



# Easter and Passover at Highlands School

## Spring religious festivals

During the month of April, there are three important festivals.



## Similarities between Judaism, Christianity and Islam

**These three religions are all connected.**

- They all believe that their religion can be traced back to the prophet Abraham/Ibrahim who devoted himself to one God.
- Judaism started in around 2,000BC, making it the oldest of the three religions.
- Christianity followed 2,000 years after Judaism.
- Islam is the youngest of the three religions and started in probably 610CE.
- They all have some connection to Jesus.
- Jesus was Jewish. He started his own new way of practicing Judaism and this later became its own religion now known as Christianity.
- The Qur'an (the Muslim holy book) states that Jesus (Isa) is a prophet.
- The Torah is the Jewish holy book, but it is also the first five books of the Bible.



# Easter - Christianity

- Easter is the most important festival in the Christian calendar. It celebrates Jesus' resurrection (rising from the dead), three days after he was crucified.
- When is Easter? This year, Easter is celebrated on the following days.
  - From 7th - 10th April.
  - 7th April - Good Friday (when Jesus was crucified).
  - 9th April - Easter Sunday (when Jesus resurrected).
- The week leading up to Easter is called Holy Week. Churches hold special services during this week to commemorate important events, e.g. Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Easter marks the end of Lent - the 40 days when Jesus went into the desert to fast and was tempted by the Devil.

- Easter is important to Christians because they believe that when Jesus died on the cross, he sacrificed his life for the sins of humanity. This is why he is seen as a 'Saviour' to Christians.
- Christians believe that if they believe in Jesus, as forgiveness for their sins and follow his teachings, then they will go to heaven.





# Orthodox Easter

- Orthodox Christians (for example Greek Orthodox) around the world celebrate Easter later than most in the western world. This is because they use a different calendar to work out what day Easter should fall on.
- It also remembers the resurrection of Jesus after his crucifixion.
- Some traditional customs which take place include greeting friends and family with the phrase “Christos Anesti” (Greek for “Christ is Risen”).
- Eggs are a symbol of new life. Early Christians used eggs to symbolise the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- In the Orthodox tradition, eggs are dyed red to represent the blood of Jesus that was shed on the cross.
- This year, Orthodox Easter falls on Sunday 16th April.



# Passover - Judaism

- During the festival of Passover, Jewish people remember when they were Israelite slaves in Ancient Egypt, and God freed them to make their journey to the promised land.
- Moses was the prophet that God chose to lead the Israelite slaves out of Egypt.
- This year, Passover runs from 5th April - 13th April.
- Jewish people celebrate Passover by having a special meal on the evening before Passover begins. This is known as Seder night.
- During the meal, families sing songs, say prayers, and retell the story - all of which are about the Israelite (Jewish) exodus (departure) from slavery in ancient Egypt.
- There is a special plate on the table with foods which symbolise the Passover story.
- Passover lasts for eight days and during this time, Jewish people should not eat bread or anything that contains yeast. Instead, they eat a thin, cracker type of bread called Matza.
- This is because in the Torah, it says when the Israelites escaped slavery in Egypt, they did not have enough time to bake proper bread for their long journey, and instead they had unleavened bread (bread that has not risen).





## Easter key messages

**New life**

**Forgiveness**

**Redemption**

## Passover key messages

**God's  
benevolence**

**Freedom**

**Human  
rights**