

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

The Christian calendar is based on Christian Festivals and starts with ADVENT, when Christians prepare for CHRISTMAS and the birth of JESUS. 12 days after Christmas is EPIPHANY. Christians remember the coming of 3 wise men which showed Jesus was the MESSIAH for everyone not just the JEWS.

LENT is the 40 days before EASTER and is a time of preparation and reflection. Christians remember the death of Jesus on GOOD FRIDAY and Jesus' RESURRECTION on EASTER SUNDAY.

40 days after EASTER is ASCENSION day when Christians remember Jesus ascending into HEAVEN to join God. 10 days later is PENTECOST which Christians regard as the birth of the Christian Church.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

The 4 Sundays leading up to Christmas are called ADVENT and prepares Christians for the birth of Jesus who they believe to be the MESSIAH. They believe the whole of human history is leading up to the birth of Jesus. During Advent Christians remember the Creation, the PROPHETS of the OLD TESTAMENT, MARY the mother of Jesus and JOHN THE BAPTIST Jesus' cousin who prepared the way for the Messiah. Christian's celebrate Christmas in many ways, Attending services such as Nativity services, Carol services, Midnight mass and Christmas day service. Christians will light a candle on each of the Advent Sundays for the creation, prophets, Mary and John the Baptist, one white central candle is lit on Christmas day for Jesus.



Christians will send cards with religious images associated with Christmas and will decorate their houses including trees which their triangular shape represents the HOLY SPIRIT.



LENT

Christians prepare for the events of Easter during the 40 days of LENT which begins on ASH WEDNESDAY when Christians might attend church and have the sign of the cross marked on their forehead using ash from the burnt PALM CROSSES given out the previous year on PALM SUNDAY. Christians often give up something during LENT to remember Jesus went without food for 40 days in the wilderness and give money to charity. In order that they get rid of rich food they have SHROVE TUESDAY or PANCAKE day before ASH WEDNESDAY.



HOLY WEEK

HOLY WEEK leads up to Jesus' death. On the Sunday Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a colt as the prophets said the Messiah would do. Christians today re-enact this and are given palm crosses to remember Jesus being welcomed by people waving palm branches and shouting "Hosannah here comes the king of the Jews." On Monday Jesus went to the Temple and got angry as God's house was being disrespected by a market taking place, the Jewish leaders plot to kill Jesus. On the Thursday Jesus has his last supper with his disciples where he predicts his death using bread and wine. Christians go to Church on MAUNDY THURSDAY, have the EUCHARIST and sometimes the priest will wash the feet of some of the congregation as Jesus washed his disciples feet. Jesus is arrested and after several trials is found guilty of BLASPHEMY, disrespecting God's name. The Roman Governor Pilate sends Jesus for crucifixion on what Christians call GOOD FRIDAY. Services are held with a solemn atmosphere with no coloured cloth on the altar. Some Christians process in silence, carrying a large wooden cross stopping to pray at regular points otherwise remaining in silence. On Good Friday hot crossed buns are eaten.



EASTER SUNDAY

Easter Sunday celebrates the belief that Jesus was resurrected from the dead, atoning for mankind's sins. Some Christians hold a vigil on the Saturday night, others get up on the Sunday morning and hold a sunrise service often outside on high ground with a Eucharist to follow. There will be a big service in the morning when the altar cloth will be gold and white for celebration. Traditionally decorated hard boiled eggs are smashed as worshippers leave representing the stone in front of the tomb opening and the new life of Jesus' resurrection. These have been replaced with chocolate Easter eggs. Cards are also exchanged with images associated with Easter.



To find out more please open the links below

Palm Sunday <https://request.org.uk/festivals/holy-week-and-easter/palm-sunday/#>

Easter <https://request.org.uk/festivals/holy-week-and-easter/why-is-the-resurrection-so-important-to-christians/>

Christmas <https://request.org.uk/festivals/christmas/why-christmas/#>