



The Gospel In a Pumpkin

by  FamilyLife®
A Cru Ministry





Why not use the fun of pumpkin carving to create great memories around talking about Jesus? We've got what you need for a fun afternoon with your family (even a parent script!).

intro

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Pumpkins
- Large spoon, ladle, or scooper
- Newspaper/table covering
- Knife/pumpkin cutter
- Pumpkin face stencil sheets (included in this download)
- Felt-tip marker
- Scissors
- Tape
- Candle
- Long-handled lighter

SAY:

- Ready to have some fun?!
- There are some cool things about God I like thinking about while we carve, so I'm going to talk about that, too.

choose

SAY:

- There are a lot of pumpkins out there. Why'd you choose yours?
- This is like how God chooses you!

PRO TIP

To keep the energy moving, let older kids take turns reading the verses.

VERSE

Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ.

-Ephesians 1:4-5, NLT

SAY:

- God chose you on purpose! He wants you to be part of His family.
- He even lets you stay a part of our family. I'm part of His family!
- How's that make you feel? (Let kids respond.)
- God's got a special, on-purpose plan for your life—even better than the plan you're making for your pumpkin.

clean

SAY:

- Time for the *fun mess*! Ready to clean out the inside?

DO

- Clean out the pumpkin in the way you usually do: Cut the hole in the top (at an angle!). Scrape out the pulp and seeds of the pumpkin onto the newspaper with a large spoon, ladle, or ice cream scoop.
- Start talking with the next bullet points. Take a break when you get to the prayer. (Let kids know you're not stopping for good!)

PRO TIP

Save your seeds for roasting. This download includes a separate activity and devotional for roasting your seeds tomorrow!

SAY:

- In the same way we're cleaning out this pumpkin, God wants to clean out the yucky stuff inside of us. There are things inside of us that are ugly and messy to God.
- What are those things? Got any ideas? (Let the children respond. Offer hints to get them started if need be. For example, our unkindness toward a sibling.)
- The "yuck" is our sin. It's all the bad thoughts, lies, selfish words, and hateful things we have done and even thought about.
- We need to be cleaned out just like this pumpkin. Sin is in all of us.

VERSE

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.

-Romans 3:23, NLT

SAY:

- Just like we can cut the yucky stuff out of the pumpkin, God can cut out our sin because Jesus died to pay for it. It's like if you did something bad, but your brother or sister said they'd take your punishment! (Feel free to create a scenario your child would understand.)

VERSE

He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.

-Colossians 2:14, NLT



SAY:



- That means God can completely forgive our sins and make us like we never sinned at all. He cleans out all of our junk.
- We can't do it ourselves—that would be like a pumpkin trying to clean itself out! We have to accept God's free gift of forgiveness.
- Have you told God you want Him to take your sin-junk? To be forgiven and be accepted into His family?

PRAY (if your child is interested)

- God, I have messy sin inside of me that needs to be cleaned out. I know you hate sin and that's why you sent Jesus to take my punishment.
- I believe Jesus died for my sin. I need Him to save me from my sins. I want to be Your child and give my life totally to You. Amen.

SAY:

- When you decide Jesus will be the One who saves you, all of your sins are forgiven! Jesus comes into your life. Instead of seeing your sin-junk, God now sees Jesus when He looks at you.

The next two steps we'll take with our pumpkin show what God does for us after we believe in Jesus and join God's family.



SAY:

- It's time to create your pumpkin's face! Want to choose one of the faces to cut out from the pumpkin—or make your own?

DO

- To use the template: Kids cut out the black areas on the paper, taping them to the pumpkin. Use the marker to draw the outlines of the face for you (the adult) to carve around.



SAY:

- It's fun to carve a pumpkin face and make something unique! Is yours silly? Happy?
- What do you like to create? (Lego creations? Paintings? Songs?)

- When we become God’s child, He makes us a new creation.

VERSE

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

-2 Corinthians 5:17, NLT



SAY:

- Remember, just like pumpkins can’t carve their own faces, we can’t make this happen. God does it!
- He takes away our sin and puts His goodness in us. He puts part of Himself—His Holy Spirit—inside us to help us in everything we do. He’s a little like a pattern, showing our hearts how to act and think and talk.
- We’re not just better. We’re made all new inside!
- We will still sin (do wrong things), but God will continue to forgive us. He helps us become more like Jesus.

