A Christians Guide to
Defense against the Dark Arts, Magical Beasts,
Potions and Curses!
To defend ourselves we need to understand, and in order to understand first make a comparison

**Hogwart’s World**
Hogwarts pupils believe

- Supernatural powers exist – both good and evil - are at war with one another. And the outcome of the war is undecided.

- The use of spells, potions and curses can manipulate those powers to make things happen the way we want – to achieve our desired result.

- Souls or spirits exist not only in humans but also in other animals, plants, rocks, mountains, trees, natural phenomena (**animism**)

- Magic, sometimes known as sorcery, is the practice of conscious manipulation to achieve a desired result.

- Black Magic is a form of sorcery that draws on assumed malevolent powers. This type of magic would be invoked to kill, to steal, to injure, to cause misfortune or destruction, or for personal gain without regard to harmful consequences to others.

- Dark Arts are those magical spells and practices that are usually used for malicious purposes. It involves wrongdoing or mischief and is used to describe malevolent, dangerous, or harmful magic, evildoing.

- Power doesn’t depend on truth. It depends on knowledge of how to do certain things.

- Magical organizations like Hogwarts train special people who are born special. And, that special birth is what sets you apart from Muggles.

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**The World we live in**
Christian’s believe

- Supernatural power exists in God, who is love. Evil is the result of our choosing anything that is not God. In the end, evil cannot win. Denying God’s power doesn’t make Him any less powerful.

- Christians believe that prayer places us in a position to understand what God’s will is in our life - prayer changes our hearts. As a result, God may use different a tactic.

- Christians believe that everything has a purpose, and merit, in God’s eyes and is to be respected. But a spirit? That’s not something we can prove or disprove.

- Christians believe that supernatural powers are probably not so easily manipulated.

- Christians believe that the purposes of black magic - to give form to anger, hatred, envy, lust - are evil in themselves. So, anything that encourages us to achieve those ends is harmful. It doesn’t matter if it works or not - it’s poison.

- Christians believe that there are lots of Dark Arts. Most of them don’t look like magic - they look more like selfishness, bending the rules, prejudice, disdain......

- Christians believe that the truth is the only thing that really matters. Doing things the "right way" for the wrong reason is dangerous to the soul.

- Christians believe everyone is born special, but each of us needs education, discipline, love and God's grace to achieve our potential. Your effort at growth is what makes you outstanding.
The explanation we choose to trust in becomes our belief system. Our belief system helps us explain the why’s in our life, the reason things happen the way they do.

Here’s a few of the many different ways people explain how the world works…..

**Polytheism** (multiple gods and goddesses)

**Animism** (souls or spirits exist not only in humans but also in other animals, plants, rocks, mountains, trees, natural phenomena (i.e. lightening)

**Pantheism** (the view that everything is part of an all-encompassing immanent God and that the Universe (Nature) and God are equivalent (God is understood as an abstract principle representing natural law, existence, and the Universe rather than as an entity with human-like characteristics). Pantheists do not make a distinction between God and Nature. You cannot throw a rock without hitting God; in fact, you cannot throw a rock without throwing God. Or, at least, part of God. God does not watch over or control nature, so God is no longer viewed as supernatural. Instead, God is the complete expression of the natural.

**Christianity** – Christians are monotheists. We believe in one God-supernatural creator of human beings, the natural world, the universe and beyond; of all that is, seen and unseen. Holy Scripture affirms that God is one being. Father, Son, and Spirit are separate persons, functionally different but in every other way the same being. Christians believe the purpose of our life is to be in relationship with a living God (supernatural creator) who cannot be manipulated – but who can and does, in relationship with each individual, hear and respond to our every need. Jesus Christ is the manifestation of God - a perfect mirror reflecting the characteristics of God into the physical world.
Why are some Hogwart pupils drawn to the Dark Arts?

WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Dark Arts</th>
<th>Christianity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Magical spells and practices can be used for malicious purposes, involving wrongdoing or mischief and is used to describe malevolent, dangerous, or harmful magic, evil doing.</td>
<td>There are things you can do that are going to result in evil. Hatred, for instance, always harms. Some of those things might be “magical,” but most often they will be daily choices. And, making those choices always harms us as well as the “victim.” Being able to do the right thing means you are in touch with God, the source of all true power.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being able to do things gives you power.</td>
<td>Being able to do the right thing means you are in touch with God, the source of all true power.</td>
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<td>A chance to be “different”</td>
<td>The opportunity to be uniquely yourself</td>
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<td>You are given an identity</td>
<td>You become who you’ve always been</td>
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<td>Answers to life’s questions</td>
<td>Learning to ask the right questions, and trusting that God will give you answers as you need and can understand them.</td>
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What does the Episcopal Church have to say about all this?

1. Would it be okay to dabble a bit?
   Why would you want to hurt yourself or someone else just because it’s “fun?” – what’s fun about pain?
2. Should something ‘scare’ or frighten us?
   “Perfect love casts out fear.” That’s Bible…
3. Importance of questioning something’s goodness – not it’s reality
   Just because it works doesn’t mean it’s good or right. Nazism worked, after all. And, so does brute force.
4. Use your brains
   If magic is so awesome, how come magicians don’t rule the world? Maybe it’s because ‘dark arts’ promise more than they deliver, and cost way more than the listed purchase price.
5. Seek out the wisdom of Christ, who came not to be served, but to serve.
   Magic is usually about me getting my way, which isn’t a servant mentality.
Magical Beasts

The Bible mentions a few of them…angels, demons, devils, unicorns, dragons, Lilith, Leviathan, Behemoth. Of course, what those words mean can be debated. Maybe the unicorn is a rhino or Leviathan is a crocodile…..

Angels! Angels (Hebrew mal’akh, Greek Aggelos) are messengers. Sometimes they are human beings, sometimes messengers from the spiritual realm. And their message is often frightening – “fear not’ is almost always the way angels start talking with people in Scripture. Jesus implies that children have a special angel who watches over them, and the Old Testament suggests that some angels may have protective roles for countries (Israel) or for individuals. WE call those “guardian angels.” Two angels are named in Scripture, Michael and Gabriel. Another, Raphael, is named in the apocryphal book of Tobit.

Demons! The Book of Revelation talks about “Satan and his angels,’ implying that there are angelic forces which have rebelled against God. Have you ever carried a message that wasn’t from God? Then who “angel,” or messenger, were you? In the Bible, there are demons in the desert (Lilith is one who has a name in Isaiah) and demons which “possess” or afflict people. Jesus spends a lot of time casting out demons, and so do the early apostles and leaders of the Church, so much so that Jesus’ enemies even accused him of being Beelzabeb, the head demon, and tricking people by his actions.

Ghosts! Yep, they’re in there. The only one who appears in the Bible is Samuel, called up from the grave by the “witch” of Endor. Samuel is grumpy and unhappy about being awakened. There are other places where people talk about ghosts or think that they’ve seen them. The Bible doesn’t actually say if they are real or not. It doesn’t seem like having the right answer to the existence of ghosts is really important if it were, Jesus could have set the apostles straight when they thought he was a ghosts walking on water. He could have said, “Hey, there are no ghosts,” or “I’m not a ghost, but hey do exist and can be recognized in the following ways.’ Instead, he simply says ‘I can’t be a ghost – they don’t have flesh and bone like I do.”

Monsters! Well, leviathan and Behemoth and dragons do make their appearances, but it seems more like they’re literary images than actual monsters. No one in the Bible fights dragons or hydras like in Greek mythology. Other, of course, than Michael the Archangel – but his war is against the Devil, who is called a dragon. If you think there’s a monster under the bed, sprinkle some holy water under there and baptize it! A Christian beast is always more pleasant than a heathen one!
Blessings, spells, curses and exorcism

Is a blessing a spell?
Not really. A blessing is asking God to do something wonderful through or for a thing – like bringing about wonderful companionship and good health in a dog. A spell is making things happen by doing the right things and saying the right words. The difference between asking for something to happen and making it happen is the point.

If the Church blesses something, can it also curse?
Uh, technically the answer’s probably yes. But why would we want to? Maybe a more Christian response would be to avoid the thing rather than call down fire and brimstone on it.

What about exorcisms?
In the Anglican tradition, we tend to think that the best protection against such demonic possibilities is to love and serve God. If you are filled with light and holiness, it’s unlikely you need to worry about being filled with darkness and despair. A strong relationship with God is the only exorcism you probably need to worry about. There is a whole book about this put out by the Church of England which states that “it cannot be overstressed that, as it is usually understood, this concept of demonic ‘possession’ is extremely dubious.” In Anglicanism, exorcism is extremely rare and under the director authority of the Bishop. If your house feels haunted, ask for a house blessing, and if you feel driven by dark urges, maybe some counseling is in order.