

Halloween: What's the Balance Between Having Fun and Discerning Evil?

Handling Halloween as a Christian family is starting to get tricky at our house.

With a middle school girl and boy at home, the Disney princess and Superhero costumes have lost their allure. What's left to choose from is either scary or frankly, a bit more seductive than I prefer.

Ask Yourself Questions

Yesterday, an hour-long discourse—OK, let's be real—a battle ensued at the store as to what an “appropriate costume” looked like (sigh).

In between the banter I began to ask myself,

“How should we handle Halloween as a Christian family, anyway?”

“As a Christian family trying to teach our kids biblical principles, should I just boycott Halloween altogether?”

“Where is the balance between dressing up and having fun, yet teaching my kids to be discerning about evil?”

Examine the Scripture

There's nothing specific about Halloween in the Bible, but what I do know is that in the city of Ephesus, people practiced sorcery and witchcraft daily. Also, in Ephesus, Paul strategically moved his ministry out of the selectivity of synagogues and the obscurity of homes right into the city square. In the original Halloween town, Paul positioned

himself right in the center of evil. We are told that “all ... heard the word of the Lord” (Acts 19:10) in Ephesus. Also, many churches were planted in the surrounding cities as a result of Paul’s ministry resulting in explosive kingdom growth. In the darkest city of all, Paul intentionally took the light of the gospel right into the center of it.

Make a Decision

Right then and there, I made a resolution: I’m taking back Halloween. No, I’m not boycotting it. I’m reframing it. I’m using it as an opportunity to teach my kids that evil is real and we’re called to shine in the midst of it. How? We’ll serve at our church’s harvest festival. We don’t live in a neighborhood that gets trick-or-treaters, but if we did, I’d set up tables right in my driveway and serve food. Maybe include a craft or games. Bring out my dogs. Anything to cause my neighbors to stop for a few moments so I could interact with them—or at least learn their names.

But we’ll also go out into the darkness. We’ll see things that are scary. People who laugh at death and destruction. Children dressed as witches, devils and vampires. My children wear historical costumes that recount life rather than celebrate death. We’ll introduce ourselves to others in our neighborhood and tell them where we live. We’ll try and make connections and then pray for those whom we met.

Create Conversation

After loading up with candy, our family will share this conversation:

1. God has given us a costume to wear every day.

“So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense.

Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it" (Col. 3:12-14, MSG)

2. We are not made for the darkness, but for light. We have been rescued from the darkness.

"Go out into the world uncorrupted, a breath of fresh air in this squalid and polluted society. Provide people with a glimpse of good living and of the living God. Carry the light-giving Message into the night so I'll have good cause to be proud of you on the day that Christ returns" (Phil. 2:15).

3. Evil may be celebrating now, but God has already won.

"The Devil who deceived them will be hurled into Lake Fire and Brimstone, joining the Beast and False Prophet, the three in torment around the clock for ages without end" (Rev. 20:10).

Handling Halloween

I could boycott Halloween. I could try and shelter my children from the sights and sounds of this annual holiday. Or I could take this opportunity and use it for good. I will remind them that we are not of this world. Our God overcame the world and brought light into the darkness. Will we hide our light away or go out and shine in that darkness?

How do you handle Halloween with your family? Do you participate or not?

Why have you chosen to take that course of action with your family? {eo}

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