



# REACHING

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY INTERNATIONAL, INCORPORATED

## Reformation Day at Your Church

Most Bible believing churches will face a dilemma this October 31st on whether or not they should bow to the secular influence of the day and have some sort of Halloween Party, ignore the day all together, try to make up something to replace it (Fall Harvest Festival) or celebrate our Reformation roots by having a Reformation Party.



I remember an analogy given to me a few years ago of the uneasiness many Christians feel for this time of year. Halloween was likened to walking past a cemetery on a windy, partially cloudy night, with a quarter moon peering through the overhanging, leafless trees. Hurrying past the cemetery you hear the ghoulish sounds of frivolity and celebration in the air as a group of merrymakers are vaguely seen reveling in the darkness, thoroughly enjoying themselves amidst the gravestones and bidding you to join them. You try to ignore it but have a very unsettling sense that something is very wrong as you hurry home trying to place as much distance between you and this event as possible. If we take a brief look at the origins of Halloween it's no wonder we get the "heeby-geebies" as we study this inspired celebration of darkness. Its beginnings were actually in Ireland and Scotland with the Celtic and Druid s. Their new year was November first. It was believed that the night before this day the spirit world was most active. "Samhain" was the "god of the dead" and he was worshipped on this day. Their custom was for their Sun god "Chron" to "die" on that day and go to the "Kingdom of the Dead". Samhain could assist in the return of Chron if innocent blood was sacrificed on that day.

All of the symbols of Halloween have origins from the "jack-o-lantern" to "trick or treating". If you want a detailed summary of the dark side of each of these Halloween symbols they are listed in appendix B of CMI's\_"Heroes of the Reformation".



Thankfully, God has given us "Reformation Day" to observe on October 31st. It was the celebration of "All Saints Day" that motivated Martin Luther to nail his 95 theses on the Wittenburg Cathedral Door in 1517 thus truly starting the Reformation. Luther's ideas sparked a roaring fire of protest against the unbiblical practices of the church of that day and are a part of our heritage of Bible-believing Protestants. "Scripture Alone," "Justification by Faith Alone," "Jesus Alone," "By Grace Alone" and "To God Alone be the glory" were all Reformation themes that are key to our beliefs today.

I have been in several churches that have thoroughly redeemed this day by celebrating our Reformation heritage. This can be fun and educational. (Who says that we need to hide in a corner on October 31st with a long face and hope that no one knocks on our door).

We have listed a whole variety of activities that you could do at your church to make this October 31st a fun and educational event. For instance have everyone dress as Biblical characters or 16th century Reformers and have them "act out" who they are for people to guess.

CMI's "Heroes of the Reformation" has two lessons on the primary characters of the Reformation. The lessons could be taught the two Sundays before October 31st to "prepare" the children for the big celebration, or portions of the lessons on the lives of Luther, Tyndale, Zwingli, Calvin and Knox could be acted out during the Reformation Day party. Relay races with "Reformation" themes; pinning the 95 theses on the Wittenburg Door and a host of other activities can be found in the "Heroes of the Reformation" booklet. Order one today for \$17.50.

Obviously, this is only the beginning of redeeming and transforming this devilish day into a true Reformation celebration. Have fun and learn about your Reformed roots by giving the devil his due this October 31st. If you come up with other ideas share them with other like-minded churches and with us at Children's Ministry International.

Brad Winsted, Director

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