

# Celebrating halloween

[Sociology](#)



The Church, normally respected by the Americans, considers that when imitating evil spirits, people take over the demonic disposition and destroy the appearance that was given to them by God. Such behavior contradicts Christian foundations; however, the Americans never cease being true believers.

Also, there are usually acts of “ petty vandalism” which the Church also does not approve of – children break glasses, burn trees, etc. Though in the 1920s the scouts called to introduce the practice of “ trick or treat” instead, sometimes people still like to commit something they would not usually do in their normal life. Respectable businessmen are likely to turn over garbage bins, stewardesses (mainly on domestic flights) dress up as witches or fairies, teachers have no less fun than their students. It is really an unusual tradition – to wear a mask and play a role quite opposite to what one is in society. Both children and grown-ups enjoy themselves and have fun meeting November in the costumes of witches and vampires, throwing eggs, taking part in the “ best costume” competitions, and eating pumpkin dishes. It reveals the Americans being in need of throwing away from time to time their “ normal” social roles and taking up something quite uncommon.

Americans particularly care about their children and are usually good parents. The paradox is, though some scientists think it can traumatize the child’s mind, demoralize the children and even demonize them, American people treat Halloween as a means to please their kids.

Also, more and more Americans like to perform wedding ceremonies on this day, especially with some characteristic “ Halloween trick effects” (for example, the bride and bridegroom are married by Dracula from out of his coffin). It is rather unusual for people who, first, truly believe in God, and

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second, are rather concerned about the seriousness of ceremonies, especially weddings. As a rule, people in the USA prefer to get married in a church, but in this case, no church can be employed, as people cannot have a priest dressed up like a vampire or a wizard. Again, it can reveal the people's need to sometimes step aside from traditions.

2. Write several paragraphs introducing the question that is found in the original essay. Include a brief description of why you are interested in this question, who else is probably interested in it, and what sorts of differing answers/opinions have been proposed.

One of the paradoxes of American society is that it is considered the society of believers who at the same time enjoy the feast officially blamed by the Church. In the essay, I was investigating how this paradox, as well all these steps of Halloween celebration, reveal the peculiarities of the American culture. On the one hand, Americans are very pious, and they are the nation of believers, but on the other hand Halloween, notwithstanding the fact that the official Church condemns it, is really widely spread in the society.

However, it would be incorrect to state that the Americans are the only nation incorporating both pagan and Christian traditions into their culture. But the phenomenon of Halloween and certainly reveals some peculiarities of the American mind and culture on the whole.

There is no other feast that would be as dear to each American's heart as Halloween is. To my mind, it is based upon the national tendency to enjoy trick effects and shows. It should also be mentioned that celebrating Halloween is a part of American death-denying culture pointed out by Mitford, as it teaches – as practically all pagan religions and feasts do – that people should not be afraid of death, and that humorous attitude to it is

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possible. Many elements of Halloween show that the Americans are in need to change their social roles from time to time, they are tired of posing as respectable citizens and like to be - at least once in a year - somebody else.

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### Lesson 1

The question that I want to raise is the paradox of the American society - which on the one hand is the community of exemplary believers and on the other hand, we enjoy the Halloween feast that is officially blamed by the Church. Halloween originated among the ancient Celts who had their special feast in honor of Samhain (which was not the name for the Celtic "Death God" as some people erroneously state), that means it was brought to America from Europe, but as it was later almost fully prohibited in England, France, etc., Americans became the ones who truly breathed new life into it. The Church, normally respected by the Americans, considers that when imitating evil spirits, people take over the demonic disposition and destroy the appearance that was given to them by God. Such behavior contradicts Christian foundations; however, the Americans never cease being true believers.

Also, there are usually acts of "petty vandalism" which the Church also does not approve of - children break glasses, burn trees, etc. Though in the 1920s the scouts called to introduce the practice of "trick or treat" instead, sometimes people still like to commit something they would not usually do in their normal life. Respectable businessmen are likely to turn over garbage bins, stewardesses (mainly on domestic flights) dress up as witches or fairies, teachers have no less fun than their students. It is really an unusual tradition - to wear a mask and play a role quite opposite to what one is in

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society. Both children and grown-ups enjoy themselves and have fun meeting November in the costumes of witches and vampires, throwing eggs, taking part in the “ best costume” competitions, and eating pumpkin dishes. It reveals the Americans being in need of throwing away from time to time their “ normal” social roles and taking up something quite uncommon.

It would be incorrect to state that the Americans are the only nation incorporating both pagan and Christian traditions into their culture. However, in order to answer this question, it is important to have a look at how the feast of Halloween reflects the peculiarities of the American mind and culture on the whole and at what it reveals about the Americans.

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The Church condemns Halloween and considers it a satanic feast, but millions of people who have fun at Halloween night think that they do not worship evil spirits, but overpower them. If this contradictory question is really answered, it will be possible to show to the world how the American people learned to overcome fear with the help of laughter.