

RE Knowledge Organiser: What is the real meaning of Easter?

KPI: Know and understand religious beliefs and practices

What is Easter celebrating?

The festival of Easter celebrates the resurrection from the dead of Jesus, three days after he was executed. The Easter story is at the heart of Christianity.

Who do Christians believe Jesus was?

Christians believe that Jesus was the chosen one, the saviour, who through his death on the cross and resurrection, restored the relationship between God and humans and allowed people to get forgiveness for their sins.

Keywords:

- **The Messiah/Christ:** the Hebrew and Greek word for 'the chosen one'.
- **Mass:** is the most important act of worship for Christians.
- **Holy communion:** is one of the seven Holy sacraments. A person accepts a wafer to symbolise their acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice.
- **Passover:** is a Jewish festival to remember how the children of Israel left slavery behind them when they were led out of Egypt by Moses over 3000 years ago.
- **Crucifixion:** a way of executing someone by nailing them to the cross and living them to die.
- **Resurrection:** when someone comes back to life after their death.

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Palm Sunday	It is the first day of Holy Week and celebrates Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem riding on a donkey. Crowds of people came out of the city to greet him, throwing down palm branches on the road.	In most countries this day is celebrated with religious processions with crosses made with palm leaves or other plants to remind of how Jesus was greeted when he arrived in Jerusalem and what came after.
Maundy Thursday	On Maundy Thursday Christians remember when Jesus ate the Passover meal with his disciples, breaking bread and drinking wine, which is now known as the Last Supper. The word 'maundy' comes from the command (mandate) given by Jesus at the Last Supper, that we should love one another. He demonstrated this by washing the feet of the disciples - something a servant would normally do. You can read this story in the Bible in John Ch.13v1-15	Many Christians remember this by sharing bread and wine together in a service called Holy Communion, Eucharist or Mass. It is a reminder that Jesus sacrificed his life for mankind. Roman Catholic church services include a ceremony in which the priest washes the feet of 12 people to commemorate Jesus' washing the feet of his disciples.
Good Friday	Good Friday is the Friday before Easter Sunday. It commemorates the execution of Jesus by crucifixion.	Good Friday is a day of mourning in church. During special Good Friday services Christians remember Jesus' suffering and death on the cross, and what this means for their faith. In some countries, there are special Good Friday processions, or re-enactments of the Crucifixion.
Easter Sunday	Easter Sunday marks Jesus' resurrection. After Jesus was crucified on the Friday (now known as Good Friday), his body was taken down from the cross, and buried in a cave tomb. On the Sunday, Mary Magdalene, followed later by some of Jesus' disciples visited the tomb and found that the stone had been moved, and that Jesus' body had gone. Jesus showed himself to Mary and the disciples that day, and for forty days afterwards by many people.	Easter commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the most important Christian festival, and the one celebrated with the greatest joy. The date of Easter changes each year, and several other Christian festivals fix their dates by reference to Easter. Churches are filled with flowers, and there are special hymns and songs.

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Why is the Easter the most important festival for Christians?

The Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ enforcing the opportunity for life after death to all Christians.

Jesus' death on the cross earned humans forgiveness for their sins.

Easter is a symbol of Jesus' sacrifice for all of the humanity.

Why is the Easter celebrated during the spring?

The story of the crucifixion and resurrection describes the vents taking place during Jewish festival of Passover and Passover is celebrated during the spring.

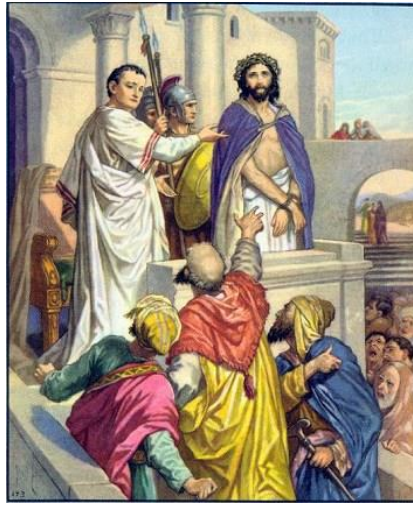
The spring became a symbol of new life and new beginnings and Jesus' resurrection is the beginning of his new life in heaven and marks the new start for human race.

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The trial of Jesus

Jesus and his disciples planned to spend the night in the garden of Gethsemane. Judas Iscariot brought an armed crowd to arrest Jesus in the middle of the night. The Sanhedrin (Jewish High Council) found Jesus guilty of blasphemy for claiming to be the Son of God. The Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, sentenced Jesus to death.



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The crucifixion

What is Crucifixion?

It is a way of executing someone by nailing them to the cross and leaving them to die. It was considered the most dishonourable way to die.

What crimes were punished by crucifixion?

