



Fall 2005 *GOstudents.net* Bible Study

Reaching Out to Wiccans

Materials:

- *GOstudents.net* Download Video: *Wicca: The New Witches*
- Computer, monitor or video projector to display video
- Chalkboard, whiteboard, or large sheet of paper
- One copy of *GOstudents.net* Group Activity “Reaching Out to Wiccans” for each student
- Optional: Printouts of the *GOstudents.net* World Religions article called “Wicca: The Way of the Witch.” You’ll find it through the Beliefs section of *GOstudents.net* by clicking on Roundtables. (Or click this link in your PDF document:
<http://www.gostudents.net/site/apps/nl/content2.asp?c=ejINI5PNKpG&b=881019&ct=366830>)

Discussion Intro:

Begin your time together by asking your students to name as many TV shows, books, movies and video games as they can that deal with witches, the supernatural world and the occult. As they name them, list each one on a chalkboard, whiteboard or large sheet of paper. Say something like this:

Obviously, there’s a huge interest in our culture in supernatural things and the occult. It’s no wonder that the beliefs and practices of the Wiccan religion are spreading fast in North America and around the world. Teenagers, especially, are being drawn to a religion called Wicca. Today, we’re going to study what Wiccans believe, what the Bible says about those beliefs, and how we can reach out to friends who are interested in Wicca.

Video:

Introduce the download video clip, *Wicca: The New Witches*, by stating that you’re going to hear a basic explanation of the Wiccan religion from Marcia Montenegro, a former astrologer turned Christian missionary. She’ll talk about what real Wiccans believe and how they practice those beliefs.

Group Activity:

After you watch the video, hand out copies of the Group Activity sheet to each student. This is basically just a fact sheet students can also use to take notes. It lists Wiccan terminology and their definitions. Emphasize that Wiccans are not Satanists; most don’t even believe in Satan. They don’t have an organized religion with a headquarters, so



different groups may have somewhat different beliefs about the ideas we'll look at today. But what we'll be covering is generally true of most Wiccans.

What Wiccans Believe:

Now we're going to look at four major areas of belief for Wiccans and a biblical response to those ideas.

Who or What Is God?

Wicca: Most Wiccans believe in what we call *animism* and *pantheism*. That is, they believe that deity (or the Life Force) is in all things, including nature, every human and even non-living objects. So, in a sense, all of us are gods, or part of a greater deity.

However, many Wiccans also focus attention on "the Goddess" or "the Goddess and the God" or "the Lord and the Lady." They see these spiritual beings as personifications of the deity that is in all things. Some emphasize the Goddess as supreme and the God as her horned male escort.

The idea that god is in all things leads Wiccans to place a high value on all of nature. They view nature as sacred, and many of their rituals include the worship or acknowledgement of earth, air, water, the heavens, rocks and trees. Thus, Wiccans are often strong environmentalists and some are strict vegetarians.

Biblical Response: The Bible clearly teaches that there is one and only one God and that He is separate from His creation, not part of it. [Ask two students to read Deuteronomy 6:4 and Isaiah 44:6.] There's simply no room for biblical Christians to believe that anything is God except for the one, true God. Although humans are made in His image, we are not gods ourselves.

Having said that, Christians also place a high value on nature because we believe God created it. However, we believe God has called us to subdue nature [read Genesis 1:28], not to worship it. In fact, Paul wrote that those who reject the true God eventually end up worshipping creation instead of the Creator. [Read Romans 1:21-23.]



Where Does Supernatural Power Come From?

Wicca: One of the central ideas of the Wicca religion is that humans can use "witchcraft" or the practices of Wicca to control nature or alter the laws of the physical universe. To do this, they use "magick." They add the "k" to distinguish their use of spells, divination, channeling, tarot cards and other attempts at supernatural power from the illusionists who perform magic acts for crowds.

Some Wiccans include in their practice of magick the appeal to or use of Watchers. These are supernatural beings who oversee or help with acts of magick. Specifically, Wiccans seem to believe in an “astral plane” that links the supernatural world to the physical realm. Whatever can be made real in the astral plane will eventually happen in the “real world.” Thus, witches learn to turn their thoughts and desires into reality on the astral plane.

Biblical Response: The Bible teaches that there are only two sources of supernatural power, power that can overcome the laws of the physical world. Those sources are God, of course, and Satan or other demons. Scripture gives countless examples of God’s supernatural power at work in everything from creation to Jesus’ resurrection from the dead.

But God’s Word also reveals examples of demonic power in action. Acts 16:16-18 describes a slave girl who had a demonic spirit that helped her predict the future. When Paul cast it out, she couldn’t do it anymore. The book of Exodus also tells of the Egyptian magicians who copied some of the plagues of God using “secret arts.” (See Exodus 7:11-12, 22; 8:6-7.)

In other words, biblical Christians understand that any supernatural power Wiccans are able to access comes not from the true God (whom they reject) and not from nature (which has no power of its own), but from Satan and other demons. Most Wiccans would disagree, especially those who reject belief in Satan and demons, but the Bible allows for no other source of such power.

