

Sunday morning
teaching plan

Date: 29th June

TITLE:	Saul and the witch of Endor
THEME:	A warning about dabbling with the dark side
AIM:	YPs to understand that the occult is serious and dangerous

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

King Saul had been disobedient to the Lord. The Lord had removed His Spirit from Saul and given it to David, who was to be his successor. Saul was filled with despondency, jealousy and rage. The Bible says an evil spirit tormented him. Saul has been trying to kill David, and David has fled and is living with Israel's enemies, the Philistines. Now a battle looms and Saul is scared because he has no contact with the Lord. He has already exiled or killed mediums and witches in the land, but now he calls upon one to summon up Samuel the prophet who has died. When he does the news is not good, it makes Saul's mind-set even worse!

WARM UP.

"I'm thinking of a number"

This game is a cheat. You state "I'm thinking of a number between 1-10" . Get YPs to take turns guessing or predicting what number you are thinking of. They always get it wrong, by one number. "So close!" How long will it take before they see it is a scam!

Predicting the cards! Using a deck of cards, try to get YPs to guess what card will be turned over next!

MAIN TEACHING

Activity 1 What's the story?

Explain the background and context of the story to set the scene.

Read 1 Samuel 28 or Watch cheesy video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVSIYISl0wI>

1. Why did Saul want to know the future?
2. What did he discover?
3. How did he react?

Key teaching point: Many people are worried about the future or want to be sure of what lays ahead so they turn to astrology and the occult to help them discover things. The truth Saul discovered was that he was going to die! This affected him greatly.

Activity 2: What does the Bible say?

Look up Deuteronomy 18:10-13.

1. What kind of things are outlawed by God?
2. Why do you think God dislikes these practices?
3. How do we know God takes this seriously?
4. What are the modern things today that are similar ?

Teaching point: God wants His people to be different from everyone else. The practices described were common in Canaan, (the land Israel took over) and in the lands around. God hates these practices because **firstly** they show a lack of trust in Him. By calling on spirits /demons or trying to reveal the future you are not trusting God! **Secondly**, they fill your mind with ungodly thoughts, they are selfish in nature and not God centred. **Thirdly**, Satan uses these practices to deceive and lie to people and lead them away from God. Modern equivalents : Tarot cards, séance, Ouija board, crystal ball fortune telling, astrology (future read in the alignment of stars) Wicca, witchcraft, casting spells to protect or curse... anything that uses other forces like crystals etc rather than rely on God. (could bring in Halloween here if you want)

Activity 3 Are these practices real?

1. Look back at the story. v12 Why was the woman shocked to see Samuel?
2. Many people believe in these “dark arts.” What could actually be happening?
3. Why might it be dangerous to engage with the occult and fortune telling?

Teaching point: The woman was shocked because she wasn't expecting to see Samuel. She was probably a fake or used to seeing demons! God allowed Samuel to rise to warn Saul of his sin and impending doom! Satan is very clever at using lies and deception to trick people into believing they can speak to the dead or read the future. It is all a ploy to stop people trusting in God. Saul had failed to be obedient to God and trust Him, the consequence was disaster! **When we open ourselves up to the occult by “just having a go” “What harm will it do?”** we are saying to God, “I don't trust you.” At the same time we are allowing evil to get a foothold in our mind and thinking. This can affect us and cause us problems emotionally, spiritually and mentally. Satan can use a “message” from a supposed dead relative to deceive us into rejecting the gospel and relying on God.

TAKEAWAY

Look up the following verses and fill in on the sheet what they say.

Proverbs 3:5-6 Psalm 56:3-4 Jeremiah 17:7-8 Romans 8:28

Keep it in your Bible!

EXTRA INFORMATION