

HALLOWEEN

Trick or Treat with a Twist

By LaKeisha Fleming

As Halloween approaches, children nationwide are preparing to offer this sing-song refrain.

Merriam Webster says trick or treat is “a custom on Halloween in which children knock on people’s doors and say ‘trick or treat’ when the doors are opened to ask for candy.” The tradition dates as far back as the 1920’s in North America. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 41.2 million children ages 5 to 14 were potential trick or treaters in 2013. The tradition seems a popular way to pass the last day of October! It sure was for me, many years ago. I remember getting excited about Halloween as a child. What costume would I pick? Would I get more candy than my sister? How many pieces could I sneak during the night, walking from house to house? It was a fun night.

Flash forward to years later and Halloween isn’t what it used to be. What I perceived to be a time of fun and innocence as a child has become a time of concern. Walking from house to house, asking for candy, doesn’t have the same connotation as it used to. Darkened streets aren’t mysterious; they’re dangerous. Sadly, people find it hard to trust neighbors that they don’t know well. And forget about eating candy from anyone, anywhere, before it gets checked at home. Given all of the concerns, trick or treating just doesn’t hold the same allure it did some time ago. But kids ultimately still want

to have fun! Even though they may not have the same trick or treating experience you grew up with, there are tons of fun alternatives available for them to have a good time.



Take trick or treating from your street to “Main Street.”

From grocery stores to restaurants, many businesses now offer candy to kids on Halloween. Marketing themselves as a safe alternative to walking up and down the darkened streets, many businesses specify times that kids can come by in costume and collect their goodies. Malls and shopping plazas are great locations, since there are a

number of stores in one location that may participate. Plus it offers a well-lit, safer scenario for your little ones. Dress up your favorite princess or superhero, and get some shopping done in the process! Check out Main Street Newnan’s or Downtown Fayetteville’s calendar of events for specifics.

A Twist with a Trunk

Enjoy a twist with trunk or treat. Over the years, many churches have begun offering trunk or treat celebrations. Trunks full of treats and a carnival-like atmosphere, they offer an abundance of activities to keep kids busy in a positive way. Take in a hay ride, jump on inflatables, or enjoy a friendly game of bean bag toss. And often you don’t have to be a member of the church to take part in the fun. Light-hearted, fun costumes are often encouraged.

Fall Fests

Fall festival cheer. Community organizations and schools offer fall festival celebrations filled with a lot of the traditional Halloween fare of candied apples, cider and food. Bobbing for apples and playing games are usually on the list. Police and fire departments frequently host Halloween events that major on fun, while slipping in good information about safety in the process. And what’s more fun than exploring a squad car or fire truck?

Various locales hold Halloween-themed events. **The Little Five Points Halloween Festival and Parade** is one of the biggest in the country! Over 35,000 people will be there to celebrate with you, enjoy the music and entertainment. **Legoland Discovery Center Atlanta** will hold its Brick or Treat event, which will include candy and contests. **Six Flags Over Georgia** offers its Fright Fest. And you can always mix it up with the animals with **Boo at the Zoo**. Looking for less

scary? **Rock Ranch** will host a “Not So Spooky” Halloween festival. Check the individual websites, since some events are happening all throughout the month.

Throw your own Party

Where is a place that’s safe, has all of your kid’s friends, is filled with food and fun, and most importantly lets you keep an eye on your child? Your house! Many parents are opting to allow their kids to throw their own parties in an effort to exercise some control over the festivities. Parties at home ensure that both fun and safety are paramount.

A little pumpkin carving, anyone?

Throw a competition into the mix for an exciting night. Hold a contest to see who can make the scariest-funniest-silliest-ugliest pumpkin. Carving, painting, drawing, you name it. And for kids, the messier, the better. Get creative, then go for it!

Monster mash movie marathon.

Movie selections can be fun, like, “It’s the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown.” Or maybe you’re going for scary choices, such as “Nightmare on Elm Street.” Whatever your preference, Halloween is the perfect night to host a movie marathon of all your favorites. Have people submit titles in advance. The person who finds the most movies on theme, wins!

Plan a family night at home. Make up your own activities specific to your family. It can be a great time of bonding and togetherness. Arts and crafts? Game night? Storytelling? Maybe even give one of your older kids the experience of answering the door for potential trick or treaters.

There are as many variations on each idea as your imagination will allow. Think outside the box, and make it a night of fun that both you and your child will enjoy!

FAYETTE COUNTY
PARKS & RECREATION DEPT.

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