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Protect Kids From False Beliefs

Many parents worry about shielding their children from dangerous non-Christian influences. This is especially true at Halloween, which has become a \$6 billion holiday. Because of the costumes and candy, most children adore Halloween. But parents face a dilemma: How much should children participate in a holiday that focuses on scary images often glamorizing death and the occult?

Avoiding Halloween entirely is one option. Another is providing Christian alternatives such as harvest events. Parents can also provide children with a faith-based understanding of Halloween. You can use the holiday to discover the differences between God's truth and false beliefs. Here are ways to start:

Explore children's fears regarding death.

Kids often ask tough questions that make adults uncomfortable. When topics such as death and the devil arise, let your home be a safe place where children can express their fears. Then turn to the Bible for answers.



Share with children the history of Halloween. The holiday first marked the eve of All Hallows or All Saints' Day, when Christians remember saints who've died. Talk about special family members or friends who are now in heaven with Jesus. Also share that all who believe in Jesus are called to be saints, or holy people (see Romans 1:7).

Put on the "armor of God" as protection against evil. Read aloud Ephesians 6:10-20 and discuss how God keeps us safe. Let children dress up in this armor; for example, wear the belt of truth to recognize Satan's lies and resist his temptations.

Trick or Truth?

- According to a recent Gallup Poll, one in 10 Americans objects to celebrating Halloween because of religious beliefs. In a poll at about.com, 40% of respondents said Halloween activities are harmless and fun.
- At edutopia.org, 52% of poll respondents said public schools should celebrate Halloween and that children whose parents object should be excused from the festivities. Another 41% said an alternative seasonal festival should include everyone.

PowerSource

Ask God:

1. To help you teach and remind children of God's truths.
2. To protect your children from evil forces and activities.
3. To help your children learn to resist Satan's temptations.

Parenting Insights

Start now to safeguard children against being misled by the false teachings of cults.

- **Love and accept children unconditionally.** Show them that church is the place to find God's love and acceptance.
- **Teach children to think critically.** They must know what they believe and why.
- **Expect and encourage kids to question their faith.** Doubts help spur faith growth.
- **Teach kids to understand the Bible.** Always look at the context of verses.
- **Talk to children about false religions.** Otherwise, they'll be unprepared to evaluate and respond to cults when they're out on their own.
- **Pray and trust the Holy Spirit.** God promises to keep his children safe in his truth.

OpenTheBook

"Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.'"
John 14:6

Jesus, our Savior, is the only source of truth and the only way to eternal life.

Teachable Moments

1. **Bible Villains**—Put a biblical spin on children's interest in "bad guys" by learning more about Bible-time villains such as Pharaoh, Goliath, Bathsheba, Delilah, Haman, Pilate, and Judas. Discuss these people's actions and how we can avoid being like them.
2. **Reverse Trick or Treat**—Surprise neighbors with an unexpected act of kindness. Bake some goodies and deliver them by ringing doorbells and saying, "Reverse trick or treat!" As you walk from home to home, talk about biblical truths such as the Golden Rule—and why God tells us to love our neighbors.



3. **Let It Shine**—Make some luminarias by decorating brown paper sacks and filling them each with sand and a votive candle. Line them along your sidewalk to light a path to faith in Christ at Halloween. Read aloud Isaiah 9:2 and share ways you can help others see the light of Jesus all year long.



"So commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these words of mine. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are ON THE ROAD, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up." Deuteronomy 11:18-19, NLT

Talk about children's fears and beliefs by using these conversation-starting questions:

1. What kinds of things frighten you the most, and why? Why do you think Jesus tells us to not be afraid (see John 6:20)?
2. What makes you feel better when you're scared? How do you comfort other people when they're facing fears?
3. How can you tell when other people are telling the truth?
4. Why does Jesus want us to live according to his truth found in the Bible? How can we make sure we do that?

Family Experience: Nothing But the Truth

Use these activities to discover where we can find real truth. The first works well with younger children, and the second works well with older children.

