

I am glad to bring this Community Comment to you on a day that is rapidly rising as one of the biggest holidays of the year. Apparently, people are spending almost as much on spider webs and skeletons, ~~scarecrows and costumes~~ as they do on Christmas decorations and gifts. Is this a good thing?

Is Halloween harmful? Or, is it good clean fun? ~~Is it a dark and sinister day? Or just a chance for kids to don a costume and collect candy?~~

Well, here's my thoughts and I hope it will stimulate yours.

I have warm childhood memories of the black and orange colors, jack 'o lanterns, abundance of candy, and the opportunity to dress up as whatever I wanted, ~~on Halloween~~. Never did I give safety a thought; much less did my parents worry about harm on Halloween back in the 1960's. Nobody did; that was before the ^{rumors} about razor blades in apples... which I'm told, were mostly rumors. Halloween served, still does, as the real end of summer and beginning of fall—~~it's~~ it's a kind of marker for the beginning of the holiday season. Bobbin for apples, trick or treating, kids dressed like super heroes, ~~witches, ghosts and goblins~~. It all seemed kind of innocent back then. Well, more or less; I do remember pulling a few mischievous 'tricks'.

A bit of Halloween history; many trace Halloween to Pagan origins. ^{the} Celtic festival of Samhain pronounced Sow-an... meant "summers end." Basically ^{it was} giving thanks for the summer and crop and bracing for the winter.... Was it pre Christian? We don't know, because the only written records of this ancient holiday were ^{from} written by the Monks—who were obviously Christian.

Our English term, Halloween comes from the ^{is a contraction} English, 'All Hallows Even,' which is the eve of All Saints Day, ^{always} always November 1st. All Saints Day is a hallowed or holy day, because it celebrates those who lived the Christian life and are now dead in Christ awaiting resurrection ^{words}

So, should we not be dressing up like Martin Luther, ~~St.~~ St. Francis of Assisi? Or Sister Clare? ~~Why~~ Why are there so many dark and sinister characters roaming about on the Eve of All Saints Day? Halloween mayhem apparently rose with the idea that the goblins and evil spirits knew the next day would be one of Christian triumph, therefore, the forces of evil are fleeing before the forces of good. In the mean time, ghosts and goblins are out raising mayhem—as much as they can before it all ends--kind of like Count Dracula trying to find another victim before sunrise.

I bring this bit of history, because it seems to me that ^{the} dark side of Halloween is getting more press than it deserves; images of death and mayhem are on the increase. Things that scare or terrify us—even as adults-- hold a strange ^{attract} attraction; but I for one, do not think kids, especially young children, should be exposed to some of the sinister forces in this world—even images of those forces can ^{have a} ~~have a~~ ^{harm a tender young soul.} damaging effect. As adults we need to face the fact of our mortality; ~~we~~ children, ~~we~~ are not equipped to deal with such colossal themes.

On the whole, I think Halloween can be a healthy holiday if it's celebrated with care and parental guidance. ^{Costumes,} Costumes, decorations and festivities—~~especially around children~~, should reflect life and light rather than cruelty and death.

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment.