

The Ishbane Conspiracy

The Occult: Defined and Resisted

Ice Breaker/Game:

Book Study:

Playing with Fire

Time: about 60-90 minutes

Students will learn about the themes of "The Ishbane Conspiracy" by Randy Alcorn, more specifically how to resist the temptation of fake "spirituality" or the Occult.

Supplies: Bibles, *The Ishbane Conspiracy* by Randy Alcorn, a dessert, white board, marker.

Start the study out with a discussion of the students' reactions and insights of chapters 10-12.
(20 min)

Ask: **What did you think of this week chapters?**

What did you think about the discussions about the occult between Rob and Ian, and Brittany and Skyla?

Say: **In the book there are examples of Ouija board, Wicca, Tarot Cards, Horror Movies and other things linked with the Occult, but what exactly does it mean?**

Ask: **How would you define what the Occult is?**

Say: **The word occult may be defined as any practice to do with the supernatural that is forbidden in the Bible or is self-evidently evil. It actually comes from the Latin word *occultus* which means hidden, secret or mysterious.**

Ask: **What is your first reaction to this definition?**

Say: **By its very nature, the Occult is secretive, sly, and manipulative.**

Have a student Read *John 8:44*: ⁴⁴You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Say: **Satan is the occult, so he will try and use it to infect your life with a slippery slope scenario, where you think that these things are just "entertainment", when really, you are separating yourself from God.**

Break into small groups of about 4-5. **(20 min)**

Ask: **Are Wicca, Satanism, witchcraft, or other occult belief systems popular at your school?**

Why do you think people are attracted to occult or pagan beliefs?

Do you believe Satan or demons are involved in the lives of people who believe in the occult?

Are Ouiji boards part of the occult? Why or why not?

Is it dangerous to watch movies or TV shows or read books that involve magic, witchcraft, or Satanism? How do you decide if something is OK to read or watch?

Have a student Read *Philippians 4:8-9*:

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Ask: **Does God say anything about entertainment value in this scripture?**

Come back together in a large group. Have teenagers brainstorm different occult activities while you write their ideas on the white board. **(30 min)**

Say: **Satan will do anything to hinder us from learning the truth about him or his strategies for defeating us. Turn to Ezekiel 28:11-19. This Bible passage compares an earthly king of Tyre to the devil. As I read the passage, look for everything it says about who Satan is, what he used to be, and what his future is. Write a few ideas to share on the paper provided.**

(Activity based on Innovative Tools by Group Publishing)

Read *Ezekiel 28:11-19*: ¹¹ The word of the Lord came to me: ¹² “Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: “‘You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. ¹³ You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: carnelian, chrysolite and emerald, topaz, onyx and jasper, lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl. ¹⁴ Your settings and mountings ¹⁵ were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. ¹⁶ You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. ¹⁷ You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. ¹⁸ Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. ¹⁹ Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. ²⁰ By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on

the ground in the sight of all who were watching. ¹⁹ All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more.”

Have the students report what they discovered as you write their discoveries on the white board.

Then say: The Bible also describes Satan as an accuser, an adversary, the “Evil One,” and a tempter. He wants to defeat, deceive, and destroy us. Let’s examine each of these objectives.

Give a student a plastic-wrapped pastry. Have the students look at the list of occult activities and say whether they’ve been tempted to do any of them. Tell the group that whenever someone speaks, he or she must hold the pastry.

Ask: Were you tempted to eat the pastry when it was passed to you? Why or why not?

If the leader told you the pastry was full of poison, would you still be tempted to eat it? Why or why not?

How is the temptation to eat the pastry like the temptation to engage in occult practices? How is it different?

How might Satan defeat you through temptation?

Have a student read *Matthew 4:1-4*.

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted^[a] by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” ⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’^[b]”

Ask: How did Jesus counter the devil’s temptation?

How would Jesus’ strategy work for those involved in occult activities?

Say: Satan tempts us to do harmful things by making them seem innocent. This is how he attempts to defeat us. Let’s ask God to show us whether we’re facing this kind of temptation and, if so, to help us overcome it.

Pray a prayer for wisdom and spiritual guidance to overcome Satan’s temptations. Allow students a time of silence to pray on their own before closing.