



## How should we respond to Halloween?

### Leader's version

**Check in** – ask everyone, including the leaders, how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

This study aims to help people to understand what modern day (UK) Halloween is and to think about how Christians and their children should respond.

#### 1. **SHOUT OUT** What do you know about how Halloween started?

*Let the group brainstorm and then give them the facts.*

*In the Anglican and Catholic Church calendars, 1<sup>st</sup> November is All Saints day, or All Hallows day (same thing) – the day when all saints and martyrs are celebrated (i.e. all the believers who have already died). The evening of 31<sup>st</sup> October, is All Saints (All Hallows) Eve. Glen Scrivener says it is 'a futile final fling before All Saints Day and the triumph of the light over the darkness and the saints in the Lord Jesus will triumph over Satan. We will crush Satan under our feet...'<sup>1</sup> (Romans 16 v 20).*

*All Hallows Eve got shortened to Hallowe'en. The dressing up came from a tradition of dressing up to mock the devil (not to imitate him).*

*Some people believe Halloween originated from the Pagan festival of Samhain over 1500 years ago (the day when it was believed that the boundary between this world and that of the dead was at its thinnest, also on 31<sup>st</sup> October), others that it arose purely from the church calendar.*

#### 2. **SHOUT OUT** What do you think Halloween celebrates today?

*Brainstorm onto the flip-chart. If the group don't mention the supernatural and commercialism, add them yourself.*

#### 3. What has your own experience of Halloween been, as a child and as an adult?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://soundcloud.com/union-theology/up-special-0001-what-should-christians-make-of-halloween-glen-scrivener>

4. **SHOUT OUT** What do you think are the good and bad things about Halloween today?

*Write the answers as two lists on the flip-chart.*

*Good – a bit of fun, dressing up, children enjoy it etc.*

*Bad – it encourages a fascination with the occult, dumbs down the occult etc.*

5. Read Deuteronomy 18 v 10-13. What does God think about dark practices?

Explain that in the book of Deuteronomy, God gave Moses many laws for the people of Israel to live by. There were ceremonial and civil laws, which were relevant to their time. The ceremonial laws told the people how to worship God and make animal sacrifices to pay for sin before Jesus Christ came and gave Himself as the ultimate sacrifice for sin. The civil laws told them how to live as God's people in community.

The third group of laws were God's moral laws; do not murder, do not commit adultery etc. God's morality is unchanging, so His moral laws are unchanging despite the passage of time or changes in culture. Deut 18 v 10-13 fall into this category and so is still valid today.

*God detests such practices and does not want his people involved in them. God is going to drive out from the nations who engage in these practices (the context is that the people of Israel are about to enter the Promised Land).*

6. Why do you think God doesn't want his people involved in these sorts of practices?

7. Read Ephesians 6 v 10-13. Why do you think we are told to put on the 'armour of God' in order to stand our ground against evil?

If people don't know what the armour of God is, give them a quick list and explanation (v14-18).

*As believers in Christ we are engaged in a spiritual battle. We are told to equip ourselves because, without God, we are exposed and vulnerable to the lies and temptations of devil.*

8. Read John 8 v 12. How does Jesus describe Himself here and what do you think He means?

*As 'the light of the world'. He is saying that the world is a dark place, including spiritual darkness, but that He is the spiritual light – the one who destroys spiritual darkness and shows the way to the Father. Whoever follows Him has 'the light of life', meaning eternal life.*

9. Read Luke 4 v 33-37. Why do you think Jesus drove evil spirits out of people?

*Jesus drove evil spirits out because they do not belong in people. Human beings are made for God's glory, to bring honour to Him alone. The Holy Spirit is the only spirit who should dwell in a person. An evil spirit is an invasion of evil. Jesus drove them out 1. Because they don't belong there and 2. Because He has the power and authority to do so.*

*These accounts of Jesus driving out evil spirits show us, if there was any doubt, that the spirit world is 1. Real and 2. Not to be engaged with by followers of Christ.*

10. Read 1 John 3 v 8. Why did Jesus come? How did He do this?

*To destroy the devil's work. He did it by dying to defeat death and the devil's hold on us. (Casting out evil spirits, like physical healing, was not itself an act of salvation).*

11. Based on Jesus' response to evil spirits, how do you think we should respond to opportunities or invitations to get involved in occult practices?

*This refers to occult practices on any level – Ouija boards, tarot cards, communicating with the dead, lucky socks on match day etc. Our response to occult practices should be the same, whatever the situation – avoid them like the plague and turn to Christ for strength to resist (put on the armour of God).*

12. Based on all that we've seen of God's laws about engaging with the devil, Jesus' response to evil spirits and the reason that Jesus came, how do you think Christians should respond to Halloween?

*Let the group brainstorm.*

*Then consider the three main options, 1. Do what everyone else is doing and don't worry about it, 2. Hide away and pretend it's not happening / ban your children from all parties on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 3. Hold / attend an event that makes a statement about Jesus overcoming evil.*

13. We'll consider option 3: How do you think you could use Halloween, which has become a huge cultural event in the UK, to tell your children about the good news of Jesus?

*Halloween has become a time when evil gets the publicity – how can you use it to show that good has triumphed because Jesus has overcome? Consider what message you really want your children to get, and how you would go about communicating it. It might be worth having some children's tracts, e.g. from <https://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/search?q=halloween&f> to show to your group.*

14. How do you think you could support your children, who want to go to parties or go door-knocking on Halloween, to do so safely?

*Go with them!!*

*Consider what they are wearing – is it appropriate for a child of their age? What is it communicating? Think about how children's costumes may be sexualised – is that what you want people to see when they see your daughter? Think about how costumes can minimise (or traumatise) victims of violence and violence itself e.g. axe and knife wounds, ugly characters etc. Think about what the costume is communicating about your faith – if you let your child dress up as a ghost, what are you saying about your own beliefs and what you are reinforcing of their understanding of the world?*

*Think about children going to doors asking for sweets – can you turn it into a celebration of giving, rather than taking? Let your children give your neighbours cakes instead of taking sweets?*

*Think about pumpkin carving – can you carve something other than a scary face?*

*Think about how you are going to respond when you open the door to a group of trick-or-treaters?*

*Etc.*

**Check out** – ask everyone, including leaders, how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.

### **Websites and videos that I have found really helpful on this subject**

<https://carm.org/halloween> - I found this article covered all the issues very helpfully

<https://christthetruth.net/2014/10/27/halloween-mocking-the-devil-preaching-the-word/>

Scrivener G (2013) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LyfXTBdegQM> 10ofthose – it would be great if you could watch this with your group



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