

How to Host a Light Party

A practical guide to a welcoming Halloween alternative

What is a Light Party?

A Light Party is a welcoming celebration built around light, hope and kindness. Many churches host one around Halloween as a Christian alternative, with crafts, games, food and an optional Bible message. Families and schools can also use the general lantern, sunshine and star activities without a religious session. Explain the programme in the invitation so every family can choose comfortably.

Christian organisers often connect the celebration with Jesus describing himself as the light of the world in John 8:12. This hub separates explicitly Christian resources from general activities. A guest does not need to know Bible stories, wear a costume or join a faith discussion to enjoy the welcome.

Scripture Union and the Diocese of Ely share examples of Light Parties and lantern events. There is no single programme every host must follow. Choose a manageable event that fits your children, venue and helpers rather than trying to use every printable.

Choose your guests, venue and date

Decide whether this is a family gathering, an invited classroom group or a registered community event. Confirm the venue booking, accessible entrance, toilets, drinking water and a clearly supervised collection point. Keep exits and mobility routes clear. Check the venue's capacity and safeguarding arrangements before advertising places.

Choose a date and time that work for your community; a Light Party does not have to fall on 31 October. Tell families the start and finish times, whether an adult must stay, what food is provided and how to request access support. Ask about allergies, sensory needs and communication preferences during registration. Only collect information you need, restrict access and follow your organisation's retention policy.

Plan a budget you can change

For a home group of 5–10, begin with one shared craft table, a short game and a familiar snack. For a classroom of 15–30, count complete sets for each table and allow for replacement pencils, paper and glue. For a community group of 50–100, include printing, venue costs, food, cleaning and enough trained helpers for the actual activities and children attending.

Use the editable budget sheet to enter your own quantities, local unit prices, donations and contingency. Multiply quantity by unit cost, subtract confirmed contributions and compare the total with your spending limit. There are no assumed prices in this pack. Borrow washable table covers and decorations, reuse scrap paper and offer fewer well-prepared stations if funds are tight.

Set up a bright, calm room

Use normal comfortable room lighting, paper lanterns, large stars and reusable bunting. Decoration does not need to mean darkness. Choose a calm corner with seating and an activity that can be taken away from the main group. Avoid flashing lights, loud sudden sounds, blindfolds and surprise scares. Make station signs readable from a child's height.

Use battery-powered LED lights only when a responsible adult has checked the product and secured its battery compartment. Keep batteries and spare cells out of children's reach. Paper lanterns, tissue crafts and paper candles are decorations: never put a flame, hot bulb or exposed battery inside them. Do not hang strings across walkways or around children's necks.

Offer affordable, comfortable costumes

Invite bright colours, stars, a favourite book character or ordinary comfortable clothes. Say clearly that costumes are optional and no purchase is expected. Paper crowns and handheld star decorations can be made on arrival. Avoid trailing fabric, sharp props, restrictive masks and anything that blocks a child's sight or movement.

Food, allergies and breaks

Keep snacks simple and familiar, with drinking water available. Ask families about allergies before the event and agree what the venue can safely provide. Keep ingredient packaging and label each serving; do not claim a homemade item is allergen-free without a reliable basis. Prevent shared utensils from moving between dishes and follow the venue's food-handling policy.

Offer a non-food option for treats and prizes. Choose foods and serving sizes appropriate to the children present, with seated supervision where needed. Use snack time as a real break rather than asking children to eat while moving between stations. Plan a nearby quiet place for anyone who needs more time.

Run stations that children can actually finish

Choose two or three crafts and a small selection of games. Print one test sheet at actual size before preparing the group copies. Put the finished assembly sketch beside each craft, separate cutting from gluing and have an adult manage tools or small components. Younger children can colour prepared shapes while older children build the template themselves.

Give each station a named helper, a clearly marked boundary and a simple instruction card. Demonstrate one task at a time. Let children watch, use larger pieces, work seated or choose a quieter alternative. Plan transitions with a spoken and visual cue. Avoid competitive elimination: children can join again whenever they are ready.

Make the welcome inclusive

Explain which activities include Christian teaching before families attend. Offer a general colouring or lantern station during an optional reflection. Nobody should have to speak, pray, perform or explain their beliefs. Invite children to share something kind they noticed, but let them pass. Celebrate helping and participation rather than perfect crafts.

