



Reaching Out to Wiccans

“Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD.” (Deuteronomy 18:10-12, NIV)

Wiccan Terminology

The specifics of Wiccan beliefs vary widely depending on what kind of Wiccan group is involved. But these basic definitions would fit most Wiccan groups currently practicing in North America.

Wicca: The craft of the “Wise” (*Wicca* and *witch* are derived from old words meaning “wise”). Wicca, a modern form of witchcraft, is based upon teachings of nature worship and magick. Gerald Gardner founded the Wiccan movement in the 1950s as a modern reinvention of witchcraft.

Neo-pagan: Literally, “new Pagan,” this refers to the modern forms of pagan teachings. Neo-pagans include modern witches (Wiccans) and modern-day druids as well. Pagan usually refers to followers of ancient or primitive religions, although the neo-pagans of today often have little or no knowledge of what the actual ancient religions believed.

Witch: A Wiccan, or practitioner of Wicca. Wiccans believe that nature can be manipulated to make life better for people.

Warlock: A male witch. But warlock is considered insulting these days, so male witches prefer to be called “male witches.”

Magic vs. Magick: According to neo-pagans, “magic” includes just tricks and sleight of hand, what many people call illusions. Magick, on the other hand, is tapping into the powers within the universe and manipulating natural laws through spells.

Coven: A gathering of witches, not necessarily around a black cauldron. A coven can be four, seven, twelve, thirteen...or any other number, though “magickal numbers” are believed to hold more power.

Handfasting: Pagan wedding ceremony where hands of lovers are joined in a bond. Wiccans don’t get married, they get handfasted.

Sabbat: Wiccan holiday based on natural cycle of seasons.

Esbat: Monthly gathering of Wiccans in a coven (usually during the full moon).

To learn more about Wiccan beliefs and other world religions, check out the “Beliefs” section of GOstudents.net.

