

Easter

Easter is an important Christian festival. At this time of the year, Christians remember the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The week leading up to Easter Sunday is called Holy Week. During this week, Christians remember the last week of Jesus' life. Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday.

The First Palm Sunday

Jesus and His followers went to Jerusalem for the Passover meal. As Jesus rode the donkey, people cut branches from the palm trees and put them on the ground in front of Him. They shouted, "Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel!" This was to show Jesus that they believed in Him as their King.

To welcome Jesus into Jerusalem, a large crowd waved palm leaves. The leaders saw how the people loved Jesus and they became angry and jealous.

Palm Sunday Today

Palm Sunday is the Sunday before Easter Day. There are special church services which remember Jesus' arrival into Jerusalem. Crosses made from palm leaves are given out as a symbol of the Christian faith.



The First Maundy Thursday

Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and told them they must serve others, just as Jesus had served them.

Jesus celebrated Passover with His disciples. He knew He was soon to die and that this meal would be His last; this is known as the Last Supper. One of Jesus' disciples would betray Him.

During the meal, Jesus broke the bread and blessed it. He told his disciples that the bread was his body and they should eat it in remembrance of him. Jesus then took a cup of wine, blessed it and said that this was His blood. He told the disciples to drink it in remembrance of Him.

Later, Jesus and His disciples went to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus prayed to God and the disciples fell asleep. Judas, one of the disciples, came into the garden with guards and priests. As a signal to the guards, Judas kissed Jesus on the cheek, then the guards arrested Jesus and took Him away.

Maundy Thursday Today

In church, Christians still remember the Last Supper, this is called Holy Communion. It reminds Christians of Jesus' sacrifice.

Did you know

Some churches still hold foot-washing ceremonies on this day.

The First Good Friday

Jesus was handed over to the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, and made to carry a large, wooden cross through the city to the place where he would be crucified. As He walked, the Roman soldiers laughed at Him, beat Him and made Him wear a crown of thorns.

Finally, Jesus was nailed to the cross. He was placed between two robbers who were also being crucified. Soon after, Jesus died.

Good Friday Today

Good Friday is a special day for Christians and services are held in church. They remember how Jesus sacrificed His own life so that others could be forgiven for the bad things they had done. Christians believe that Jesus gave His life for the 'good' of everyone, which is why the day is called 'Good' Friday.

The First Holy Saturday

Jesus' body was placed in a tomb. A heavy stone was rolled in front of the tomb's entrance and guarded by a Roman soldier.



Holy Saturday Today

Church services take place and the Easter candle (or Paschal candle) is lit. This is a time of waiting for Jesus' resurrection.

The First Easter Sunday

On the Sunday morning, one of Jesus' friends, Mary Magdalene, went to visit the tomb. When she got there, she found that the stone had been rolled away and Jesus' body was gone. Over the next 40 days, Jesus appeared to His disciples and to many other people. They realised that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Easter Sunday Today

Easter Sunday is a day of celebration for Christians as they believe that Jesus came back to life. The resurrection of Jesus is very important to Christians as it gives the promise of eternal life in heaven. There are special church services on this day.

Other Easter Traditions

On Easter Sunday, many Christians celebrate with a special meal.

Hot cross buns are eaten at this time of year. The cross reminds Christians of Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection.

Chocolate eggs are also eaten. The egg is a sign of new life, just like when Jesus came back to life.

Many Christians also give and receive Easter cards.



Glossary

disciples: the 12 disciples were men who travelled with Jesus and learned from him. They were Jesus' closest friends.

resurrection: to come back to life

sacrifice: to give something up for the sake of others

Questions

1. On the first Palm Sunday...

Jesus washed the feet of his disciples

Jesus arrived in Jerusalem

Jesus' body was placed in the tomb

Jesus was crucified

2. What might you be given if you go to church on Palm Sunday?

3. The Last Supper took place on ...

Palm Sunday

Good Friday

Easter Day

Maundy Thursday

Holy Saturday

4. What is the significance of Holy Communion during church services today?

5. Why is the day called 'Good Friday'?

6. Match up the correct answers:

Good Friday

A day of Christian celebration when Jesus came back to life.

Holy Saturday

Jesus' crucifixion took place on this day.

Easter Day

Church services take place in the evening and the Easter candle is lit.

7. How did Mary Magdalene feel when she saw that Jesus' body had disappeared from the tomb?

8. In the Garden of Gethsemane...

Judas kissed Jesus on the cheek to identify him to the guards.

Judas shook hands with Jesus to identify him to the guards.

Judas bowed before Jesus to identify him to the guards.

Judas shouted Jesus' name to identify him to the guards.

9. Why is the cross an important Christian symbol?

10. How does eating Easter eggs help Christians to remember Jesus at Easter time?