Agree who checks children in and out, who holds emergency information and how helpers raise a concern. Follow your organisation's safeguarding and supervision policies; the printables do not replace them. Ask guardians about the support their child needs rather than assuming the same approach works for everyone.

Close well and review

Allow time for names on work, a calm final activity and collection by the agreed adult. Count children out according to your venue's procedure. Keep exits staffed while helpers tidy the activity areas. Collect small pieces, check the floor, switch off LED decorations and return borrowed equipment.

Afterwards, ask helpers what children enjoyed, where queues formed and which supplies ran out. Record actual spending and useful changes for next time. A short, safe event with friendly adults is more valuable than an overfilled timetable.

Recruit and brief your helpers

Begin with your organisation's safeguarding policy and the needs of the actual children, rather than a universal adult-to-child ratio. Name an event lead, a first-aid contact and a backup for each station. Check required recruitment, training and venue procedures before volunteers work with children. Give helpers the running sheet, emergency procedure, accessible routes and an agreed way to ask for support.

For 5–10 children, keep the craft and food in one supervised area. For 15–30, use small table groups with assigned helpers and staggered transitions. For 50–100, use advance registration, a staffed entrance and exit, separate food and craft teams, and capacity-limited stations. If you cannot staff the programme safely, reduce places or activities.

Practical food ideas and alternatives

Offer colourful fruit portions appropriate to the children's ages, vegetable sticks prepared safely for the group, sandwiches with clearly identified fillings, or simple crackers. A rainbow display can use coloured paper labels rather than sweets. Use familiar foods that guardians can check, and avoid hard round foods or other unsuitable choking hazards for younger children.

Ask families before choosing dairy, egg, wheat, soy, sesame or nut ingredients; this is an example list, not a complete allergen assessment. Keep original packaging available, use separate serving utensils and agree safe options with the families concerned. Water and a take-home paper craft can replace sugary drinks and sweet prizes.

Essential spending and optional extras

At home, count one lantern sheet, a handful of colouring sheets and a pencil per child, plus shared glue and adult-managed scissors. A classroom needs enough table sets to avoid queues; divide the printing list by station capacity. A community event needs additional registration materials, accessible signs, cleaning supplies and venue costs. Enter all of these in the budget planner before buying optional decorations.

Costumes, glow accessories, balloons, treat bags and purchased prizes are optional. Paper stars, borrowed table covers and reusable LED products can provide the atmosphere. Budget a contingency you choose; record donations only when confirmed. The editable CSV lets you add formulas in your own spreadsheet, while the fillable PDF supports manual totals.

Optional Bible message: Jesus the Light of the World

Use the separate age-specific five-minute reflection sheets. Read John 8:12 from the World English Bible, then connect the picture of light with following Jesus. Matthew 5:14–16 describes lives that point people towards God; Psalm 119:105 pictures God's word as a lamp for our steps. These are Christian beliefs, not a requirement for joining the party.

The World English Bible is public domain. Exact verse quotations are attributed in the reflection pack; craft headings such as "Let your light shine" are short activity titles. Never use a flame, darken the room or ask children to share personal fears. Offer a general quiet activity at the same time.

Ten Light Party themes

Let Your Light Shine

Colours: Yellow and blue. Decoration: Paper stars and clear station signs. Activities: Kindness cards and a star hunt. Optional Matthew 5:16 reflection.

Jesus Is the Light of the World

Colours: Gold and white. Decoration: Lanterns and a simple globe display. Activities: Bible light trail and Bible colouring. Explicitly Christian; John 8:12.

Shine Bright

Colours: Bright pink, yellow and teal. Decoration: Large stars and Shine bunting. Activities: Colourable lettering and star wand craft. General activities available.

A Celebration of Light

Colours: Warm yellow and cream. Decoration: Paper lanterns and LED table lights. Activities: Lantern craft and picture bingo. General activities available.

Stars and Sparkles

Colours: Blue, purple and yellow. Decoration: Paper stars; avoid loose glitter. Activities: Star garland and missing-star memory. General activities available.

Rainbow of Hope

Colours: Rainbow colours. Decoration: Broad paper rainbow flags. Activities: Rainbow mobile and treasure hunt. General activities available.

