



### CONNECT WITH THE COMMUNITY

Like most small towns, Quincy likes to celebrate holidays. Each fall, we at Columbus Road have offered an alternative to the traditional Halloween trick-or-treating. It is our opportunity to bring families with children on to our campus.

### UNDERSTAND THAT ONE OPPORTUNITY LEADS TO ANOTHER

I am always learning new things. Sometimes I want to learn to gain mastery or to be more effective. Other times, God teaches me with life experiences even when I have no intention to learn. This type of learning took place as Columbus Road transitioned from one outreach event to the next at the end of summer.

In the summer, we offer KidZone Soccer Academy (see related article on website), a three- and four-year-old soccer academy, in which children are introduced to the sport of soccer. All of the participants come from the community, making it a total community outreach. We are excited to have them with us for those short few weeks.

Toward the end of the soccer academy—almost as an afterthought—we decided to pass out Trunk-R-Treat invitation cards to each soccer player. The Trunk-R-Treat was to take place one month after the end of KidZone Soccer. One must remember that these players were three- and four-year-olds who do not know how to tie their shoes! The likelihood of getting them to come back to our campus a month later to attend a Sunday evening event was unlikely, especially when Halloween was several days before.

On the last day of the academy, I sat down with each of my teams and told them about “my party.” I asked them to come as my honored guests. I proceeded to make a big deal of the event, promoting it to the max. Lastly, I gave the children the invitation cards and sent them on their way.

### PLAN & EXECUTE THE EVENT

Trunk-R-Treat was easy to administrate. Members of our congregation decorated their trunks, supplied candy, and parked on the perimeter of the property. Promotional invitation cards were printed and passed out by our people to their friends, family, and coworkers. Door hangers were purchased and passed out in the neighborhood. Our large bounce houses were inflated. Food (popcorn, chili, cider) was provided.

### REAP THE BENEFITS OF A SIMPLE INVITATION

I could have not been any more incorrect in my assumption that the soccer player wouldn't show up a month later. They did! Here is what I learned about three- and four-year-olds.

- If you invite them to your party...they will hold onto the invitation.
- If you invite them to your party...they will keep asking their parents, “When is Coach Bob’s Party?”
- If you invite them to your party...they will remind their parents until the party happens.
- If you invite them to your party..... they will come.

It was amazing to see family after family pile out of their cars to join the fun! Many parents expressed their commitment to attending because I had personally invited their children. Sometimes the simplest things are the most effective. So...may your party begin. It starts with a simple invitation.

