

IrishFest Pre-VBS Carnival

You don't want your community to miss out on this awesome VBS, so get the word out by hosting your very own promo event called IrishFest. This is a carnival-type event held two to three weeks before VBS so you can preregister children, build excitement, and spread the word throughout the community.

The IrishFest will include themed games, crafts, activities, and snacks. Admission is free. Invite the community by setting up an event page on Facebook and by mailing or handing out [Carnival Invitations](#) to church attendees, friends, sports teams, clubs, and family.

For a list and description of suggested [activities](#) to offer at your carnival, check the following pages.

Many of these suggestions can also be incorporated into VBS week or the closing program if not used prior to VBS.

Setup

- Decide if your event will be indoors or outdoors. If indoors, use a multipurpose room. If outdoors, choose a grassy area or a safe area of the church parking lot.
- Each activity should have its own space, a sign with its name, prize tickets, and a marker or stamp (1230930) to use on each child's master ticket.
- Use folding tables or large cardboard boxes for activities requiring a base. Drape each table with a colorful, thematic tablecloth, fabric, or sheet. Attach boards, PVC pipe, or long cardboard tubes to each side of the table. Stretch a colorful sign made from roll paper between the two boards and add some colorful balloons.

- A simpler option is to use rope, cones, or sidewalk chalk to mark individual activity spaces.
- Choose a few decorating suggestions found in the Decorating Decisions section. Keep it fun, colorful, and simple.
- Play VBS music.

Staffing

- Enlist at least one worker for each activity area. Church families may want to sign up to decorate, organize, and staff one activity each. This divides the workload into small, manageable pieces.
- Workers should dress in VBS T-shirts or farm-themed clothing.
- Friendly, costumed greeters can welcome the arriving families.

Registration

- Set up the registration area near the entrance to your event.
- Warmly greet each family and check everyone in.
- Copy extra [Carnival Master Tickets](#) on bright card stock. Cut apart. Give one to each child. This ticket enables children to participate in each activity once and will be marked or stamped at each location as activities are completed.
- Use [registration forms](#) to sign up any unregistered children for VBS.

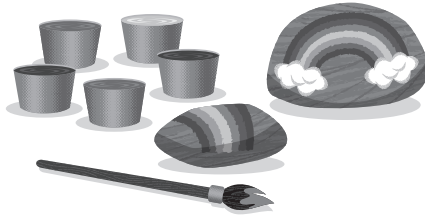
Carnival Activities and Games

Some of the games need a start line, finish line, or throwing line. These can be made from painter's tape, masking tape, rope, cones, or chalk.

Rainbow Rocks

SUPPLIES

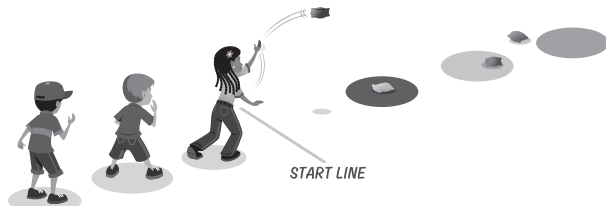
- » Small, flat rocks
- » Non-toxic acrylic paints
- » Paintbrushes
- » Water and paper towels for rinsing brushes
- » Old T-shirts or men's shirts to use as smocks
- » Permanent markers



DIRECTIONS

- » Make some samples ahead of time of various rainbow pictures kids could paint.
- » Kids will paint a rainbow on their rock. Make sure they put their name on the back with a marker.
- » Share that there are lots of rainbows—real ones!—in Ireland because it rains a lot. God is the one who created the rainbow in the sky and it is a wonder!
- » Award 1 ticket to each child who completes this activity.
- » Hold onto the rocks during VBS week and create a colorful outdoor display with them. Allow kids to pick up their rocks at the end of VBS.

Tricolor Toss



SUPPLIES

- » 1 green, 1 white, and 1 orange circle cut from craft foam, poster board, felt, or construction paper
- » 3 beanbags

DIRECTIONS

- » Scatter the circles on the ground.
- » Share that these are the colors of the flag of Ireland.
- » Players get three turns to toss a beanbag onto one or more of the circles.
- » Give 1 ticket for participating and an extra ticket for each throw that lands on a circle.

Flynn's Face Painting

SUPPLIES

- » Face paints
- » Paintbrushes
- » Wet wipes
- » [Face Painting Reference Chart](#)

DIRECTIONS

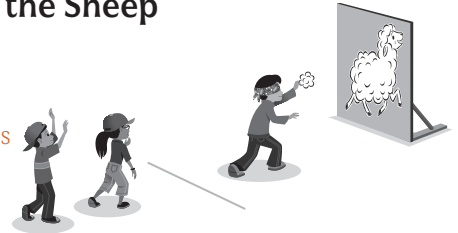
- » Paint the kids' faces, using images on the reference chart.
- » Give 1 prize ticket after completing this activity.