PRO TIP

Want to preserve your carved pumpkin a little longer? Put Vaseline on the cut edges.



shine

PRO TIP

Use a candle 3” or more in diameter. Make sure the inside bottom of the pumpkin is flat (you may need to scrape until it’s level) and that the candle is the right height so the light shines through the cutout face.

SAY:

- Here’s a cool part of our project: We put a light inside!

DO

- Turn off the lights and light the candle. Admire your pumpkin together!



PRO TIP

Don’t move the pumpkin when the candle is lit.

SAY:

- I think your pumpkin looks better with a light inside. Do you?
- God does the same thing with us! When we say “yes” to Jesus, God puts His light inside us. The loving, good things we do are like light, pointing people to what Jesus has done inside us.

VERSE

You are the light of the world ... Let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

-Matthew 5:14, 16, NLT



SAY:

- The “light” inside of us—the change Jesus makes in us—helps people know what Jesus is like. It shows how He cleans us from sin and creates beautiful things in our lives.
- Obey Jesus and love people around you. Then other people begin to see Jesus is real. Maybe they will believe in Him, too! Let your light shine with good works!



the wrap-up

DO

- Put your pumpkin on your front porch.

SAY:



- Each night, when we light your pumpkin, we can remember what Jesus does inside of us!
- He’s chosen us, cleaned us, created us new—and He shines through us when we become a part of His family.
- If you haven’t done that yet, just remember you can talk to Him when you pray, and say “yes” to Jesus anytime. And I’m here to talk about it with you anytime you want.

PUMPKIN SEEDS:

A Devotional to Read as You Roast



Want to make these memories and lessons last? Here's another activity for the day after carving—and a devotional to read together while your seeds roast.

Easy Roasted Pumpkin Seeds to Make Together

Prep time	Cook time	Ready in	Serves
15 min	20 min	35 min	6



INGREDIENTS

- Washed, de-goop-ified and towel-dried seeds from one pumpkin
- 1 tablespoon butter or oil of your choice for every cup of seeds
- Kosher salt, pepper, garlic powder to taste
- Additional spices to choose from: rosemary, paprika, seasoned salt (omit kosher salt), curry powder, chili powder

PRO TIP

Let kids smell the optional spices alongside other spices you've chosen so you can get a flavor mix you all like!

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Toss the seeds with the oil or butter and the spices you've chosen.
3. Spread seeds in one layer on a cookie sheet.
4. Place the cookie sheet in the oven. About seven minutes into cooking, stir the seeds around.
5. Toast the seeds until they're crunchy and golden, about 15 minutes. (Test a cooled seed to make sure they're crunchy, not chewy.)

The Devo



Devon dropped his backpack on the floor like a bag of rocks.

"Hey, Bud. Welcome home! Mind hanging up that bag while I grab you a snack?" his dad smiled, headed for the cupboard.

Devon threw his dad a look that could have set something on fire. Devon rolled his eyes and plunked the pack on the coat rack.

"Whoa. Something happen at school today?" his dad looked up. Devon knew he shouldn't be taking his anger out on his dad. He could tell his frustration was leaking out.

"I guess."



"Want to talk about it?" his dad said quietly, setting a glass of milk on the table next to Devon and folding himself into a chair.

"School was just bad. Mr. Cooper had us read out loud in class, taking turns."

"Oh." His dad probably knew where this was going.

"I'm trying so hard to read better, but the letters get all mixed up. And during lunch, Trevor started throwing his food at me and holding snack wrappers up, asking if I could read them. He said maybe I should just stick with all the little kids.

"He kept sounding out words, asking if I was 'd-d-dumb.'" Devon swiped at his cheek, hoping his dad didn't notice it was wet.

"Devon." His dad lifted his chin, looking in his eyes. "Hey. I am so sorry he treated you like that."

"It wasn't just him. Other kids started throwing their snacks at me, too. One kid flipped some yogurt on my shirt, and I couldn't get it off. I looked even dumber."

"Bud, I've had people talk to me like that before. It hurt me so much. I felt really, I don't know, embarrassed. Like I wasn't good enough."

"You felt that?"

The Devo ... continued



“I did. In fact, I was thinking about something like that while I was making your snack today.” Devon began to notice the savory smell floating through the kitchen.

His dad walked over to the oven. “I was going through something tough at work this week. And I was thinking about the seeds from yesterday’s pumpkin.”

