

HALLOWEEN

10 TIPS FOR MUSLIM PARENTS



The Prophet ﷺ said: “Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for those under your care. A man is a shepherd, and he is responsible for those under his care. The woman is a shepherd in her husband's household and she is responsible for those under her care.” [Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim]

Consider the following 10 tips when discussing Halloween with your family:

1) **Get the facts.** The more you know about a subject the more secure you will be in your stance regarding it. Remember that your children need to know why you want them to be different from their peers. This is not a trivial matter. If you show them that you respect them and their intellect, they will feel more empowered and confident. Their confidence and understanding of Islamic principles will be very important if they are going to differentiate themselves from their classmates. Here are two resources you can learn more about the history of Halloween: These links will demonstrate the reality of Halloween and its incompatibility for Muslim.

- ◆ **Library of Congress:** <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/halloween.html>
- ◆ **The History Channel:** <http://www.history.com/topics/halloween>

2) **Have a united position:** It is essential that you and your spouse agree on your family's position on Halloween. Discuss your concerns, ideas and your desired approaches with each other. Once you both come to an agreement and understand each other's concerns call a family meeting.

3) **Show compassion:** Introduce the topic by asking your kids questions. Find out what their school or friends are planning for Halloween. Ask them how they feel about it. Make sure you really listen to your children. Do not cut them off while they express their thoughts and feelings. Let them know you understand and care about where they are coming from by doing more than just listening to them, validate their feels to show that you understand. Parents can say things like, “I know it's hard to watch your friends having fun on Halloween and it might make you sad because you feel left out.”

4) **Explain your position:** Present your research about Halloween. Allow your spouse to support you. Explain what your position will mean for your children. Emphasize that this is you and your spouse's position and remind them that you love them. Do not over emphasize fatwas or what people in the community might think. You do not want your children to think that Islam is limiting their lives or that you care more about what people think than about your kids and what they want. Be sure to help them understand the following facts:

1. **Halloween has pagan/polytheistic roots**
2. **It is associated with celebrating superstition, black magic, and devil worship**
3. **Costumes are often inappropriate and immodest**
4. **Trick or treating can be seen as either blackmail or begging and Muslims are not supposed to beg or extort people.**
5. **Muslims are not to copy or imitate non-Muslim whatsoever in their festivals.**

5) **Show more compassion:** Encourage your kids to ask questions and respect them by discussing their concerns. You are looking for changes in how they see Halloween after you have discussed your family's position with them.

6) **Accept reality:** Your kids most likely know other Muslim families who will take a different stance on Halloween (and other holidays) than you want your family to. Remind your children that each family is responsible for their own decisions. Just because another Muslim family is doing something, it does not mean that their decision is right for your family. Remind your children to be confident in their decisions and not to be judgmental of other people.

7) **Teach them to be proud of who they are:** Remind your children that it is OK to be different. Emphasize that this does not mean that they cannot have non-Muslim friends or that they will have to be excluded from all of their school or peer activities. Remind them of all the things that they love about Islam and the Muslim community. Tell that in Islam we accept the best aspects of what is good and safe guard ourselves from things that contradict Islamic principles.

8) **Organize a fun event:** On Oct. 31st put together a family night at the masjid or a even just a small get together with friends. This will help your kids take their minds off Halloween and bond with other like-minded people so they do not feel alone.

9) **Consider their school:** Write a letter to their teacher explaining your stance on Halloween. You may also want to consider picking them up early or even not taking them to school on the day there is a Halloween party. Offer to meet your children's teachers to discuss you and your children's concerns.

10) **Reward your kids:** Both Eids have just passed, however you can still do something special to show them you appreciate how they handled the situation. End the event by getting your family excited about Ramadan, Eid al Fitr, Hajj and Eid al-Adha! Explain the significance of our Islamic celebrations and the meanings and purposes behind them. Seek input from your children about ways to do something special in lieu of celebrating Halloween. Ask for their suggestions by saying things like, "Since you're trying so hard to please Allah, let's try to think of something we can do as a family that would be fun." In this way,

your children will have more ownership over the alternatives and feel empowered to share their perspectives with you.

The most important point of this article is that we have to establish better communication with our loved ones. We have to encourage them to open up to us. To do this we must create an environment where our children will trust us with their mistakes, their curiosity and their problems. They will do this more and more when they are reminded of how much we love them.

“And those who believed and whose descendants followed them in faith – We will join with them their descendants, and We will not deprive them of anything of their deeds. Every person, for what he earned, is retained.” (The Holy Qur'an: 52:21)

Lastly remember that we as Muslims do not follow or imitate the traditions or customs of non-Muslims. And we must maintain our own identity otherwise we will not be raised in the nation of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

The Prophet ﷺ states: “Whoever imitates or resembles a people is one of them.” (Abu Dawood)

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