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How to Make a Model Volcano and Other Fun Kids Party Special Effects

By Patricia B. Jensen

How to Make a Model Volcano and Other Fun Kids Party Special Effects

by: **Patricia B. Jensen** Kids love magic tricks and special effects because they surprise and delight with the unexpected. Here's a collection of easy yet impressive special effects to try at your next kids party.

But beware... kids are naturally inquisitive, and will want to know how you achieved your spectacular results. Keep it mysterious, and you'll be the hit of the party crowd!

Erupting Volcano

Start by lining a box lid (edges should be about 2 inches high) with foil or use a large metal pan. Fill with wet sand. Place an empty soup can in the center and press the sand around the can to form your volcano mountain. For the best effect, completely conceal the can. Spoon 1/4 cup baking soda into the can and place the box on a surface protected with a plastic tablecloth or newspapers.

To erupt the volcano, pour a portion of the activation solution into the can. When this is added to the baking soda, it will make flowing "lava". Let your party guests take turns adding a bit of solution to the can to cause further eruptions.

Activation Solution – 1 cup water, 3/4 cup vinegar, « cup dishwashing liquid, 10 drops of red food coloring and 10 drops of yellow food coloring.

Volcano Cake

Make a bundt cake and frost it in chocolate frosting. Decorate with palm trees and small plastic dinosaurs: Before serving, take a pint of chocolate ice cream and place over the hole in the center of the cake. Pour strawberry syrup over it for volcano lava. Serve and enjoy!

Variation: Frost the cake white and use vanilla ice cream for a different look.

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Spinning Vortex

Take two empty 2-liter bottles and fill one about one third with water. Put the bottle openings together, with the empty bottle upside down on top of the full one. Place a 3/8 inch metal washer in the opening between the two bottles and duct tape them together carefully.

When you're ready to make a vortex, reverse the bottles so the full one is on top. Swirl the top bottle in a circular motion until a spinning vortex begins to form in the water. It will continue until all the water has funneled through the washer and into the bottom bottle. Just reverse the bottles to create another vortex.

Party Punch with Pizzazz

Mix up a batch of one of the following party punches:

Smoldering Swamp Water

Mix equal parts Ice Cool Arctic Green Apple flavor Kool-Aid with ginger ale, or try any green beverage such as 7-UP.

Bubbling Love Potion

Mix equal parts cherry Kool-Aid & ginger ale for a colorful and fizzy love potion drink.

Here's where the fun starts...

Place a piece of dry ice in a sealed plastic container. Punch or cut holes in the container lid. Before serving drop the container into the punch bowl for a very cool effect!

Important: Always use caution when handling dry ice! Use tongs or heavy gloves so it does not touch bare skin as burn will result. Do not put the dry ice directly in the punch; it should NOT be ingested.

Frozen Hand

Fill an unpowdered surgical glove with water. Add green food coloring for a creepier look. Securely twist tie the end and hang from a shelf in the freezer. Once frozen, cut off the glove and float hand in your punch bowl for a nice "touch"!

Slime

Take a cup of water and add to it 1 Tbs. of borax (available in the laundry section of the grocery store). Stir until completely dissolved. Take 1/4 cup of white glue and 1/4 cup of water and mix thoroughly. In a ziploc bag, add equal parts of the borax solution to equal parts of the glue solution. A half cup of each will make a cup of slime. Add a couple drops of green food coloring. Seal bag and knead the mixture.

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Fake Blood

Karo brand corn syrup

Red and blue food coloring

Milk

Add some red food coloring to the corn syrup, then just a drop or two of blue to get a more realistic dark color. Milk will make the blood appear more opaque and more realistic.

Note: This mixture is sticky and can stain clothes.

These cool special effects are perfect for a mad scientist party, a dinosaur party, a Halloween party... just use your imagination and have fun! They add a unique twist to any kids party and will make your child's special day a truly memorable event!

Patricia B. Jensen is a mother of three and kids party enthusiast. She is the webmaster and owner of – a comprehensive resource for kids party ideas and complete party plans for

many popular themes, including invitations, cakes, decorations, games, costumes, favors, and food.

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Enjoyable Halloween Party Games

By Beverly Kane

Kids love many things about Halloween parties. The candy and dressing up are right at the top of the list. Party games rank pretty high on the list too for all kids love to play Halloween games especially since the winners usually get a prize.

If you are in charge of planning the Halloween party, the first thing you need to consider is the age of your guests. If you are in charge of very young children then you should pick simple Halloween games that don't require much of an attention span. Pin the tail on the donkey and hot potato come to mind and are fun for kids of all ages, so you can adapt this for Halloween by playing pin the tail on the skeleton. Another fun game for kids to fill balloons with air and have them try and pop the balloons by

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sitting on them. It isn't as easy as it sounds and usually results in lots of laughs.

Kids that are a little older love to play treasure hunt or scavenger hunt. For this, you simply hide items in your house and give them a list of clues that lead to the objects. Whoever finds them all first wins a prize. This will help to keep the kids busy while you tend to the party or watch over little ones. Hide Halloween related objects in semi-scary locations such as under a big stuffed spider to make it more exciting for the brave older kids.

For the adults you might consider Halloween games of charades or card games. This is a fun way for them to socialize and relieve stress at your party.

Halloween games will help keep your party moving and keep your guests engaged. The adults will appreciate having something entertaining to do and the little ones will get a thrill out of winning a prize.

Beverly Kane is a staff writer at

and is an occasional contributor to

several other websites, including

.

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