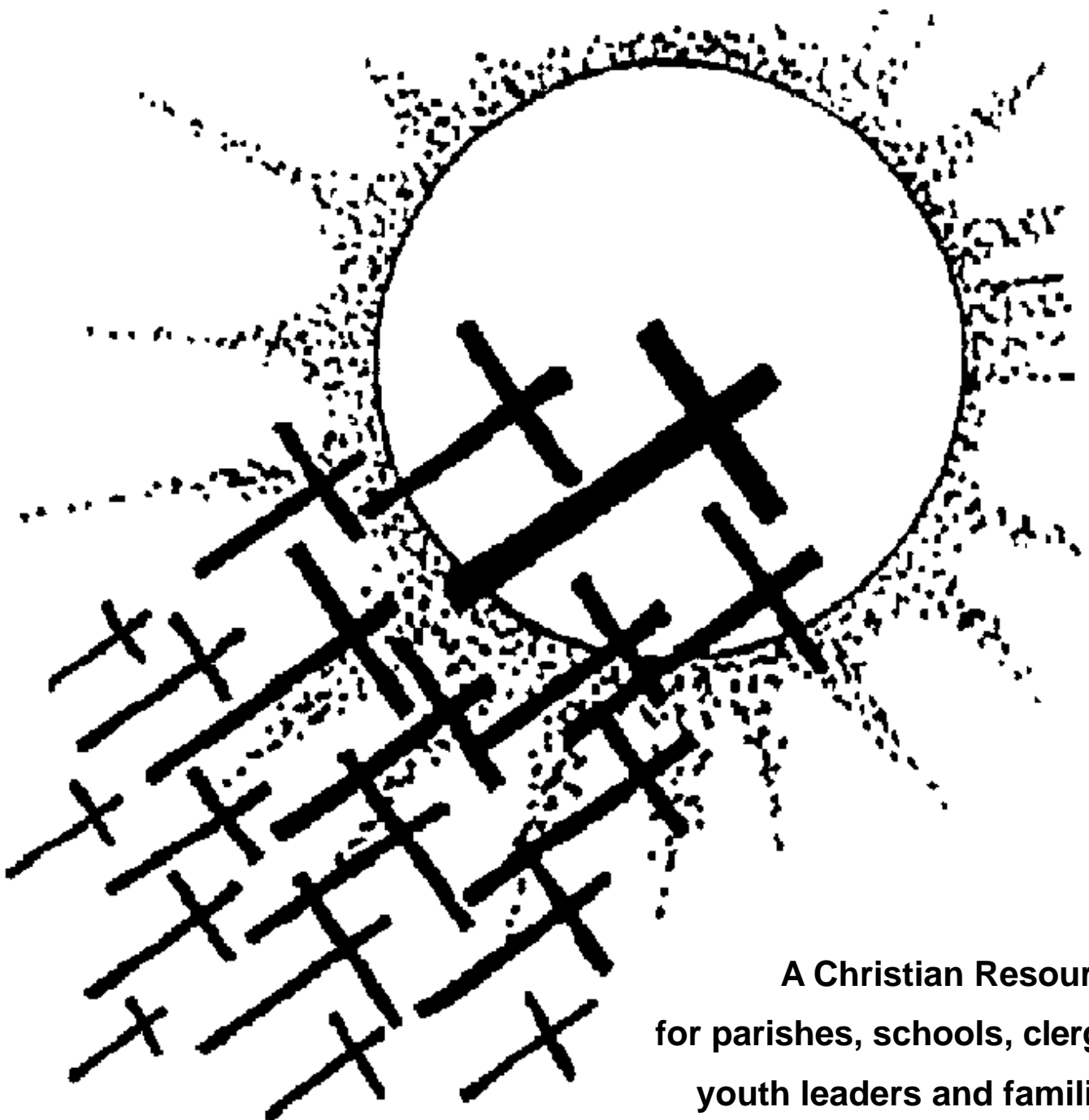
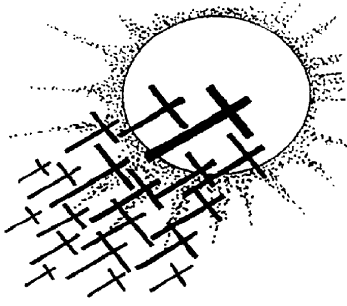


Hallelujah! It's Halloween!



**A Christian Resource
for parishes, schools, clergy,
youth leaders and families**



Hallelujah! It's Halloween!

Introduction

The aim of this material is to resource youth leaders, clergy, teachers and all who work with young people to celebrate Halloween in a Christian way and provide basic Christian teaching. It doesn't 'dismiss' or completely reject the ways in which Halloween is celebrated today. In some cases, it simply interprets those things in a Christian way. For many families, Halloween is celebrated as a harmless piece of fun. It's not always a good idea to make something a complete taboo for then we only raise fear and intrigue. However, there is a need to provide a response to the apparent growing interest in the occult and other so called 'darker' things. This material also reminds people of the Christian roots and influence of Halloween, and helps us to celebrate Halloween as a Christian festival and holy day!

The use of the following ideas all depends, of course, on the age and number of young people participating and the kind of event you are hoping to organise - whether it's a party, an activity night, a 'vigil' in church, a time of worship or a combination of all these things! Another important factor is the kind of young people you are trying to attract: church, non-church or both.

The venue is important, too. Is it in a Church Hall, a church, a school or a Club? Does your church building have a crypt - can that be used to your advantage? What about a graveyard? Can you use that as part of your activities or worship? If your event is more of a party then it may be dominated by a disco with food, games and other activities. An Activity Evening or a theme night at your youth club may have more art, craft, games and drama. A Vigil would obviously have prayers, readings and music but could also contain drama, food, games and other gimmicks - in fact anything - a vigil or liturgy can have a party atmosphere!

