



Transforming Halloween

At my old house, the end of October

marked a neighbourhood celebration. The local real estate sent yellow balloons to households, gardens became decorated with cobwebs and pumpkins. As I drove home from work, the streets were full of families in costumes. 'There's another one!' a child would excitedly scream, pointing to another decorated house where treats were promised. Halloween can be a beautiful community celebration.

But it can also be difficult...

I've spoken with preschool parents who dislike the influence of American culture and consumerism. Others find the lack of 'rules' about trick-or-treating awkward or have children upset by the scary decorations in shops. For Christians - the celebration of violence and evil - seems something to be avoided at all costs.

But that isn't always easy. Rachel Turner from BRF (see link below) suggests that it can be helpful to break Halloween up into pieces, so it's not so 'big'. Ideas could include - how do we respond to fear? What about scary pictures in our minds? How do we be in the world but not of the world? Or how is light beautiful in the darkness?

I find the 'transformation' part of Halloween fascinating. We transform ourselves by putting on costumes, pumpkins are transformed into jack-o-lanterns, paper can be transformed into a pumpkin with a few simple folds. Jesus used everyday objects, people and events to show God's love for us.

Sheep, coins, parties, tax collectors – all are transformed in Jesus' stories to show God's love.

Centuries ago, Christians transformed a pagan festival to scare away evil spirits, into a 'All Hallows Day'. A time to remember Christians who had died. A reminder that nothing can separate us from God's love - not even death. God's love transforms us, and our world.

This year, as Oct 31st comes around, let me encourage you to remember God's transforming love. In the midst of Covid-normal, as we make decisions about what is best for our families, let Paul's words to Romans ring true.

Happy All Hallow's Eve

Emma

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39



Origami Pumpkins

Instructions [link](#)



Lanterns and luminaries

Ideas to make lanterns.

Note: Adult supervision is needed if using a real candle.

Fairy Dough

A soft and stretchy dough made from just 3 ingredients. [Link](#)

Note: Fairy dough is not taste-safe, so if your kids put everything in their mouths, use regular [playdough](#).

Chocolate Spiders

A no-bake party treat. [Link](#)

Nut free - leave out the peanut butter and add more chocolate and coconut.

Gluten free - use Chang's gluten-free fried noddles. They will go stale faster, so make a small batch.

Light Against Darkness:

A Christian history of Halloween. [Link](#)

Making Up Your Mind

About Halloween

Rachel from BRF shares some helpful advice in this short podcast. [Link](#)

Pumpkin Activity

Carving a pumpkin can remind us of how God grows our faith

1. Cut open the top of the pumpkin - we ask God to open our minds
2. Scoop out the inside - we ask God to forgive us, and to take away the wrong things we have done
3. Cut out the eyes - we ask God to help us see the needs of others around us, and give us ways in which we can help them.
4. Cut out the mouth - we ask God to help us speak words of love and encouragement.
5. Light the tea light - we ask for God's love to shine brightly inside us.

Caution – pumpkin carving is hard!

An adult will need to assist with this. If using a real candle or tealight, adult supervision is needed. Make sure there is enough room for heat to escape. Pumpkins can burn.

Source: strandz.org.nz/halloween.html

