



EMBRACE THE YEAR OF MERCY

Protecting Our Children

A mother just shared a situation with me that recently took place involving her daughter. At a birthday that included a sleepover, one of the gifts received at the party was a Ouija Board. Later in the evening those gathered decided to play the Ouija board for fun. My friend's daughter got so scared in watching what was happening from the doorway that she texted her mother to come and get her right away. Was this girl just being hypersensitive, or are Ouija boards something to be avoided at all costs? Every adult needs to know the answer to this question.

The situation that the mother related struck a deep chord with me as I had realized, many years ago, that my life took a turn for the worse in middle school after playing with a Ouija board, not realizing the possible consequences. At that time, I also was at a birthday party and when the "game" was brought out, I agreed to play, mainly out of curiosity because I really knew nothing about it. After only a few minutes, the events became downright freaky. I am sure that the faithful prayers of my parents probably helped to prevent me from playing with the Ouija Board more than twice, but the gateway to the dark side of the spiritual world had already been opened.

A Ouija board is a flat board marked with letters, numbers, and pagan-like symbols used to communicate with spirits. It uses a small triangular piece of wood called a planchette to spell out a message communicated by the "spirit." The premise is that those seated around the board will receive messages that will connect them to people who have died and enlighten them as to hidden knowledge like future events and the afterlife.

We need to be clear. The Ouija board is a form of "divination," meaning it seeks to obtain unknown or hidden information from the spirit world. However, the only "spirits" that will be contacted through it are evil ones.

Divination differs from prayer in that it goes outside the ways God uses to reveal His will to us. It seeks to take shortcuts around God's plan and obtain answers to our questions without going to God.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states the matter succinctly. "All forms of divination are to be rejected: recourse to Satan or demons, conjuring up the dead or other practices falsely supposed to 'unveil' the future. Consulting horoscopes, astrology, palm reading, interpretation of omens and lots, the phenomenon of clairvoyance, and recourse to mediums all conceal a desire for power over time, history, and in the last analysis, other human beings, as well as a wish to conciliate hidden powers. They contradict the honor, respect, and loving fear that we owe to God alone." (paragraph 2116)

Ouija boards are on the shelf at book stores and convenient marts between a deck of cards, Monopoly and Twister as an innocent "game" that sells for less than \$20. To entice young girls even more, it can be purchased in pink for \$89.50. Unless we give our children background on this unmarked danger, they will not know, at least initially, of the horrible effects that people often experience even by dabbling in divination, of which the Ouija board is one of the most dangerous forms. It opens a door through which evil spirits and their oppressions and temptations can readily come, as many people can sadly testify. God, who is completely good, loves us and wants to protect us from harm. Let us trust our Heavenly Father and listen to His warnings against such evil things for our safety and the safety of our children.

Ann Lankford
Director for Catechesis and Evangelization



DIocese of LA CROSSE, WI