



A Parents Guide

To Protecting Their Child With Craft Interests

Parenting

It's never easy raising children. You have a greater responsibility to the health, well being, and physical condition of your child than anyone else. Today, it's easier for parents to rely on others to help them monitor interests, than it is to sit down and talk with your children. But you also have a responsibility to their mental conditioning as well. There's nothing new about this concept. There are a huge number of books, magazines and even web sites offering advice for the best way to talk to your child.

That isn't the purpose of this posting however. My purpose here is to merely give non-pagan parents an understanding or insight into how to handle, deal with and work with a child with interests in magik and/or witchcraft.

Mutual Respect

The first comment I feel a need to pass on to all parents is: if you want your children to respect you and your wishes; then you must start with respecting their thoughts and interests. You can't control what a person thinks. No matter how hard you try.

That doesn't mean agreeing with their interests or condoning their actions, but it does mean having the ability to talk with them and LISTENING to what they say, how they say it and being open to their thoughts.

The worst thing anyone can do to a child is not listen. All you will accomplish is creating a situation where the child will begin hiding their interests, and deceiving you. This is dangerous to both the child and to you! Without listening, you could easily miss an underlying message of pain or sadness which unchecked, could lead to some seriously dangerous behavior.

With that said, and once again, this article focuses on spiritual beliefs and mystical interests. Nothing else. It's meant to give parents information about the path of Witchcraft, what it is and what it isn't. It's better to work with your child to help them research, so that they can find the most accurate and best information; instead of trying to control their thoughts and creating a situation where your child could become involved in a group that has no clue what they're talking about. Or worse, who only wish to control and abuse your child.

These kinds of groups exist in ALL religions. The best way to provide safety for your child, is to help them research and steer clear of wannabe false priests/priestess. To do that, you need to know a little too.

How Did It Happen

As a spiritual leader and teacher, I'm often asked to talk with parents and teachers about the path of the craft. After many years of counseling, I can predict the questions I'm about to be asked. So here's a quick frequently asked questions - and some answers that will clear up much mis-information.

- Why did my child get interested in this?
There are as many answers for this as there are children on the planet.
 - Rebellion of parents and authority.
 - Friends at school
 - Dissatisfaction with fundamental religions and ideals



- A general curiosity that became a real interest
- How about asking the child?
- How did my child find out about this?
Again, friends and the media are often the sources of much information that influence our children. With movies like "The Craft", "Practical Magik" and TV shows like "Charmed" and "Sabrina Teenage Witch", there are bound to be children who see the "fantasy" and want to be special. The real side of Witchcraft is nothing like this Hollywood version however.
- We're not evil, why do they want to do this?
First of all Witchcraft and magik ARE NOT evil. We don't worship the devil or negative Gods. In fact, the religion of Witchcraft is very unfavorable about those who practice negative actions toward other living things. Mystical beliefs have existed throughout history. Have a curiosity isn't evil as long as it follows a real path of honest research and study.
- What can we do to get them out of this cult stuff?
By definition, even Christianity and Judaism are cults. Check the dictionary for cult and you'll see what I mean. There are just as many Christian or Hebrew 'brain washing' cults as there are, excuse the phrase, flaky cults. Witchcraft is not about 'brain washing', controlling or manipulating people. In fact, it is a religion based whole heartily in respect. Violating that concept is equivalent to a major sin. So it's something we really don't approve of.

After you have talked with your child and learned a little about the craft path; perhaps your sincerity of respect in their interests will also encourage your children to respect your wishes as well. You're not going to be able to control your child's thoughts and beliefs. But who said you can't use their beliefs to help you through discipline and reciprocal respect.

- What do we do now?
Once again learn a little bit about what the religion of Witchcraft is, so you can speak with your child with some level of understanding. Your efforts might even impress them enough to listen to you. Imagine that. ;-)

If you still feel the need to control their actions and interests, then this article has failed. But I'd ask for you to at least respect your child and calmly tell them you are uncomfortable with their interest in this religion. Out of respect or your wishes, would they please stop. Demanding to control their beliefs isn't going to work. Remember when you were a kid? Demands will only send your children underground into hiding their beliefs and actions. Where you can not protect them.

If your child is still interested in the path of the craft, the best thing you can do is help them research for valid information. This will put your mind at ease by knowing what their doing, and with whom. But it will also help you both learn about the misconceptions, misinformation and even the propaganda that can be dangerous.

