

St. George's Day

Saint George is the patron saint of many countries around the world, including England.

St. George's Day is celebrated on 23rd April every year. The symbol of Saint George is a red cross on a white background. This is also the flag of England and a part of the flag of Great Britain.



Who Was the Real Saint George?

Saint George was a soldier who was born in the year AD 270 in Eastern Turkey. He and his family were Christian and lived their lives following Christian values. When he was 17 years old, following the deaths of his father and mother, he joined the Roman army.

By the age of 30, Saint George was promoted to a higher rank and became an imperial guard of the Emperor, Diocletian. In AD 303, the emperor stated that all Roman soldiers must worship Roman gods rather than follow their Christian faith. Saint George pleaded with him to stop but Diocletian refused. He even tried to bribe Saint George to give up his Christian beliefs. Saint George was imprisoned and tortured but didn't deny his faith, continuing to spread the word of Christianity. People thought of him as extremely brave.

23rd April was named St. George's Day in 1415 because this was thought to be the day that Saint George died in AD 303.

Did You Know...?

Saint George is also the patron saint of scouts, farmers, shepherds, soldiers and archers.

What Is the Legend of Saint George?

There is a famous legend about Saint George slaying a dragon to rescue a princess, although these stories were only told for the first time in the 11th century

– 700 years after

Saint George's death. Many people believe

this legend to be symbolic of Saint

George's triumph over evil

(the dragon) by refusing to give up his Christian faith despite facing punishment.



St. George's Day around the World

England

One custom is to wear a red rose on your jacket. Church services are held during which the hymn Jerusalem is usually sung. Morris dancers are often seen at celebrations.

Catalonia, Spain

In Catalonia, Spain, there is a similar legend about Saint George (Sant Jordi) slaying a dragon. From the blood that flowed from the lifeless body of the dragon, a red rose appeared, which Saint George handed to the princess he had saved. A public holiday, with similarities to Valentine's Day, is held - roses are given to loved ones.

Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, St. George's Day is celebrated on 6th May. It is also known as Army Day. Many people walk in the early morning, washing their faces in the fresh dew, which has been blessed by Saint George at the beginning of spring.

Croatia

Saint George is one of the most important saints in Croatia as the patron saint of the military. This holiday is also a time to celebrate the return of spring, decorating homes with twigs and flowers and lighting fires.

Questions

1. Saint George pleaded with him to stop...

What does 'pleaded' mean? Tick one.

- told
 appealed
 argued
 shouted

2. Match the event to the year that it happened.

Saint George was born.

1415

Saint George died.

AD 270

April 23rd was named as St. George's Day.

AD 303

3. Give two things that people in Croatia do on St. George's Day.

- _____
- _____

4. What other name is St. George's Day given in Bulgaria?

5. Find and copy a phrase which tells you that Saint George was a courageous man.

6. Why did Saint George argue with Diocletian?

7. Why do you think a dragon is used as a symbol of evil? Explain your answer.

8. In which country would you like to celebrate St. George's Day? Explain your answer.

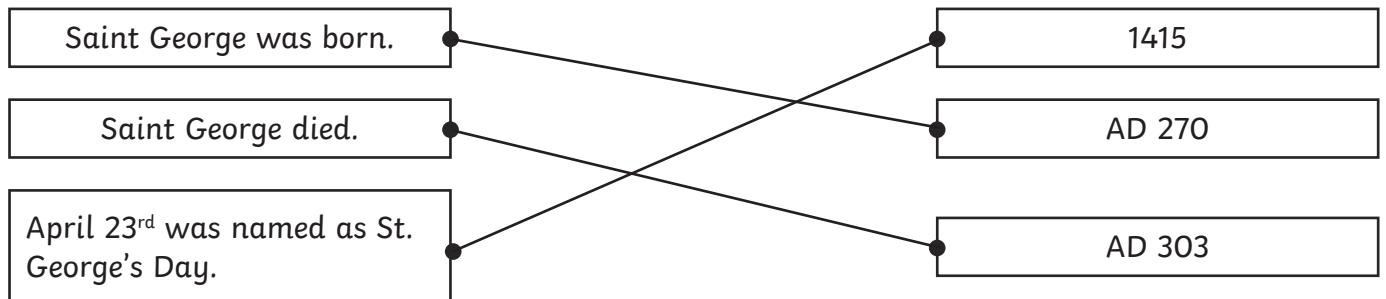
Answers

1. **Saint George pleaded with him to stop...**

What does pleaded mean? Tick one.

