

THE FALL FEASTS

A FAMILY GUIDE

CELEBRATING GOD'S FAITHFULNESS AT HOME



The Fall Feasts: A Christian Family Guide

Table of Contents

About this Guide & Family Safety

Setting the Atmosphere

The Festive Menu Guide

Part 1: Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah)

Part 2: The Days of Reflection

Part 3: Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)

Part 4: Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot)

- **The 8-Night Family Sukkot Machzor**
- **The Eighth Day: Shemini Atzeret / Simchat Torah**

Rainy-Day Indoor Alternatives

Easy Sukkot Crafts for Kids

Other Craft Ideas:

Notes

Please note that this is just a guide that I made to help my family and others like ours who wish to celebrate the Biblical Feasts. Please use this guide at your own discretion and do your own research to make changes as you see necessary.

About This Guide & Family Safety

Theological Context

This study and activity guide is designed as an educational and devotional resource for Christian individuals and families wishing to explore the historical, biblical, and prophetic depth of the Fall Feasts. It is intended to build faith, encourage reflection, and foster family unity. It does not replace the guidance of your local church leadership or personal study of Scripture.

Activity & Craft Safety

- **Adult Supervision Required:** All activities, recipes, and craft projects detailed in this guide require active adult supervision.
- **Sharp Objects & Tools:** Scissors, hole punches, and craft knives should be handled strictly by adults or under direct adult monitoring.
- **Adhesives & Paints:** Ensure all paints, glues, and clear sealants used for weatherproofing are non-toxic, skin-safe, and used in a well-ventilated area.
- **Fire & Lighting Safety:** Never leave real candles, lanterns, or outdoor lighting unattended inside a temporary structure, tent, or blanket fort. We strongly recommend using battery-operated LED candles and tea lights, especially around children and flammable materials like paper, sheets, or dried branches.
- **Outdoor & Structural Elements**

- Weather Conditions: If building an outdoor shelter (*Sukkah*), ensure it is structurally stable and secured against wind. Move activities indoors immediately in the event of severe weather, high winds, heavy rain, or lightning.
- Allergies & Foraging: When collecting natural materials (such as branches, leaves, pinecones, or gourds) for your crafts or table displays, double-check for pests, thorns, poisonous plants, or common seasonal allergens that could affect your children.

Notes

There are plenty of blank spaces throughout the guide and at the end for you to make notes and changes as you go. We pray that this will bless you and your family as it has ours!

GOD BLESS YOU!

The Fall Feasts: A Christian Family Machzor

A Guided Liturgy for Parents, Kids, and Friends around the Dinner Table

Setting the Atmosphere (Before You Begin)

- **Preparation:** Place a Bible, a candle, and some sliced apples and honey on the table. If anyone in the home has a Shofar, have it ready.
 - **Atmosphere:** Dim the overhead lights and light a central candle to signify setting this time apart from normal home life.
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The Festive Menu Guide

To make the meal part of the learning experience, try organizing the food around the symbols of the biblical feasts:

- **Appetizers:** Sliced apples, round challah bread (symbolizing a crown for the King), and honey.
 - **Main Course:** A celebratory roast chicken or brisket, roasted harvest vegetables (carrots, sweet potatoes), and rice or couscous.
 - **Dessert:** A honey cake or pomegranate seeds (symbolizing a life full of good deeds and fruitfulness).
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Part 1: Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah)

Gather everyone around the dinner table with the lights dimmed. Place a shofar, party horn, or bell in the center.

1. The Big Wake-Up Call (Kids' Interaction)

Leader: "Scripture says: *'Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you!'*" Kids, why do we use alarms in the morning?"

(Let kids answer: To wake up!)

Leader: "God has a spiritual alarm clock to wake up our hearts. It's called the Shofar!"

Action: Blow a real Shofar, let the kids blow party horns, or ring a loud bell.

2. The Apple & Honey Blessing

Pass around the apples and honey.

All Together: "Lord God, King of the universe, thank You for a new season. As we dip these apples, we pray You make this year sweet and full of Your goodness for our family. Amen!"

Eat the apples and sing "Days of Elijah" together.

Part 2: The Days of Reflection

This happens right before the main course is served. Give each child a piece of paper and a washable marker.

1. The "Washable" Heart (Object Lesson)

Leader: "During these ten days, we look inside our hearts. We ask God to show us if we've been mean, disobedient, or selfish."

