

Children reveal most heroic job in run-up-to Halloween

The nation's most heroic role is that of a parent, according to a national poll of children run by the Church of England and The Children's Society.

Rt Revd Mark Davies, the Bishop of Middleton, revealed the results of the on-line poll to find the most heroic job in the UK at a ceremony in Manchester Cathedral this week. Out of the 25 jobs nominated by a selection of school children, the poll revealed that the UK's most heroic jobs were:

- **First:** Parents with 25% of the vote.
- **Second:** Fire-fighters with 13% of the vote.
- **Third:** Soldiers with 12% of the vote.

The Rt Revd Mark Davies said, "The National Hero Poll is part of the Church of England's efforts to help parents who are not keen on their children dressing up as murderers or taking part in trick or treating, to find alternative ways of marking Halloween in a more positive and fun way.

"The Church sees the 31st October as 'All Hallow's Eve', which is the night before 'All Saints Day', when we celebrate our own religious heroes. The survey was a way of finding out who children consider as today's secular heroes. We hope the poll results might encourage young people to look to everyday heroes around them and celebrate all who lead their lives in the service of others."

Commenting on the results, the Bishop said: "Each of the 25 nominated jobs is heroic, but it is great to see parents, fire-fighters and soldiers receive this special recognition from children.

"Parents are rightly recognized for the sacrifices they make in the dedicated service of their children. Parents give lots of love and care, and will often go without so their children can have opportunities."

"Fire-fighters risk their lives every day responding to calls for help. They work as a team, often putting those in danger before themselves."

"Soldiers, I am sure, have been recognized both for their role as peace-keepers in countries across the world, and for the sacrifices many in the Armed Forces have made in defending the nation from threat."



Picture shows from left to right: Soldier (3rd Place) - Warrant Officer Lutha Magloire; Parents (1st Place) - Mr Graham Higson; Bishop of Middleton, the Rt Revd Mark Davies; Firefighters (2nd Place) - Officer Steve Sherridan

Children from across the UK will have a chance to celebrate heroes this Halloween by attending one of around 500 child-friendly parties that have been organised by churches, many of them with assistance from resources produced by The Children's Society. The parties, known as Halloween Choice events, offer parents and children a choice about how they celebrate Halloween, with kids dressing as their heroes and enjoying fun games while also raising funds for the important work of The Children's Society.

The Halloween Choice website, www.halloweenchoice.org, includes resources for parents, schools and church congregations, many of whom are running the alternative Halloween 'bright' events this week. In previous years, the Halloween Choice campaign led some of the country's leading retailers to offer more positive Halloween products in addition to the usual fare of monster masks and costumes based on horror movies.

Almost half (45 per cent) of the parents polled for the campaign in 2007 felt 'strongly' that there should be a choice of alternative Halloween goods for children, while among the youngest people interviewed (aged 18-24) the figure rose to nearly six in ten (58 per cent).

For more information on the results of the poll or to take part in the alternative Halloween 'bright' events, please visit the website, www.halloweenchoice.org.

Church of England Communications Office

Church House
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3AZ