

# EASTER

Why do we celebrate Easter?



## When is Easter?

The date of Easter Sunday varies from year to year. It is celebrated on the first Sunday after the full moon, on or after 21 March.

In 2020 Easter Sunday is on 12 April. The week leading up to Easter is called the Holy Week.

## What is Good Friday?

And why is it called 'good' if it is about Jesus dying on a cross? On Good Friday, we remember that Jesus suffered and died on the cross as the ultimate sacrifice for our sin. Then 3 day later he rose again declaring that he had victory over sin and death. We refer to it as good Friday because although it was a sad day and horrific in itself, Easter was to follow and this is the best news we have. Jesus endured the cross on Good Friday and conquered death knowing it led to his resurrection, our salvation, and the beginning of God's reign of righteousness and peace.



### **Ash Wednesday ( the first day of Lent)**

What is Ash Wednesday? Ash Wednesday marks the first day of the period before Easter that some refer to as Lent. It comes from a Jewish tradition of repenting and praying. To symbolise this, ashes can be worn on the forehead in the shape of a cross with the ashes symbolising dust from which God made us. They also represent our grief as we have sinned against God. The ashes are palm branches that have been blessed from the previous year's Palm Sunday. The ashes are placed on the head accompanied by the words "Repent, and believe in the Gospel" or "Remember that you are dust, and to dust, you shall return." Ash Wednesday is more often observed in the Catholic church than in other denominations.

**Ashes drew on the head in the shape of a cross symbolising the dust from which God made us. This also represents our grief as we have sinned against God.**

## What is the meaning of Lent?

Lent is the period of time that begins with Ash Wednesday and ends on Easter Sunday. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the 40 days (excluding Sundays) that Jesus spent in the desert where he fasted, prayed and was tempted before Easter Sunday where we remember the resurrection of Jesus 3 days after he was crucified. As Christians, we are not required to observe Lent and it is not something that is talked about in the Bible. However, many Christians may choose to 'do Lent' as a way of preparing their hearts for Easter. During this time, they may choose to fast, reflect and pray.

Common Lenten sacrifices include giving up chocolate, soft drinks, and sweets. Some Christians choose to give up alcoholic beverages

Ash Wednesday is a Christian holy day of prayer and fasting. It is preceded by Shrove Tuesday and falls on the first day of Lent, the six weeks of penitence before Easter.

## What is Palm Sunday?

Palm Sunday is the week before Easter Sunday when we celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. As he entered Jerusalem on a donkey, the people waved palm branches, laid them on the ground and shouted Hosanna. Hosanna meant 'save now' and the palm branches were a sign of honour as they symbolise goodness and victor



The picture is showing Jesus entering Jerusalem on the Sunday before Easter ( Palm Sunday). Palm branches from the crowds were scattered in front of Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem. Other tree branches olive, willow, and yew.

## Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday marks Jesus's **resurrection**. After Jesus was crucified on the Friday his body was taken down from the cross and buried in a cave tomb. The tomb was guarded by Roman soldiers and an enormous stone was put over the entrance.

On Sunday **Mary Magdalene** and some of Jesus's disciples visited the tomb. They found the stone had been moved and that Jesus's body had gone. Jesus was seen later that day by Mary and the disciples, and for forty days afterwards by many people. His followers realised that God had raised Jesus from the dead. Christians call this the resurrection.

# Easter Eggs

## The Easter egg

An egg is a symbol of new life. For Christians, Easter eggs are used as a symbol for the resurrection of Jesus.

Christians believe that, through his resurrection, Jesus overcame death and sin. This offers people the promise of eternal life if they follow his teachings.

Nowadays, most Easter eggs are made from chocolate and covered in coloured foil. Traditionally though, chicken eggs would be hard boiled and then decorated by hand. Traditional Easter egg hunts remain popular with both Christian and non-Christian children.

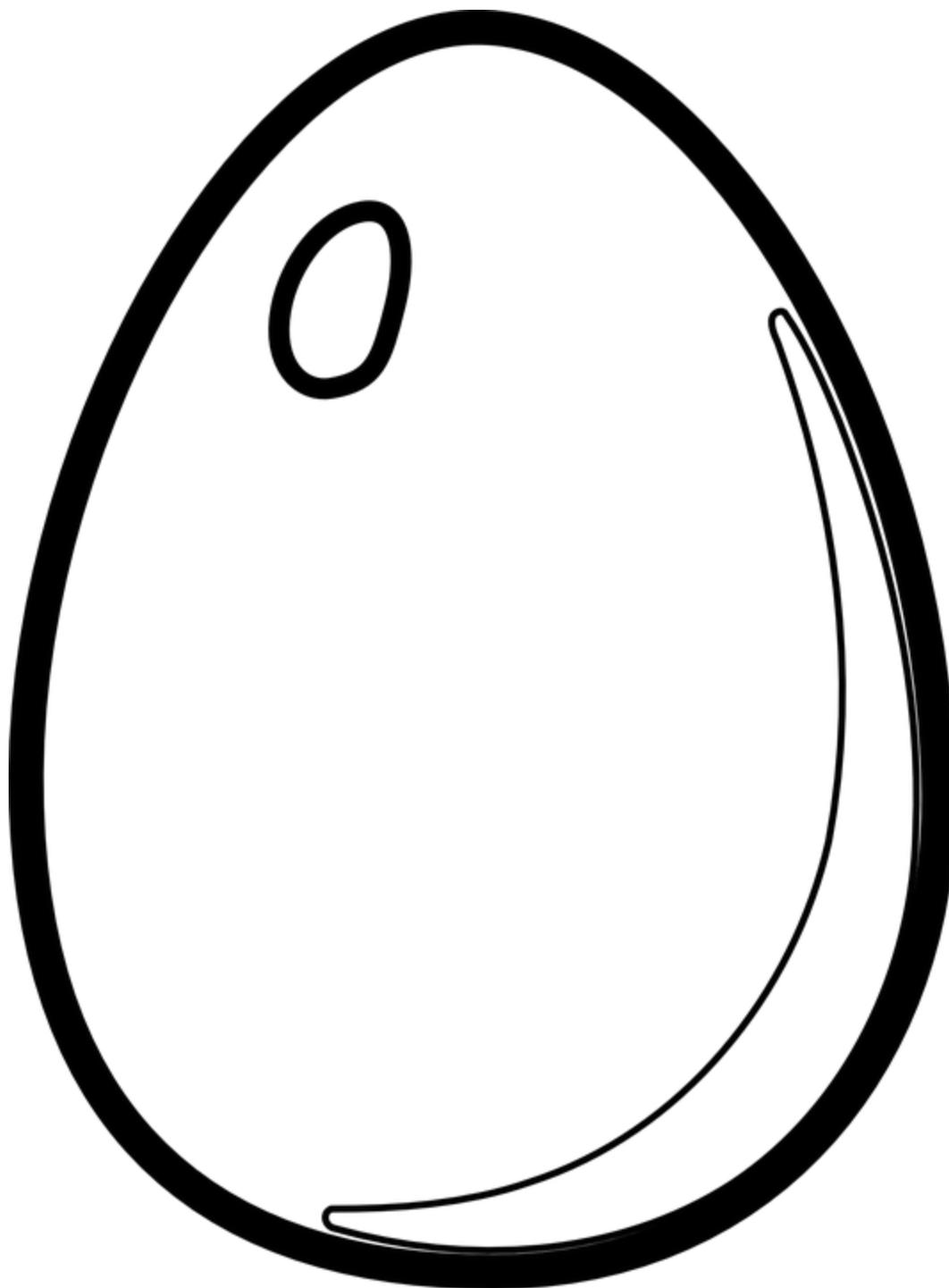
Another egg-shaped candy, the jelly bean, became associated with Easter in the 1930s (although the jelly bean's origins reportedly date all the way back to a Biblical-era concoction called a Turkish Delight).



## The Easter Bunny

The Easter bunny was introduced to America by German immigrants who brought over their stories of an egg-laying hare. The decoration of eggs is believed to date back to at least the 13th century, while the rite of the Easter parade has even older roots. Other traditions, such as the consumption of Easter eggs, are among the modern additions to the celebration of this early springtime holiday.





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