Action: Have the kids draw a big heart on their paper, and write or scribble things they did wrong this week inside the heart using the washable marker.

2. The Clean Heart Prayer

Leader: "Let's read Psalm 139 together: 'Search me, O God, and know my heart... see if there is any bad way in me.'"

Action: Bring out a damp sponge. Let the kids wipe their papers completely clean, erasing the marker marks.

Leader: "Just like this sponge cleans the paper, the love of Jesus completely cleans our hearts when we say sorry."

Sing "Create in Me a Clean Heart" together.



The Main Festive Meal

Serve the main course now! Enjoy the food, talk about the best parts of your year, and laugh together as a family.

Part 3: Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)

After the main plates are cleared, remain at the table. This is a moment of deep gratitude for what Jesus did.

1. The Red Ribbon Lesson

Hold up a piece of red yarn or ribbon, then swap it for a clean white napkin or cloth.

Leader: "Isaiah 1:18 says, 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.' On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest used to offer sacrifices for the people's mistakes. But Jesus did it once and for all on the cross. We don't have to worry about our past mistakes anymore."

2. Family Popcorn Prayer

Pass a cross or a heavy Bible around the table. Whoever is holding it says one quick thing they are thankful to Jesus for.

Sing "Thank You Jesus for the Blood".

Part 4: Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot)

Move the family to the living room to sit in a blanket fort, or head out to the backyard/porch for dessert.

1. The Blanket Fort Chapel

Leader: "God commanded His people to live in temporary booths or tents for a week to remember how He protected them in the wilderness. It reminds us that our earthly bodies and houses are temporary, but God's home is forever!"

2. The Blessing of Great Joy

Serve the dessert (honey cake or fruit).

Leader: "Let's read Revelation 21:3: '*Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them.*' Let's toast to the future kingdom of Jesus!"

Raise your dessert plates or cups and yell "L'Chaim!" (To Life!).

Finish the night by singing the high-energy song "House of the Lord".

The 8-Night Family Sukkot Machzor

A Night-by-Night Guide for the Blanket Fort or Backyard Sukkah



The Core Nightly Ritual (Do This Every Night)

1. **Gather:** Move into your temporary shelter with your dessert or evening snack.
 2. **Light:** Light a lantern or candle together.
 3. **Sing:** Sing a verse of "**Goodness of God**" or "**House of the Lord**."
 4. **The Nightly Blessing:**
All say together: "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who protects us in the wilderness of this world and invites us to live in Your joy. Amen!"
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The Nightly Themes & Activities

Night 1: The Invitation (Hospitality)

- **The Spark:** Talk about *Ushpizin*—the traditional custom of welcoming guests into the tent.
- **Kids' Action:** Have the kids draw a "welcome sign" to hang up inside the fort.
- **Scripture & Prayer:** "*Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers...*" (Hebrews 13:2).
"Lord, make our home a place of love where others can see You. Thank You for welcoming us into Your family."

Night 2: The Four Species (God's Variety)

- **The Spark:** Bring out a lemon (representing the *etrog*) and some green leafy branches (representing palm/myrtle/willow).
- **Kids' Action:** Let the kids feel the different textures and smell the lemon. Explain that God makes all kinds of people, and He loves us all.
- **Scripture & Prayer:** *"Rejoice before the Lord your God..." (Leviticus 23:40).
"Thank You, God, for making us unique. We give all that we are to You."*

Night 3: The Starry Roof (Trusting God)

- **The Spark:** Look up at the ceiling of your fort or the night sky.
- **Kids' Action:** Turn off all the flashlights for 30 seconds. In the dark, remind them that God is always watching over them, even when they can't see Him.
- **Scripture & Prayer:** *"He who watches over you will not slumber..." (Psalm 121:3).
"Lord, when we feel afraid or lonely, remind us that You are our ultimate shelter."*

Night 4: The Wilderness Walk (God Provides)

- **The Spark:** Serve a simple snack like crackers or "manna" (popcorn).
- **Kids' Action:** Ask the kids: "If you lived in a desert for 40 years, what would you miss most?" Talk about how God gave Israel food from heaven and water from a rock.
- **Scripture & Prayer:** *"And my God will supply every need of yours..." (Philippians 4:19).
"Thank You for our food, clothes, and warm beds. You give us everything we need."*