- **Pumpkin Matchup**—Remove the seeds and pulp from two pumpkins. Carve them together, reserving large pieces from your designs. Place all the pieces on a tray in the center of the room. Place the carved pumpkins at opposite ends of the room. Then form two teams and have teams each stand by a pumpkin. Say: "Let's complete our pumpkins. Race to match your team's pieces to your pumpkin. If a piece doesn't fit, return it to the pile. Afterward, say: "It isn't always easy to find the right match for things." Read 1 John 2:5. Say: "Jesus wants us to do things that match up with the Bible. Following Jesus makes us complete."
- **Searching for the Truth**—Fill a large tub with ice cubes and 20 or 30 clear marbles. Have family members try to pick up the marbles with their bare toes. Ask: "How easy or difficult was this task? How were the marbles different from or similar to the ice? How is distinguishing between marbles and ice cubes with your toes like or unlike deciding what's true and what isn't?" Say: "What's false often looks or feels like truth. Just as our feet got cold and numb from the ice while we were looking for the marbles, sometimes false things can make us numb to the truth. The best way to know truth is to pick up and hold on to God's Word." Read aloud Psalm 119:105 and discuss ways that God's Word lights our path and warms our hearts. Then enjoy a warm snack.





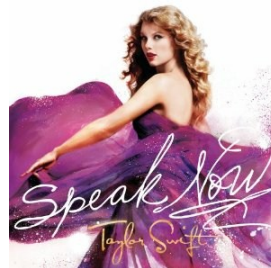
What's Playing at the Movies

Movie: *Flipped* (now in theaters)
Genre: Comedy, drama, romance
Rating: PG (for some language and thematic material)
Cast: Madeline Carroll, Callan McAuliffe, Anthony Edwards, Rebecca De Mornay
Synopsis: This coming-of-age movie, based on a young-adult novel about first love, takes Juli and Bryce from second grade to junior high. These neighbors and classmates discover who they are—as individuals and as a pair.
Discussion Questions: At what age can someone truly fall in love? How can you tell whether your feelings are just a crush or something more? Read aloud 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. What can our first relationships teach us about true love? For you, what are the most challenging parts of love, as God intends for it to be?



What Music Is Releasing

Artist: Taylor Swift
Album: *Speak Now*
Artist Info: Country-pop sensation Swift, 20, started writing songs in school to deal with the pain of not fitting in. When other kids gave her grief, she wrote songs about them.
Summary: For her third album, Swift wrote all the songs herself. She says the first single, "Mine," is about her tendency to run from love. "Innocent" is about forgiving rapper Kanye West for interrupting her awards-show speech last year. It includes the line, "Today is never too late to be brand new."
Discussion Questions: What does it feel like to hold a grudge? How willing are you to forgive people who hurt you? Read aloud 2 Corinthians 5:17. In what ways are you a new creation? How can you let other people know that God has made them brand new, too?



Culture & Trends

What's happening right now that may affect your children and family:

- Some schools are banning Silly Bandz, the rubber bracelets and rings popular with children across the country, because they're a distraction and kids are flinging them at one another.



- To give their children an advantage in school, more parents are now "redshirting" their kindergartners, holding them back a year—especially if their birthdays are near registration cutoff dates. (livescience.com)

Quick Stats

- 69% of preteens say talks with their parents are very helpful for dealing with pressures and challenges. (parenting.com)
- Of the 30 million kids who enroll in sports each year, 70% quit by age 13. The number-one reason for giving up? "It stopped being fun." (Nat'l Sports Coaches Assn.)

Title	Content	Rating & Platform
<i>Ivy the Kiwi?</i>	Young Ivy goes on a journey to find her mom. Players maneuver Ivy via vines through storybook-like illustrations.	E; DS, Wii
<i>Start the Party!</i>	This release, one of the first to use the new PlayStation Move, contains nine fast-paced mini-games. Contains comic mischief and mild cartoon violence.	E; PS3
<i>Civilization V</i>	Players found cities, fight wars, and build wonders of the world in this history-based strategy game. Contains mild violence.	E10+; PC

