

GLOW in the dark

How to host a light party event for 5-11s this autumn

Prepare for the party

Invite local primary-aged children for a 'light party' to celebrate Jesus' light. Presented as an alternative Halloween party, families appreciate a safe alternative to 'trick-or-treating'.

Timing

It's easier to facilitate glow-in-the-dark activities in the early evening, when it is already dark. Plan the event for 31st October or the weekend immediately before Halloween, as the following weekend is when Bonfire nights are often held.

Decoration

In a dark space, use light in the following ways to decorate.

- £ – Borrow fairy lights or use the church's Christmas lights.
- ££ – Use LED-light balloons (pictured right).
- £££ – Hire a UV cannon from a lighting/party rental company and use neon UV tape to decorate your space. Large geometric shapes on doors, windows or the floor, or hanging hula-hoops decorated with UV tape can be particularly effective. These could feature in your obstacle course later.

Logistics to consider

- Will parents stay or drop the children off?
- If parents stay, how will you engage them (a cup of tea and someone to speak with them) or will they assist with the event?
- Will you permit older or younger siblings to come and what provisions will you make for them?
- What parental permissions will you need: e.g. dietary requirements, first aid, photo permissions?
- Will families RSVP to help you prepare the right amount of food and supplies?
- How many volunteers with a DBS will you need to safely supervise children?
- Check your safeguarding policies, food hygiene for catering, and do a thorough risk assessment. Be aware that activities in the dark may lead to injuries.

Food

Provide a simple meal, e.g. hot dogs (including veggie), served with neon-coloured napkins, followed by a dessert, e.g. ice lollies. While the children are seated, eating their dessert would be a great time to present a short talk.

Don't forget to pray

for a positive impact in your community, for connections with families who may not normally attend church, and for children to feel loved, safe and experience Christ's light in their lives.

Party ideas

Welcome the children

Explain there will be numerous activities, followed by food and a short talk.

Provide lots of fun, sweets and prizes so children really enjoy themselves and families feel welcome in your church space. Give children a glowing bracelet as they enter – you could use different colours to differentiate the children by age or group.



Balloons: vladdon/Shutterstock.com

Activities

Choose as many as space, time and volunteers permit.

1. £ Glow stick hoopla

You will need: glow sticks and connectors; a quoits/hoopla upright or a water bottle as a target; masking/UV tape.

Decorate the quill stand with glow sticks or UV tape. Connect two glow sticks in a hoop. Allow each child, standing behind a line marked on the floor with tape, a few throws to try to get the hoop over the vertical stand. Keep score and reward success with prizes.

2. £ Ten pin glow bowling

You will need: 10 identical clear plastic bottles; glow sticks; UV/masking tape for the floor; a medium-size indoor ball.

Arrange bottles (with glow sticks inside) in a triangle formation; these are your pins. Mark out a lane with tape or use barriers to make it easier for the ball to stay in the alley. Give each child two attempts to roll the ball and knock down as many pins as possible.

3. £ Obstacle course in the dark

You will need: a large space; blackout materials; obstacles like chairs, tables or play tunnels; torches or UV light; UV/masking tape; a stopwatch.

Black out the windows and set out a simple obstacle course (it will be harder in the dark!), marking the path with UV/masking tape. Time the children as they race through the course, using either torches or UV lights. Provide prizes for finishing and the fastest times.

4. £ Laser deflections

You will need: a torch, mirrors.

In a dark room, get the children to use torches and pre-positioned mirrors to accomplish tasks like illuminating a picture or bouncing the light successfully off three mirrors in succession.

5. £ Musical games

You will need: music and speakers

Play party games that involve dancing, like musical bumps or musical statues, with a fun party playlist (see [WEB](#)).

6. £ Laser maze

You will need: a ball of wool, tape, flashing lights and bells (optional).

Using a ball of wool, rig up a 'mission impossible' style maze that the children must pass through without 'tripping a laser'. A hallway will work well for this, but keep accessibility and fire exits in mind. Hang bells on the yarn so you know if a laser has been touched or watch carefully. Add difficulty by using a disco light to make the lighting flicker.

7. £££ Decorate t-shirts

You will need: plain t-shirts in black or white (buy or ask children to bring one from home); UV/Neon fabric paint/pens; cardboard; stencils; designs for inspiration; wet wipes for clear-up; space for drying.

Using glow in the dark art materials, allow the children to decorate a t-shirt. Use cardboard inside the t-shirts so paint doesn't bleed through. Draw stars, fireworks or use stencils to write the word 'Shine' on the shirt. Leave the t-shirts to dry to be taken home later or deliver later if still wet.

Talk ideas

Choose one of these ideas to capture children's attention and communicate the message that Jesus is the light of the world. He has overcome the darkness and calls us to live as children of the light.

John 8:12; John 12:46; Ephesians 5:8

Darkness the Unwelcome Visitor

Use the beautiful children's book, 'Darkness the Unwelcome Visitor' by Catalina Echeverri to tell the story of Jesus defeating darkness and how we can conquer our fear.

Magic light bulb

Use a magic trick to capture children's attention. Mission Magic have a few light-related options to choose from with instructional YouTube videos (see [WEB](#)).



Absorb his light

Use a glowing star room decoration to illustrate the benefits of spending time in God's presence – worshipping, praying and loving Jesus – so that we can soak up God's love, and be able to share it, to truly shine in our world. Set a glowing star directly under a light while you talk and, at the end, turn off the lights to show the star sharing its glow.



Why is space dark?

The sun's light travels through space, but we do not notice its light until it comes into contact with a planet. Light needs something to reflect off. The moon is a dark lump of rock, but when the sun shines on it, it reflects the sun's light and illuminates our night. (Demonstrate with a torch and a mirror.) When we live showing God's love and justice, our actions reflect God's light to the world. At night we cannot see the sun, but the moon reflects its light. People may not be able to see God at work directly, but through our actions they can experience his light.



Party bags

Send the children home with a party bag. You might include a UV pen, a glow stick, a tract, e.g. 'A friend in the dark' or 'Jesus is the Light', an invitation to other events at your church, stickers and more sweets.

Posters, Invites and Playlist

Go to [rootsforchurches.com](https://www.rootsforchurches.com) for a music playlist and other links to printable invites and posters.