Pin the Tail on the Sheep

SUPPLIES

- » [Sheep Backdrop](#)
- » [Sheep Tail Cutouts](#) (or cotton balls)
- » Tape or mounting putty
- » Blindfold



DIRECTIONS

- » This is played like Pin the Tail on the Donkey.
- » Ahead of time, put up the backdrop and put loops of tape or mounting putty on the sheep tails.
- » Have at least two players play this each round.
- » Share that Ireland is known for having lots of sheep. Who created sheep? God did! What day of creation did he make sheep? Day 6, when he made the land animals. God is a wonderful Creator!
- » One at a time, players are blindfolded, spun around (gently), and directed toward the sheep backdrop with a tail in their hand. See who can attach their tail closest to where the sheep's tail belongs.
- » Give 1 prize ticket after completing this activity. Give 2 bonus tickets for the tail that is closest to the right spot.

Photo Spot

SUPPLIES

- » Photo Spot Backdrop
- » Step stool for small children
- » Camera

DIRECTIONS

- » Purchase the photo ops (1231270) or make one and put it up. Clip art images are available if you want to make your own.
- » Children stand behind the backdrop and put their face through the hole. Photograph them and print the picture (either at the carnival or later) to give to them. You may want to have an area during VBS where they can pick up their picture.
- » Give 1 prize ticket after completing this activity.



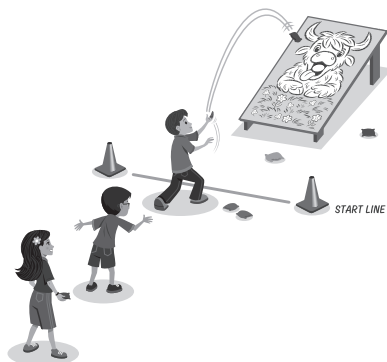
Feed the Cow

SUPPLIES

- » Cornhole board
- » Poster board or colored paper fashioned to look like a cow
- » 3 beanbags

DIRECTIONS

- » Beforehand, decorate the cornhole board to look like a cow with its mouth open. (See picture.)
- » Players have three tries to toss a beanbag into the cow's "mouth."
- » Share that Ireland is known for its dairy products, many of which come from cows. Many foods come from cows, including milk, cheese, and yogurt. God gave us these good foods!
- » Give 1 ticket for participating and an extra ticket for each beanbag that lands in the cow's mouth.



Clover Hunt

SUPPLIES

- » 1 fake three-leaf clover (buy artificial clover online or make your own out of card stock)
- » 4 cones
- » Timer

DIRECTIONS

- » Make a small square with the cones in a grassy area. Drop the pretend clover somewhere inside the square.
- » Players get 30 seconds to find the clover.
- » Give 1 prize ticket for participating and an extra ticket if the clover is found.



Rainbow in a Jar

SUPPLIES

- » Table or elevated surface
- » 25 mason jars with points labeled on them
- » M&Ms candies

DIRECTIONS

- » Set up the jars in a 5 x 5 grid (5 jars in each row and column). Label the middle jar with a sticker or piece of tape with the numeral 3. Label the jars directly around the middle jar with the numeral 2. Label the rest of the jars with 1s.
- » Players get three turns to throw an M&M into one of the jars. Award the amount of tickets to match the label on the jar. For example, if the player gets an M&M in the jar labeled with a 3, give her 3 tickets.
- » Plastic punch cups could be used instead of jars.



Still Waters Search

SUPPLIES

- » Baby pool filled with water
- » Bulk mini rubber ducks (enough to mostly fill a baby pool)
- » Shamrock stickers
- » Timer



DIRECTIONS

- » Place stickers on the bottom of about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the ducks. Place all the ducks in the filled baby pool.
- » Players have 15 seconds to find as many ducks as possible with shamrock stickers on them. The amount they find is the amount of tickets they receive.
- » Return the ducks to the pool for the next player.

Enemy Ring Toss

SUPPLIES

- » 1 enemy helmet with horns
- » 4 rings

DIRECTIONS

- » Players have four tries to toss the rings onto the horns of the helmet.
- » Give 1 prize ticket for playing and an extra ticket for each successful toss.
- » Note: Add a challenge by using more than one helmet, and placing them at varying lengths from the throw line. A successful toss around the helmets farthest from the line could be worth more tickets.



