

Holidays Around the World

# Celebrate Easter

*with Colored Eggs, Flowers,  
and Prayer*

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# colored eggs



^ Painted Easter eggs

In March or April, Christian people all over the world celebrate Easter. We celebrate with colored eggs, flowers, and prayer.

Easter is a time to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. We celebrate the miracle of his coming back to life after death.



^ Spring tulips

We also celebrate spring in all its glory. We give thanks for beautiful blooming flowers, for newborn animals, for sunshine and warm breezes.

# flowers

# prayer

< Women leave an Easter Sunday church service in Ghana.



# We hear about the last days of Jesus.



Christians believe Jesus Christ is the son of God. His story is in the part of the Bible we call the New Testament. Jesus lived about 2,000 years ago.

Jesus taught about love, justice, and forgiveness.

Although Easter is in the spring, some of us start getting ready for it about six weeks before. We observe Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday. During Lent we hear about the last days of Jesus. People in power thought he was a dangerous threat, and they put him to death on a cross.

During Lent we may give up some favorite foods and some fun activities. Lent is a solemn time.

< In the town of Boac, on Marinduque Island in the Philippines, people in an Easter procession act out the last day of Jesus.





^ Celebrators in New Orleans enjoy Mardi Gras parades.

Because Lent is a long, serious time, many people celebrate for days before it begins. On Shrove Tuesday, also called Fat Tuesday, we have carnivals and parties. In New Orleans there is a famous celebration called Mardi Gras, which is French for "Fat Tuesday."

> Stilt walkers show off in Old Havana, Cuba, during Carnival.

> Shrove Tuesday is a time for pancake races in Olney, England.



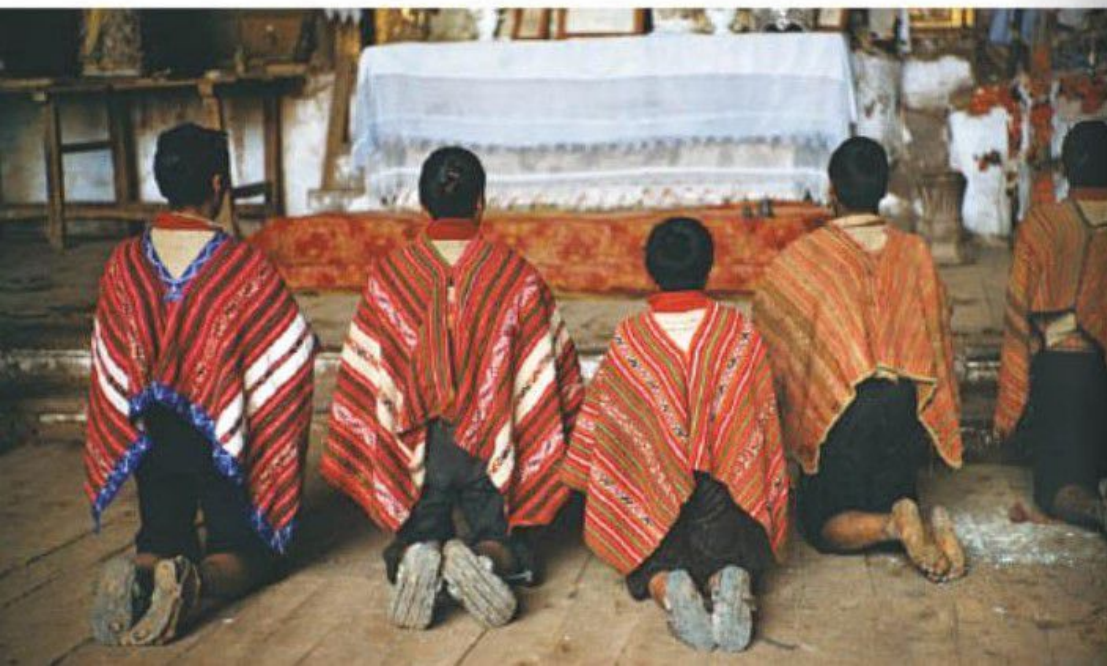
We have carnivals.





The week before Easter Sunday is called Holy Week. It starts with Palm Sunday. On Palm Sunday we have special prayer services. We hear that when Jesus rode into Jerusalem for the Passover festival, people greeted him by waving palm branches and laying them at his feet. We get palm branches at church.

## We go to church



< Boys in the village of Pisac, in Peru, pray at a church service during Holy Week.



^ Christians in Jerusalem, Israel, celebrate Palm Sunday.

On the Thursday before Easter, some of us follow the custom of washing other people's feet, just as Jesus washed the feet of his followers. We also donate money or food to those in need.

On Good Friday, we go to church and pray. Good Friday is a sad day because we remember how Jesus suffered as he died on the cross.





< Swedish girls  
on Easter Eve.

On Easter Eve we celebrate the light of Jesus. For many of us it is the most important celebration of the year. In many churches, people make commitments to Christianity—we have baptisms and confirmations.

# We celebrate the



< In Peremilovo, Russia, people hold candles during a church service the night before Easter.



Sparks fly at an Easter Eve bonfire in Ratzeburg, Germany.

# light of Jesus.

Easter Eve is also a time for fun. In Sweden, girls knock on doors, and ask for candy and coins. Many towns in Germany have bonfires on Easter Eve. We also have Easter Eve bonfires in Texas.



