

Offer Kids Perspective About the Supernatural



The supernatural is everywhere these days, and not just because Halloween is approaching. Young people are being bombarded with tales of vampires and magic powers, and they also may be intrigued by psychic claims such as ESP, palm reading, and Tarot cards. By definition, the “supernatural” includes things that people believe are real but can’t be proven. Although ghosts, spirits, and the occult fall into that category, so do positive things such as God and faith.

Supernatural forces are powerful; the difference stems from the source of that power. Satan, the father of lies (John 8:44), is behind supernatural phenomena that dishonor God and trick people into thinking they can be godlike. But our Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—acts supernaturally on our behalf and for his glory. Meanwhile, Christians trust him based on faith, not sight.

“Dark” supernatural phenomena appeal to many teenagers because they’re already dealing with powerful emotions and often searching spiritually. Many kids are curious about anything that goes beyond the definition of “normal,” and some may even be attracted to perceived danger involved in the supernatural.

As with many parenting issues, the best approach to keeping your kids safe from harmful experimentation is to talk about the supernatural and be receptive to kids’ questions. Don’t avoid the issue, but don’t hype or romanticize it, either. Assure kids that they’re protected by a loving, all-powerful God who conquers evil.

Discernment is an important life skill that kids can use to resist temptations such as evil supernatural beliefs. In Matthew 10:16 (NIV), Jesus instructs his followers to be “as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.” With God’s guidance, shrewd snakes can send the Serpent slithering away.

- 1. Snakes are cautious, patient, and sure.** They’re grounded in prayer and use the Bible as the final test for right and wrong.
- 2. Snakes stay true to themselves.** They ask God to give us eyes to see situations as he does. They also approach non-Christian friends with love, not condemnation.
- 3. Snakes avoid danger.** They steer clear of questionable movies, music, TV programs, and Web sites. While they don’t live in bunkers, they shrewdly critique all aspects of their culture from a Christian perspective.
- 4. Snakes are deadly accurate.** They evaluate all “facts” that come their way and engage in hard thinking and discussions with godly mentors who keep them on the narrow path.

(Group Magazine)

Pulse

Although relatively few kids are involved in serious anti-Christian practices, many young people are intrigued by supernatural activities.

- Almost one-third (30%) of teenagers polled say they have had supernatural encounters. More than 10% say they have communicated with the dead, and nearly 10% claim they have psychic powers.
- Almost three-quarters (73%) of U.S. teenagers have engaged in a psychic or witchcraft-related activity. The most common listed were using a Ouija board and reading about Wicca, each of which were done by more than 30% of kids.
- Only 28% of Christian teenagers remember receiving any teaching at their church in the last year that helped shape their views about the supernatural world.



(Barna Research Group)

Great Questions to Ask Your Kids

Start a conversation about the supernatural by asking your kids these questions:

1. How do you account for the popularity of supernatural practices these days?
2. How can you tell whether a supernatural force is good or evil? What are some ways to resist evil forces?
3. What supernatural abilities accompany your faith in God? How can you harness them?
4. Which supernatural phenomena are you most curious about, and why?
5. What would you tell a friend who was being deceived by evil supernatural influences?



Focus on Prayer

PRAY THAT:

1. God will protect your teenagers from all evil forces and activities.
2. Your teenagers will rely on God's Word and put on his armor each day as they live in our sinful world.
3. God will strengthen your teenagers to resist Satan's whole range of tricks and temptations.
4. Your teenagers will be powerful Christian witnesses to other young people who are attracted to supernatural phenomena.

Verse of the Month

"Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world." (Ephesians 6:11-12)

Thankfully, God doesn't leave us defenseless. We can harness his mighty power by putting on armor that will strengthen us for all types of spiritual battles. God's armor includes the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, shoes of peace, a shield of faith, a helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is God's Word.

What's Up With Kids

On SimplyYouthMinistry.com, youth minister Lane Palmer notes that a popular horror-movie theme is selling one's soul to the devil. No one can do that, he writes. That choice is yours.