Do It Yourself Butter

SUPPLIES

- » Small jars with screw top lids
- » Heavy whipping cream ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup per person)
- » Marbles (washed and dried)
- » Optional: Small pieces of bread and knives for tasting butter



DIRECTIONS

- » Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ c. heavy whipping cream into each jar. Add one marble per jar and screw on the lid.
- » Kids shake their jar until butter starts to form. It generally takes 3–10 minutes to make the butter depending on how vigorously the cream is shaken. Different kids can take turns shaking the jar.
- » Note: Let kids try their homemade butter by spreading some on small chunks of bread.

Coat of Arms Coloring Contest

SUPPLIES

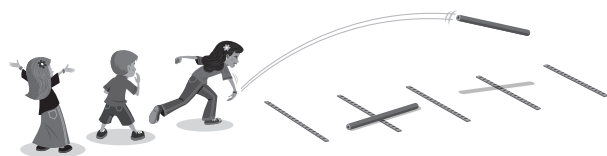
- » Coat of Arms Coloring Contest Pages
- » Crayons or markers

DIRECTIONS

- » Children color the picture, drawing items to describe themselves or their family. Make sure they write their name on their page.
- » Explain what a coat of arms is. They are popular in Ireland!
- » If you have a lot of entries, you can have winners of various age categories. Give 1 prize ticket after completing this activity.
- » Collect the pictures and hang them somewhere during VBS week. Announce winners during VBS week. Return pictures to the children on the last day of VBS.



Sling the Staff



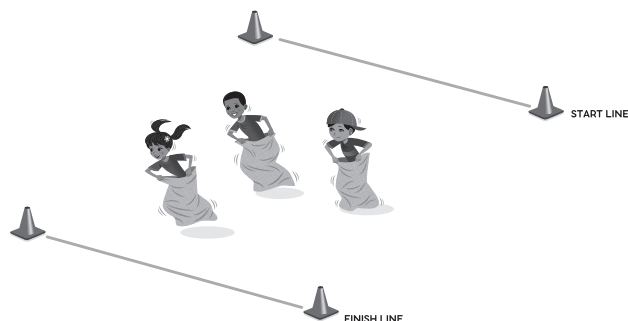
SUPPLIES

- » Pool noodle (use as shepherd's staff)
- » 3 or more cones or ropes to make throwing lines

DIRECTIONS

- » Set up a few lines that indicate different point values, depending on how far the pool noodle is thrown. If thrown past the farthest line, the player gets 3 points, past the second line, 2 points, and past the start line, 1 point.
- » Players try to throw the "staff" as far as they can from the start line and receive a certain amount of tickets depending on how far they throw it.

Potato Sack Race



SUPPLIES

- » Large potato sacks
- » Cones or ropes to make start and finish lines

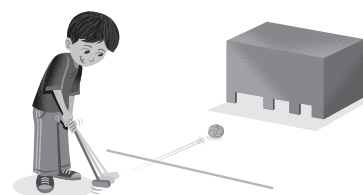
DIRECTIONS

- » Have two or more players for each round.
- » Players step into a potato sack, then race by jumping to the finish line.
- » Give 1 ticket for participating and give an extra ticket to the winner.

Herd the Sheep

SUPPLIES

- » 1 or more wool dryer balls (use as sheep)
- » A child-sized golf club or hockey stick
- » A large cardboard box with three cutouts (see directions)



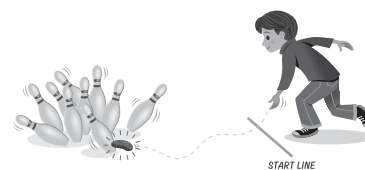
DIRECTIONS

- » Cut three different-sized square openings out of the bottom edge of a large, overturned cardboard box. The holes should be big enough for a wool dryer ball to pass through them. Make sure one opening is fairly large to make it easy for younger players.
- » Using a hockey stick or golf club, players have three tries to get a "sheep" (wool dryer ball) into one of the openings. The smaller the hole is, the more tickets players receive for getting the ball in.
- » Give 4 tickets for getting the sheep in the smallest hole, 3 for the medium hole, 2 for the largest hole, and 1 ticket for participating.

Potato Bowling

SUPPLIES

- » Potatoes (use as bowling balls)
- » 10 bowling pins or water bottles



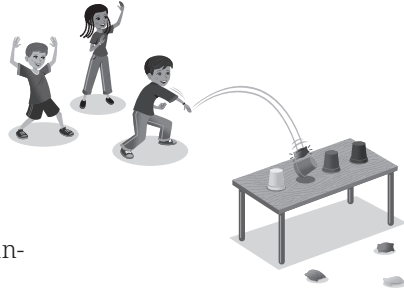
DIRECTIONS

- » Set up the pins in a pyramid shape like at a bowling alley.
- » Players roll a potato down the "lane" to the pins and see how many they knock over.
- » Allow 2 tries per player.
- » Give 1 ticket for each pin that gets knocked over.

