Parade Entry Ideas

For those who are new to the parade world hear are some ideas to get your creative brains started. The trick is to be creative and have fun!

Be sure to review the rules and regulations for this parade before you begin.

Do not fret if your float is not perfect because it is really supposed to be about family and fun.

Pick your vehicle:
Will your float be in the bed of a pickup or will a pickup pull a flatbed trailer? Will you use a unique vehicle i.e. an antique car, horse drawn carriage, boat, camper, double decker bus, etc? Or will you have a large group marching.

Theme Scenes
Pick a theme that compliments the parade theme. Use the KISS principle when building a float. Keep it simple! Theme scenes can be built with props commonly found at your home or through drama supply places. Be creative and set the stage for the scene you want to build.

Planning:
Use the sketch to determine if you'll use cardboard cutouts of objects or if there is time to build a wood frame and use chicken wire.

An inexpensive parade float can be just as impressive as a float that spares no expense. Generating a concept and using creativity makes building a parade float an easy task.

Building Materials  Necessary supplies for floats typically include:
• Artificial grass or rug to cover the trailer bed
• Fabric or vinyl fringe to cover the sides of the trailer
• Paint to use for signs or to paint any cutouts or props
• Tape - magnetic tape works best on trailers

Additional supplies that you may choose to consider, especially if cost isn't
an issue, include:
  • Balloons
  • Crepe paper streamers
  • Festooning
  • Foamboard Letters
  • Streamers

If you make 3-D shapes with chicken wire, you will need some type of material to stuff into the wire. Tissue paper is a popular choice.

Parade Supplies available through the following sites:
  http://www.paradefloatstuff.com
  http://www.shindigz.com
  http://www.funcarnival.com/store/float_supplies.html

**Skirt your float.** Tack chicken wire, fabric, cardboard or foil paper around the base of the trailer; allow it to hang near the ground. If you use chicken wire, plug the holes with tissue paper, crepe paper or brightly colored napkins.

**Glam up your float** with lights and sounds. Generally, a small generator provides enough power for the special effects on a simple float. Conceal it within the float's construction.

**Don't forget the sign!**

It is always good to have a sign either incorporated into your entry or have some individuals carry a sign in front of your entry so people know who you are and you can communicate your theme. These can be made easily with fabric and a PVC or wood pole. Keep it lightweight, as individuals will be carrying them for at least a mile.

**Easy Ideas to Implement:**

**On Foot:** Have members dress alike with bright colors. Have something for them to do, waive a flag, hand something out to spectators, sing, play musical instruments, ride bikes and or tricycles, etc. Consider placing small children in a decorated wagon. Carry signs that spell out your message or theme. Develop a dance routine of sorts where they march in rows and make turns or spin items all at the same time. View it as a performance and practice if you can!
**Vehicles:** Decorate the vehicle and use a vehicle with an open area for people to sit in – convertible car, bed of a truck, etc. Decorate with fringe, signs, balloons, etc. Play music from the vehicle, a small generator and sound system can be placed in the bed of a pick up truck to add excitement. Have individuals walk with the vehicle and hand out giveaways like balloons, candy, etc.

**Tow Something:** Large flat bed or small trailers can be easily decorated to come to life in a parade. Small utility trailers and boats can be just as fun as larger flat beds. Decorated with signs, colorful streamers & fringe will help them make a splash.

**Incorporate large visuals:** Cold air or helium balloons can be rented if you would like to make a big splash. You can also use large puppets, flags, Chinese dragons, homemade caterpillar costumes,

**Wear costumes:** Incorporating individuals in costume that fit your them will make a big impression especially on young spectators – it’s almost like going to a play. Tip: kids love dressing up and it can get them involved, especially little girls!

**Have Music:** To have music you will most likely need power, use a generator (preferably a quiet one), 12 Volt Battery (available at auto or marine shops), or a 12 volt converter hat can plug into your converter box of your car (available at Walmart or Target)

**Use Animals:** Animals of all kinds from dogs and horses to sheep, goats and donkeys are frequently a favorite with kids! Just be sure to remember you are responsible for the clean up behind them, don’t leave a mess for marching groups that may be behind you.

**Remember to keep safe.** Secure any individuals, who may be standing on a float, do not allow people to get on and off a float while it is moving, etc. Be sure to read all the rules and regulations and share them with all participants in the parade entry.