

Leading a Successful Fall Festival

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.

GAMES

- **Carnival Games**
 - 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 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) or toss a beanbag or even throw a baseball depending on the kind of bottles you are using. Lot 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 stick with a paper clip on 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**
 - Tug-A-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.

- Samarai – Use pool noodles to play “Samarai.” 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 “free-style.” 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 and 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 come back. 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 one who stays the most consecutive rounds.

- **Sport Games**
 - 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, try having a variety of 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**
 - Potato Sack Race – You can buy these online from www.usgames.com or a variety of other places and probably even find them locally.
 - 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.
 - Bumper Belly Races – This is a step up from Inner Tube Races. You can order one from www.usgames.com. Just running with one on is fun but for a harder challenge have your volunteers try to kick a somewhat deflated ball around a cone and back to the beginning. The funny part is that they can’t see their feet!
 - 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**

- Dodge the shot – Have kids dodge as something 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 shot 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 re-light.
 - 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 table – See if they can squirt them off the table or off of 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/ThrowGames**
 - Throw an apple through a cut out 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 accurate kids can shoot different items. A catapult can be made as easy 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 gold fish bowl.

- **Craft**
 - 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**
 - David and Goliath – Give your kids a slingshot, and let them shoot marshmallows at a Goliath Cut Out.
 - 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 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**
 - 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.

- **Skill Games**
 - 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 it 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 – Gives kids one chance to reach in something and grab a hand full 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 ease, already have strings tied 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. And whatever apple you choose, take it with you when you're done.
- 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 dominos 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**
 - Arm wrestling
 - Leg Wrestling
 - Thumb Wrestling
 - Hammer Hit – There are all sorts of ways to have something the kids hit with a hammer. For example, have some preset nails and see how far kids can drive them in with one hit.
- **Finding Games**
 - 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.

ACTIVITIES

- **Other Activities**
 - Balloon Animals – Get affordable supplies at www.btydirect.com.
 - 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 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 set-up where kids blow big bubbles. I've seen a set-up where a kid could make a big bubble around himself by standing inside a tractor tire full of bubbles and pulling on 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

- 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 quickest.
- Guess how many candy corn or Jelly Beans 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 giveaway 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 where they can make shadow animals. You can also use a Shadow Room to have someone draw body outline of shadows against the wall.
- The Ultimate Simon Says – See who can stay in to the end.
- Dice Roll Game – Roll a dice that have different challenges on each side. It's like using Physical Activity Cube. Whatever it lands on, that 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
 - Super Hero Story Telling – Post Times for your own Super Hero 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 www.threethirtyministries.org/store.
 - 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
 - You can have a lot of fun with themes: For a Western, you can have a sheriff that puts people in jail—Set a fun bail requirement to get out. 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 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 parent’s 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 for all their kid’s 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:

- (1) A pumpkin pass instead of “Musical Hats”
- (2) Bounce the ping pong ball into a pumpkin
- (3) Hit the pumpkin with a dart
- (4) Pull a slip of paper from out of a pumpkin and do what it says
- (5) Pumpkin toss (many of these will get busted!)
- (6) Pumpkin bowling
- (7) Pumpkin shooting
- (8) Pumpkin Sweep – as listed above
- (9) Pumpkin Decorating
- (10) Giveaway Pumpkin Pies at the Pumpkin Walk (Cake Walk)
- (11) Three-legged pumpkin carry
- (12) Big spoon pumpkin races (for Spoon Races) – You’ll need small pumpkins and a big spoon for this one!

- (13) Who can draw the best pumpkin?
- (14) Who can find the pumpkin in the maze?
- (15) 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.
- (16) Many more of the games above can have creative pumpkin varieties.

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.