



MARKING ALL HALLOW'S EVE



An Intergenerational Halloween
Celebration Resource



This resource was developed by and for people living and doing ministry in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.

There is much that we can learn from Mi'kmaq culture about honouring the connections between the living and the dead, so as you explore ways for your parish to intentionally mark Halloween or All Hallow's Eve, we invite you to also learn about and honour the stories and traditions of the people who have live and died here since time immemorial, and to continue to work to be people of reconciliation in this place.

Written and produced in 2025 for the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island
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Welcome and Introduction



Welcome to our Halloween Celebration Resource! We hope that this brief guide will help you and your parish community confidently and meaningfully engage with your wider community this Halloween!

It can be easy to think of work like this as a nice thing to do, but not really connected to who we are or what we are about as church, but, as you'll see as you read on, there are ways that celebrating Halloween with your community can be deeply tied to our faith, and even on the most basic level, Halloween is generally a cooperative community celebration, and being a good neighbour is one of the simplest expressions of our faith. And sometimes being a good neighbour is as simple as being a smiling presence, passing out candy to the ghouls and goblins who are out trick-or-treating.

We've designed this to be straightforward to use and to have a variety of options and ideas so that every parish, regardless of their congregation size or financial situation, can find something that they could use. If you see something that wouldn't work at all in your situation, don't worry about it, just let those pieces go, and hold on to what might be possible.

Before you dig too far in, it's worth pausing to think about what resources or opportunities exist within both your church community and your wider community that your parish can tap into as you find ways to celebrate Halloween. Here is a little bit more of what we mean by that:

Within Your Wider Community – This might include community events or activities that are planned as well as any relationships that your parish has with other community organizations. This could include things like:

- A Trunk or Treat event organised by a school community group, or municipality
- A family resource centre who you have partnered with or supported in the past
- Any local traditions or customs around trick or treating.



Within Your Church Community – This might include things about your church’s buildings or property as well as the gifts, skills, and passions of the members of your church community. This could include things like:

- A church on popular trick or treating street
- A hall that you could set something up in
- A musician who might be open to making some spooky music
- People who love to connect with their community, especially with children and families





An All Hallow's Eve Reflection



All Hallow's Eve, when the veil between heaven and earth is considered thin, and the spirits of those we have loved are thought to come closer, is a remarkable time for Churches to mark and celebrate with an intergenerational event.

Themed movie nights could include *Coco* or *The Book of Life*, both of which commemorate the importance of remembering and naming those we love but see no longer. Many cultures and traditions include preparing and sharing the favourite foods of those who have died, gathering to sing, tell stories and remember. These are the themes that shape our weekly Eucharist, so should feel familiar to us, and to our communities.

Years ago, there was some talk that Trick or Treating was only for small children, and I remember reading an article advocating for the adolescent trick or treaters who, the author said, needed the sweetness even more. This made so much sense to me. Engaging with the adolescents who were usually tentative and grateful helped me think about the practices around the holiday and the need we all have for bits of sweetness amid all that is dark and gloomy.

One of the opportunities All Hallow's Eve offers is to explore our fears from a place of security.

And it is also a time when, as churches, we can share in building community and fun in our neighbourhoods, while also modelling the practices that give us faith and courage.

Prayers

From ghoulies and ghosties
and long-legged beasties
and things that go bump in the night...
May the dear Lord deliver us.

Traditional Scottish Prayer

God of time, God of dark,
God of earth, God of heaven,
you are stronger than the elements,
stronger than the shadows,
stronger than the fears,
stronger than human wills,
stronger than spirits,
stronger than magic spells.
Your presence be our shield.
The love of God to enfold us,
the peace of God to still us,
the Spirit of God to fill us,
the Saints of God to inspire us;
the angels of God to guard us this night, this winter, forever.

Celtic Blessings by Ray Simpson



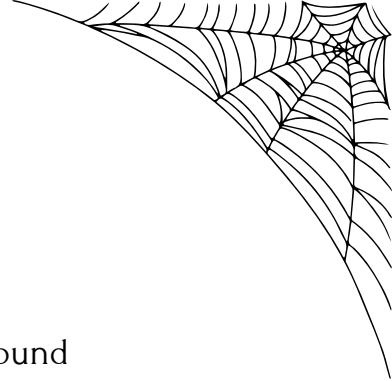


Pick and Mix



We've pulled together and created a variety of different ideas and possibilities that could be used in a variety of combinations based on your particular context. There's a lot of things listed here, so just remember that you don't need to do everything. We encourage you to approach this exactly like you would a wall lined with jars of candy – you can pick the things that look delicious to you and mix them all together and leave the rest behind for someone else to enjoy!

- Tell people about your plan – This doesn't have to be a lot of work, but if you put together a simple poster and share it on social media and around your community, it will help make sure people know what you have going on and encourage them to join you.
 - [Here's an editable template on Canva](#). You can add it the specifics for your plan, and then share away!
- Hand out candy to trick or treaters - This is as easy-peasy as it gets! Gather a handful of volunteers to hangout (maybe in costumes!) at your church or another spot that makes sense and hand out treats.
 - If you assemble treat bags to distribute, [you could use this template](#) (or something like it!) to add a note from your parish.
- Offer an opportunity for prayer – There's a few different ways that you could do this, and we will list some of them here. Whatever you might decide to do, make sure that it's something that people are free to choose to participate in, and that there's no pressure around it.
 - Printable prayer cards – You can print these prayer cards as they are or adapt them with a prayer that you prefer. Here are a few options:
 - [Cute Ghosts with Traditional Scottish Prayer \(Full Colour\)](#)
 - [Simple Scottish Prayer \(Black and White\)](#)
 - [Celtic Style Prayer with Spooky Background \(Full Colour\)](#)
 - [Simple Celtic Style Prayer \(Greyscale\)](#)
- Invite people to light a candle – Your church may already have a purpose stand or table for this, but if not, you can arrange small candles on a table with matches or a lighter on a table and invite people to light a candle in memory of someone who has died.

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- Get a little bit crafty – There are just zillions of craft possibilities around Halloween, and [we've collected a couple of super simple ones](#) that don't require any drying time that could be a fun addition to a trick or treat stop.
 - Invite people into the church – You can make this feel very Halloween-y, have dim lighting (but not so dim that it's a safety hazard!), maybe play some Halloween music playing, or have someone playing something on the organ or piano, and just invite people to come into your sacred space on this night when the veil between heaven and earth is so thin. You could have a few people present to pray with anyone who would like, or tell people about All Hallow's Eve, or just be present.
 - Have some books on hand – You can do this just at a table handing out candy or inside the church or any other space where you might invite people in! If it's outside, you could set out a couple camp chairs or make a cozy sit-spot to invite people to pause and share a moment together. Here are some books that we recommend (and that you can likely borrow from your local library!):
 - The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree by Stan and Jan Berenstain
 - The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything by Linda Williams
 - Dem Bones by Bob Barner
 - Skulls! by Blair Thornburgh
 - Leo: A Ghost Story by Mac Barnett
 - Compline – If trick or treating has a typical wrap up time in your community, you could plan compline for around then as an end-of-the-evening activity, or you could just choose a time that feels right.

