

What Does the Easter Bunny Have To Do With Easter?



Backrow L to R: Max, Destyne, Tiarra, Triston, Gracie and Jenya. Mattie, Kerri and Marcus far back. Front: Triniti and Morry. Children run excitedly, to find hidden Easter eggs in the backyard of the Ratcliff home. Prior to this day family members read and discussed Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection (Luke Chapters 23 and 24) with the children. They wanted to know what the Easter Bunny and Easter Eggs had to do with Jesus's death and resurrection. The information below was read to them and discussed explaining how this is tradition not tied to facts from the Holy Bible.

Credits to Ian O'Neill, Library of Congress, Corbis - There's no story in the Bible about a long-eared, cotton-tailed creature known as the Easter Bunny. Neither is there a passage about young children painting eggs or hunting for baskets overflowing with scrumptious Easter goodies. And real rabbits certainly don't lay eggs.

BRIEF: How the Moon Affects the Date of Easter?

Why are these traditions so ingrained in Easter Sunday? And what do they have to do with the resurrection of Jesus? Well, to be frank, nothing. Bunnies, eggs, Easter gifts and fluffy, yellow chicks in gardening hats all stem from pagan roots. These tropes were incorporated into the celebration of Easter separately from

the Christian tradition of honoring the day Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

NEWS: Was the Last Supper a Day Earlier?

According to the University of Florida's Center for Children's Literature and Culture, the origin of the celebration — and the origin of the Easter Bunny — can be traced back to 13th-century, pre-Christian Germany, when people worshiped several gods and goddesses. The Teutonic deity Eostra was the goddess of spring and fertility, and feasts were held in her honor on the Vernal Equinox. Her symbol was the rabbit because of the animal's high reproduction rate. Spring also symbolized new life. The tradition of making nests for the rabbit to lay its eggs in soon

and rebirth; eggs were an ancient symbol of fertility. According to History.com, Easter eggs represent Jesus' resurrection. However, this association came much later when Roman Catholicism became the dominant religion in Germany in the 15th century and merged with already ingrained pagan beliefs.

The first Easter Bunny legend was documented in the 1500s. By 1680, the first story about a rabbit laying eggs and hiding them in a garden was published. These legends were brought to the United States in the 1700s, when German immigrants settled in Pennsylvania Dutch country, according to the Center for Children's Literature and Culture. The tradition of making nests for the rabbit to lay its eggs in soon

followed. Eventually, nests became decorated baskets and colorful eggs were swapped for candy, treats and other small gifts.

So, while you're scarfing down chocolate bunnies (I hear chocolate is good for you!) and marshmallow chicks this Easter Sunday, think fondly of this holiday's origins and maybe even impress your friends at your local Easter egg hunt.

Go ye therefore and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you and lo, I am with you, always even unto the end of the world. Amen

Matthew 28: 19-20