

## Common Questions Kids Ask about Lent, Holy Week, and Easter— and How to Answer Them!



### 1. What does the word “Lent” mean?

The word “Lent” comes from the Old English word *lencten*, which simply means “spring”—springtime! But since way more than a thousand years ago (in 800s), “Lent” has been used as the name of the church season that comes right before Easter.

### 2. How many days are in Lent?

Lent is the period of 40 days leading up to Easter. The number 40 represents the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert being tempted by Satan after getting baptized in the Jordan River.

### 3. What is the first day of Lent called?

It is called Ash Wednesday, when some Christians have their foreheads marked with ashes in the shape of a cross to remind them of Jesus’ death on the cross for our sins.

### 4. What is “Fat Tuesday”—is it part of Lent, and why is called “Fat”?

The day before Ash Wednesday, Fat Tuesday is not part of Lent. It’s called “Fat” because some people eat lots of rich, fatty foods on that day, since on the next day—Ash Wednesday—some Christians start fasting, like Jesus did during his 40 days in the desert.

### 5. What is “Palm Sunday” and why is it called “Palm” Sunday?

It’s what we call the Sunday before Easter. “Palm” Sunday remembers the day when Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey and the people “paved” the road with palm branches to honor him—like when people today put down a red carpet for people to walk on to give them extra-special treatment.

### 6. When is “Holy Week,” and what does it mean?

The seven days before Easter, starting with Palm Sunday, are called Holy Week. The week is called “Holy” because it’s the week leading up to and including Jesus’ perfect sacrifice of himself on the cross.

### 7. What is Maundy Thursday?

It’s the Thursday before Easter—the Thursday of Holy Week, so it’s also called “Holy Thursday.” It helps us remember the “Last Supper,” when Jesus shared the Passover meal with his 12 disciples before he was crucified. At the Last Supper, Jesus started the practice of Communion when he gave them the bread and the wine.

### 8. But what does “Maundy” mean?

It comes from an old English word that means “command.” At the Last Supper, Jesus gave a new commandment to his disciples after he washed their feet (which was a job that even a servant wasn’t expected to do for anyone). Jesus’ new commandment was, “Love one another” (John 13:34).

### 9. Why do we call the next day “Good” Friday if that’s the day we remember that Jesus died?

Some people say that “good” used to be another way of saying “holy,” and Good Friday is the Friday of Holy Week—so it’s Holy Friday. Some people say that “Good Friday” used to be a way of saying “God’s” Friday. Either way, Good Friday is the day we remember Jesus’ goodness to us by dying for our sins so that we don’t have to. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says: “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd

lays down his life for the sheep [that means us]. . . . No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again” (John 10:11, 18).

10. Is there a Holy Saturday?

Yes—it comes between Good Friday and Easter, and it’s on Holy Saturday that we especially remember Jesus’ lying in the tomb after he was crucified and died.

11. What does Easter celebrate?

Jesus’ resurrection—his rising from the dead, so that if we have faith in Jesus, we can have eternal life with him! In the Gospel of John Jesus also says: “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die” (John 11:25-26).

12. What date do we celebrate Easter on?

Easter is always celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after the first day of spring—so the date of Easter changes every year, but it is always on a Sunday!

13. What do eggs have to do with Easter?

Eggs represent new life! In ancient times, they were used in celebrations of springtime, when nature springs back to life after the wintertime, just like we celebrate Jesus’ rising to new life on Easter Sunday in the early spring! Many Christians think of the egg’s hard shell as representing Jesus’ tomb, which was sealed shut, and they crack the Easter eggs to represent Jesus’ coming out of the tomb alive!

14. Why do people *dye* the Easter eggs?

People started dying Easter eggs red to represent the blood of Jesus, which he shed on the cross. Now people dye them all sorts of springtime colors that represent new life.

15. But bunny rabbits don’t lay eggs, so why is there an Easter *Bunny*?

The legend of the Easter Bunny started more than 500 years ago—probably because rabbits have lots of babies, so rabbits also became a symbol of new life, like eggs did even earlier. But we know the legend is just a made-up story because it says that the Easter Bunny not only decorates and hides the eggs but also *lays* the eggs!

16. Is the Easter Bunny supposed to live on Easter Island?

Actually, no. It’s only called “Easter” Island because the first visitor from Europe (he was a Dutch explorer who came there from the Netherlands almost 300 years ago)—he landed there on Easter Sunday in 1722. Easter Island is part of the country of Chile, in South America—but it’s way out in the Pacific Ocean. It’s one of the most remote islands in the world. There’s no way the Easter Bunny could have hopped clear out there!