If you want some ideas of how to string some ingredients together then see Section Three. But whatever you decide to do - be free to use your own imagination! Be creative!

Being Sensitive

Obviously, when planning events, we should be aware of any particular issues facing the young people. For instance, if we are addressing the issue of death and the departed, we should be sensitive to any young people that may have experienced bereavement.

How to use the Material

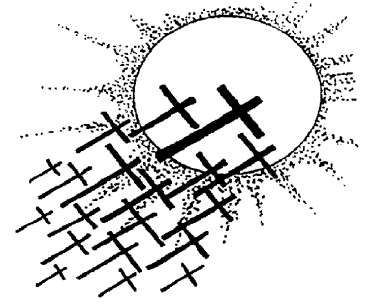
Section One gives a very brief background to Halloween and how it has come to be celebrated in the way it has. It also highlights some of the ways in which the season is celebrated in different countries and cultures. Think of it as a 'starter', a 'taster' or an 'aperitif'!

In **Section Two** you will find various ideas for Halloween Celebrations. You can pick and mix to create your own event, or just use some of the ideas for homilies or school assemblies. The Second Section, then, is the menu!

Section Three contains examples of a 'set meal'! It gives you an idea of what you can do with the material.

Section Four contains supplementary material that may help to pack things out - including ideas for further reference, and connecting to TV, films, music, and popular culture. Call it a 'side order' if you like!

Hallelujah! It's Halloween!



Section One

So what's it all about then? How did we get to where we are? This section isn't intended to give an accurate historical thesis of Halloween - we'll leave that to someone else! Hopefully, though, it gives some idea of where people are 'at' when it comes to celebrating Halloween and all the ingredients that are in the mixing bowl! Many people argue over Halloween - either claiming it to have pagan roots or Christian roots - with various groups trying to 'own' it - here are some of the origins of various different festivals that have occurred around the same time of year as Halloween. And since, this is a Christian resource let's start there!

Christianity

Halloween, as we know it, is a Christian festival. The Church celebrates All Saints Day (or All Hallows' Day) on November 1st and All Hallow's Eve is the celebration of October 31st. On this festival it celebrates all the Christian saints, known and unknown. The earliest references to such a feast occur in St Ephrem Syrus (d. 373). St. John Chrysostom, gives the festival a definite day, that is the first Sunday after Pentecost (a day still observed in the Eastern Church). It's observance on November 1st appears to date from the time of Gregory III (d.741) who dedicated on that day in Rome a chapel in the basilica of St Peter to 'All the Saints'. Others say that the re-dedication of the pagan Pantheon in Rome in honour of Our Lady and all the Martyrs is the origin of the feast of All Saints, which became a Christian place of worship in the seventh century. It was Gregory IV (d.884) who ordered the day to be universally observed. The Commemoration of the Souls of all the Faithful Departed on 2 November became widely known through the influence of Odilo of Cluny. In 998 he commanded that all his Benedictine Houses celebrated it annually.

As the Christian Church grew in those 1000 years it still continued to encounter many pagan practices. In order to inculturate the Faith of the Church they adopted or immersed many of these practices into their own celebrations, giving them new meaning, or celebrating their own festivals of Christ on the same day as Pagan Festivals, and we will deal with some of them next.

The Ancient Celts

The Ancient Celts worshipped nature and had many gods, with the sun god as their favourite. They believed it was he who commanded their work and their rest times, and who made the earth beautiful and the crops grow. They celebrated their New Year on November 1st with a festival that marked the end of the "season of the sun" and the beginning of "the season of darkness and cold." On October 31st after the crops were harvested and stored for the long winter, the cooking fires in the homes would be extinguished. The Celtic priests would meet in the hilltop in the dark oak forest (oak trees were considered sacred), light new fires and offer sacrifices of crops and animals. As they danced around the fires, the season of the sun passed and the season of darkness would begin. When the morning arrived the Druids would give an ember from their fires to each family who would then take them home to start new cooking fires. These fires would keep the homes warm and free from evil spirits. The November 1st festival was called Samhain (pronounced "sow-en"). The festival would last for 3 days. Many people would parade in costumes made from the skins and heads of their animals. Whether or not this festival is one of the origins of Halloween or just an Autumn/Winter festival is a matter of opinion.

Wicca

Wicca has been described as a Neopagan religion. What's a Neopagan, though?! Neopagan's have been described as 'faith groups, which are based on attempted reconstruction of ancient, extinct religions.' They are a very earth based religion. However, not all Neopagans are Wiccans, and there are many different kinds of Wiccans. Some believe in one god, some in two, some in many. Most wiccans practice magic or witchcraft. They do not claim to be Satanists and do not claim to believe in an all powerful, evil entity, such as Satan, although there are common features, such as some of the symbolism that is used. Today, Wiccans celebrate Halloween as one of eight festivals on their 'wheel of the year.'

The Romans

During the first century the Romans invaded Britain. They brought with them many of their festivals and customs. One of these was the festival know as Pomona Day, named for their goddess of fruits and gardens. It was also celebrated around the 1st of November. After hundreds of years of Roman rule the customs of the Celtic's Samhain festival and the Roman Pomona Day mixed becoming one major Autumn holiday. Another Roman festival was Feralia, which honoured the dead and was also intertwined with the Celtic practices.

