

MORE COLLEGE NEWS

MAKING THIS HALLOWEEN NIGHT A HALLELUJAH NIGHT

Anonymous Author
<http://www.graceland.com>

Every year in October, people spend thousands of dollars buying customs, candy, decorations, food and drinks for parties, and other things to celebrate the Fall season and Halloween. Many people decorate their homes and yards with pumpkins, jack-o-lanterns, scarecrows and haystacks. On October 31 thousands of children swarm sidewalks dressed in scary costumes and expecting to get their bags filled with candy for the observance that some think promotes evil. Christian parents are taught to forbid their children to participate in a Satanic and devilish celebration. Parents are probably aware that their children have been exposed to Halloween traditions, such as dressing in devilish costumes, trick-or-treating, and Halloween parties in their schools and by other children. Halloween is ultimately a difficult time for Christians and their children because our society promotes Halloween with such zeal. In our part of the world, this is especially true because Halloween is a very big and commercial holiday indeed. So the question is, how do we handle Halloween in a way that neither conflicts with our convictions, nor unfairly penalize our children? Here are a few suggestions:

1. Provide a Halloween alternative at your church. Get the kids to dress up like Biblical characters and award prizes for the best costume. You should also play games and pray for those who use Halloween to worship the darkness.

2. While the children do not go out, or get dressed up, we should not expect them to merely "take it like a man." Instead of just taking something away, we should provide replacement activities. Usually there is a Halloween party at school, so instead, perhaps you should let the children stay home and maybe later go out for dinner and a movie. This will make Halloween a family time that the children will really enjoy.

3. If the family decides to stay home that night, turn your lights on and allow trick-or-treaters a chance to come to the door. Let the children take turns handing out Bible tracts or candy with an upbeat message about Jesus on Halloween night, therefore, you can help add light to the dark holiday.

4. Explain carefully to the children why they are not allowed to celebrate Halloween. If they are asked why they don't celebrate by other classmates or teachers, encourage them to explain why

with a polite answer and never judge or point fingers.

Alternative fun and celebrations have been sponsored by churches nation-wide for years. They often entitled their alternative celebrations with titles such as, "Hallelujah Night," "Fun Family Festivals," and "Harvest Celebrations." However, these alternative celebrations are not designed only for children ages 3-12, but also teenagers. These celebrations can provide, youth dinners, activities, sing-a-longs, and contests for best Biblical character costumes. Teenagers can also attend youth dinners, sexual abstinence seminars and an evening youth church service. For teenagers and younger children, churches often host Fall Harvest Festival Nights with laser tag games, moonwalks, and hay rides.

While all of these Halloween alternatives sound fun and exciting, new Christians may not understand why Halloween is a satanic pagan holiday and should not be celebrated. They should first understand the origin of the holiday and its traditions. The Celts, who lived 2,000 years ago in the area that is now Ireland, the United Kingdom, and northern France, celebrated their new year on November 1. This day marked the end of summer and the harvest and the beginning of the dark, cold winter, a time of year that was often associated with human death. Celts believed that on the night before the New Year, the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead became blurred or intertwined. On the night of October 31, they celebrated Samhain, which promoted the belief that the ghosts of the dead returned to earth to cause trouble and damage crops. By A.D. 43, Romans had conquered the majority of Celtic territory. In the course of the four hundred years that they ruled the Celtic lands, two festivals of Roman origin were combined with the traditional Celtic celebration of Samhain. The first was Feralia, a day in late October when the Romans traditionally commemorated the passing of the dead. The second was a day to honor Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruit and trees. The symbol of Pomona is the apple and the incorporation of this celebration into Samhain probably explains the tradition of "bobbing" for apples that is practiced today on Halloween.

By the 800s, the influence of Christianity had spread into Celtic lands. In the seventh century, Pope Boniface IV designated November 1 All Saints' Day, a time to honor saints and martyrs. It was believed that he was trying to add

religious traditions to help take some of the wickedness out of the holiday. Even later, in A.D. 1000, the church made November 2 All Souls' Day, a day to honor the dead. It was celebrated similarly to Samhain, with big bonfires, parades, and dressing up in costumes as saints, angels, and devils. Together, the three celebrations, the eve of All Saints', All Saints', and All Souls', were called Hallowmas.

The American tradition of "trick-or-treating" probably dates back to the early All Souls' Day parades in England. During the festivities, poor citizens would beg for food and families would give them pastries called "soul cakes" in return for their promise to pray for the family's dead relatives. The distribution of soul cakes was encouraged by the church as a way to replace the ancient practice of leaving food and wine for roaming spirits. The practice, which was referred to as "going a-souling" was eventually taken up by children who would visit the houses in their neighborhood and be given ale, food, and money.

The tradition of dressing in costume for Halloween has both European and Celtic roots. Hundreds of years ago, winter was an uncertain and frightening time. Food supplies often ran low and, for the many people afraid of the dark, the short days of winter were full of constant worry. On Halloween, when it was believed that ghosts came back to the earthly world, people thought that they would encounter ghosts if they left their homes. To avoid being recognized by these ghosts, people would wear masks when they left their homes after dark so that the ghosts would mistake them for fellow spirits. On Halloween, to keep ghosts away from their houses, people would place bowls of food outside their homes to appease the ghosts and prevent them from attempting to enter.

As European immigrants came to America, they brought their varied Halloween customs with them. In the late 1800s, there was a move in pagan America to mold Halloween into a holiday more about community and neighborly get-togethers, than about ghosts, pranks, and witchcraft. At the turn of the century, Halloween parties for both children and adults became the most common way to celebrate the day. Parties focused on games, foods of the season, and festive costumes. Due to the high numbers of young children during the fifties baby boom, parties moved from town civic centers into the classroom or home, where they could be more easily accom-

modated. Between 1920 and 1950, the centuries-old practice of trick-or-treating was also revived. Trick-or-treating was a relatively inexpensive way for an entire community to share in the Halloween celebration. In theory, families could also prevent tricks being played on them by providing the neighborhood children with small treats. A new American tradition was born, and it continued to grow.

Though the holiday went through several changes, it is obvious that there are still satanic origins and, therefore, Christians should understand what the Bible says about Halloween and its satanic traditions. Exodus 22:18, says, "You shall not let a witch live." However, it appears that this holiday promotes the presence of witches, witchcraft, and other evil spirits. Deuteronomy 18:10-12 says "Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, (11) or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. (12) Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD..." Halloween is full of the tradition of bonfires, fortune telling, communication with the dead, and sorcery, which contradicts God's word, dabble in demonic spirits, and invite judgment from God.

The Bible unmistakably speaks against occultic practices, spirits, and witches. It condemns not only the practice, but also the people who are involved in it. As Christians, we are to have nothing to do with the occult. Tarot Cards, contacting the dead, séances, lucky charms, and other satanic practices, are all unbiblical and can harm a Christian's fellowship with God and open the Christian to demonic oppression.

1 Timothy 4:1 says, "But the Spirit explicitly says that in the later times, some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons." Help protect yourself and your children from being one of those people that 1 Timothy 4:1 is speaking about in the last days. Remember not to let you or your children be deceived and participate in seemingly harmless traditions of the holiday, and remember to have alternative family and church family fun on Halloween night and all year. Enjoy this "Hallelujah Night" on October 31!

PICTORIALS



The Participants in the Honda Campus All-Star Challenge. These are the ones who were in the All-Star game.

Photo by Antonio Barrow



Melody Lynch and Ebony Hunter painted a sign, representing ECSU during the Fall Fest.

Photo by Rich Harvey