Not surprisingly, the religions practiced by many nations in Bible times included some of the same practices Wiccans seeks to use today. God strictly warned the Israelites to have nothing to do with those “secret arts.”

“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)

What Moral Code Should We Follow?

Wicca: Although many Wiccans believe they can access supernatural power that could be used against others, they see it as wrong to do so. In other words, they reject the stereotypes of witches who cast hurtful spells, put curses on their enemies, or use power for evil.

One neo-pagan creed called “the Rede” teaches to do whatever you like as long as it doesn’t hurt anyone else. Another idea some Wiccans believe in is the “Law of Three,” or that whatever you do to someone else will come back on you threefold. Thus, many neo-pagans see



themselves as ethical and kind members of society.

Their moral code does not, however, put any restrictions on sexuality. One reason many are drawn to the religion is the freedom it allows for sexual expression, including homosexuality, extramarital sex and nudity. As long as everyone agrees and no one “gets hurt,” any sexual activity is fair game.



Biblical Response: Some statements in the Bible sound similar to Wiccan beliefs on ethical living. But God asks His followers to move beyond just not hurting others. He asks us to sacrifice ourselves and our desires for the good of others. When Jesus was asked what God means by “love your neighbor as yourself,” he told the story of the Good Samaritan, a man who sacrificed time, energy, schedule, money and status to help a fallen enemy he’d never met (Luke 10:25-37).

As for the karmic idea of the “Law of Three,” God’s Word does confirm the basic principle that we tend to experience natural consequences of our good and bad choices (Job 4:8), but it’s also clear that everything good comes straight from God [read James 1:17], not from the universe keeping score on a cosmic balance sheet. In fact, the main idea of Christianity is that we can never do enough good to make up for our sins. We rely on God’s grace to save us, not our own efforts to do right. [Read Ephesians 2:8-10.]

Finally, the Bible teaches that God’s restrictions for followers of Jesus in every area of life, including sex, are for our good. God is a loving Father who enjoys giving us good gifts (Matthew 7:11) and wants to steer us away from things He knows will hurt us. Sex outside of heterosexual marriage leads to naturally painful emotional, and sometimes physical, consequences.

What Happens After We Die?

Wicca: As we heard on the video, neo-pagans vary widely in their beliefs about this issue. Some Wiccans believe humans simply cease to exist, that perhaps our “life force” gets dispersed into the universe. Others believe in “Summerland,” not a WB TV show, but a pleasant existence on the astral plane where the soul receives rest before being reincarnated into another life.

Either way, the idea of salvation is unnecessary. Since we are all part of the life force and/or deity already, there is no separation from God to worry about. Most neo-pagans consider the idea of sin to be a negative and unhelpful concept. They also see our conviction that Jesus is the only way to God as intolerant, arrogant and unreasonable.

Biblical Response: The Bible rejects both the idea that humans cease to exist after death and reincarnation, teaching instead that this life is followed by eternity in either heaven or hell, depending on whether a person has placed his or her faith in Jesus Christ.

“Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.” (Hebrews 9:27-28, NIV)

One death for humans followed by judgment: That rules out reincarnation, as well as the idea that this life is all there is. All of us need Christ. Although many neo-pagans claim to respect the historical Jesus as a great teacher, they reject His teaching that “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6, NIV).

Conclusion: Reaching Out to Wiccans

Finish this session by encouraging your students to make friends with people they know who are interested in or practicing the Wiccan religion. Remind them that even though such people may call themselves witches and/or may be influenced by Satan or demons, we don't have to be afraid of them.

“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.” (2 Timothy 1:7, NIV)

Three things to remember, though, when offering the love of Christ to Wiccans.

Emphasize areas of agreement as a starting point. Christians and Wiccans have some things in common. Both believe in a supernatural world and in supernatural power. Both value the environment; Christians see it as God's creation and gift to us. Both have great respect for women. Jesus and the early church took a lot of heat for teaching that women can have their own relationship with God and should be able to follow Jesus even without their husband's consent. Jesus often made a special point to befriend, interact with and teach women, in spite of the fact that His culture placed a very low value on females.

Treat Wiccans and neo-pagans with kindness and respect. Like Christians, Wiccans are often made to feel stupid for their faith. And too many Christians laugh at or mock people of other religions, especially religions so different from ours. You can't earn the right to be heard by scoffing at another's beliefs. Listen. Try to understand. Take the time to get to know them as people. Share common interests. Be patient. Your best hope of gaining their respect for your beliefs is by letting them see Christ's love in you.

Boldly tell the truth in love. If what we believe about Jesus being the only path to salvation from sin and eternity in heaven is true, then the most loving thing you could ever do is to tell someone about it. You might have to risk your relationships or status to do so, but it's worth



the cost to offer your neo-pagan friends a relationship with the Source of greatest power in the universe.

Close in prayer, thanking God for your study on Wicca. Ask Him to help all of you to be ready to show the love of Christ to anyone in your lives who might be into neo-paganism. Ask Him to also help you to be ready to explain the love of Christ in you with gentleness and respect for the beliefs of others. Thank Him that He is with you and that He is greater than anything else we might face in the world.

As they leave, remind your students that they can find lots of helpful articles about world religions of all kinds at GOstudents.net.

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