Please remember that pagan paths are not where the dangers lie. Within ALL religions, there are fanatics and people who wish to control and manipulate others. By respecting the interests of your child, you will gain their trust and maybe even learn a little along the way yourself. Learning about other religions and cultures doesn't take anything away from your beliefs or way of life. It merely gives you an understanding and maybe even a little tolerance.

What Are The Dangers

As within any religion, there are people and organizations whose only interest is control, manipulation and greed. The religion of witchcraft is no different. But they're a little easier to spot.

paganspath.com/magik/parent.htm



The biggest problem today are the many people who are newly interested in the craft path who think they've learned enough to be teachers. These people are often misinformed, or know just enough to be dangerous. Mostly because their concepts or understandings are only partially developed.

They base their concepts on two or three books, movies or turn of the 19th century writings that are filled with misconceptions in themselves. The only real way to spot the dangers, is to learn the basics of what Witchcraft really is.

So what is Witchcraft?

- Witchcraft is a religion of respect, and a way of life that focuses on the balance between nature and man, as well as, the physical and spiritual world. In order to achieve balance, one must first learn respect for all things; seen and unseen.
We have many basic beliefs, but the long and short of them are:
 - We believe in the concept of a God. However, to us, God is not something outside of ourselves, but rather something we are part of. We see "God" as a divine entity that has masculine and feminine aspects. Many traditions will assign pantheons (a mythological God or Goddess) to these aspects in order to give form to their practices by which they can honor the Divine. This is similar to Christians who use the crucifix or images of Jesus to give their God form by which they can worship.
 - We do not worship, we honor. We honor the divine around us and within us. I alone am not a Goddess, you are not a god. But you and I and all things throughout the universe, seen and unseen make up the Divine.
 - We believe in reincarnation, karma and an after life. We believe in a soul and spirit.
- These are the basics. If you'd like to learn more about these, visit our [Metaphysics 101](#) section.
- Witchcraft as religion has existed for thousands of years, under many labels and in many countries. The religion today is primarily based on Indo-European concepts and cultures. Witchcraft defines the basics of the belief, while the traditions (or denominations) put those beliefs into practice and sometimes further defines or adds details to those beliefs.
- There are literally thousands of traditions within the religion. The most known today is Wicca. But as a tradition, Wicca is relatively new. It was founded in the 1950s by Gerald Gardner who was an initiated witch into other traditions. Gardnerian Wicca is widely practiced here in the United States. But there is also, Faery Wicca, Dianic Wicca, Seax Wicca, Celtic Wicca and many more.

In addition to formal traditions, there are family traditions, which are based in knowledge passed through each family generation to the next. There are more of these than you may realize. Finally there are also solitary paths, where a person will study many traditions, take those parts that feel right to him/her and create their own.

- Within our religion a leader is called a priest, priestess, mage, wizard or shaman. Member groups are called coven's and clans. A leader/teacher has gone through many years of formal study and has been initiated into a particular tradition of the path.

Or they have studied for many many years, decades even, through formal classes, personal research and community interactions to reach a point of significant wisdom and spiritual understanding. They are looked upon as a wise mage or shaman by their community, based on their actions, knowledge and daily exercise of that wisdom.



I'll be honest here; there are few of these self taught shamans. In some traditions, a leader who takes on the title of Priest or Shaman without a formal test of knowledge and initiation is often frowned upon or somehow seen as not fully acknowledged in the role.

- Formal traditions often require a dedication of faith, which is usually a self dedication before a person can be considered for a formal initiation. Initiations are invitations to join a coven or clan and are only given when a person has demonstrated a certain level of knowledge of that tradition.

Many traditions contain varying levels of initiation as well. Such as student, apprentice, teacher and leader or priest/priestess. Each level requires a test or demonstration of knowledge before the title is granted.

It's important to note here that just claiming the title of witch, priest or shaman, doesn't make it so. And rarely are self proclaiming initiations to claim a title acknowledged. Education, study, research and demonstration of knowledge is all hard work. But if your child is serious about this path, they must be serious about the effort involved to practice it.

What Witchcraft Isn't

First and foremost, Witchcraft is not devil worship. Witchcraft is a pre-Christian religion and we do not believe in the existence of the devil. So it's kind of hard to worship something you don't believe in.

