

Halloween options for those too old to trick-or-treat

By JENNIFER COLTON

How old is too old for trick-or-treating?

If you aren't sure, you're not alone: a Google search brings up more than 101 million results working to answer that same question. Most surveys seem to put the cut-off age for trick-or-treating between 14 and 16, but hitting an age cap doesn't mean your kids have to forego the festive fun.

Here are a just a few ideas of how your teen or tween can celebrate Halloween:

The trick-or-treat chaperone:

Let's get the loophole of the way. If your teen or tween has younger siblings, consider letting the oldest be the chaperone who escorts the younger kids trick-or-treating. For those who are afraid they may be too old but still want to trick-



or-treat, this can be a great bridge while helping develop responsibility.

Door-to-door food drives: On a night most people are expecting their doorbells to ring, it can be a great time to send your teen in

search of nonperishable food donations instead of candy. Food drives give the fun of going door-to-door and dressing up while doing good for the community. Contact local food pantries and organizations to find out if any have organized drives already set up and get the go-ahead before the holiday.

Visit another Halloween location: Many area corn mazes are open on Halloween and offer a way for teens and tweens to celebrate the holiday on Oct. 31 without going door-to-door.

Volunteer to hand out candy: Churches, schools, hospitals and nursing homes all hand out candy on Oct. 31 and few complain about having too many volunteers to help decorate, clean up, or dole out the sweets. Small communities offer Halloween parties or festivals, and Hermiston and Pendleton each offer large Halloween events downtown and beyond (at the Hermiston Community Center and Pendleton Convention Center) that include carnival games for younger children. Help your teen or tween contact the organizers of one of the events and see if they're looking for volunteers.



Strategies

Halloween parties: Many teens (and adults) still love dressing up in Halloween costumes, regardless of their age. Hosting or attending a Halloween party lets teens and tweens dress up, eat treats and celebrate the holiday without feeling like they're hanging out with younger kids. If your teen or tween is attending a party you aren't hosting, make sure the event is safe, chaperoned and age-appropriate.

Stay home: Staying home is always an option for teens and tweens, and it's not hard to find spooky activities to keep the atmosphere alive (or dead, if you prefer). Teens and tweens can host a party at home, plan a murder mystery, have a pumpkin decorating contest or simply watch spooky movies – bonus points for marathons.

Go trick-or-treating anyway: If your tween or teen is willing and respectful, they may find many people willing to still hand out candy and strike up a conversation. Until a child turns 18, they're still a child and maybe – just maybe – they're still allowed to go trick-or-treating. If your teen is going trick-or-treating, a good rule of thumb is to make sure their costume isn't too scary – you don't want to make younger kids uncomfortable while they're enjoying the holiday.

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