

# YOUTH

## Youth groups key on healthy Halloween themes

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

It will still be entertaining, and still feel a little spooky. However, the children's haunted house staged by the St. Christopher Parish youth group is taking a decisively milder route than in years past.

And for good reason, a member of the North Chili parish emphasized.

"There is a lot of violence already," remarked Jill Emerson, 13. "We're trying to make it so the kids don't see it everywhere they go."

Jill noted that many previous gory segments have been eliminated from the annual haunted house, to be held Oct. 28 after 5 p.m. Mass.

"Last year we had a girl burned at the stake, and now we have games," Jill said.

One new feature will be a maze of balloons decorated as spiders and pumpkins. Participants walking through the maze without touching any of the balloons will win a prize.

"The kids will still dress like spooks and have witch's brew. It will have that spooky effect, but it will not have that violent nature," noted Ann Murphy, who serves as St. Christopher's youth minister.

Also keeping with this year's anti-violence theme is the youth group at St. Columba/St. Patrick Parish in Caledonia and Mumford. These teens will stage their "Great Pumpkin Bash" Oct. 29 after 10 a.m. Mass at St. Columba's Church.

This mix of games, prizes and food will raise funds for two groups dedicated to stopping violence: Rochester Teens for Peace, a contingent of Catholic teenagers in the diocese; and the Irish Children's Foundation, which helps place children in the United States so they can escape war-torn parts of Ireland. In addition, the St. Columba/St. Patrick fundraiser will support services performed through parish youth ministry.

"We like to emphasize that it's harvest time. It's not a time when you go out and 'egg' people's houses," commented youth-group member Kate Flanagan, 16.

And in Canandaigua, St. Mary's Church will be the site of a regional Halloween Mass Oct. 29 from 6 to 8:30



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Members of the St. Columba/St. Patrick parish youth group in Caledonia and Mumford are gearing up for their annual 'Great Pumpkin Bash.' The fundraiser, set for Oct. 29 after 10 a.m. Mass, is one of several diocesan youth-group activities seeking to promote the positive aspects of Halloween.

p.m. Youth groups from several Finger Lakes parishes will take part in the liturgy being celebrated by Father Timothy Brown, parochial vicar at St. Mary's. A Halloween party will follow the Mass and include events such as a pumpkin-carving contest.

At the beginning of Mass, teens will light candles inside several pumpkins carved in the shape of a cross. This action is to illustrate the original meaning of Halloween, said Monette Mahoney, St. Mary's director

of faith formation.

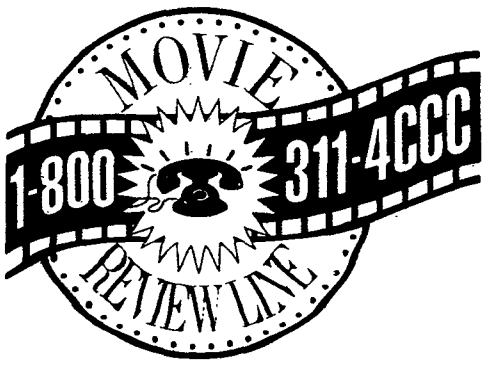
"It's the Hallow's Eve - the night before All Saints Day. So many people are against Halloween, but we still feel it originated from something good," Mahoney said.

Mahoney explained that the pumpkin-carving tradition originated with the Irish. They lit pumpkins to provide a path to their homes "so the spirits of deceased family members could return to see they were doing okay," Mahoney said.

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### Teen Mass to take place Sunday at Elmira church

Called to Be Peacemakers and Apostles of Hope will be the theme of a Southern Tier regional teen Mass, scheduled for this Sunday, Oct. 29. The special 7 p.m. liturgy falls on World Youth Sunday and will be celebrated at St. Peter and Paul Church, corner of Market and High streets, Elmira.

The event is being sponsored by Eastside Catholic Parish, Our Lady of Lourdes Church and St. Mary's Church in Elmira, and the Corning-Painted Post Roman Catholic Community. Serving as celebrant will be Father Patrick Connor, pastor of Eastside Catholic Parish.

According to Lisa Johnson, youth minister at Eastside Catholic Parish and Our Lady of Lourdes, the service is being held to address this year's World Youth Sunday theme of peacemaking as a response to violence in society.

"It's our hope that this message will continue beyond this Mass into the teens' own lives at school, at home and in the community," Johnson said.

A reception will follow the Mass. All Southern Tier teens in grades 7-12, along with their families, are invited to attend. For details, call 607/734-0727.

-Mike Latona

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