

Ministry Protection Memo

“MPM” is a series on various topics relative to Church and safety. Send your comments and interests to the Northern Illinois Conference.

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Halloween Safety

Everyone wants to have a safe and happy Halloween for themselves, their guests and their children. Using safety tips and common sense can help you make the most of your Halloween season and make it as enjoyable for your kids as it is for you. We would like parents and youngsters to keep some important safety tips in mind:

- Make sure children are accompanied by an adult or responsible teenager when they go door-to-door. Please don't let them go alone; go with them if you can.
- Instruct children never to eat anything until they are home and the treats have been examined. Do not allow children to eat any homemade goodies or food they may have received.
- Check the treat wrappers for signs of tampering.
- Throw out any suspicious treats.
- Make sure children's costumes fit and are short enough to prevent tripping. Also make sure that masks or accessories do not obstruct the child's vision. Remember, using face paint makes it easier to see than wearing a mask.
- Tell your children to trick-or-treat in their own neighborhood and to stay on well-lit streets. Daylight hours are the best!
- Teach your children not to go inside or in the back or side yard of any home.
- If children are going to be out after dark, make sure they carry a flashlight. Any amount of reflective clothing or tape is also a good idea.
- Know which friends your children will be with and which route they will be taking.
- Leave your porch light on, so children will know it is okay to visit your home.

- Teach your children to use the sidewalks and to watch out for traffic.
- Keep costumed children away from pets. The pet may not recognize the child and could become frightened.

Be Safe and Have Fun!

Trunk or Treating: 10 Tips to Help You Plan a Successful Event



Many organizations now offer trunk-or-treating events as a safer, less-spooky alternative to traditional trick-or-treating. During this event, adult members of the organization decorate the trunks of their vehicles in Halloween-themed decor and pass out candy or other goodies to the children in their community. The events are often held in parking lots or other well-lit, contained areas, so children are at less risk of being hit by a vehicle on a dark road. Trunk-or-treating also gives families a chance to get to know each other. If your organization is holding a trunk-or-treat event this year, keep the following planning pointers in mind and communicate them to all who are volunteering at and participating in the event.

1. **Participants** — Discuss whether or not anyone in the community can sign up to have a vehicle on-site, or if only organization members will be allowed to participate in handing out candy.
2. **Attendees** — Decide who will be invited to your event. Will you allow only organization members and their families? The entire community? Will there be a fee to participate, or will it be a free event?
3. **Date** — Will your event be held during regular trick-or-treating hours, or on a different day so as not to compete? Will you hold the event early in the evening to avoid the dark and colder temperatures?
4. **Decor** — Will you allow candles or any other sort of flammable objects? Will fake blood be allowed?
5. **Food safety** — One in 13 children has a food allergy, so this must be addressed as you plan your event. Will you allow homemade items to be passed out, or only store-bought, prepackaged items that don't contain nuts or other allergens? Will you sell food and/or beverages during your event?
6. **Building security** — If you are holding the event at your facility, decide if you'll open the building or keep it locked during the event. Will participants have access to the restrooms, the entire building or nothing at all? If you open your building to attendees, have a volunteer monitor traffic to and from the building.
7. **Falls** — Falls are the leading cause of unintentional injuries on Halloween, according to the National Safety Council. Inspect the grounds for fall hazards, such as curbs, grassy areas, cracks, potholes or any other obstruction that may be hidden due to dim lighting.



8. **Inclement weather** — Whether it's moving the event indoors or scheduling a rain date, have a backup plan ready to go if rain, snow or extreme cold strikes. (After all, Halloween costumes can be thin and not cold-weather friendly.) Watch the weather and communicate any event changes as far in advance as possible.
9. **Traffic** — The benefit of hosting your event in an enclosed area is that it reduces the risk of children running into traffic. However, there will be vehicles moving in and out of the parking lot as people come and go. Have a volunteer direct traffic to guide traffic flow and also have a designated walking area away from the traffic for children moving around the parking lot.
10. **First aid** — No matter how much you plan, accidents can happen. That's why it's a good idea to have a volunteer on-site who is trained to administer care should an accident occur. Keep a first-aid kit handy, too.

Trunk-or-treating is not only fun for people of all ages, it's a great way for your organization to raise awareness of your cause. Avoid putting a damper on the evening of fun, sweet treats, costumes and camaraderie by being thoroughly prepared for any issue.

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