Every time any of us gives in to temptation, we post a spiritual real estate sign that says: "Eternal Soul Available to Demonic Kingdom...Apply Within." The good news is that we also have the choice every day to keep our souls safe in the all-powerful and loving grip of our heavenly Father. John 10:29 promises that God "is more powerful than anyone else" and "No one can snatch [us] from the Father's hand."

Here's the amazing thing about the Christian life. If you have truly trusted in Jesus as your only hope of salvation, your eternal destiny is safe and secure. Yet every day in hundreds of little and big ways, you choose to listen to and obey the voice of life or the voice of death. The choice is yours.

Satan would love nothing more than to see you depressed, deceived, and ultimately destroyed. He will trick you any way possible, but you can also be sure that God's plan is to treat you as his unique and eternally loved child from today through eternity.

As you go about each day, think about your choices. Ask: "Does this keep me safe in the Father's hands or sell my soul to the devil?" Don't underestimate Satan and his powerful army of demons. One of the best ways to avoid sin and pursue holiness is to remember that the Enemy of your soul is just around the corner, waiting to rip you to shreds. Consider what desires tempt you and drag you away. This week, make a plan to take radical action (see Matthew 5:29-30) so you can live the abundant life that Jesus has promised his children.



MUSIC SPOTLIGHT



Mainstream Artist

Background: McGraw exploded onto the scene with his 1994 album *Not a Moment Too Soon*. It became the year's best-selling country album, and McGraw has gone on to sell more than 40 million albums and garner numerous awards.

Albums: *Southern Voice* (2009), *Live Like You Were Dying* (2004), *All I Want* (1995)

What Parents Should Know: McGraw is married to fellow country singer Faith Hill. They have been active in charitable benefits, including one for Hurricane Katrina victims and Brett Favre's charity that benefits children with disabilities.

What McGraw Says: He doesn't often discuss his faith. "It's a personal issue.... I'm a private guy, and you don't want to be out there preaching to people. But faith leads you in the decisions you make. You don't always pick the right path, but it's there in your conscience."

Discussion Questions: Is faith a private thing? How does it guide you from day to day? Read Matthew 28:16-20. Must Christians be out "preaching to people"? Why are people often hesitant to share their faith? How would you sum up the gospel message in one sentence? What might make faith-sharing easier for you?

Christian Artist

Background: This pop-punk band, formed five years ago, quickly caught the eye of mainstream media. They played the classic band The Who in an episode of *American Dreams*. And their song "The Show" has been featured in video games and NFL commercials.

Albums: *Live Life Loud* (2009), *Hawk Nelson Is My Friend* (2008), *Letters to the President* (2004)

What Parents Should Know: Although Hawk Nelson's music sounds like Blink-182 and Green Day, it has a decidedly better message. The band has partnered with TOMS Shoes to donate shoes to children in poverty-stricken countries.

What Hawk Nelson Says: About the new album, bassist Daniel Biro says, "*Live Life Loud* is really about encouraging our fans to do just that. To live your life loud, to embrace all that life brings your way, and to experience every moment of it to the fullest extent."

Discussion Questions: Do you live life "loud"? Why or why not? How does the world's idea of living to the fullest compare with God's definition? What are some ways to embrace the difficult or not-so-nice things life throws your way? Read Luke 12:16-21. How can you live your life richly for God? What is getting in the way of that?

FILM WATCH

Movie: *Where the Wild Things Are* (releases Oct. 16)

Genre: Adventure, Fantasy

Rating: PG (for mild thematic elements, some adventure action, and brief language)

Synopsis: In this adaptation of Maurice Sendak's beloved children's book, misunderstood Max is sent to bed without supper. His imagination runs "wild" as he travels to an island and meets strange creatures. After Max is crowned king, he realizes that ruling these beasts is more complicated than he expected.

Discussion Questions: Describe your temper. How does it affect your relationships with other people? with God? What are some constructive ways to deal with anger? Read Psalm 27:1. What are your biggest fears? How do your fears affect your faith, and vice versa? How can you start to conquer your fears and worries?

