

Halloween

Halloween is a festival that takes place on October 31. In the United States children wear costumes and masks and go trick-or-treating. Many of them carve jack-o'-lanterns out of pumpkins. Fortunetelling and storytelling about ghosts and witches are popular activities.

Halloween developed from new year festivals and festivals of the dead. Christian church established a festival on November 1 called All Saints' Day so that people could continue to celebrate their festivals.

The Mass said on All Saints' Day was called Allhallowmass. The day before All Saints' Day was known as All Hallows' Eve or All Hallow e'en.

The main Halloween activity for children is trick-or-treating. Children dress in costumes and masks and go from door to door saying "trick or treat". The neighbours give children such treats as candy, fruit and pennies so that children do not play tricks on them.

Jack-o'-lanterns are hollowed-out pumpkins with faces carved into one side. Most jack-o'-lanterns contain a candle inside. An Irish legend says that jack-o'-lanterns are named after the man called Jack.

He could not enter heaven because he was a miser, and he could not enter hell because he had played jokes on the devil. As a result, Jack has to walk on the earth with his lantern until Judgment Day.

Fortunetelling is an important part of Halloween. For example, a coin, a ring, and a thimble were baked into a cake. It was believed that the person who found the coin would become wealthy. The one who found the ring would marry soon. And the person who found the thimble would never get married. Today people practice cardreading or palmistry.

People once believed that there were many ghosts and witches on the Earth and that they met on October 31 to worship the devil. Today, people do not believe in ghosts and witches but they like to tell stories about them on Halloween.