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## Halloween Craft: Make Halloween Masks With Paper Mache

By Susanne Myers

You'll need just a few things to make just about any mask you can imagine. Those items include

balloons, newspaper, wallpaper glue and some acrylic paint. A pair of sharp scissors comes in handy to cut out eyes and mouth. Wear old clothing, or put an apron on both you and your child. Making the mask can get a bit messy.

Cover your work area in plenty of newspaper to protect it from glue and paint. Next, cut several newspapers into strips. Blow up a balloon so it is slightly larger than your child's head. Now dip a newspaper strip completely in the glue and stick it on the balloon. Continue doing this back and forth until you have the entire balloon covered in several layers of newspaper. Work out any wrinkles as you go along. The more layers of newspaper you have, the sturdier the mask will be.

Finally add any features specific to the mask you are making. For example, if you are making a frog mask, sculpt two ball shapes at the top of the mask that you can later paint as eyes. If you are making a cat, dog, or monkey mask, form the snout and of course don't forget about ears. The only limit is your imagination.

Allow the mask to dry completely, preferably over night. Once it is completely hardened, start cutting into the mask to pop the balloon. Cut a large enough opening so your child can get his or her head inside the mask, then cut eye and mouth openings. For younger children, you may prefer to cut the back of the mask out completely, and, instead, wrap a piece of ribbon or yarn around the back of the head to secure the mask to allow better air-passage.

Paint the mask in a solid color and allow it to dry completely. Then add details like eyes, nose and lips in different colors. Once that coat of paint is completely dry, it is ready to wear. For a longer lasting and shiny mask, cover the mask in several layers of hodge podge before using it.

Would you like to quickly make creative Halloween costumes that you and your children will be proud of -- for a fraction of the price of store-bought? Susanne Myers has co-authored a book to show you how -- no sewing involved. Visit

<http://www.ILoveHalloweenCostumes.com>

to learn more.

## **Pumpkin Painting: A Halloween Activity For The Whole Family**

**By JoAnne Westcott**

A carved jack-o-lantern may very well be the most recognized symbol for the Halloween holiday. But using a sharp knife to carve them is not exactly an activity that everyone, especially the children who are the biggest fans of Halloween, can do.

And how many parents have stayed up late, the night before Halloween, carving their jack-o-lanterns, only to see that same pumpkin collapse just days after the big holiday?

During a field trip to a pumpkin farm, I discovered a Halloween craft activity that even the youngest members of the family can participate in. Pumpkin painting is a fun and safe way to celebrate autumn and Halloween.

This quick and easy craft is perfect for family activities, preschool or elementary school parties, Girl Scout gatherings or Halloween parties.

With just a few supplies: pumpkins of any size, craft paint, brushes, sealer and your imagination, anyone can transform a plain pumpkin into a whimsical, life-like character.

By tracing a pattern onto the pumpkin, young children can "paint by numbers" to create their own Halloween masterpiece.

With a bit of creative planning, scrap fabric, craft supplies, hats and jewelry can transform the painted pumpkin into a character worthy of name-giving.

The best feature of painted pumpkins is their lifespan. A pumpkin, once carved, will last three to five days at the most before it begins to collapse and rot. A painted pumpkin, when sealed properly, will last four weeks or longer!

Because of the extended lifespan, painted pumpkins make the perfect porch decoration, dining table centerpiece or gifts for teachers, friends and family.

And a great way to make your pumpkin work double-duty is to paint one side for Halloween. When Halloween is over, turn the pumpkin around, paint some autumn leaves and leave it on your porch for a beautiful Thanksgiving decoration!

JoAnne Westcott is the publisher of the full-color, step-by-step instructional e-guide

<http://www.easypumpkinpainting.com>

She is also the publisher of the e-guide Easy Face Painting.



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