Night 5: The Living Water (Jesus at the Feast)

- **The Spark:** Bring a pitcher of ice-cold water and clear cups.
- **Kids' Action:** Pour the water dramatically into the cups.
- **Scripture & Prayer:** *"On the last day of the feast, Jesus stood up and cried out, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink'" (John 7:37).
"Jesus, You are the Living Water. Fill our hearts so we never feel spiritually thirsty again."*

Night 6: The Light of the World (Chasing Shadows)

- **The Spark:** Hand out glow sticks or small flashlights to the kids.
- **Kids' Action:** Turn off the room lights and let the kids wave their glow sticks.
- **Scripture & Prayer:** *"Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'I am the light of the world'" (John 8:12).
"Help us to shine bright like these lights at school and with our friends so others can see Your love."*

Night 7: The Great Rejoicing (Hoshanah Rabbah)

- **The Spark:** This is the final official night of Sukkot. Make it a party!
- **Kids' Action:** Put on high-energy music and have a 3-minute family dance party right inside the living room or fort.
- **Scripture & Prayer:** *"You shall rejoice in your feast... so that you will be altogether joyful" (Deuteronomy 16:15).
"Lord, our joy doesn't come from things, it comes from You. Thank You for this beautiful week!"*



The Eighth Day: Shemini Atzeret / Simchat Torah

The "extension day" where God asks His people to stay just one more day simply to enjoy His company. In modern tradition, it celebrates the joy of God's Word.

The Grand Finale: Celebrating the Word

- **The Setup:** Move back into the main house. It's time to transition from the "temporary" fort back to reality, carrying the joy with you.
- **Kids' Action:** Have each child hold a family Bible. Let them march in a circle around the living room table while singing "**House of the Lord.**"
- **Scripture Reading:** *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105).*
- **The Closing Blessing:**
"Lord Jesus, the feast is ending, but You never leave us. We thank You for Your Word, the Holy Bible, which guides our family. As we take down our tent, keep the joy of Your presence alive in our hearts every day of this coming year. Amen!"
Clink your cups together for a final "L'Chaim!"



Rainy-Day Indoor Alternatives

If the weather forces you inside, you can easily pivot to keep the holiday feeling special instead of like an ordinary rainy evening:

- **The Ultimate Living Room Blanket Fort:** Bring the wilderness indoors. Use couch cushions, dining chairs, and heavy blankets to construct a mega-fort over the living room rug. Line the inside with pillows, string fairy lights, and let the kids sleep or eat dessert inside.
 - **The "Pop-Up" Camping Tent:** If you have a small pop-up or dome camping tent, pitch it right in the middle of the living room or garage. It instantly creates that cozy, enclosed "booth" feeling without needing outdoor space.
 - **A Living Room Picnic:** Lay a green or brown blanket on the floor to simulate grass. Serve the festive meal picnic-style on the floor inside or right outside the blanket fort.
 - **Rain-Sensing Reflection:** On **Night 3 (Trusting God)**, if it is raining outside, sit near a window. Listen to the rain together and talk about how God uses the rain to provide water for crops, reminding us that He washes away our worries and takes care of us.
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Easy Sukkot Crafts for Kids

The kids can use them to decorate the indoor fort or outdoor tent for the rest of the week.

These are completely optional!

Night 1: "Links of Love" Weatherproof Paper Chains

Kick off the festival with a classic sukkah decoration using a durable twist to survive the autumn elements.

- **The Project:** Cut colorful construction paper or patterned scrap paper into 1x8-inch strips. Write family blessings or things you are grateful for on each strip.
- **Weatherproof Step:** Slide each paper strip into clear plastic sheet protectors or laminate them before looping and taping them into an interlocking chain.
- **Where to hang:** Drape them across the walls or weave them carefully near the roof (*schach*).

Night 2: Etrog & Citron Sun Catchers

Capture the beautiful autumn sunlight during the day with a bright fruit craft.

- **The Project:** Cut out the silhouette of an *etrog* (citron fruit) from yellow cardstock, leaving an open window in the center.
- **The Fill:** Place a piece of clear contact paper over the window and let everyone press yellow, orange, and gold tissue paper scraps onto the sticky surface. Seal it with a second layer of contact paper.
- **Where to hang:** Tape them directly to clear plastic sheet protectors to hang along the sukkah mesh or windows to let light pass through.