Mix and Match

It seems that the Halloween celebrated by many people today includes a mix of all of these influences, Pomona Day's apples, nuts, and harvest, the Festival of Samhain's black cats, magic, evil spirits and death, and the ghosts, skeletons and skulls from All Saint's Day and All Soul's Day. TV use it as entertainment! And some people just have a bit of fun! The Christian Church retained some of the practices but gave them Christian meaning which is what we should be trying to do in anything that we organise and engage with: by trying to be creative in connecting with the way that people live and learn and laugh and bringing Christ back to our celebration of All Saints and the commemoration of the departed.

Halloween Customs – some Origins

Lanterns

The Celts of Britain and Northern France would carry a lantern when they walked on the eve of October 31. These lanterns were carved out of big turnips and the lights were believed to keep the evil spirits away. Children would carve faces in the turnips. These carved turnips were called "jack-o-lanterns. Legend has it that the "jack-o-lantern" got its name from a stingy and mean old man, named Jack, who when he died was too mean and selfish o get into heaven. When Jack went to hell he was meet by the Devil who gave him a piece of burning coal and sent him away. Jack placed the burning coal in a turnip to use as a lantern to light his way. The legends claim that Jack is still walking with the lantern looking for a place to stay!

Halloween is big business in America! When the early settlers came to America they found the big round orange pumpkin. Being larger and much more colourful than turnips, the pumpkin made great "jack-o-lanterns". Eventually the pumpkin would replace the turnip in Halloween celebrations. As the settlers spread across America they took their Halloween celebrations with them, which included the custom of the "jack-o-lantern" and the pumpkin has become one of the most widely recognized symbol of the Halloween festival.

Trick or Treat?

The history of "Trick or Treating" may be traced back to the early celebrations of All Soul's Day in Britain. The poor would go begging and the housewives would give them special treats called "soul-cakes". This was called "going a-souling", and the "soulers" would promise to say a prayer for the dead. Over time the custom changed and the town's children became the beggars. As they went from house to house they would be given apples, buns, and money. During the Pioneer days of the American West, the housewives gave the children sweets to keep from being tricked, the children shouting "Trick or Treat!" Another aspect to this practice is that people believed that on this night their dead relatives and friends came back to visit them and cakes and

foods would be placed in order to guide and welcome them and, in some cases, appease them!

Bobbing Apples

Games involving fruits such as Bobbing Apples etc could have their origin in the time of the Harvest and may have pagan roots in the worship of Pomona, a roman goddess of the harvest. And many of the games played at Halloween today involve some kind of fortune telling (or 'Divination'). For instance, it is said that if you peeled the apple in one long piece and threw it over your shoulder it would form the initial of the person you would marry! Halloween, of course, quickly follows the celebration of the Harvest Thanksgiving and precedes the Kingdom Season and the Feast of Christ the King so you could still use bobbing apples and other games to talk about the fruits of the kingdom or the fruits of the Spirit! In the same way, the story of Jack and the lantern is a morality story and one that raises issues of selfishness, forgiveness and reconciliation.

A Mexican Halloween

Los Dias de los Muertos, the Days of the Dead, is a traditional Mexican holiday honouring the dead. It is celebrated every year at Halloween time and the Christian holy days of All Saints Day and All Souls Day (November 1st and 2nd). *Los Dias de los Muertos* is not a sad time, but instead a time of remembering and rejoicing.

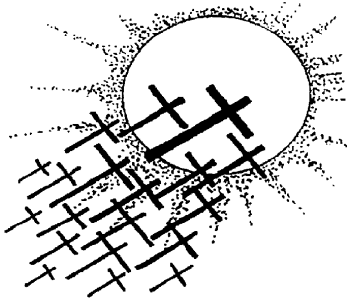
The townspeople dress up as ghouls, ghosts, mummies and skeletons and parade through the town carrying an open coffin. The "corpse" within smiles as it is carried through the narrow streets of town. The local vendors toss oranges inside as the procession makes its way past their markets. Lucky "corpses" can also catch flowers, fruits, and candies.

In the homes families arrange ofrenda's or "altars" with flowers, bread, fruit and candy. Pictures of the deceased family members are added. In the late afternoon special all night burning candles are lit - it is time to remember the departed - the old ones, their parents and grandparents.

The next day the families travel to the cemetery. They arrive with hoes, picks and shovels. They also carry flowers, candles, blankets, and picnic baskets. They have

come to clean the graves of their loved ones. The gravesites are weeded and the dirt raked smooth. The Crypts are scrubbed and swept. Colourful flowers, bread, fruit and candles are placed on the graves. Some bring guitars and radios to listen to. The families will spend the entire night in the cemeteries. Skeletons and skulls are found everywhere. Chocolate skulls, marzipan coffins, and white chocolate skeletons. Special loaves of bread are baked, called *pan de muertos*, and decorated with "bones. Handmade skeleton figurines, called *calacas* are especially popular. These usually show an active and joyful afterlife. Figures of musicians, generals on horseback, even skeletal brides in their white bridal gowns marching down the aisles with their boney grooms!

Hopefully, this section has given you some insight into the background of Halloween, and how it's Christian nature has been mixed up with all kinds of other traditions. Now you can get on with celebrating Halloween with your young people!



Hallelujah! It's Halloween!

Section Two

So, you want to celebrate Halloween? Where do you start? Here are a few pointers. Take your pick from the menu - and feel free to come up with your own ideas.

What an Atmosphere!