Be a Light

Colours: Yellow and green. Decoration: Kindness-message cards. Activities: Helping challenges and kindness lantern. Optional Christian discussion.

Glow and Grow

Colours: Teal and yellow. Decoration: Paper light bulbs and hopeful words. Activities: Bright-idea colouring and cooperative games. Use steady room lighting.

Light Up the World

Colours: Blue and gold. Decoration: Globe display and paper city windows. Activities: City lantern craft and lighthouse colouring. Optional Christian connection.

Lanterns of Hope

Colours: Orange, gold and white. Decoration: Hanging paper lanterns above adult reach. Activities: Lantern templates and a supervised lantern trail. No flames or dark-room walking.

60-minute programme

30 minutes before: check room, prepare stations, brief helpers and check registration materials.

0–8 minutes: Welcome and easy colouring.

8–10 minutes: Move to craft table and demonstrate.

10–28 minutes: One main craft.

28–30 minutes: Tidy tools and transition.

30–40 minutes: Cooperative game.

40–50 minutes: Seated snack and water break.

50–55 minutes: Optional reflection or quiet lantern colouring.

55–60 minutes: Thank you and supervised collection.

Allow 20 minutes after collection for equipment checks and cleanup.

90-minute programme

45 minutes before: set up two stations, check access routes, food labels and helper roles.

0–10 minutes: Welcome and arrival activity.

10–30 minutes: First craft station.

30–35 minutes: Calm transition.

35–55 minutes: Second craft or puzzle station.

55–65 minutes: Seated snack and water break.

65–80 minutes: Small-group game.

80–85 minutes: Optional reflection or general quiet activity.

85–90 minutes: Thanks and supervised collection.

Allow 25 minutes after collection for cleanup and a short helper review.

120-minute programme

60 minutes before: set up three stations, check supplies and rehearse transitions with helpers.

0–15 minutes: Welcome and arrival colouring.

15–35 minutes: First station.

35–40 minutes: Transition and water.

40–60 minutes: Second station.

60–75 minutes: Seated snack and quiet break.

75–95 minutes: Third station.

95–100 minutes: Transition.

100–110 minutes: Cooperative group game.

110–115 minutes: Optional reflection or quiet activity.

115–120 minutes: Thanks and supervised collection.

Allow 30 minutes after collection for cleanup, equipment counts and helper feedback.

Frequently asked questions

What if it rains?

Choose an indoor fallback before advertising an outdoor trail. Move station cards indoors, shorten walking routes and keep entrances dry and clear. Cancel an outdoor element if the venue cannot run it safely.

What if attendance is lower than expected?

Use one shared table, shorten rotations and let children choose a second activity. Keep the welcome relaxed; you do not need to fill the room with extra stations.

What if more people arrive?

Stay within the booked capacity and agreed supervision arrangements. Use registration limits and a waiting list. Do not add unsupervised stations or accept children you cannot safely accommodate.

Can non-Christian families attend?

Yes, if the invitation clearly explains the programme. Label Christian sessions and offer a general activity at the same time. Make participation optional and welcome guests without testing their beliefs.

How can we reduce sugar and spending?

Offer water, simple familiar snacks and non-food take-home crafts. Borrow supplies and choose two good activities instead of buying treats or decorations for every station.

What about additional needs?

Ask families what helps. Offer seated access, larger templates, a quiet space, clear picture instructions and flexible participation. Discuss any individual support with the family and venue before the event.

How many supplies should I print?

Count registered children and the number who can use each station at once. Print a small contingency within your budget, plus one demonstration copy and the separate answer sheets for helpers.

Can I use these in a classroom?

Use the clearly marked general activities and classroom pack. Christian activities are supplied separately so you can follow your school's policies and the needs of your group.

Sources and original resources

Background reading: Scripture Union Halloween and Light Party resources; Diocese of Ely Halloween and Light Party resources; NurtureStore light craft ideas. The text, illustrations and templates in this Help My Kids Are Bored pack are original. Bible quotations, where included, use the public-domain World English Bible and are labelled separately from paraphrased activity headings.

Find individual activities, Christian and general options, and planning downloads in the Light Party hub at helpmykidsarebored.com. Pick only the activities that fit your group and follow your venue policies.