



Light Parties and Halloween Alternatives in 2022

By Raewyn Moodie and Carolyn Kestle

If that heading made you gasp and look at the calendar, you are not alone! It is now less than 2 months to Monday 31st October, but if you usually do something for your community don't panic.

We are in a new season where it is firstly important to ask God what He is calling you to, and in light of that, re-evaluate what has gone before. It is a good time to recheck what your vision is for reaching your community. If you have been a church who has run big events in the past and now you are looking to see where all your volunteers have gone, this could be an opportunity to seek God for a new direction.



Jesus said, **28** "Come to me, all you who are tired and are carrying heavy loads. I will give you rest. **29** Become my servants and learn from me. I am gentle and free of pride. You will find rest for your souls. **30** Serving me is easy, and my load is light." Matthew 11:28-30

We all have vision and a call to share the love of Jesus with our communities, but part of our call is also caring for our fellow labourers in the faith from within our community. Striving to meet the expectations of a community, or even our own church, is a recipe for burnout, so avoid falling into the trap of trying to do something just because of tradition or expectation, because that yoke may not be from the Lord at all.

A few questions to ask yourself and your team:

1. God, what are you wanting me to do this Halloween time? Are you wanting me to continue with what we've done before or step into something new you have in store for us?
2. What is God currently doing within our faith community and how can we plan something that will fit in with that?
3. What people resources does our church currently have? Are there nearby churches we could partner with this year, to carry out God's mission to our community together?



Many churches are feeling that connection is an important value for families at this time post lockdowns etc. and some community families may feel more comfortable with something outside rather than in a building.

Here a few alternatives on a smaller scale which can be more relational to your immediate church community.

- Run a BBQ and bike night in your church car park for those who live in the neighbourhood.
- Host neighbourhood BBQs and games (giant Jenga/tug of war) maybe on the front lawn of some church members' houses.
- Host a carnival but make all the games "serve yourself" for families to enjoy together, rather than relying on volunteers to run them all.

It may be helpful if we can go to where the people are at the moment, rather than asking them to come to us. Just being seen in your community on the night, when many are out walking the streets, can be positive and relational.

However, the most important thing for us is to discern what God is calling us to. If that is to focus on Christmas instead - wonderful. Give yourself permission to say, "No light party this year!"

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