If you're having a party, then set the scene! You don't have to discard all the usual Halloween activities and decorations - use and interpret them in a Christian way. 'Connect' with the young people. There is a danger in giving certain things a 'stigma', which then makes them either interesting or scary because we are a slightly insecure about them. Perhaps you could decorate the room using banners, ribbons, crepe paper, even using the traditional Halloween colours of orange and black. The use of pumpkins and other items can be interpreted in a Christian way: after all, we have just celebrated Harvest and All Saints and the Kingdom Season reminds us of the first fruits of the Kingdom. Dim the lighting or, if appropriate and safe, have candles or lanterns burning. What about a smoke machine? Have flashing lights, Christmas or Stage lights (Believe it or not, things like lighting systems, smoke machines and other equipment isn't that expensive to hire). If your event is taking place in Church there's no reason why you can't be equally creative - not everything has to be 'churchy' to have significance or communicate the gospel!

Music

Have a disco! Or at least have music playing in the background - particularly during any games or activities you have. You can even use contemporary music to teach the gospel by 'interpreting' lyrics of songs, or using particular song themes to deal with various issues (see section 4 for examples)

Food and Drink

Have a non-alcoholic punch bowl - with pieces of fruit - to keep with the 'fruit' theme associated with Halloween - or non-alcoholic cocktails named after saints (Peter's Peril, St John's Juice, St Martin's Mix, Timothy's Tipple, etc). Have an array of sweet food - cup cakes, home made biscuits, sweets, etc.

Soul-cakes are a Halloween observation (see the meaning above in section 1). I'm not exactly sure what the ingredients are but you could have home made biscuits and put them on the food table or in the tuck shop advertised as 'Soul-cakes'. The young people will ask what a soul cake is - and then you tell them. Or you could even get the young people to make their own soul cakes, if you have kitchen facilities.

Organise a Pizza Party - build your own pizzas with a variety of toppings. You could have prizes for the best. Suggest a variety of saints' symbols - cross, sword, etc - it's amazing what you can do with cheese and tomato!

Make ice cream sodas or novelty ice creams named after saints (e.g. a dish of ice cream with cordial criss-crossed like a net for St Peter's ice cream, etc.) Use your imagination!

Hot dogs - make it a 'Saints 'n' Sausage Night' - particularly if the participants are 'younger' - or just stick to burgers or jacket potatoes with various fillings.

Games and Activities

Whether you're having a party night, an activity night or an evening in church, games and other activities are an important part of it. There are many Games Books

available to buy - some of which are given in Section 4. However, here are a few games to get you going!

Lanterns

Why not carve out some pumpkins or turnips and tell the tale of Jack and talk about the moral of the story, You can deal with issues of selfishness, charity, what it means to use our gifts, etc. as well as the issues of Christian meaning of death, eternal life, heaven and hell Imagine the scene before you of the some of the harvest displays from a week or two before now carved out and shining inwardly shining with lights through cross shaped holes.

What's in a Name?

When they arrive, give everyone a badge with a different saint's name on (a list of examples of saints' names is given in section 4). You may want to give a very brief biography of each saint – for example, year or birth, death, where they lived, what they did. Alternatively, borrow a badge machine so they can make a badge themselves. Use the saints' names for the games and activities later in the evening or as competitions and raffles. You can also use the saints' names to divide people into groups: martyrs, religious, bishops, doctors of the church etc. One way of doing this would be to place each name in a balloon. Distribute the balloons to the young people who have to burst them to find their 'name' and 'type' of saint. This will familiarises them with particular saints. People may ask what a saint is - which gives you the opportunity to give them an answer! Have you got one ready?

Not Only Witches Have Brooms You Know!

St Martin de Porres is often represented with a broom. This is because in the Religious Community of which he was part, he was always happy to do the meagre, little jobs such as cleaning the kitchen floor: a sign of his great humility. So, play a relay game with each group or team divided into two at each end of the hall. Each team is given a broomstick and a balloon. The aim is to transport the balloon from one end of the hall to another until every team member has taken part.

Keep it messy!

Halloween has become a messy affair with lots of teenagers relishing in messing people and property with eggs and flour and whatever else they can get their hands on! So, in order to get this aspect out of their system in a non harmful and threatening way, play a game with forfeits - make them messy: marshmallows in jam, treacle or flour. The game can be a simple question and answer or more elaborate. For example, play 'Spin the Tray.' Have a large round tray. Each of the young people is given a saint's name. Invite them to sit in a circle. Spin the tray in the centre and then, from the list of Saints, call out a saint's name - that person then has to grab the tray before it stops. Call out the names later and later, so it gets more difficult! Or play 'Spin the Spoon.' Each in turns spins a spoon, whoever it points at chooses as question or a forfeit.

Oh Mummy!

Halloween is a time for ghouls and monsters! Divide the young people into groups and supply them with a few toilet rolls! Get them to choose one person from their group and create a mummy by wrapping the toilet paper as bandages. It's more difficult than it appears - especially if they are playing against the clock. Award a prize or point for the best mummy! When they have finished and points have been awarded, the 'mummy' breaks out of their bandages. Yes, Halloween is about the 'other life!' Jesus actually bursts from the tomb, leaving behind the linen cloths he was wrapped in. He was raised from the dead - not to scare or frighten. He overcame death so that we aren't frightened by death or dying. We are made to live with him forever! You may want to read an account of the Resurrection, drawing attention to the empty tomb and the linen cloths lying neatly.

Alternatively, you could use the Mummy idea to get into the Bible stories involving Egypt. For example, the story of Moses and the escape from the Egyptians, Joseph and his coloured coat, Mary and Joseph fleeing into Egypt after the birth of Christ etc.

'Dem Bones

Give each group a skeleton kit - available in Toy Shops. The bones need to be jumbled up. The first group to complete the skeleton wins. Use this as a teaching point. In Mexico, handmade skeleton figurines, called *calacas* are especially popular. Calacas usually show an active and joyful afterlife, with figures of musicians, generals on horseback, even skeletal brides, in their white bridal gowns marching down the aisles with their 'boney' grooms! So, don't be afraid to use skeleton images or other images associated with death and dying. In fact, lots of Medieval images found in some churches feature skeletons joyfully going about their 'life'!. Make things joyful rather than scary!