Night 3: Popsicle Stick Mini-Sukkahs

Build miniature replica models of your holiday tabernacle.

- **The Project:** Glue craft sticks together to form three miniature walls.
- **The Details:** Use markers to draw a tiny table inside or sketch family members. Glue real small twigs or faux leaves across the top to simulate the *schach* roof.
- **Where to hang:** Attach a loop of twine to the back to turn these miniature structures into hanging wall plaques.

Night 4: Fruit & Veggie Stamped Harvest Banner

Celebrate the agricultural roots of the season by printing with real produce.

- **The Project:** Cut apples, pears, and the ends of celery stalks in half.
- **The Print:** Dip the cut sides into weather-resistant outdoor acrylic paint and stamp them onto a canvas tarp or a blank burlap banner strip. The celery ends create an elegant flower or rose shape!
- **Where to hang:** Tie the finished banner securely to the main entry beam of your sukkah.

Night 5: Four Species Handprint Keepsakes

A meaningful art piece representing the *Arba Minim*: the lulav (palm), etrog (citron), hadas (myrtle), and aravah (willow).

- **The Project:** Trace the family's hands on green and yellow paper sheets, or use washable paint to stamp handprints directly onto heavy cardstock.
- **The Assembly:** Cut out the green handprints and stack them vertically to form a tall, layered *lulav* branch. Add a yellow cutout at the base for the *etrog*.
- **Weatherproof Step:** Seal the entire page inside a cold laminating pouch or a clear packing-tape sealed page protector to guard against rain.

Night 6: Glittery Hanging Gourds & Pinecones

Bring natural elements indoors with a festive, sparkling finish.

- **The Project:** Gather small dried gourds, pumpkins, or large pinecones from a nature walk.
- **The Shine:** Paint them using a foam brush dipped in non-toxic white glue, then shake autumn-toned glitter over them.
- **Where to hang:** Securely wrap a piece of rustic twine or colorful ribbon around the stems or bases to hang them safely from the support beams.

Night 7: Paper Bag Ushpizin Lanterns

Honor the traditional theme of welcoming guests (*ushpizin*) with warm, cozy lighting for the final evening.

- **The Project:** Use a hole punch or a sharp pencil tip to poke decorative patterns, stars, or simple geometric borders into small brown or white paper lunch bags.
- **The Glow:** Place a handful of clean sand or small rocks at the bottom of the bag to weight it down against the breeze. Drop an electric, battery-operated LED tea light candle inside.
- **Where to display:** Line them up safely along your sukkah's entryway or on the center of the dining table for a warm glow.

Other Craft Ideas:

1. Paper Chain "Harvest Garland"

- **What it represents:** The unity of the family and the harvest season.
- **How to do it:** Cut strips of colorful construction paper (harvest colors like orange, red, yellow, and green). Have the kids write things they are thankful for on each strip (e.g., "Family," "Jesus," "Our House"). Loop the strips together and staple or tape them into a long chain.
- **Where to hang it:** Drape it across the ceiling or entrance of your fort.

2. Shiny Tin Foil Stars

- **What it represents:** Looking through the roof of the tent at God's creation and remembering His promise to Abraham.
- **How to do it:** Cut star shapes out of cardboard or heavy paper. Let the kids wrap them completely in aluminum foil so they become shiny and reflective. They can poke a small hole in the top and run a piece of yarn through it.
- **Where to hang it:** Hang them from the ceiling of the fort so they catch the light of your lanterns or string lights.

3. Mason Jar "Glow Lanterns"

- **What it represents:** Jesus as the Light of the World (**Night 6**).
- **How to do it:** Give each child an empty plastic or glass jar. Let them glue pieces of colorful tissue paper to the outside, or draw on it with markers. Place a battery-operated tea light candle inside the jar.
- **Where to hang it:** Place these around the fort floor or table to provide a warm, safe glow for your nightly prayers.

4. The "Four Species" Nature Collage

- **What it represents:** The diverse plants used to celebrate the feast (**Night 2**).
- **How to do it:** Send the kids on a quick backyard safari (or a walk between rain showers) to find unique green leaves, twigs, and a piece of fruit. Have them glue these items onto a paper plate or heavy cardstock to make a harvest collage.