appealed

2. Match the event to the year that it happened.



3. Give two things that people in Croatia do on St. George's Day.
Accept the following: People decorate their homes with twigs and flowers; people light fires.
4. What other name is St. George's Day given in Bulgaria?
St. George's Day is given the name Army Day in Bulgaria.
5. Find and copy a phrase which tells you that **Saint George was a courageous man. extremely brave**
6. Why did Saint George argue with Diocletian?
Pupils' own responses, such as: Saint George had a strong Christian faith, so when the emperor told him he must worship Roman gods, he fought for his beliefs.
7. Why do you think a dragon is used as a symbol of evil? Explain your answer.
Pupils' own responses, such as: Dragons are large and fierce and often used in stories as a bad character – they symbolise evil due to breathing fire and being difficult to destroy.
8. In which country would you like to celebrate St. George's Day? Explain your answer.
Pupils' own responses, such as: I would like to celebrate St. George's Day in Bulgaria because I think it would be fun to get up early to walk and wash my face with dew.

St. George's Day

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Who Was the Real Saint George?

Saint George was a soldier who was born in the year AD 270 in Cappadocia, which is now in Eastern Turkey. He and his family were Christian and lived their lives following Christian values. When he was 17 years old, following the deaths of his father and mother, he joined the Roman army just as his father had before him.

By the age of 30, Saint George was promoted to a higher rank and became an imperial guard of the Emperor, Diocletian. In AD 303, the emperor began to **persecute** Christian people, forcing them to give up all of their possessions and jobs. He also stated that all Roman soldiers must worship Roman gods. Saint George pleaded with him to stop but Diocletian refused and even tried to bribe Saint George to give up his Christian beliefs. Saint George was imprisoned and tortured but didn't deny his faith and carried on spreading the word of Christianity until his death on 23rd April in AD 303. His body was returned to Lydda where it was buried - Christian people soon came to honour him as a **martyr**.

23rd April was named St. George's Day in 1415 when it became a national feast day.



What Is the Legend of Saint George?

There is a famous legend about Saint George slaying a dragon to rescue a princess, although these stories were only told for the first time in the 11th century

– 700 years after Saint George's death. The

legend describes Saint George travelling to

Libya, where a poison-

spewing dragon was living in a lake, terrorising the local people, taking young girls chosen by lottery as sacrifices. When it fell upon the king's daughter to be sacrificed, Saint George arrived, saved her and killed the dragon.

Many people believe this legend to be symbolic of Saint George's triumph over evil (the dragon) by refusing to give up his Christian faith despite facing punishment.



Saint George is also the patron saint of scouts, farmers, shepherds, soldiers and archers.

St. George's Day around the World

England

One custom, which many people no longer observe, is to wear a red rose on your **lapel**. Church services are held during which the hymn Jerusalem is usually sung. Morris dancers are often seen at celebrations.

Catalonia, Spain

In Catalonia, Spain, there is a similar legend about Saint George (Sant Jordi) slaying a dragon. From the blood that flowed from the lifeless body of the dragon, a red rose appeared, which Saint George handed to the princess he had saved. A public holiday, with similarities to Valentine's Day, is held - roses are given to loved ones.

Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, St. George's Day is celebrated on 6th May and is also known as Army Day. Many people walk in the early morning, washing their faces in the fresh dew, which has been blessed by Saint George at the beginning of spring.

Croatia

Saint George is one of the most important saints in Croatia as the patron saint of the military. This holiday (known as Durđevdan) is also a time to celebrate the return of spring, decorating homes with twigs and flowers, lighting fires and girls dressing as goddesses, singing for locals.

Glossary

lapel: The part on each side of a jacket immediately below the collar which is folded back on either side of the front opening.

martyr: A person who is killed because of their religious or other beliefs.

persecute: Subject someone to ill-treatment, especially because of their race or political or religious beliefs.

Questions

1. Which of these are **facts** about Saint George? Tick **two**.

- He slayed a dragon.
- He was a soldier.
- He was a Christian.
- He rescued a princess.

2. Draw a line to match the activity with the country it takes place within.

Morris dancers perform on St. George's Day.

Croatia

People wash their faces in the early morning dew.

Bulgaria

Girls dress as goddesses and sing for locals.

England

3. When was St. George's Day first celebrated?

4. Fill in the missing words:

Many people believe this _____ to be symbolic of

Saint George's _____ over evil.