You could also use this activity to explore Ezekiel 37, and how the Spirit of God brings life: *'I am going to put breath into you, and you will live. I shall fasten sinews on you, clothe you with flesh, cover you with skin, and give you breath, and you will live.'*

Traditional Games

Use the traditional Halloween games such as apple dunking or apple on a string - why not?! We've just celebrated the Harvest Thanksgiving after all, and during the feasts of All Saints we celebrate the lives of the saints, and glimpse the first fruits of the kingdom, so make this explicit when playing the games. Many of the games of Halloween traditionally have aspects of trying to predict the future (also known as 'divination') so bear this in mind when playing them in order to avoid unwittingly doing this! You may wish to explore different Bible Passages that talk about the fruits of the Spirit or passages such as Jesus and the fig tree when he teaches us about being fruitful.

Quiz

Have various rounds, including a picture round - with various photographs of famous Christians - but not necessarily well known to be Christian. You can cut these out of magazines and newspapers or get them from the internet. (Such people may include The Pope, The Archbishop of Canterbury, Mother Teresa, Jonathan Edwards, Tom Hanks, Mel Gibson, Cliff Richard, Daniel

Bedingfield and other 'celebrity' Christians!) Ask the young people what they think the celebrities have in common? Another similar quiz would be to have various symbols of saints, either actual symbols or represented on a card and a list of saints. They have to match the symbols to the saints. You may want to give a brief biography of each of the saints to help them.

Search for the Hero!

Think about the saints as being role models and examples of discipleship. Have games involving modern day role models. For example, Jigsaw Games. Make a celebrity jigsaw using a magazine picture. The first team to finish their jigsaw wins! On the other hand, use the pieces as a treasure hunt. Talk about who people have as heroes. What qualities do they have? How do the saints provide role models for us?

Hello Haloes!

Every Saint has a halo (a circle or disc of light around the head or even the body)! So, play games involving halos. Make a halo out of tinsel and use it in a simple team relay race. The halo has to be passed from one team member to another, by balancing it on their head! This idea of haloes is an important one for us when faced with the phenomenon of auras, used in psychic readings. The halo was used in the religious symbolism of Hellenistic period, distinguishing gods and demi-gods (It's interesting that you don't get people denouncing the use of haloes in Christian Art as non Christian in the same way they try to say Halloween is pagan!) Christian Art adopted the halo quite gradually. In the third and fourth centuries the use of the halo was restricted to Christ. From the fifth century it was extended to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels and the saints. In the Middle Ages, the round halo was used for angels and saints, and Christ was distinguished by a cross or the use of the symbols Alpha and Omega. The colour of the halo seems originally to have been blue, but from the fifth and sixth centuries, gold, yellow or rainbow colours were preferred.

Dressing Up

Many Halloween customs involve dressing up - as

ghosts, witches, monsters, and ghouls! If it's appropriate to the age group you could have a fancy dress party. Ask them to use their imagination and come as anything but not to restrict it to the 'frightening.' Talk about how at baptism we are clothed with Christ. Think about the symbolism of being clothed in the Baptism rite, and the significance of wearing white. Refer to the Book of Revelation 'Who are these who are robed in white?' (Revelation 7:13). How can you respond to families and children who dress up as witches and ghosts? Is it appropriate? Is it just a bit of fun? Is there a way that you can talk about why people do it, and address the issues of mortality and the supernatural and fear. Think about how children develop through play and imagination. Traditionally, people would dress up as ghosts and ghouls at Halloween in order to confuse the evil spirits or ghosts that they believed visited on this night. Talk about the victory over sin and evil that Christ has won on the cross and how we share in that victory.

Have a relay dressing game, with various items of clothes. For example, have a large bag of clothing containing various items (some strange and silly) and call out an item of clothing which a person from the team has to find and put on. This could be more elaborate by giving a pair of team members an occupation. Give them sixty seconds to dress one of each pair appropriately. Then they have to act out their occupation for the rest of the group to guess. An alternative game is Chinese laundry. Divide the young people into groups. The leader stands in the middle of the room and calls out the names of the articles he 'lost'. When an article is named e.g. blue sock, black left trainer, each team tries to find one. The captain runs with it to the leader. First team to supply the missing item wins a point.

Why not have a makeover - for a laugh! Dress someone up to look completely witchlike or ghoulish. And then get the groups to transform them into 'something beautiful!' Supply them with wigs, make up, clothes, etc! This could be quite a laugh! Use it as a teaching point - with Jesus there's no need to be scared or frightened. Also, in the Kingdom of God we are transformed and made perfect. In Holy Baptism we put on Christ

(the meaning of the symbolism of being clothed in a white garment after baptism). Ugliness and Beauty isn't to do with outward appearance but is an inward quality. Sin makes us ugly. God's love, forgiveness and grace makes us beautiful. Or you could just have a bit of face painting with Christian symbols.

Art 'n' Craft

Here are some examples of different activities, including art and craft ideas.

Ready, Steady, Cook!

If it's less of a party and more of an 'activity' evening you could make your own biscuits, or get the young people to ice biscuits using the coloured icing packs available in supermarkets. Decorate the biscuits with symbols of the saints! Or make Soul-cakes.

Masks

Masks are an essential element of popular Halloween celebrations. So why not make colourful masks using cardboard, string, pens, crayons, paints and collages. Talk about what kind of masks we wear in our lives and how we try to hide who we are. Perhaps use them as part of a liturgy, where the young people wear their masks and remove them as part of a ritual act involving openness to God and each other, reconciliation, etc.

