

Items: Sword, cuddly animals, candle, matches, Bible

Anyone know what yesterday was?

(Halloween)

Does anyone know what Halloween comes from? It means 'All Hallow's Eve.' Around this time of year we remember people who have died. Maybe some of you dressed up as ghosts or zombies?

In the Christian Church we have two really important days at this time of year. We remember All Saints' Day, and All Souls' Day. Remember what I said about 'All Hallow's Eve,' which we now call 'Halloween'? Well, 'Hallow' means 'Holy, special', and on 1 November the Church remembers All Saints' Day.

Saints are people who did special things for people in the name of God. Does anyone here know about St George?

[Get out sword]

St George took his sword and killed a nasty dragon. He's the patron saint of England—this means we think he's someone in Heaven who looks after the country of England. Another saint who has a sword is Saint Michael. Saint Michael is an angel, and he was the one who fought against the devil. So both of them helped out God and people.

Other saints are a bit more peaceful. One is Saint Francis of Assisi, in Italy. He loved animals and he's the patron saint of animals.

[Get out animals]

Another saint who liked animals was St David. St David is the patron saint of Wales. Can anyone remember what it means if someone is a patron saint?

[someone in Heaven who looks after a country]

Other saints are the early friends of Jesus, his disciples, like Matthew, and John, and Peter. We can read about them in the Bible.

[show children's Bible]

So on 1 November we remember the saints who did big things for God. But another important day is November 2. This is called 'All Souls' Day.' The people we remember on All Souls' Day have also died, but maybe they aren't as well known as George, or Michael, David, or Peter, or John. On All Souls' Day we remember people we knew, that we loved, and who have died.

In a lot of churches we have special services in church around this time of year. People who have had someone they love die come to the service. We sing songs and say prayers, and we light a candle to remember someone who has died.

Maybe in the last year someone you love has died. Maybe a grandmother or grandfather, maybe someone else in your family. Maybe a dog or cat, or a hamster. It's important that we can remember them. We know that they're safe in heaven, but we miss them here on earth. So it's important that we remember how much we loved them, and also remember that they still love us.

So I'm going to light this candle, and then we'll have a moment of quiet as we remember the people we love.

[light candle, moment of quiet]

Dear God, we thank you for all the people and animals we love. We thank you for the love they give to us. We miss the ones who have died, and we thank you that they are safe with you in heaven. Thank you that their love for us is still with us here on earth. Amen.