

KIDS CAPTIVATED BY THE COUNTERFEIT

HARMLESS HARRY?

greg blanc revised 11/01

Harry Potter is a typical-looking, skinny, green-eyed, eleven-year-old kid with glasses. Orphaned at age one, Harry mysteriously survived a murderous assault by the wicked wizard Lord Voldemort, who killed Harry's parents in the attack. When he tried but failed to kill their one-year-old baby, Lord Voldemort lost much of his power. As a result, and usually hidden behind his wavy black hair, is a thunderbolt-shaped scar on Harry's forehead. He is later to discover that this marks his peculiar psychic strength and triumph over evil.

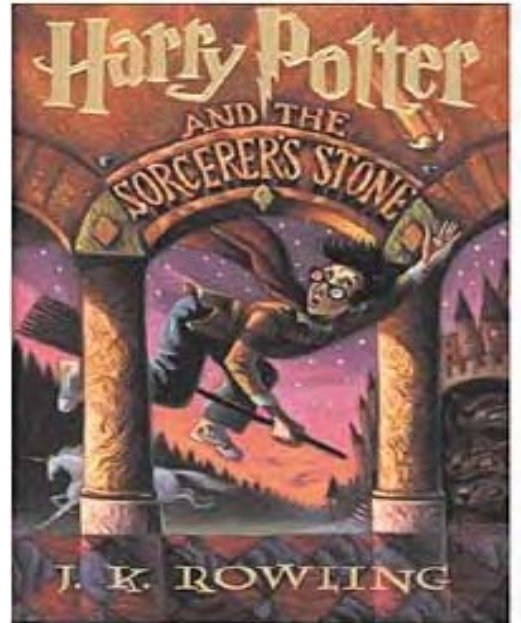
For the next ten years, Harry lives a miserable life in his uncle's London home, constantly tormented by his cruel guardians and spoiled bully of a cousin. But on his eleventh birthday everything changes. He discovers that he is a wizard of great fame, someone who once conquered death and crippled a devilish foe. Even better, he receives an acceptance to Hogwarts, a coveted boarding school for aspiring wizards.

Harry, like other students at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, travels back and forth between two worlds: the mystical world of magic and the mundane world of muggles. The muggles are those boring, blinded, and biased humans who either don't believe in the world of witches or who despise it as evil. Harry's cruel aunt and uncle fit this category. And, from Harry's point of view, so does everyone who would see witchcraft as dangerous and demonic.

Isaiah 5:20 (NKJV) Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

As a reader of the Harry Potter series, you are immersed in this mystical world of spiritual forces, feel Harry's struggles, and share his fears. You sit with him through his classes on Potions, Spells, Transformation ("turning something into something else"), and Divination. You soar with him above the earth on a magical and magnificent broomstick, and, learn some tricks of the old Craft. It is no longer necessary to only see Harry through your mind's eye. On November 16th, 2001, the "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" live-action movie was released. Opening in 2,800 theaters, this movie broke all existing attendance records, grossing over \$90 million in the first three days. Production on the second in the series of Harry Potter movies has already begun.

Today children learn their values and world view from a variety of sources. The entertainment industry (including books) is one of the most persuasive agents of cultural awareness, and it often teaches global and occult values that are in conflict with Judeo-Christian principles. In fact, many children have become so familiar with profanity, occultism, and explicit sex, that they have become desensitized to it. The child's feelings and responses can be manipulated by the author's views, values, and agenda. Few young readers realize that from the biblical perspective, all occult forces are dangerous. The negative result is a new generation of children far more vulnerable to deception than their predecessors.



The devil is a master at exploiting a child's innate curiosity. As kids peruse the Harry Potter web-sites, they are quickly linked to full-blown Wiccan and witchcraft sites by a few simple clicks of the mouse. Once introduced to the exciting world of spiritism, astrology, palmistry, shape-shifting, time-travel, and the latest version of popular occultism, many crave more. Most children do not have the biblical knowledge or discernment needed to evaluate good and evil or to resist such threats to their faith.



Adults could easily make light of the thought of finding a better source for their child's reading entertainment, and conclude that the Potter series is relatively harmless compared to other more obvious conflicts to their belief system...and at least their children are learning to enjoy reading. But after doing even a little research on these books, it will be easy for parents to conclude that this would not fall into the category of being "God's best" for their kids.

Lev 19:31 (NKJV) Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.

Isaiah 8:19 (NKJV) And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God?...

There are many ways to persuade the masses to reject uncompromising Christianity and embrace a changeable blend of all kinds of religions, including a cross-less and universalist version of Christianity. In the name of "unity" and "community," people of all ages (including children) must help form new values, challenge contrary beliefs, and oppose all other obstacles to "the common good". Much of the groundwork for this philosophy is creeping into our culture (including schools) through seemingly innocent forms of literature like the "Harry Potter" series, and its undermining of fundamental Christianity. These messages, hidden behind exciting stories, turn Truth upside-down. The biblical God simply doesn't fit into Harry's world of wizards, witches, and other gods.

It's not too soon to prepare your child for the increasing peer pressure to conform to the new social standards. Those who choose to take the biblical exhortation to raise their children in the training and admonition of the Lord have their work cut out for them. We have been given the privilege of stewardship of our children and are responsible to Jesus for the effort we put into screening what they view and participate in. Kids are looking for heroes and role models, especially those who are close to their own age.

The Bible is full of exciting examples of children who chose the way of the Lord. If Hollywood's movie-makers didn't have their own agenda, they could make a mint producing movies about these real life kids, and provide today's youth with role models even more captivating than those in the WWF. It blesses God when parents take the time to read the Bible with their children. Today's children can and should be taught to know the true God, to recognize and shun the clever counterfeits, and to never apologize for their faith in the One who created them, shed His blood for them, and is coming back for them one day.

Suggested alternative reading with a Christ-centered message.

The Cooper Kids Adventure Series - Frank Peretti
The Left Behind Kids Series - Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins
Books by Josh McDowell, C.S. Lewis, or Focus On The Family

* Some excerpts from (and commentary on) - "Bewitched by Harry Potter" by Berit Kjos