'Where Did You Get That Hat...?'

A familiar sight among Halloween costumes is the witches black, pointed hat! Why not look at another kind of pointed hat? The mitre! The Mitre is a hat worn by a Bishop and symbolises the Holy Spirit who rested on the heads of the Apostles as flames of fire. Get the young people to design and make their own mitres. Look at some Saint Bishops. Perhaps each person could adopt their own saint bishop. Get them to write the name of their saint on their mitre. They can wear their hats: talk about how we are all Spirit filled.

Paint a Saint

If it's an activity night - why not make icons? Use fluorescent paints, aluminium foil, gold paper and other materials. Have ready-made icons to decorate, and exam-

ples of icons for people to see what they are. You may be able to mount them on thick card or plywood.

Banner Making

Keep it simple by making large collages, flags or banners involving the life of the saints, symbols of saints, the church, People of God, etc.

Trick or Treat

If it is a non-free party, and you're selling things like ice cream, chocolate etc - why not give the proceeds to a charity - such as a Children's charity, homeless charity, or charities working with street children? This takes us back to what some think is the origin of 'trick or treat': in early celebrations of All Soul's Day in Britain, the poor would go begging and the housewives would give them special treats called "soul-cakes". (See Section 1)

Graveyard Antics

People visit graveyards on lots of occasions: for a funeral, to visit the grave of a loved one, tracing lost ancestors, or winding their way to Church on a Sunday morning. The old graveyards that many churches have can look quite eerie - and there is a sense in which some people are frightened or scared by them, or they make them feel just a little apprehensive: partly to do with a fear of death and a vivid imagination! All Souls is a time when people visit graves to clean the gravestone, tidy things up, and lay flowers or wreaths. The same thing is done routinely in some areas on Palm Sunday - preparing the grave for Easter Sunday, the Day of Resurrection. Why not make the most of a graveyard in your church? If it needs tidying up, why not arrange a fun, working party, with refreshments. Begin or end with a celebration of the Eucharist or some other liturgy. Or perhaps, have an outdoor liturgy with candles or torches, praying for or remembering those who have died, and affirming our belief in the Resurrection. Perhaps have a pilgrimage through the gravestones, singing hymns or stopping at various graves, laying a flower, candle or some other token. Wander into church and finish the liturgy there in warmth! If you are planning something for much younger people you could organise a bit of gravestone rubbing with crayons and paper.

Have a treasure hunt, giving them things to look for in the graveyard, for example: names, date of birth and death and other interesting features. Obviously, if the church graveyard is still used for burials, you should be sensitive to any people who may have departed family or friends buried there. Remember, you may have to remind some of the young people to treat the graves with respect.

Out of interest: when the ancient Romans, Christian or pagan, visited their dead, they came a long way from the city, and so brought provisions with them, and burial places often had special rooms where they could take a meal together. From being a matter of convenience it became a religious rite in honour of the dead. It seems that Christians did this too at the tombs of martyrs. And the earliest church buildings were erected on the sites of saints and martyrs, with an altar built over the tomb itself: which is the origin of having relics in altars.

Discussion

Use Halloween to talk about issues such as life and death, life after death, the Christian Life, etc. Here are a few examples:

My Obituary

For example, one exercise in Gerard Hughes' book, *God of Surprises* is to write your obituary - what you would want it to say - in your wildest dreams! Why not do this. It will give an idea of what people want out of life, how they want people to feel about them, what they feel about themselves. This will be more appropriate for older teenagers.

On my Gravestone

What do you want on your gravestone? What kinds of things do people write on gravestones? What does it say about the person?

Plan your Funeral

This isn't actually as depressing as it sounds - but tackles what we really think about death, the funeral liturgy, grieving, life and death. Use it to teach the young people about the Christian understanding of death, resur-

rection, hope and heaven.

Worship and Liturgy

Suggestions for Prayers, Readings (biblical and non biblical) visual aids, enacted prayers, drama, music and hymns, are given in Section Four.

Vigil

Why not hold a vigil in church? Set the scene with dimmed lights or candles. You could even use or hire stage lights for the effect. Decorate the Church, using banners made some weeks before. If you have images of saints, either statues or in windows, then illuminate them with a spotlight and/or candles. Burn incense, if appropriate, or even get a smoke machine - to give a 'heavenly' atmosphere! Have a mixture of quiet, reflective times and louder more celebratory and fun moments. Try to make it a bit more creative than just having a reading, hymn and prayer. Make it exciting! Lots of the Club Dance 'Trance' music is good for giving an 'other-worldly' feel in a very modern, electronic way! See some of the examples in Section Four.

Prayer

Lots of the Celtic hermitic saints lived in small cells. Why not get the young people to make a cell for themselves - a small beehive shape for example. Make it out of whatever materials you have available - cardboard boxes, sheets, etc. Alternatively, erect a small dome tent. The group can then take it in turn to spend a few minutes in prayer inside the 'cell'. Think about how you could make it a sacred space - perhaps by placing religious artefacts, images and visual aids, etc. You could have fun with this activity splitting the young people into groups and giving them 20 minutes to make a cell.

Get Connected

Make connections with popular culture and entertainment (or at least be aware of things such as Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Sabrina the Teenage Witch, and Harry Potter). What if the young people ask you questions about the occult, paganism, life after death or spiritualism. What would you say to them?

Stories of the Saints

The lives of the saints makes fascinating reading, with interesting tales to tell. Why not mock up on a few? Books such as Butler's 'Lives of the Saints' are a great resource. There are a few examples in Section Four.

Local Lad made good!

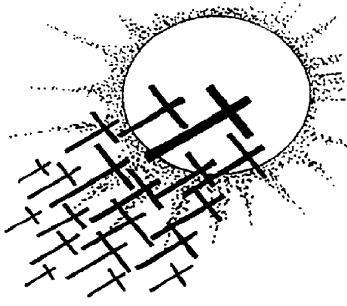
Are there local saints that could be used? Visit your library to find out what you can about any local saints or places associated with them. Have a kind of treasure hunt over the week where the young people have to find as many allusions to that or any saint in street names, organisations, buildings, etc in their local area. Another important saint, of course, is the patron of the parish - if you have one! If you are leaving the premises with your group, remember to follow all the necessary procedures and take all the relevant precautions.

Homily Outlines and School Assemblies

All of the Games, Activities and Ideas can be used as illustrations to kick-start the homily. So, why not use them in your teaching and preaching? Think about different ways in which they can be used to stimulate and involve the young people and be used as a teaching point.

Drama

Have a Drama workshop, or include drama in your liturgy and worship. Look for different ways of introducing drama into your activities - it's usually popular with young people! Remember, at Halloween younger children dress up as 'someone else' - so it may be useful to use drama to explore this theme, too. Play Charades, role play or perform set dramas.



Hallelujah! It's Halloween!

Section Three

This section contains various set pieces giving you an example of how to plan a liturgy or time of worship. Either use them to inspire your own creations or use them as they are!

When planning liturgy and worship for Halloween with young people, it may be a good idea to start where they are: with the scary and humorous, and then take them from this to the Gospel message of Resurrection and Eternal Life. Think about how you can set the scene: a scary voice over, dramatic, intense music, spooky images, etc. Although do bear in mind the age of the young people. Perhaps, mimic a movie trailer for a scary movie, or come up with a drama featuring Zombies, Count Dracula, Frankenstein, witches, etc. Work with young people on planning the worship, keeping a good balance between giving them freedom for creativity and ensuring they remain on track with the Christian message.

There is no need to separate fun activities and worship. You can lead quite naturally from some of the activities featured in the previous section into worship. Or even use some of the activities within the context of worship as a way of teaching and exploring the Christian life.

Names, Themes and Catchphrases

If you're going to promote your event it needs to have a catchy title or subheading – something that captures the imagination of the young people and makes it sound exciting! Here are a few examples:

'Be the Life and Soul of the Party! Come to...'

Life after Death Party!

Saints 'n' Sausage Nite

From the Grave to the Nave! (*especially appropriate if*

you're ending with a liturgy, though lots of people may not know what the nave is!)

Hallelujah it's Halloween!

'Don't be grave, lighten up! Get to the alternative Halloween howler at'

'Don't frighten up, lighten up! Come to the Halloween party at...'

What the Hell?!! It's Heaven!

Saints Alive!

Removing our Mask!

A Liturgy Idea

In preparation for this liturgy the young people can spend some time making their masks. You could do this in different ways: give them free reign to design their own, ask them to make something scary, or ask them to make a mask that expresses how they think they are seen or would like to be seen by others.

Gather the young people together, who should be wearing the masks they have created.

Gathering Hymn

Greeting

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

You may want to briefly introduce the theme of the Worship here

Opening Prayer

Father,
You search us through and through
You know us better than we know ourselves.
Help us to be open to you
so that you may see and love in us
what you see and love in Christ.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

You may want to have more than one reading, with sung Psalms or acclamations

Homily

Removing the Masks - Prayer of Openness to God

We wear masks all the time -
without even realising it!

We try to hide ourselves from other people
Afraid to be who we really are.
We try to live up to other people's expectations -
and so put on an act.
And try to be who we're not.

Sometimes, we force other people to wear masks
because we can't accept them as they are -
we expect them to be like us and look like us and act
like us.

Sometimes, we try to impress God
Or try to hide from him -
forgetting that God knows us through and through.
He knows what we are like.
He knows us better than we know ourselves.

God,
Help us to be open to you.
Help us to remove the masks that we wear.
Help us to face up to you
and to be comfortable with you.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.
After this prayer, the young people are invited to remove

their masks, perhaps placing them at the cross or on the altar. Play some reflective music whilst this is happening.

Almighty God, who forgives all who are truly sorry,
have mercy on us and set us free from sin;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Song of Celebration

Blessing

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

May the Lord who knows and loves you through and through, give you the strength and faith to be open to him, and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

A Matter of Life and Death

An Opening Drama

Presenter: Good Evening. And welcome to the Dead Show! Everyone we talk about here tonight is dead. There's no other way to put it: all these people are cold stone, worm wriggled, past their sell by date, gone, dead and buried. They're not with us anymore. They've kicked the bucket, fallen off the shelf.

Dave Hang on a minute! That's not right at all!

Presenter: Of course it's right! We're to celebrate all the saints. And all the saints are dead!

Dave: Oh dear! You've been visiting churches again haven't you! The saints are dead to this life but there's more to life than that. The saints are alive in Christ. And all our friends and families who have died: well we believe that we are made to live with Christ forever.

Presenter: So, it's not the Dead Show after all, then?

Dave: No.

Presenter: Oh. So, it's the ...what? The...life show?

Dave: Yes, the life show

Presenter OK then, hit it! (*Lights come on*) Good Evening and welcome to the Life Show!!!

Hymn – *something joyful and vibrant*

Opening Prayer

Father,

As we celebrate the feast of All Saints

Help us see how the life of the Holy Spirit

Has filled and inspired their lives.

Give us the strength to follow them

And to see how we can serve Christ.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

You may want to have more than one reading, with sung Psalms or acclamations. The choice will depend upon the Ritual Act that happens later in the liturgy.

