

Finding God in Harry Potter?

Should religious people celebrate the Harry Potter books or ban them?

INTRODUCTION

Begin by watching some clips that demonstrate that JK Rowling's Harry Potter books appear to suggest the existence of good and evil, a Higher Power and truth beyond the rational world.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zkjcETPvONA>: Sorting Hat scene

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDyju7qp9zs>: Harry's name gets picked out from the Goblet of Fire

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpFIj_8daVU: Harry Potter vs Voldemort in the Graveyard

ACTIVITY

Issue a handout with the following table printed on – extending the table to near the bottom of the page.

Reasons for religious people to celebrate Harry Potter books	Reasons for religious people to reject Harry Potter books

Then provide pairs or small groups of students with the following statements, cut up, or ready to be cut up, into separate statements:

Harry is like a Messiah.

The books encourage wizardry.

The idea that 'Love conquers all' runs through the books.

There is a battle between good and evil.

The books encourage fantasy.

The books encourage interest in the occult (satanic worship?).

The idea of 'the boy who lived' is blasphemy.

Harry has exceptional powers.

There is a higher power at work in the stories.

JK Rowling's books teach witchcraft.

Some Christians say that 'JK Rowling is in league with Lucifer'.

Harry Potter stories are more like fairy stories than the occult.

The books use pagan imagery.

JK Rowling's books are good moral stories.

God's people are told to have nothing to do with wizards and demons.

Harry's mother died to save him.

The books encourage a belief in the existence of a soul.

Encourage the students to discuss the statements and to place them onto one side or the other of the table. Can they add their own ideas?

Get some feedback and then present the students with these two quotations:

- "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil." Isaiah 5:20
- "Behind that innocent face is the power of satanic darkness... Harry Potter is the devil and he is destroying people.": <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/1735623.stm>

CONCLUSION

Encourage the students to sum up their reflections on these statements and on whether the Harry Potter books do more harm than good.