

Teacher's Trick or Treat



Halloween was fast approaching and an energetic school teacher decided it was time she find some decorations for her classroom. One Saturday, she went far into the countryside to old man Cheevers' farm in search of the perfect pumpkin to make into a jack-o'-lantern. She looked and she looked. Some pumpkins were too short and some were too tall. Just as the sun had gone down and the full moon came up, she found the perfect pumpkin. It stood a foot high and was almost perfectly round. She cut its stem, paid Mr. Cheevers and returned home with it.

That night she carved a jack-o'-lantern. She gave him a big smile and triangles for eyes. No sooner had she put the finishing touches on her prize pumpkin when it began to speak!

"Hello there," he said.

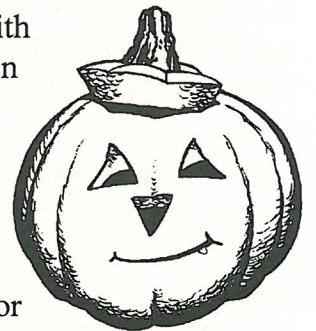
The teacher jumped back from the kitchen table in amazement.

"Can you get this seed off my lip," he said as he moved his mouth back and forth.

The teacher hesitatingly reached out with her finger and quickly brushed the pumpkin seed from his orange bottom lip.

"How is it you can speak?" she asked.

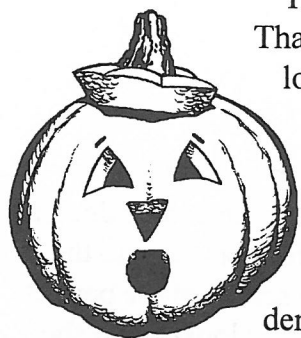
"Oh, that. Well, *you* gave me the mouth. What'd you expect? You don't go around giving things mouths unless you want them to speak. What'd you do that for



anyway?"

"I'm preparing to celebrate Halloween in my classroom," she explained.

"Halloween?! Halloween?!" he shuddered. "You mean you weren't preparing me to be a delicious, Thanksgiving pie?"



"I can't believe I didn't even make it to Thanksgiving!" he muttered to himself as he looked around the kitchen. "This is terrible news," he said to the teacher.

"What's so terrible about Halloween?" asked the teacher. "It's lots of fun. My students will be dressed up as ghosts and witches and skeletons and demons. We'll read scary stories and eat lots of candy."

"That's the problem!" said the pumpkin.

"Candy?"

"Not candy. Ghosts and witches and skeletons and demons and scary stories!" he huffed.

"But we've always done that in class," she said.

"Well, if you haven't noticed, times have changed," retorted the pumpkin. "Did you know that there are more reports of occult-related crime now than ever before?¹ And that Halloween has become a very dangerous night?"

"I didn't realize that," said the teacher.

"It's true. Call your local police department. Many of 'em now have a detective that specializes in occult-related crime. It's no laughing matter with a lot of people. The National Association of Chiefs of Police's manual on occult crime states: 'If you think there is a problem with Self-styled Satanists in your community - and there almost certainly is, the situation is epidemic - start with the schools.'² You may not have thought about it but, in a way, you may be encouraging your students to dabble in the occult. *The Dictionary of Mysticism and The Occult* describes Halloween as a pagan festival in which the souls of the deceased revisit their former homes. The church of Wicca is a recognized

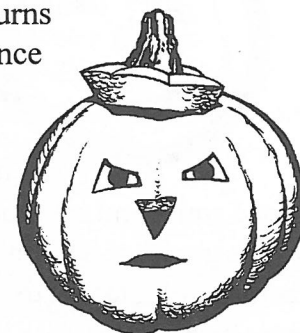
church in America where witches and warlocks practice their wicked arts."

"I certainly wouldn't want to promote that," said the teacher.

"Think of all the holidays Americans celebrate throughout the year," the pumpkin continued. "They all have positive messages. They celebrate positive religious ideas or family togetherness or patriotism or they commemorate great Americans. But what does Halloween celebrate? Darkness and fear."

"Okay, I agree. Halloween has no real redeeming value. At its core it's a celebration of evil. But we're just having fun."

"That's the problem," said the pumpkin. "When you turn evil into a game it trivializes it and numbs children to its darkness. Evil becomes an amusement. Television and movies do enough of that without you needing to add more. Did you know, for instance, that by the time a young person turns eighteen he has seen 200,000 acts of violence and 25,000 murders on TV alone? And, that 20 percent of teachers polled said they have been threatened with violence by their students?"³



"I don't want to promote the dark side of life but I can't take away Halloween. It's being advertised all around us. The children will be expecting something," the teacher explained as she leaned against the kitchen counter.

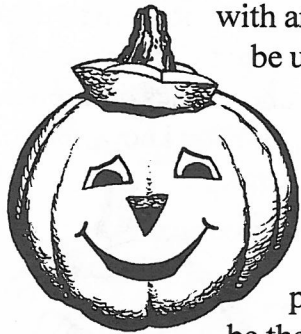
"And you can give them something," replied the pumpkin. "Give them a fall harvest festival. Make it educational. Teach them about the change of season. Encourage them to dress up as a historical figure instead of a monster. Give out candy. Play games. But just leave out the witches, ghosts, demons, and scary stories."

"That's a great idea! I can make it an educational experience." The teacher looked out the window as she began to brainstorm. "I could make it a history lesson. The kids can pick a historical character, study about him or her, design a costume worn by that person, and then, wear it at a masquerade party."

"Now you've got the idea," the pumpkin said with a smile. "Evil is a tricky thing. It tries to masquerade as entertainment and lure kids into its clutches. But you don't have to be tricked into thinking that Halloween needs to be about glorifying evil. You can make Halloween a treat by getting the kids to focus on a positive theme. Trick or treat, it's your choice, but I hope you choose to make it a treat for the kids."