Treason
Piracy
Murder
Often rebels against Rome were punished by crucifixion
A lot of evidence suggests that Roman citizens would normally be given less painful way of execution. Slaves were very often

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The crucifixion of Jesus

- The crucifixion has taken place on Good Friday after Jesus' trial.
- Jesus was trialed and executed by Romans even though it was Jewish priests who made the accusations against him
- Jesus was found guilty of treason and blasphemy
- He was taken to place called Golgotha (Aramaic for Place of Skull), a hill outside of the town, where prisoners were executed
- He was forced to carry his own cross
- Jesus was whipped and made to wear a thorn crown on his head
- Jesus was crucified with two other men, according to Matthew they were rebels, but according to Mark they were thieves.
- The nails were driven through the wrists and ankles of Jesus rather than hands and feet as suggested by medieval paintings.
- Most historians agree that according to evidence Jesus' crucifixion started around 6am and he finally passed away around 3, possibly 4.00pm.
- According to the Bible Jesus sacrificed his life to earn forgiveness for all human kind.
- After his death Jesus' body was taken by Joseph of Arimathea and placed in the tomb

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Two Biblical stories of crucifixion:

The story of crucifixion was recorded by all four authors of the Bible: Matthew 27:32-56, Mark 15:21-38, Luke 23:26-49, and John 19:16-37.

The crucifixion according to Mark: 24 Then the soldiers nailed him to the cross. They divided his clothes and threw dice to decide who would get each piece. 25 It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. 26 A sign announced the charge against him. It read, "The King of the Jews." 27 Two revolutionaries were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.

Jesus' death according to Mark: 33 At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock. 34 Then at three o'clock Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" 37 Then Jesus uttered another loud cry and breathed his last. 38 And the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. 39 When the Roman officer who stood facing him saw how he had died, he exclaimed, "This man truly was the Son of God!"

Why is the Good Friday called a Good Friday?

There are two possible explanation to this:

Firstly Jesus voluntarily gave his life to save human kind and allowed people to ask for God's forgiveness and so this is something good and worth celebrating. Secondly some of the historians suggest that Good Friday was originally called God's Friday but over time the name got misrepresented and became Good Friday instead.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crucifix represents the crucifixion• It is a symbol of Jesus' suffering and self-sacrifice• It is preferred symbol in worship for Catholics | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The cross represents the resurrection• It is a symbol of hope and new beginning• It is preferred symbol in worship for the Protestants |
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The stories of encounters of Jesus after his resurrection:

Jesus Appears to Thomas.

One of the disciples called Thomas was not with the disciples when Jesus came for the first time. Thomas said: "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." A week later Jesus came back to see his disciples and this time Thomas was there. Jesus showed him his wounds and then said: "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Jesus said to him: "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." *John 20:24-29*

Jesus on the road to Emmaus.

Two men of the road to Emmaus were busy discussing the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. They saw the empty tomb but were reluctant to accept the resurrection. A man approached them and asked what they were talking about. The man was Jesus but the travellers did not recognise him. They told him the story of the trial and the crucifixion and the empty tomb. When they finished their story he reminded them about the Jewish teachings about the Messiah. They were relieved and happier to accept the resurrection. They invited the man to dinner. During the dinner he revealed himself to them. They were happy to see Jesus alive and well and came back to Jerusalem to share their story with everyone. *Luke 24:13-35*

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Key facts of the resurrection:

- The resurrection took place on Easter Sunday
- After the crucifixion Jesus' body was placed in the tomb by Joseph of Arimathea
- A large stone was placed in the front of the tomb to protect it
- On Sunday morning Mary Magdalene with some other women went to visit the tomb to embalm the body with spices
- When they arrived Jesus' body was gone and only scraps of linen remained on the floor
- The women were greeted by an angel who explained to them that Jesus has been brought back from the dead.
- Later on women met Jesus who told them to stop grieving him
- Jesus' resurrection was foretold

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Why is resurrection important to Christians:

Resurrection is a proof that life after death exists and gives hope to Christians for an ultimate reward for following Christian teachings in their life.

Resurrection is also a miracle and as only God can perform a miracle it is a proof that Jesus is a son of God.

The resurrection is a confirmation of God's power.

The belief in resurrection is a pillar of Christian faith; if you do not accept the resurrection you cannot accept the existence of God and Jesus.

Resurrection is a symbol of the new beginning for the human race where they can ask God for the forgiveness for their sins. It is also a symbol of Jesus' victory over the death and promise of afterlife for all people.

KPI: The Ascension

The Bible teaches that after Jesus rose from the dead, he spent time teaching his disciples. He told them that he would soon be taken up to heaven but that they would not be left alone. The Holy Spirit would come into the world and help them spread the word of God. Christians call Jesus being taken up to heaven the ascension – this is celebrated on Ascension Sunday.