Homily

Ritual Act

Use one of the following Ritual Acts to determine the content of the homily. Play some reflective music whilst this is happening.

Give the young people a pen and a card with the words, 'Death is...' on one side and 'Life is...' on the other side. Ask them to complete the sentence in light of what they have just heard in the homily. The homily should talk about what it really means to live. For example, Jesus said, 'I have come that you may have life to the full.'

Have various symbols of life and death. For example, flower, plant, stone, rubble, dust, evergreen leaf, dead leaf, flower or plant, photographs and newspaper clippings. Invite the young people to light a candle and place it at one of the symbols. In the homily you could talk about signs of death and resurrection in the world. Where is God when bad things happen, etc.

Have various Symbols of the Saints, as talked about in

the homily, and invite the young people to place a candle at the symbol of a saint that has inspired them.

Have a bowl of water, symbolising baptism. The young people are invited to come to the water and dip their fingers in, making a sign of the cross on their forehead. The homily should talk about Baptism, and how, in baptism, we die and rise with Christ.

Prayer

Have an appropriate prayer that relates to the Ritual Act chosen

Blessing

The Lord be with you

And also with you

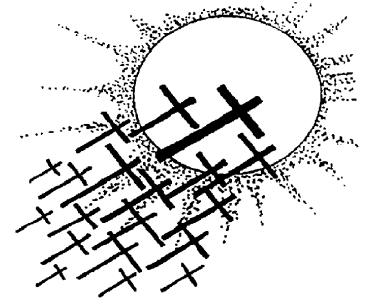
Add a sentence that relates to the ritual act, for example, if it is baptism: 'By faith you rose with Christ in Baptism. May your lives be holy so that you will be united with him for ever, and...'

The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Hallelujah! It's Halloween!



Section Four

This Section contains various useful bits and pieces, including miscellaneous sources and ideas for prayers, hymns, film and TV references, and so on.

Prayers

The Iona Community and lots of other Christian Celtic literature such as the material from David Adams, have loads of prayer resources soaked in sainthood.

Illustrations and quotes:

"Every Saint has a past and every sinner a future":
Oscar Wilde, but also quoted by Basil Hume in one of his books!

"A saint is someone the light shines through" - a Sunday School child when asked what a saint is! He was referring to stained glass windows but a saint is someone the light shines through, of course: the light of Jesus.

'Saints are people in whom the gospel has come to life.'
Frances de Sales

Books

If you visit the children's section of any bookshop you will find a whole array of fiction based around witches, magic, wiccans, etc. It's worth dipping into them to see what young people are reading and where they may get their ideas and influences. If you want novels that deal with these themes, but written by a Christian, try **G.P Taylor's** novels. **Philip Pullman** deals with magic and mystery but from an anti-Christian view point. Then, of course, there are the Harry Potter books by **J.K Rowling**. In a sense we have had these kinds of books for years – for those who remember Enid Blyton's chil-

dren's books such as 'The Magic Faraway Tree,' 'The Magic Wishing Chair,' etc! Then there are other books and resources that can be found in the alternative section of bookshops, dealing with tarot, horoscopes, witchcraft and spells, some of which are actually targeted towards children and young people. There is certainly a growth in the interest of Wicca and other Neo pagan practices, particularly amongst the young. So have a wander round your local bookstore. It may also be a useful exercise to find out what books the young people in your group are reading.

Hymns

Obviously any hymns in the Saint's sections of your Hymn Book are appropriate, but also look for hymns that deal with discipleship, holiness, life, death, Resurrection, hope, etc.

Films and TV

In one sense, we shouldn't be surprised or alarmed by the modern day films and TV programmes featuring ghosts, witches and the supernatural. Anyone who was brought up on the likes of Bewitched, and The Ghost and Mrs Muir will know what I mean! However, it's good to be aware of what's around and what the young people enjoy watching. Some contemporary films and TV programmes that have been around are Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Sabrina the Teenage Witch, Harry Potter, etc. Sabrina is a straightforward comedy for children and young people. Buffy, and its spin off, Angel, are slightly darker. Check out www.bbc.co.uk/cult/buffy. There is also an array of ghost buster reality TV programmes on various Satellite Channels. They are worth looking at to gain an insight into popular thought! Find out from the young people what films they like. You

may or may not be surprised that many younger teenagers have watched films with an 18 Certificate.

Web Sites

There are lots of useful websites available with information on the Saints. Here are a few, but try typing in Saints to a search engine to find more recent and up to date sites too. A few useful ones are: **www.catholicforum.com/saints/indexsnt.htm**. This is good website containing lists of patron saints, images, biographies, dates, and useful indexes. **www.catholic.org/saints** again contains calendars, lists, biographies, fun facts, etc. **www.americancatholic.org/Features/SaintofDay** gives the usual lists and details of saints. They also have a feature on Halloween, exploring its Christian roots and providing suggested activities. The address is: **www.americancatholic.org/Features/Halloween**. Another site giving brief details about individual saints, arranged alphabetically is **www.carr.org/~meripper/saints**

It's also worth typing **Halloween** into an Internet Search Engine and seeing what comes up. Lots of the web sites are American or from the perspective of paganism, or are commercial, selling items and ideas for Halloween celebrations. This is a useful exercise because it gives a greater insight into different people's perspective of Halloween, even if we don't agree with them ourselves. They also give ideas that you can use to adapt and reinterpret with Christian meaning, as well as some kind of historical background to the various practices that are still around today.

Typing in **Halloween Christian** will narrow your search and make it easier to find Christian Resources, of which there are quite a few! Have a look!