“Dad, those were totally gross. No way you’re feeding me those. No way I’m eating those.”

His dad laughed. “Good choice. They were pretty disgusting last time you saw them.” He bent toward the oven, pushed his hand into an oven mitt, and slid the pan from the oven with a metallic twang.

“I had to wash them really well first. And I mixed them with some spices. But they still aren’t good until you roast them in a pretty hot oven.”

Devon stood and walked to the pan. The seeds were spread there, no longer nasty, and smelling ... pretty great, actually. His dad blew on a few in his hand. “Hot! Hot!” Then, he popped them into his mouth. Devon could hear him crunching.

His dad continued. “I read in 1 Peter this morning that God uses hard stuff like a fire to make my faith better. The tough things feel almost like I can’t bear them—like they’re too hot. Probably like these seeds in an oven. But after each challenge, God keeps showing me that I’m better on the other side. I’m more like Him.”

Devon selected a few cooled seeds and tried them. “Hey, these are actually really good, Dad.”

“I know, right?”

“So you’re saying God can use things like how hard it is for me. Or kids making fun of me?”

“He can. And he does. Dude, I’ve seen what a hard worker you’ve become at other stuff since you have to work so hard to read. I gave you a hard chore yesterday and you didn’t complain!



The Devo ... continued



“And you’ve become more compassionate, too. I see you helping kids when something isn’t easy for them. You even stick up for them, like you wish someone stuck up for you today.

“And today, it sounds like you didn’t hit anybody, didn’t yell. You’re learning self-control—which is different than last year.

“Honestly, I couldn’t be prouder. No matter what Trevor says, all that ‘heat’ from your struggle is making you a young man I respect, and one who honors God.”

Dad curled his arm around Devon and rested his head on his son’s curls. “Let’s pray for Trevor and about what you can do. And then I’m getting you a bowl of something that got better because things got hot.”



The Talk

- What’s one thing that’s tough in your life right now? (Parent and kid can both answer this one!)
- How do you see God using that “fire” to create something even better in you?

“ORANGE YOU GLAD?”



Pumpkin Word Search

D S P S S M K Z F K A G L K R G B N J P
G C A R V E P Z P S F Z V I Y T G O S B
O M F U C R E A T I O N S S A K R Q R F
C Q P R H F T D D W R K Y T Y S N S O G
P P K O I I G S S K G F V J B F B S U C
P V R N N E W P A E I K K O T E U Z N V
O N K A A H W F Y V V J Q G F S K R D V
P C W I Y J S G O O E Y Y Q E E J K K D
E E K S D G R O S S Y Z D J X M H Q Q B
C M V P H K W P M O I H T U C S E Y O V
J M S C V J A D L F B H M A Z N E C A X
F R P N X N Z Z S P O O N J M G Q H M J
I W N U Q I M L Q L A Z U I P E B O S K
W J A R M H E A O I E R V W K G S O I X
Q L Q U A P I L D G Z L Y Y V I V S N P
F G R K K D K B T H P Z C A N D L E Y S
C A O X B P I I K T Z H K Q A O S A R J
J K C W L G H D N B G X A L W C I Q X F
E A B E C L E A N W U T M K U O Q L B X
P W B N I U K P F Q B D M L B Z U N F J

pumpkin	gooey	save
candle	jesus	gross
carve	sin	spoon
new	creation	face
choose	pray	seeds
messy	forgive	light
knife	round	

