



History of Halloween

Halloween falls on October 31st each year in North America and other parts of the world. What do you know about Halloween? Do you celebrate it in your country? Here is a little history about it.

Vocabulary

to evolve (v)- to change little by little

spirit (n)- ghost, some people believe the spirit and body separate when a person dies

holy (adj)- sacred, very good, related to religion. *Hallow* comes from the word *holy*.

saint (n)- an honored, holy person

evil (adj)- very, very bad

lantern (n)- lamp or enclosed light that can be carried around

turnip (n)- a purple and white vegetable that grows in the ground

Like many other holidays, Halloween has evolved and changed throughout history. Over 2,000 years ago people called the Celts lived in what is now Ireland, the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales), and parts of Northern France. November 1st was their New Year's Day. They believed that the night before the New Year (October 31st) was a time when the living and the dead came together.

More than a thousand years ago the Christian church named November 1st *All Saints Day* (also called *All Hallows*). This was a special holy day to honour the saints and other people who died for their religion. The night before *All Hallows* was called *All Hallows Eve*. Later, "Hallows Eve" was joined together to create the name "Halloween".

Like the Celts, the Europeans of that time also believed that the spirits of the dead would visit the earth on Halloween. They worried that evil spirits would cause problems or hurt them, so on that night people wore costumes that looked like ghosts or other evil creatures. They thought if they dressed like that, the spirits would think they were also dead and not harm them.

The tradition of Halloween was carried to North America by the immigrating Europeans. Some of the traditions changed a little, though. For example, on Halloween in Europe, some people would carry lanterns made from turnips. In North America, pumpkins were more common, so people began putting