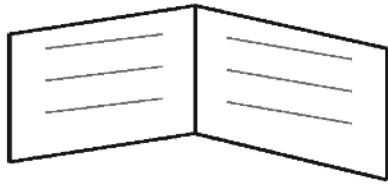
Inflatables

A Pumpkin Theme – Since this is a fall festival, it is possible to set up a bunch of games that use pumpkins. For example:

- A pumpkin pass instead of “Musical Hats”
- Bounce the ping pong ball into a pumpkin
- Hit the pumpkin with a dart
- Pull a slip of paper from out of a pumpkin and do what it says
- Pumpkin toss (many of these will get busted!)
- Pumpkin bowling
- Pumpkin shooting
- Pumpkin Sweep – as listed above
- Pumpkin Decorating
- Giveaway Pumpkin Pies at the Pumpkin Walk (Cake Walk)
- Three-legged pumpkin carry
- Big spoon pumpkin races (for Spoon Races) – You’ll need small pumpkins and a big spoon for this one!
- Who can draw the best pumpkin?
- Who can find the pumpkin in the maze?
- Have a Pumpkin Petting Zoo with small pumpkins that your kids have decorated as animals. You can even have a pumpkin decorated as Noah to represent the story of Noah’s Ark. You can also have a variety of other Bible stories depicted by pumpkins.
- Many more of the games above can have creative pumpkin variations.

Overall, be creative, have fun and don’t fall into the routine of having the same games every year. There are plenty of ways to make every year fresh and exciting.

Resources



FALL FESTIVAL RESOURCES

- Access Audio Training and Printable Gospel Tracts at:

Website: 330resources.org/fall-festival-login

Password: FFest010

- **Plan of Salvation Gospel Tract** – Download a printable tract from the website above.
- Easily printed in black and white
- Easy to fold – You can even use your older kids for this
- Print as many copies as you want both now and in the future

*Other Tracts** – Visit <https://cartoonworks.com> for other great cartoon tracts you can buy and print yourself

- **Fall Festival T-shirts**
- As low as \$8 per shirt – Learn how you can get this discount by emailing us at resources@threethirtyministries.org.
- Customized with your church name on orders of 20 or more

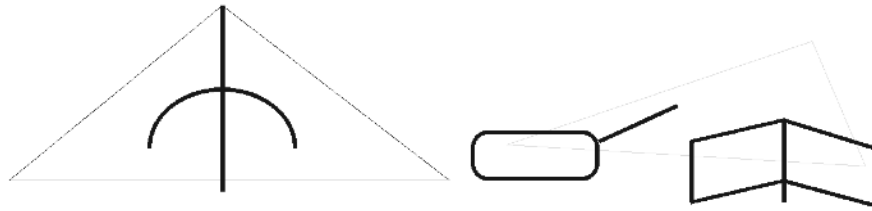
*Ninja Shirts** – This is a great way to designate certain key helpers or leaders at your event. Just tell people to find a “Ninja” if they need help or want to talk with someone. You can see these at 330ministries.com.

OTHER RESOURCES

- **Children’s Ministry Resources** – ThreeThirtyMinistries.com/children.

*Children’s Ministry Training** – More than 15 hours of audio training. Listen and learn as you go... ThreeThirtyMinistries.com/courses/childrens-ministry-training

Sample Family Devotion



Find it. Taste it. Touch it. Make it. Know it. Grow it. See it. Show it. Live it!

Below is a sample family devotion from ThreeThirtyMinistries.com.

The purpose of our family resources is to help families experience God's Word in a colorful, fun, surprising, and creative manner; to ignite in them a hunger that leads them to dig in, crawl inside, explore, enjoy, and live out God's truth.

For more family devotions like this, please contact us at resources@threethirtyministries.org.

FAMILY DEVOTION

BUILD A FORT

God is our safe place!

*"Whenever I am afraid,
I will trust in You."*

PSALM 56:3



We built this fort because a fort is a place where people feel safe. Today we're going to learn about Someone who is even safer than any fort we could ever build.



YOU WILL NEED:



1 flashlight



Your Bible
marked at
Psalm 56:3 and
Psalm 18:1–2



GET STARTED

Have your family "ransack" the house to gather pillows, blankets, chairs, and whatever else they can find to build a fort. Take your time building it, and let your kids be creative. (For example, they might want to make a tunnel entrance.) Build it large enough for everyone to fit inside.



From inside the fort, use your flashlight to read **Psalm 56:3** from your Bible.



TODAY'S SCRIPTURES:

Psalm 56:3 | Psalm 18:1–2

Theme: We can trust God because He is our fortress and will always take care of us.

1



ASK— What is something you're scared of?



SHARE— Share something you were scared of when you were a child.



ASK— What should we do when we're scared?
(*Trust God.*)



ASK— Why can we trust God? (*He's faithful. He'll never let you down. He always keeps His Word.*)



SAY— David knew what it was like to be afraid, but he also knew where to turn when he was afraid.



Read **Psalm 18:1–2** from your Bible.



ASK— How is God like a fort (fortress or stronghold) for you?
(*In Bible times, people went inside a fortress to be safe. Its walls protected them from harm. God is a shield for those who follow Him, and like a fortress, you are safe in Him.*)



ASK— Does this mean that bad things will never happen to someone who is following Jesus? Why or why not? (*Bad things still happen to godly people, but there's nothing so bad that God can't work it together for your good.*)



If your children want to know more, explain that sometimes we make wrong choices, and those choices bring painful consequences into our lives. Other times, we may do everything right, but someone else's wrong choices hurt us. Even then, there's nothing your children will ever do that is so bad that God can't forgive them when they repent and trust in Christ. And there's nothing so difficult that can happen to them that God can use for their good as they love Him and follow Him.
(*See Romans 8:28 for a wonderful promise.*)



SAY— The safest place in all the world isn't inside a fort—it's in a relationship with Jesus Christ. When we trust Him as our Savior and Lord, we belong to Him forever.



PRAY—
List prayer requests and thank God that He is always with you and that you can trust Him to care for you.

PRAYER REQUESTS



FAMILY NOTES





CLEAN UP— After you're done playing in the fort, feel free to have a pillow fight, or time your family to see how quickly they can tear the fort down and put everything away. Have fun and enjoy!

DATE: _____

WHO WAS HERE? _____

2

About the Authors



Kolby & Mary Beth King

Jesus Christ changed their lives and they are passionate about helping people to understand and know God, and to share Him in their daily lives. The King family shares the Gospel through creative ministry events and resources.

Kolby and Mary Beth are the founders of ThreeThirtyMinistries (ThreeThirtyMinistries.com), a resource network for the purpose of providing affordable resources to churches and families around the world. Kolby is a ventriloquist (which basically means he likes to talk to himself) and Mary Beth eats fire as a way of sharing the Gospel. During their years in evangelism and student ministry, they picked up other interesting ministry tools including stunts with six-foot balloons, balloon sculptures, fire-juggling (which one should never do on a windy day!), and a variety of other unique activities for the purpose of sharing Jesus with others.

Learn more about the ministry events and training conferences Kolby and Mary Beth can bring to your church or organization at 330events.org.

**Find more books by Kolby and Mary Beth King at
ThreeThirtyMinistries.com/books.**

“Jesus must become greater; I must become less.” John 3:30