Secondly, Witchcraft is not about spells and potions and magik. There is a big difference between spellcraft and Witchcraft.

Now that we've got those out of the way.

- A spell is merely a focused prayer with a specific intent behind it. Not all people on the path of Witchcraft practice spellcraft. Those that do, never cast upon any person without that person's permission.
- A spell is not an easy way out of situations and in our beliefs there are always consequences for casting.
- We do not cast to make someone else do something against their will. That means, we don't approve of love spells, hate spells, or spells that manipulate someone else in anyway. To us, that is interfering with their free will and choice, and thereby affecting the lessons or karma that person is here to learn. In short, it's affecting the advancement of their soul and that is a **big** no no.

Things To Lookout For

Now that we have some of the basic understanding and misconceptions out of the way. How as a parent can you protect your child. Here are a few tips.

- A formal teacher will not take on a minor child as a student without written and often times, verified permission from a parent. If your child is talking about a teacher who is teaching them, without your knowledge, this is a sign of trouble.
- If a teacher can offer you nothing that proves their status of leader or initiation as a teacher, this is a sign of trouble.
- If your child is getting their information from websites that do not provide information about their research material; or the research material is based solely on modern craft books, this could be a sign of trouble.



- If your child is new to the path (less than a year) then there is no way they have a complete understanding of the religion to be casting spells. That's a sign of trouble; period!
- If your child is talking about casting spells to harm someone, or threatening to cast a spell on someone, (good, bad, or indifferent) this is a major sign of trouble and a complete lack of understanding about this religion.
- If your child is talking about casting spells to bind or protect someone, this is also a sign of trouble. We do not "bind" people. We can only protect our selves, or those who ask for the help on themselves. Never upon someone who doesn't know the spell is being cast upon them.
- If your child is only talking about spells, this is a sign of trouble and lack of research. -- do you see a pattern here? --
 - Modern media focuses on spellcraft without fully knowing what they're talking about. Consequently, children want to be like what they see on TV. We're nothing like that.
- If your child is claiming to be a natural witch or born witch; there's no such thing. There is no witch DNA. Being a witch is a spiritual choice, not a birth right. No one is born a witch and no one is born a religion. Even being raised in a home with a particular religion, does not make one a member of that religion; unless they chose to be so.
- If your child is claiming to have psychic gifts and is therefore a witch. Nope wrong again. Being psychic is not specific to one religion over an other. And it certainly doesn't make someone an automatic witch.
- If your child is claiming they have "power"; Nope, wrong again. Power is an illusion. No one can have more a less power than anyone else. There is emotional "power" in having a spiritual path but that is considerably different than being self powerful.
- If your child is claiming to be part of a coven, sign of trouble. Either it is really a group of their friends who are working as a study group; in which case they should call it that. It's a group of kids who have banded together to practice rituals; in which case it's doubtful any of them have the experience or knowledge to do this. Or it's a group of people who are more interested in the size of their group than the ethics of a real coven. All these can be a sign of trouble.

So What Do You Do?

There are many well written books on the subject of witchcraft. The problem most of us in the community have is, many will only read the modern publications and not even do the basic research concerning the concepts of the religion itself.

If your child is truly interested in this path, then they should first and foremost, study the basic concepts of metaphysics. They should read and research the history of religions and how they each have evolved over the many thousands of years. They should be open to all paths of knowledge and not condemn anyone's beliefs. All positive paths are valid and right for that person who believes in them.

They should study archeology, anthropology; especially if they believe in a tradition that is based on an ancient culture, such as Dianic Wicca or Celtic traditions.

After all this basic research, then they can begin basic study into magik.



Spring Wolf's Pagan's Path

Paganspath.com ~ An Online Spiritual Education Site

Now there are several well researched and documented websites about the craft. Many we have listed on our Frequently Asked Questions page. There are several books, which we have listed on our Books and Resources page. You can also do research at Amazon.com for additional books and resources.

I hope this article has given you some understanding into our religion. I also hope it has alleviated some of your fears. I'm often asked to speak to parent groups, so if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask. Most of us who are teachers of our faith, really do understand the concerns non-pagan parents have. Like you, we too want your children to be safe and follow a path that is right for them.

Many Blessings -
Spring

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- Frequently Asked Questions @ paganspath.com/faqs.htm
- A Guide To Children Interested In A Magikal Path @ paganspath.com/magik/child.htm

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