# We celebrate the miracle.

On Easter Sunday, we are filled with joy as we celebrate the miracle of Jesus' resurrection. We hear that on the third day after Jesus died, Mary Magdalene and the other women who followed Jesus went to the cave tomb where he was buried. They were shocked to find that the rock in front of his tomb was rolled away and the tomb was empty.

In the next 40 days some people saw Jesus on Earth. Then Jesus ascended, or went up, to Heaven. His followers preached about Jesus and spread the good news. That is how the religion of Christianity began.

< *Thousands of people gather for Easter Sunday Mass every year in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, in Rome, Italy. The leader of the Roman Catholic Church, known as the Pope, leads the service.*







^ An Easter basket

Easter morning brings special treats, too. Could it be the Easter Bunny was here? We get baskets of eggs—colored, decorated, and chocolate! Yummmm. In Germany, it's the Easter Hare who brings us eggs. Bunnies, chicks, and eggs are symbols of new life.

## We go on Easter



## egg hunts.

^ Everyone has fun at an Easter egg hunt in Fairfield, Connecticut.

We do lots of fun things with eggs on Easter. We go on Easter egg hunts. We find eggs hidden in the grass, behind cushions, and even in the mailbox. We get to keep what we find!

< Simone Jones of Natchez, Mississippi, finds candy-filled Easter eggs in her mailbox during a neighborhood egg hunt.







< Alberta Knight and Celia Fockler fill Easter eggs with candy and gift certificates at the Senior Center in Pullman, Washington. Children will search for more than 5,000 eggs at the city's annual egg hunt.

Decorating eggs is a tradition that goes back a long time. We decorate eggs in many ways. We dye them, we paint them, we draw on them.

## Decorating eggs



is a tradition.

We have egg rolling contests, too. Whoever gets an egg the farthest without breaking it, wins. We even have egg tapping contests. We tap each other's eggs together. If yours doesn't break you get to keep the other egg. Some of us even have egg fights!

In Greece and some other countries it is a custom to tap a friend's egg with yours and say, "Christ is risen." The friend taps back and says, "He is risen indeed."

^ Children in Washington, D.C., enjoy themselves at the White House Easter Egg Roll, an event held every year, rain or shine.

< The Pacheco children dye eggs for their family's Easter egg hunt in Las Cruces, New Mexico.





> Pretty in pink, Dakota the dog takes a rest on Fifth Avenue during the Easter Parade.



# We have Easter parades.

^ A group of friends calling themselves the "City Chicks" march up Fifth Avenue in New York City during the Easter Parade.

> Jumpin' bunnies! It's a guitar player at the Easter Parade in Toronto, Canada.



Easter is a time to show off our new spring clothes, too. We even have Easter parades! In New York City there is a parade every year. We carry Easter lilies and other flowers. Girls and women put on pretty hats called Easter bonnets. We sing the words to an old song, "In your Easter bonnet, with all the frills upon it; You'll be the grandest lady in the Easter parade."



# “Delicious!”

A girl picks out chocolate for Easter in Damascus, Syria.

On Easter we eat lots of delicious food. We sit down with our families for an Easter dinner. We eat roast lamb, or glazed ham, turkey, or chicken. We eat potatoes or pasta and lots of spring vegetables. We finish with yummy desserts and of course...



Λ A chocolate bunny

Easter candy! We eat lots of candy! Chocolate bunnies, cream-filled chocolate eggs, jelly beans, marshmallow chicks, and more.




Λ Jelly beans

✓ Dylan Roden decorates very large Easter eggs at a chocolate factory in Sydney, Australia. Australians eat more chocolate Easter eggs than anyone else in the world!







Everywhere in the world Easter is  
a time to rejoice and celebrate. We celebrate  
the resurrection of Jesus, we celebrate spring,  
we celebrate life.

Easter is a time  
to rejoice.

*In Kona, Hawaii, people from  
several churches come together  
to celebrate Easter with a hula.*



# We Sing with Joy: Hymns for Easter

**S**inging is a big part of Easter celebrations. Here are two hymns often sung at Eastertime.

## THE EXULTET

The "Exsultet" was written about 1,500 years ago. It is sung during the Easter Vigil, held the night before Easter Sunday. The church is dark, and the deacon comes in holding the Paschal candle. The candle's flame represents the light of Jesus. The "Exsultet" is very long. Here is part of it:

*Rejoice now, heavenly hosts and choirs of angels, and let your trumpets shout Salvation for the victory of our mighty King...*

*Rejoice and sing now, all the round earth, bright with a glorious splendor, for darkness has been vanquished by our eternal King...*

*Rejoice and be glad now, Mother Church, and let your holy courts, in radiant light, resound with the praises of your people...*

*This is the night, when Christ broke the bonds of death and hell, and rose victorious from the grave...*

*Holy Father, accept our evening sacrifice, the offering of this candle in your honor. May it shine continually to drive away all darkness. May Christ, the Morning Star who knows no setting, find it ever burning—he who gives his light to all creation, and who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.*



*A Chinese Catholics sing during an Easter service in Beijing, China.*

## THE PASCHAL TROPARION

People in the Eastern Orthodox tradition sing this hymn during the Easter Vigil and throughout the Easter season. It comes from the very beginnings of Christianity and is found in all the languages of the Eastern Church (such as Greek and Russian).

*Christ is risen from the dead,  
Trampling down death by death,  
And upon those in the tombs  
Bestowing life!*