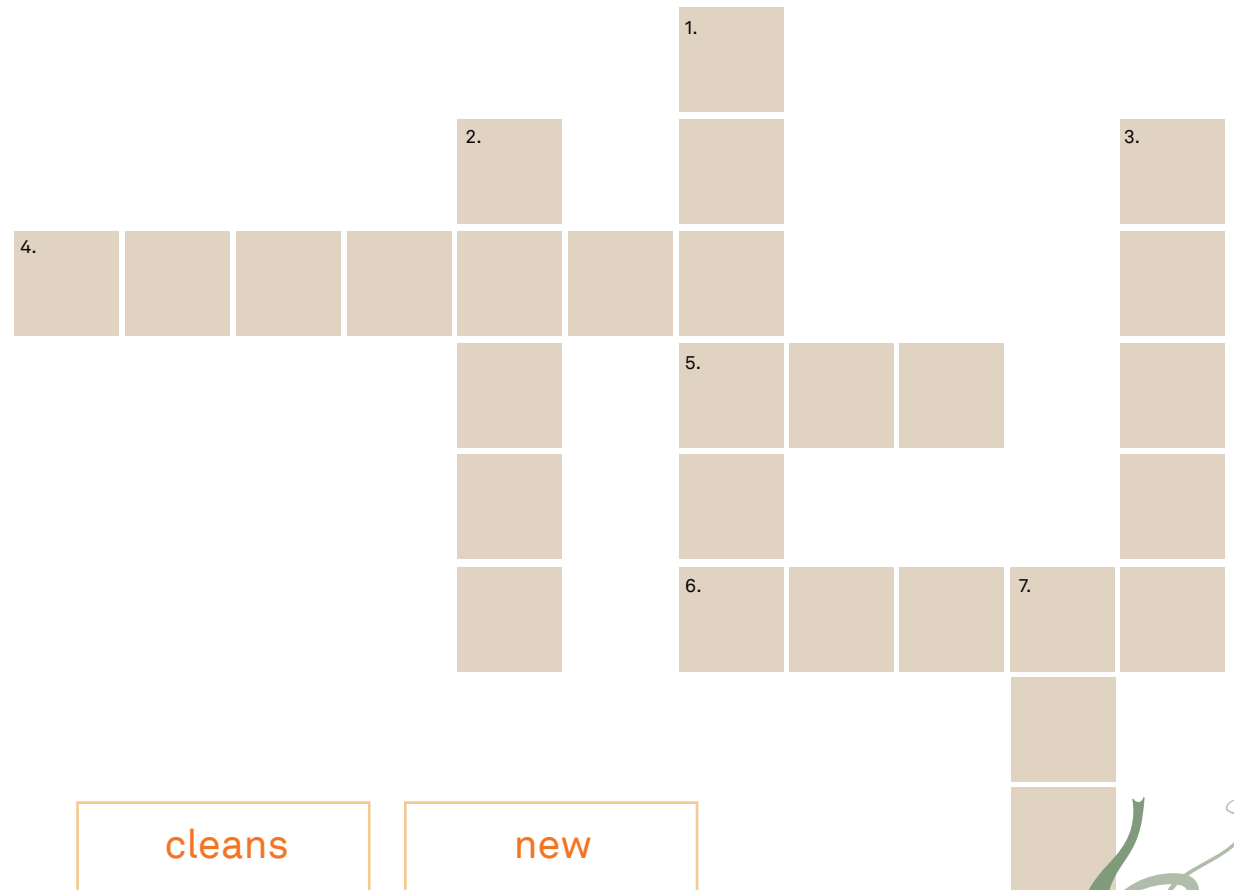


PUMPKIN CARVIN' Crossword

Look up the verses to find the clues you need to complete this puzzle!

Down

1. Read Psalm 51:2. Like the inside of a pumpkin, God _____ us from sin.
2. Read John 8:12. Jesus said He is the _____ of the world.
3. Read Ephesians 1:4-5 God _____ us before He made the world—like you chose your pumpkin.
7. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. Through Jesus, God makes us a _____ creation—like you made of your pumpkin.



Across

4. Read 1 John 1:9. When we sin again, we can tell God our sins. He wants to _____ us.
5. Read Romans 3:23. How many of us have sinned?
6. Read Matthew 5:16. Jesus wants to let our good works _____ so people can see them!



PUMPKIN Mad Libs

Fill in the blanks

1. Noun _____

5. Tool _____

9. Favorite Snack _____

2. Body Part _____

6. Family Member _____

10. Something in Your Kitchen _____

3. Past Tense Verb _____

7. Exclamation _____

11. Noun _____

4. Noun _____

8. Nouns _____

12. Adjective _____

Last night I carved my _____. It wasn't pretty. First, I had to cut off the _____.

Then, I _____ the _____ inside. That was pretty disgusting, actually. But don't worry. I used a _____ . When _____ saw all that was inside, they said, " _____ !" I think tomorrow we will roast the _____ and make _____ .

Finally, I used a _____ to carve a _____. The result was _____ !





THE
Gospel
IN A
PUMPKIN

Face #1



THE
Gospel
IN A
PUMPKIN

Face #2





THE
Gospel
IN A
PUMPKIN

Face #4

