

# **Halloween – A Holiday for Costumes and Candy**

Halloween is on October 31. It is also called All Hallows' Eve or All Saints' Eve. This is because, according to some, the holiday has its roots in a Christian holiday that remembers the dead. Others say the holiday has its roots in the ancient harvest season traditions of Ireland. In the U.S. though, the focus is less on memories of the dearly departed or agriculture. It is about kids dressing up in scary costumes and going door-to-door asking for candy. This is called trick-or-treating.

When children knock on the door of a house or ring the doorbell, they usually say "Trick or Treat". The "trick" part is a fake threat signaling that the kids will commit a prank if they aren't given something delicious. Homeowners then give the children candy, raisins, or some other food treat. Many homeowners decorate their houses to prepare for the holiday and let kids know that they are participating and can ring the bell for candy. Traditional decorations often include jack-o'-lanterns, which are pumpkins with faces carved into them and candles inside. Jack-o' lanterns were thought to scare away evil spirits when Halloween was first celebrated among the ancient Christians. Also turnips, not pumpkins, were originally used. People often decorate using the colors black and orange.

Halloween is not just for kids; adults get in on the fun by attending costume parties. There are often contests for who has the best costume. There are also games bobbing for apples, where people have to get an apple using only their teeth from a large bucket of water. Other people celebrate by scaring themselves by going to haunted houses, homes where people dressed up as ghosts, zombies, and werewolves and jump out to frighten guests. People also tell scary stories or watch horror movies.