5. Find and copy a phrase from the text which tells you that the emperor treated Christian people badly.

6. Why is 23rd April named as St. George's Day?

7. Why do you think that Saint George decided to join the army?

8. Why did Christian people honour Saint George after his death?

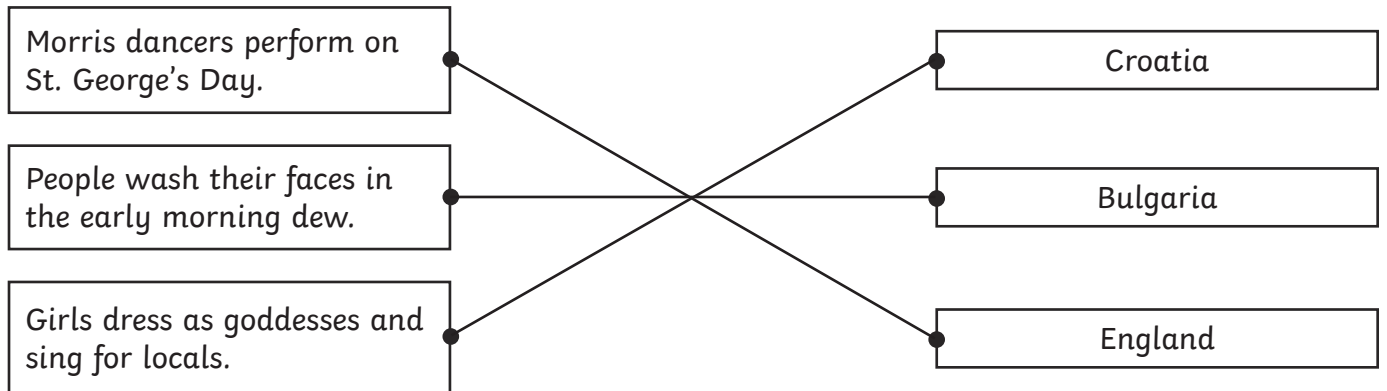
9. Why do you think the legend of Saint George slaying the dragon has been told for centuries? Explain your answer.

Answers

1. Which of these are **facts** about Saint George? Tick two.

- He was a soldier.**
 He was a Christian.

2. Draw a line to match the activity with the country it takes place within.



3. When was St. George's Day first celebrated?

St. George's Day was first celebrated on 23rd April 1415.

4. Fill in the missing words from this sentence:

Many people believe this **legend** to be symbolic of Saint George's **triumph** over evil.

5. Find and copy a phrase from the text which tells you that the emperor treated Christian people badly.

Accept any of the following: The emperor began to persecute Christian people; Saint George was imprisoned and tortured.

6. Why is 23rd April named as St. George's Day?

Pupils' own responses, such as: This was the day that Saint George died on in AD 303.

7. Why do you think that Saint George decided to join the army?

Pupils' own responses, such as: As his father had died, he wanted to follow in his footsteps.

8. Why did Christians honour Saint George after his death?

Pupils' own responses, such as: Despite being imprisoned and tortured, Saint George continued to stand up for his Christian beliefs until his death. Christians honour this strength of faith.

9. Why do you think the legend of Saint George slaying the dragon has been told for centuries? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The legend of the dragon being slain is an effective metaphor to describe good overcoming evil - children enjoy stories about dragons and the message in this story is a positive one to share.

St. George's Day

Saint George is the patron saint of many countries around the world, including Bulgaria, Croatia and England. St. George's Day is celebrated on 23rd April every year. The symbol of Saint George is a red cross on a white background, which is also the flag of England and a part of the flag of Great Britain.



Who Was the Real Saint George?

Saint George was a soldier who was born in the year AD 270 in Cappadocia, which is now in Eastern Turkey. He and his family were Christian and lived their lives following Christian values. When he was 17 years old, following the deaths of his father and mother, he joined the Roman army just as his father had before him.

By the age of 30, Saint George was promoted to a higher rank and became an imperial guard of the Emperor Diocletian. There are stories of him travelling to Britain, where he visited Glastonbury and Caerleon. In AD 303, the emperor began to **persecute** Christian people, forcing them to give up all of their possessions and jobs and stating that all Roman soldiers must worship Roman gods. Saint George pleaded with him to stop but Diocletian refused and even tried to bribe Saint George to give up his Christian beliefs. Despite being imprisoned and tortured, Saint George didn't deny his faith, so people thought of him as extremely brave.

Sadly, he was beheaded near Lydda in Palestine on 23rd April in AD 303. His body was returned to Lydda where it was buried - Christians soon came to honour him as a **martyr**.

23rd April was named St. George's Day in 1415 when it became a national feast day.

What Is the Legend of Saint George?

Told for the first time in the 11th century (700 years after Saint George's death), there is a famous legend about Saint George slaying a dragon to rescue a princess. The legend describes Saint George travelling to Libya, where a poison-spewing dragon was living in a lake, terrorising the local people. Young girls were being sacrificed to stop the dragon from attacking the city of Silene. When one day the king's daughter had to be sacrificed, the king offered his people all of his riches to have his daughter spared. The people refused and the princess was sent to the lake.