(Knock) Over the Rainbow

SUPPLIES

- » Table or elevated surface
- » 4 assorted, rainbow colored, disposable cups
- » Water gun or 4 beanbags or balls



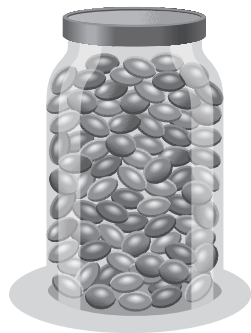
DIRECTIONS

- » Place 4 cups on the elevated surface. Try this ahead of time to make sure your water guns or beanbags are able to knock over the cups. If not, use balls instead.
- » Players have 4 tries to knock the cups over using a water gun or beanbag.
- » Give 1 prize ticket for each cup that is knocked over.

Green Goodie Guesses

SUPPLIES

- » Green candy of any variety (enough to fill a jar—lime Tootsie Fruit Chews are an option)
- » Jar with lid
- » Bowl to hold guess papers
- » Small pieces of paper (1 per player)
- » Markers



DIRECTIONS

- » On their paper, players write their name and how many candies they think are in the jar.
- » Give 1 prize ticket after completing this activity.
- » Announce the winner of this contest at the end of the carnival or on the first day of VBS. The winner gets the jar of candy.

Shepherd's Souvenirs

- » Set up an area called Shepherd's Souvenirs with assorted prizes worth different amounts of tickets. Children turn in their tickets to receive prizes. Check Oriental Trading Company or Rhode Island Novelty for inexpensive prize possibilities. The following are some possible suggestions:



- lamb bouncy balls, sticky shamrocks, green glow sticks, shamrock rings, green bubble tubes, mini squishy farm animals (especially cows or sheep), border collie squishmallows, shamrock necklaces, mini green footballs, shamrock water bead squeeze balls, sheep key chains, potato squishies or stress balls, mini Highland cow figurines, Highland cow plush backpack clips, assorted Irish stickers, shamrock lollipops, shamrock silicone wristbands, green play dough, rainbow slap bracelets, mini rainbow erasers, rainbow silly straws, mini farm character bendables, barnyard animal stampers, wool felt balls, orange and green mini inflatable balls, cheese squeeze toys, green yo-yos.
- » Another option is to give prizes at each location. If this option is chosen, children will need bags of some kind to keep their prizes in as they move from activity to activity.

IrishFest Food Booth

Set up the IrishFest Food Booth area and choose one or more fun snacks from the suggestions listed. Make signs that announce the name of each snack.

Note: There are also lots of additional great ideas in the *Still Water Snacks Guide* and the Training Workshop section of this guide. You may want to make some of the snacks you will be serving during VBS week.



DRINKS

- » Serve drinks of your choice and call them Donegal's Drinks.
- » Water: Wrap water bottles with *Still Water Labels*.

Additional Ideas

- » Animal Piñatas—Buy a fun and colorful Irish animal pinata, such as a cow or fox, and let kids have at it!
- » Irish Balloon Creations—Try making some balloon creations, such as a fox, flower, squirrel, shamrock, or even a rainbow! Look online for ideas.
- » Themed Costumed Greeters—Use your drama team or others to greet and interact with the kids while dressed in fun costumes like a farmer, shepherd, king or queen, Irish step dancer, cow, or sheep.

LOADED FRIES:

- » Fries come from potatoes, a staple food of Ireland. So serve up some fries with a variety of topping options, such as melted cheese, bacon bits, chili, green onions, sour cream, and assorted dipping sauces.

RAINBOW CUPCAKES

- » Serve cupcakes decorated with the seven-color rainbow as an ode to Ireland.

IRISH PARTY MIX

- » Serve bags of party mix that include things like green M&Ms, pretzels, popcorn, green sprinkles, and chocolate chips.

FIONA'S FRUIT

- » Offer assorted green fruits like granny smith apples, kiwis, green grapes, and green melon.

FLAG OF IRELAND SKEWERS

- » Make skewers with foods the color of the Irish flag like an orange cheese cube, a white cheese cube, and a green grape. Make a sweet version with a cube of yellow/orange cake, a mini marshmallow, and a green grape.

CALLAHAN'S COOKOUT

- » Grill hamburgers and hot dogs to offer as a hearty meal for festival-goers.