

What is Easter?

(A Reading Comprehension Exercise)

The early Christian church celebrated Easter at different times. Then, in 325 A.D. the Council of Nicaea decided that the holiday would be the first Sunday after the first full moon after March 21. This means Easter will always be sometime between March 22 and April 25.

Easter is a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Many churches have an outdoor Easter services at sunrise. This tradition developed from the Bible story which tells us that Jesus' friends first discovered that He had risen from the dead at dawn on the third day after His crucifixion.

Many people decorate with colored Easter eggs and bunny rabbits. These are not a part of the original Easter story of the Bible. However, eggs remind people of new life and can be a reminder of the new spiritual life we can have through Jesus Christ. Many baby animals, such as bunnies and lambs, are born in the spring so they have become associated with Easter.

People often use lilies and other fresh flowers to decorate their homes and churches at Easter time. The large white lily blossoms remind them of the clean, new life they can have because of Jesus Christ's death and return to life. The shape of the lilies—like trumpets—represent the wonderful announcement that "He is risen!" When the pastor of a church says, "He is risen!" the congregation replies, "He is risen indeed!"

Vocabulary Draw lines to connect the correct word to the picture:

bunny/bunnies

crucifixion

full moon

lily/lilies

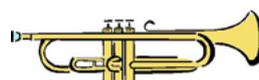
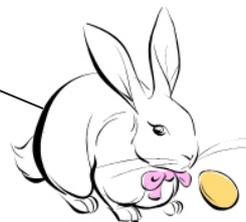
dawn/sunrise

trumpets

colored eggs

lambs

celebrate/celebrated



Additional vocabulary words:

life
decorate
crucifixion
sunrise
resurrection
risen

Sentence Completion 1

Use the vocabulary words to complete the sentences below:

1. Jesus Christ died by _____.
2. Three days later he returned to _____.
3. Easter eggs are used to _____, and they remind people of the new life they can have because of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection.
4. Some churches have Easter services at _____ because that's when Jesus' friends discovered His tomb was empty.

Sentence Completion II

Use the vocabulary words to complete the sentences below.

1. The date for Easter is decided by finding the first Sunday after the first _____ after March 21.
2. _____ are a favorite flower used to decorate for Easter and are shaped like _____.
3. Easter is primarily a holiday celebrating the _____ of Jesus from the dead.
4. Many baby animals, such as _____ and _____, are born in the spring.
5. He is _____ indeed!

Discuss Together

1. Who celebrates Easter?
2. What are they celebrating?
3. How is the actual date for Easter decided every year?
4. Why do some churches have a service at sunrise?
5. Why are eggs used as Easter decorations?