Trick or treat? Teaching about All Saints' and All Souls' Days

Halloween traditions often bring about much debate among Catholics.

Are we glorifying evil and dead things? Isn't it just too scary? Is it a pagan holiday?

The simple answer to some of these things is…well, sort of, yeah. But wait…there is (as Paul Harvey would say) the rest of the story.

Halloween can be tons of fun for our children as long as we don't lose our heads like Ichabod Crane.

Inform and teach

Remind your children that the roots of Halloween are to pray for the dead on the Feast of All Souls' Day. Explain to them that we all need the prayers and support of the faithful and there may be a soul that has no one to pray for them.

Encourage them to attend Mass (if at all possible) on the Feasts of All Souls and All Saints. Note that, most years, All Saints' Day is a holy day of obligation.

Inspire

Explain the difference between magic, which is usually encouraged to obtain something an individual wants (innately wrong as it supersedes God's will), and miracles, which are asked for by man, but granted only by God as His will determines.

Point out the dangers of making evil look inviting. Scary

costumes, horror movies, messing with demonic things not only invite wrong thinking, but they can cause young people inner stress, or worse, desensitize them to evil in the world. As one television commentator once observed, “How can you watch and enjoy a sadistic movie for two hours and expect to come out of it without any effect on your personality?” We do not want to encourage anything that is not from God to enter our lives. We must be vigilant in protecting ourselves and our students from negative or even evil influences.

Celebrate!

Have a Saint Costume Party in place of a Halloween party. Everyone comes dressed as their favorite saint.

Educate ourselves and our children on the traditions and truths of Halloween. This infographic from ChurchPOP is wonderful!

Enjoy. A little cider, donuts, and a party during Faith Formation Classes always brings smiles and cheer. God bless.