

<sup>1</sup>LEADER'S NOTES INTRODUCTION TO OBEDIENCE UNIT The fourth lesson in Unit 10 deals with King Saul's disobedience to God and his involvement in witchcraft. Since it falls in October, it provides an ideal opportunity to educate students and parents about the Satanic origins of Halloween and why Christians should not be involved in this holiday because of its connection with the occult and its practices. Allowing children to participate in the celebration of Halloween may appear to be quite harmless on the surface, but the spiritual implications are far from Christian. In today's world, fortune-telling, ouija boards, ESP, telepathy, horoscopes, voodoo, clairvoyance, yoga, hypnosis, magic, transcendental meditation, Eastern religions, reincarnation, metaphysics and many other practices are expressly forbidden in Scripture. They are related to the occult and Satanic forces. Therefore believers should have nothing to do with them. Note the following Scriptures: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." (Ex. 22:18) "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them; I am the Lord your God." (Lev. 19:31) "So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it." (1 Chron. 10:13) "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch. Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer (one who tries to communicate with the dead). For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord; and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee." (Deut. 18:10-12, 21:8; Lev. 20:27, 20:6) The Bible very clearly instructs Christians to have nothing to do with the practices of darkness. Halloween is a rite with pagan, demonic roots. The Celtic people who lived over 2,000 years ago, feared the evening of October 31st more than any other day of the year. It was the eve of the Lord of the Dead. To celebrate, the people built bonfires, wore masks and costumes in order to prepare for the arrival of spirits. Fire rituals and divination were part of their celebration. Pagan priests even offered human and animal sacrifices. The following symbols and customs all have Satanic origins: JACK-O'-LANTERN An ancient symbol of a damned soul. "Jack-o'-Lanterns were named for a man called Jack, who could not enter Heaven or Hell. As a result, he was doomed to wander in darkness with his lantern until Judgment Day." CAT AND WITCH Both symbols obviously relate to witchcraft. Druids believed the black cats were reincarnated human beings. GHOST AND SKELETON These relate to the belief that spirits of the dead were roaming throughout the land. They induce fear in children. SKULL AND MASK The Druids wore masks, skulls and costumes, even offered human sacrifices on October 31st, to ward off evil spirits. TRICK OR TREAT The Druids went from house to house asking for a contribution to their demonic worship celebration. If a person didn't give, their trick was to kill him. The people feared the phrase "trick or Treat." Therefore, it is inappropriate for Christians to celebrate Satan's high holy day or to celebrate with those who practice witchcraft and use occult symbols such as witches, black cats, ghosts, Jack-o'-Lanterns, etc. This time can be used to make children aware that Halloween is an alliance with the powers of darkness and that it is now our privilege to live as children of light. As believers, we can take this opportunity to provide a creative alternative to this celebration of darkness. In ancient Israel, the majority of Jewish festivals occurred at the same time as pagan festivals. God did not simply tell his people not to engage in pagan festivals, He provided an alternative. During every major pagan festival, the Hebrew people would take part in a God-given alternative, a festival celebrating the same general subject but with a completely different focus. One successful alternative used by a number of churches is a "Faith Festival" in which children dress as their favorite Bible character and gather for a special children's service with puppets, a Christian film, or something special. This offers an ideal opportunity to explain the spiritual significance of Halloween and to encourage the children to remember Hebrews chapter 11, which features great men and women of faith who have gone before us. The "Faith Festival" can be a time to thank God for His many blessings. As a teacher of young children, you have a responsibility to follow the biblical admonition to protect and train them with Scriptural principles. Children need to be taught that there is no such thing as a "cute" witch or a "friendly ghost". Scripture is very clear that Christians are not to celebrate pagan rituals. The Halloween season is a golden opportunity to make this clear to the children. You may want to prepare a flyer for the parents to let them know some of the history of Halloween. It would also be nice if you could offer an alternative celebration for the children at Halloween. WHAT IS HALLOWEEN? Millions of Christians will allow - even encourage - their children to participate in Halloween on October 31. Some churches will fully sanction the event with parties held on their premises. Decorations will feature witches, brooms, cats, Jack-o'-Lanterns, and bobbing apples. What's the harm? Where did this holiday come from? Why is the holiday celebrated? History provides the answer. HISTORY OF HALLOWEEN The American celebration rests upon Scottish and Irish folk customs which can be traced, in a direct line, from pre-Christian time. Although Halloween has become a night of celebration to many, its beginnings were otherwise. The earliest Halloween celebrations were held by the Druids in honor of Saman, lord of the dead, whose festival fell on November 1. It was the Druid's belief that on the eve of this festival, Saman called together the wicked souls that within the past 12 months had been condemned to inhabit the bodies of animals. They were released in the form of ghosts, spirits, witches or elves. The Druids, an order of priests in ancient Gaul and Britain, also believed that the cat was sacred because cats once had been human beings but were changed as a punishment for evil deeds. From these Druidic beliefs come the present-day use of witches, ghosts, and cats in Halloween activities. TRICK OR TREAT The Pagans believed that on one night of the year, souls of the dead returned to their original homes. These wandering spirits were in the habit of

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haunting the living. To exorcise these ghosts (that is, to free yourself from an evil spirit) you would have to set out food, (give the demons a treat) and provide shelter for them by the night. If you didn't, they would "trick" you by casting a spell on you or hurting you. It was the Celts who chose the date of October 31 as their New Year's Eve and who originally intended it as a celebration of everything wicked, evil and/or dead. Also during their celebration they would gather around the campfire, and offer their animals, their crops, and sometimes themselves as a sacrifice. The celebration remained much the same after the Romans conquered the Celts around 43 A.D. The Romans, however, added a ceremony honoring their goddess of fruit and trees, thus the association with apples, and the custom of bobbing for them. The apparently harmless lighted pumpkin face of "Jack-o-Lantern" is an ancient symbol of a damned soul. They were named for a man named Jack who could not enter Hell or Heaven. As a result, he was doomed to wander in darkness with his lantern until Judgement Day. Fearful of spooks, folks began to hollow out turnips and pumpkins and to place lighted candles inside to scare away evil spirits from the house. No real Christian would knowingly glorify Satan, but the devil has used Halloween as a subtle attempt to plant seeds in our children's hearts. How kids must get confused when they hear Sunday School teachers warn of the devil, but are encouraged to dress up as demons, witches and ghosts. Credits: "Halloween Through 20 Centuries", Ralph Linton Encyclopedia Britannica World Book Encyclopedia The Book of Festive Holidays Newsweek (Feb., 1974)