"I will," said the teacher as she patted the pumpkin on the top of his head. "But, what do I do with you?"

"Oh, never mind me," he looked down at the floor with an embarrassed grin. "I always wanted to be used for a pie anyway."



"Then, you'll be one of my treats for the children. I'll bake you into a delicious pumpkin pie that everyone can enjoy."

"Oh, would you really?" asked the pumpkin with excitement. "That would be the best treat of all!" With that he smiled a broad smile and sat motionless, never to speak again. And that year a group of delighted students, all dressed up as someone from history, tasted the best pumpkin pie they would ever taste in their lives.

The End

Lesson Plan Ideas

1. For an Earth sciences lesson, have students study about the change of seasons from summer to autumn to winter. Examine changes in weather, plants, and animals. You can include lessons on farming as well.
2. For a history lesson, have students choose a famous historical figure to research (steering clear of the diabolical ones). They can write a report on the character and/or give a speech about him or her. Their projects can culminate in a masquerade party in which they dress like the character they studied.
3. As an art lesson, have students create a fall harvest festival of their own. They can design advertising posters to hang in the classroom. Divide the class into groups and have each group design and build a festival game booth. The project culminates in "festival day" for your class. Set up the booths around the room and let the class have fun playing the games.
4. As a current events lesson (for older students), have students research the problem of violence in society, especially during Halloween. Have them write reports on the negative aspects of Halloween and what society can do to change Halloween into a positive and healthy event.
5. As a lesson on nutrition, have the students study the ingredients of candy and how it is manufactured. Examine the effects of candy on our health.

1. "Cult Crimes," by Peter Carroll, *San Francisco Magazine*, August 1987, p. 20

2. Dubois, William Edward Lee, *Occult Crime Control: Law Enforcement and Prevention*, from the chapter titled, "Investigation and Surveillance" excerpted in Harper's Magazine, December 1990, p. 20, 22. The manual is the textbook for the National Association of Chiefs of Police home-study program for law-enforcement officials on satanic cult and ritualistic crime investigation.

3. From the transcript of "Deadly Lessons," ABC News' *Primetime Live*, November 19, 1992.

Watching For Students Dabbling In The Occult

These suggestions come from *Occult Crime Control: The Law Enforcement Manual of Investigation, Analysis, and Prevention*, by William Edward Lee Dubois. This is used by the National Association of Chiefs of Police as a home-study program for law-enforcement officials on satanic cult and ritualistic crime investigation.

- Common characteristics of "Self-styled Satanists:" unpopular male high school students whose "concepts of how to worship come from a variety of sources including books, videos, heavy-metal music, and general assumptions about satanic worship."
- The policy manual suggests that you look for satanic symbols on student clothing, as graffiti, as doodles, as art-class projects.
- "Don't limit yourself to the high schools. More and more, middle schoolers are becoming involved in Self-styled Satanism."
- "Check with school and public librarians to see which books from call number 133 (occult subjects) are missing or overdue."
- "Early signs of future serious criminal activity can best be classified as terrorist activity in the form of threats and harassment - usually taking the form of notes - first aimed at fellow students, then at unpopular teachers."
- "Follow up quickly and take action forcefully. What is normally considered harmless juvenile activity is not harmless when Self-styled Satanism is involved. Left unchecked, the level of Self-styled Satanic criminal activity increases almost exponentially."

From "Cult Crimes: A City Policewoman Probes The Underworld of Satanic Worship," by Peter Carroll, *San Francisco Magazine*, August 1987. Based on an interview with Officer Sandra Daly Gallant, a nationally-recognized expert on occult crime.

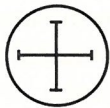
- Sales of *The Satanic Bible* "have tripled in the past two years. It was found in the possession of five Texas teenagers accused of torturing a man to death in a cemetery."
- Teenage cultists include those who "indulge in fantasy role-playing, often coupled with heavy metal music, and then permit such personal obsessions to dominate their lives and alter their behavior. Teenage satanism masks existing personality problems or legitimates antisocial activity. Teenagers may go out and vandalize a cemetery, spray paint pentagrams, or perform exotic rituals. Sometimes they kill themselves or others, or vanish mysteriously."
- "Lyrics and album covers of so-called 'Black Rock' groups can influence teenagers to engage in satanic behavior."
- "'We're not talking about streetwise dummies,' " [Officer Gallant] exclaims, "'We are talking about really intelligent kids who are bored with what we have to offer them.' "
- "Gallant cites the case of a seventeen-year-old Stanford-bound honors student who became preoccupied with occult philosophy. An older man introduced him to various rituals, and the youth ended up at the bottom of a cliff near Land's End. Suicide, homicide, accident? The coroner couldn't decide."

Satanic or Occult Symbols

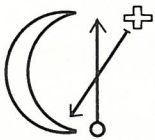
Below are listed various symbols typically associated with satanism or the occult. Watch to see if your students have drawn these symbols on their notebooks, papers, or clothes. It may be that they are only copying the example set by some Heavy Metal rock bands. However, it also may be the sign of deeper problems.



Anarchy. Represents the abolition of all law and denial of authority.



Black Mass. These are signs used by those involved in black masses.



Blood Ritual. A symbol for animal and human sacrifice.



Cross of Confusion. This is an ancient Roman symbol questioning the existence or validity of Christianity.



Diana and Lucifer. Represents Diana, the moon goddess and Lucifer, the morning star. Widely used in witchcraft and satanism. When the moon faces the opposite direction it is primarily a satanic symbol.



Inverted Pentagram. Also called a baphomet. It is a satanic symbol and represents a goat's head. When right-side up, it represents magic.