

A Probe Mom Looks at Halloween from a Christian Perspective

Sue Bohlin takes a hard look at Halloween celebrations, applying a biblical worldview. As Christians, we cannot shield our children from this popular cultural event, but Sue provides some ideas on bringing a Christian perspective to this time of year.

A number of articles are available advising Christians to have nothing to do with Halloween. And I do agree that Christians have no business *celebrating* a holiday that glorifies something that delights the enemy of our souls. And potentially opens us up to demonic harassment, to boot!

But if we've got kids, especially kids in public school or who hang around other kids in the neighborhood, it's entirely possible that parents can feel pressured to do *something* about Halloween. After all, it's pretty hard to hide under a rock for the whole month of October. A number of houses on our street are more decorated for Halloween than for Christmas!

It seems that the costume manufacturers have really cranked up production of all sorts of costumes to a degree we've never seen before. Gone are the days of burning a cork to blacken a face, put on some thrift-shop oversized clothes and dressing up as a hobo. (There's probably some politically-correct term for "hobo" these days anyway. . .)

Is there anything intrinsically wrong with dressing up in a costume and getting a bunch of candy from consenting adults? I don't think so; hey, the Bible tells us that God instructed the children of Israel to ask their neighbors for silver and gold their last night in Egypt in a VERY early version of "Trick or Treat" (Exodus 11:2). But we can cooperate with the forces of darkness, however unwittingly, by participating unwisely in Halloween festivities.

It is essential to exercise discernment in how we handle Halloween. If you can get away with ignoring it, wonderful! That would be the best solution. But you may find yourself in a place where you want to provide some way for your kids to have fun in a Halloween-immersed culture without compromising on our Christian values and beliefs. For instance, your child's school may invite all the students to dress up in a costume on October 31. I know a number of Christian schools that do this. May I make these suggestions:

Halloween Don'ts

God gave us some very strict guidelines for our own protection, commanding us to stay away from items and practices of witchcraft and divination in Deuteronomy 18. These "doorways to the occult" make us wide open to the influence of Satan and the demons. For more information on this, click [here](#).

So stay away from anything that glorifies:

- **The occult.** Witches, warlocks, sorcerers and sorcery, casting spells, mediums, magic, ouija boards, crystal balls, tarot cards, and astrology are doors to the kingdom of darkness. Satan/Beelzebub masks and costumes have no place on a Christian or in a Christian family—not even "adorable"(??) little baby devil costumes complete with horns and pitchfork.
- **Darkness.** Satan and the demons are the rulers of darkness (Eph. 6:12). There's a reason so many

people are afraid of the dark; it is a fearful thing both physically and spiritually.

- **Death.** Satan has had the power of death over people (Heb. 2:14) ever since the Fall, and he uses it to control people through fear. Death is an enemy of God (1 Cor. 15:26), not something to flirt with. Vampires, ghosts, goblins and gargoyles (concepts rooted in the reality of demons) are all figures of death.

- **Fear.** Fear is both a feeling and a reality where Satan dwells. It is one of his most effective means of spiritual warfare against us. When we use Halloween events, decorations and costumes to cause and build fear in other people, we are cooperating with the sworn enemy of God and of God's people. This would include anything spooky, such as cemeteries, haunted houses, and scary stories. You can now buy "The Scream" masks that are as disturbing as Edvard Munch's original painting; their purpose is to make people afraid, even if they don't know why.

Anything gruesome falls in this category as well; you can buy special effects like fake slash wounds, hanging eyeballs, and stakes through the forehead. Blood and gore are neither funny nor godly. Needless to say, slasher movies and horror films that deliberately terrorize and stir up fear are a tool in Satan's hand. Scripture tells us that God does not give us a spirit of fear (2 Tim. 1:7), nor does He want us to be a slave again to fear (Rom. 8:15). That's Satan's arena.

Note: there are a number of churches that use the legitimate fear of an eternity in hell, separated from God, as a platform for drawing people into a creative presentation of the gospel. Many young people have been saved as a result. This is a God-honoring use of fear, not glorifying fear for fear's sake.

- **Worldliness.** Costumes that glorify some of the world's heroes and heroines can shape our values in ungodly, unchristian ways. Little girls dressing like female pop stars, exposing their midriffs and looking as sexy as possible, is completely against biblical values. God calls girls and women to dress and act modestly, decently and with propriety (1 Tim. 2:9). Costumes of movie and TV characters that represent anti-biblical values are inappropriate for believers (and believers' children).

Halloween Do's

- If your church sponsors a Halloween alternative event such as a fall festival, that's a great idea to allow kids to have fun within pre-set boundaries. (Note: it's important to specify what kind of costumes are NOT welcome!)

- **Child Evangelism Fellowship** (www.cefonline.com) has reported that Halloween has been the best time of year for children to trust Christ, simply because the spirit of fear that pervades our culture at this time makes them more open than usual to hearing a good news of the gospel. Halloween is a great time to sponsor Good News Clubs and invite kids in your neighborhood to hear stories that will comfort, rather than terrorize, them.

- **American Tract Society** (www.crossway.org/group/ats) has some terrific kid-friendly tracts to include with the candy you give out. This year, ATS has introduced the most practical Halloween evangelism resource yet! The Halloween Rescue Kit includes candy, bags, stickers and tracts — everything you need to reach 31 kids this Halloween. They suggest (and I think it's a great idea!) that if you expect kids to actually read the tracts once they get home from Trick-or-Treating (instead of tossing them out unread with the empty candy wrappers), that you tape them to popular candy bars that kids actually want. (Find out what kids in your area consider "cool" candy.) Or make your own tract kit by putting a tract plus quality candy inside sandwich bags. Either way, it forces kids to handle the tract in order to get to the candy. Sounds like following the Lord Jesus' command to be

“shrewd as serpents, and innocent as doves” (Matt. 10:16) to me!

I know several families who have purchased tracts for the neighborhood ADULTS, and when their kids go trick-or-treating, when the adults give them candy the kids will hand them a tract (aimed at adults) and say, “Thank you for the candy. Here’s a treat for you!” How often do people open their doors and make themselves open to this kind of opportunity?

- **Let the Little Children Come** (www.letthelittlechildrencome.com) has a wonderful “Is anything better than candy?” Box-tract. Give out more than just candy this Halloween! This attractive pumpkin shaped Box-Tract is designed to contain children’s favorite candies. More importantly, the pumpkin opens up to answer the question, “Is There Anything Better Than Candy?” Yes, there is something much, much better than candy. It’s being God’s friend!

- Look for teachable moments to relate the things of Halloween to spiritual truth. Talk to your kids about the way fear is glorified at Halloween, and teach them what Jesus said about it: “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful” (John 14:27), and “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Talk to your kids about “God’s no-no list” in Deuteronomy 18 and have them help you identify those things when they see them advertised or used as decorations. (You might keep a running total of all the witches you’ll see just to quantify this concept.) This is probably the best way to prevent your children from getting desensitized to things of the occult. Help them identify all the Halloween items that strike fear in them, and encourage them to take a stand against their power by saying out loud, “God has not given me a spirit of fear!” Show them this verse in their Bibles (2 Timothy 1:7) so they know they are using the sword of the Spirit against one of the wiles of the enemy.

This story making its rounds on the internet is a good pumpkin-carving object lesson:

A lady had recently been baptized. One of her co-workers asked her what it was like to be a Christian. She was caught off guard and didn’t know how to answer, but when she looked up she saw a jack-o-lantern on the desk and answered, “It’s like being a pumpkin.”

The co-worker asked her to explain that one.

“Well, God picks you from the patch and brings you in and washes off all the dirt on the outside that you got from being around all the other pumpkins. Then he cuts off the top and takes all the yucky stuff out from inside. He removes all those seeds of doubt, hate, greed, etc. Then he carves you a new smiling face and puts his light inside of you to shine for all to see. It is our choice to either stay outside and rot on the vine or come inside and be something new and bright.”

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