At this point, Saint George arrived and promised to stay with the princess. When the dragon emerged from the water, Saint George charged at the dragon on his horse, wounding it with his **lance** before leashing the dragon.

Upon returning to Silene, Saint George offered to kill the dragon if the people would all become Christians. The city agreed so 15,000 men, including the king, converted to Christianity and Saint George killed the dragon.

Many people believe this legend to be symbolic of Saint George's triumph over evil (the dragon) by refusing to give up his Christian faith.

St. George's Day around the World

England

In the past, St. George's Day was seen as being as important as Christmas but, following the union of Scotland and England in the early 15th century, the celebrations waned. One custom, which many people no longer observe, is to wear a red rose on your **lapel**. Church services are held during which the hymn Jerusalem is usually sung and Morris dancers are often seen at celebrations.

Saint George is also the patron saint of scouts, farmers, shepherds, soldiers and archers.

Catalonia, Spain

In Catalonia, Spain, there is a similar legend about Saint George (Sant Jordi) slaying a dragon. From the blood that flowed from the lifeless body of the dragon, a red rose appeared, which Saint George handed to the princess he had saved. A public holiday, with similarities to Valentine's Day, is held - roses and books are exchanged by people in love.

Bulgaria

Also known as Army Day in Bulgaria, St. George's Day is celebrated on 6th May. Traditionally, rural families roast a whole lamb as Saint George is also the patron saint of shepherds and farmers. Many people also walk in the early morning, washing their faces in the fresh dew, which has been blessed by Saint George at the beginning of spring.

Croatia

Saint George is one of the most important saints in Croatia as the patron saint of the military. This holiday (known as Durđevdan) is also a time to celebrate the return of spring, decorating homes with twigs and flowers, lighting fires and girls dressing as goddesses, singing for locals.

Glossary

lance: A long weapon with a wooden shaft and a pointed steel head.

lapel: The part on each side of a jacket immediately below the collar which is folded back on either side of the front opening.

martyr: A person who is killed because of their religious or other beliefs.

persecute: Subject someone to ill-treatment, especially because of their race or political or religious beliefs.

Questions

1. Which of these countries is Saint George **not** the patron saint of? Tick one.

- England
- Scotland
- Bulgaria
- Croatia

2. **The city agreed so 15,000 men, including the king, converted to Christianity...**

What does 'converted' mean? Tick one.

- remained
- changed
- stayed
- left

3. What is the symbol of Saint George?

4. Fill in the missing words.

23rd April was named St. George's Day in _____ when it
became a _____ feast day.

5. Find and copy a word or phrase from the text which shows that Saint George followed in his father's footsteps.

6. Why do you think that Saint George is so important to Christian people?

7. Summarise what you have read in the third paragraph in 30 words or less.

8. Why do you think that the Roman Emperor wanted to stop people from being Christian?

9. Which St. George's Day tradition do you think sounds the most interesting? Explain your answer.

10. Do you think that St. George's Day should be as important as Christmas? Explain your answer.

Answers

- Which of these countries is Saint George **not** the patron saint of? Tick one.
 Scotland
- The city agreed so 15,000 men, including the king, converted to Christianity...**
 What does 'converted' mean? Tick one.
 changed
- What is the symbol of Saint George?
The symbol of Saint George is a red cross on a white background.

- Fill in the missing words.

23rd April was named St. George's Day in **1415** when
 it became a **national** feast day.

- Find and copy a word or phrase from the text which shows that Saint George followed in his father's footsteps.
just as his father had before him
- Why do you think that Saint George is so important to Christian people?
Pupils' own responses, such as: Despite being imprisoned and tortured, Saint George continued to spread the word of Christianity.
- Summarise what you have read in the third paragraph in 30 words or less.
Pupils' own responses, such as: When the emperor (whom Saint George worked for) began to persecute Christian people, Saint George pleaded with him to stop and, despite being imprisoned and tortured, never denied his faith.
- Why do you think that the Roman emperor wanted to stop people from being Christian?
Pupils' own responses, such as: He was a very powerful ruler, who had different beliefs, so he wanted everyone to believe in the Roman gods and follow him.
- Which St. George's Day tradition do you think sounds the most interesting? Explain your answer.
Pupils' own responses, such as: I like the idea of getting up early, walking and washing my face in the morning dew – it sounds fun and refreshing!
- Do you think that St. George's Day should be as important as Christmas? Explain your answer.
Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Saint George did a lot to spread the word of Christianity but without Jesus Christianity would probably not exist, so Christmas is more important than St. George's Day.