

DECODING easter

Easter is full of symbolism and five of these symbols—cross, egg, rabbit, full moon and hot cross bun—all have a purpose in telling the story of Jesus. But what do they have to do with the death of Jesus and the good news that Jesus is alive? Why does a bunny deliver eggs and not a chicken or some other egg laying animal? It'll all make sense once you match each of the sentences with the symbol it relates to most correctly!

In April it is sometimes known as the 'Egg Moon'.

1. **Q** cross **I** bunny **J** moon **N** buns

The exact date of Jesus' death and burial was not recorded at the time but we know the first Easter happened after Passover. Because Passover follows a lunar cycle, the date changes every year and so Easter changes too.

2. **F** egg **R** bunny **E** moon **N** buns

As Easter began in the Northern hemisphere it is celebrated in spring; a time of birth and new life. During spring these are laid and hatched and so they are a powerful symbol of life.

3. **S** egg **V** bunny **A** moon **M** buns

In 1500's England spice bread was only allowed to be sold on special occasions; at burials, Christmas or Good Friday.

4. **L** egg **H** bunny **T** moon **U** buns

Nothing to do with the real Easter but a cute symbol of hope, rebirth and new life.

5. **J** cross **S** bunny **N** moon **V** buns

Each year Easter occurs on the Sunday after the Paschal Full Moon, which is the first full moon after 21 March.

6. **E** egg **G** bunny **L** moon **T** buns

In Medieval England, these were given out to the needy on special days; the cross reminded eaters of Jesus.

7. **Z** egg **V** bunny **I** moon **O** buns

Known to have lots of babies and so they have become a symbol of life and of spring time.

8. **P** egg **V** bunny **S** moon **E** buns

Sometimes rolled down hills in a celebration of the rock that was rolled away from Jesus' tomb.

9. **E** egg **D** bunny **C** moon **U** buns

People were forbidden to eat this food during Lent (40 days before Easter Sunday) and so they were a special treat on Easter Sunday.

10. **S** egg **A** bunny **C** moon **W** cross



Eaten on Good Friday the cross on top is a reminder that Jesus died so our sins can be forgiven!

11. **A** egg **R** bunny **T** moon **U** buns

In many countries it is not a 'man in the moon' but a 'hare in the moon' and so it represents the lunar cycle that sets the date for Easter each year.

12. **A** egg **O** bunny **C** cross **D** buns

This symbol reminds us that Jesus died to save us.

13. **U** cross **F** bunny **E** moon **K** buns

At Easter time there's lots of bunnies and hot cross buns around but if asked what it is about Easter that you love lots of people would say Easter eggs—decorated, hand-painted or chocolate—yum!

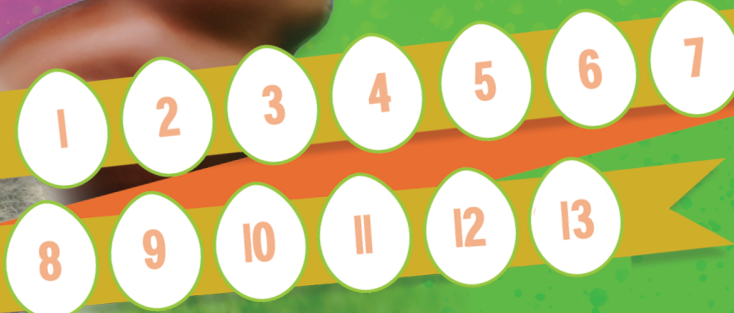
No-one really knows why eggs have become an Easter symbol. Some Christians say the egg, because of its shape, represents the rock that was rolled in front of the tomb of Jesus. Some say a hollow egg represents Jesus' empty tomb.

The egg however is perhaps the oldest and most well-known symbol around the world of new life and that's exactly what Easter is about. Easter is a time to celebrate and remember that God loves each one of us so much that he sent his son Jesus to Earth to forgive us for any wrong things we've done so we can begin a new life as part of God's family. The Bible says, 'Anyone who belongs to Jesus is a new person. The past is forgotten, and everything is new,' 2 Corinthians 5:17.

So, when you're eating your Easter eggs remember to celebrate that Jesus is alive and that he loves you. If you haven't already done so, ask Jesus to be your friend and begin your new life. You may not look different on the outside but on the inside you'll change as you try and live like Jesus by showing love to others and doing the things he wants you to do. It's not only the most important thing you can ever do in life, it's the most eggs-citing!

Now let's decode the Easter message.

Can you match the explanations to the Easter symbols on this page? Colour in the right eggs to get the letters 1-13. Then use the letters to finish the sentence: 'Tell the world ...'



Answer: