

What's on in a Church of England School



2018

Christian Festivals

The Annunciation 9th April (just for 2018)
St George's Day 23rd April

Other Festivals and Awareness Days

Stress Awareness Month
National Pet Month
International Children's Book Day 2nd April
National Gardening Week 30th April - 6th May
The Big Pedal 23rd April- 4th May
Save the Children Week 29th April - 6th May

9th April - The Annunciation

The feast of the Annunciation marks the visit of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, during which he told her that she would be the mother of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is celebrated on **25 March** each year, but just this year on 9th April, owing to Palm Sunday being on 25th March.

The Annunciation occurs 9 months before the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day, the Annunciation marks the actual incarnation of Jesus Christ - the moment that Jesus was conceived and that the Son of God became the son of the Virgin.

The festival has been celebrated since the 5th century AD.

The festival celebrates two things:

- God's action in entering the human world as Jesus in order to save humanity
- Humanity's willing acceptance of God's action in Mary's freely given acceptance of the task of being the Mother of God

The Annunciation and the liturgy

The story of the Annunciation has produced three important liturgical texts, the Ave Maria, the Angelus, and the Magnificat.

- The angel's greeting to Mary, which is traditionally translated as "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee," (in Latin *Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum*) is the opening of the Ave Maria, and a part of the Rosary prayers.
- The Angelus consists of three Ave Marias, together with some additional material. It is said three times a day in the Roman Catholic Church.
- The Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) is the poem with which Mary responds to the Annunciation and celebrates the power of God.



Political implications of the Annunciation

Some feminist theologians find the story of the Assumption portrays women as unacceptably submissive and as colluding with the idea that "women's only claim to fame is the capacity to have babies." They interpret Mary's behaviour as demonstrating passive subordination to male power. Simone de Beauvoir wrote:

'For the first time in human history the mother kneels before her son: she freely accepts her inferiority. This is the supreme masculine victory, consummated in the cult of the Virgin.' (**Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 1952**)

Other writers have a different interpretation. They don't see Mary as powerless before God, but instead as a woman who makes a free choice to accept God's task for her - a task she could have refused. Mary's acceptance of the role of servant is not, they teach, demeaning, and they point out that Jesus

also regarded himself as a servant. And taking up the example of the disciples, they see Mary, through her act of faith, exercising her right to believe what she wants and to cooperate with God in his plan of salvation - a plan that he cannot carry out without her.

Other writers suggest that the story of the Annunciation emphasises the status of women, since in the Incarnation God enlists the help of a woman to create a child of vast importance, and gives men no part to play in this important work.

And in the Magnificat itself, Mary becomes the herald of Salvation, and takes Christianity into the spheres of politics and justice as the first spokesperson for the marginalised people who were the focus of Jesus, and are now the focus of Christians and the Church.

The Bible story of the Annunciation

The story is told in Luke's Gospel, 1: 26-38.

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

Luke 1:26-38, NIV Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society

Why not tell the children the story and discuss it?

There are some excellent pictures on Google images a lovely project would be for the children to make their own paintings of the event.



By [Giannicola di Paolo](#)

late 15th Century

The National Gallery

Leonardo da Vinci

Painted in Florence
1472 - 1475

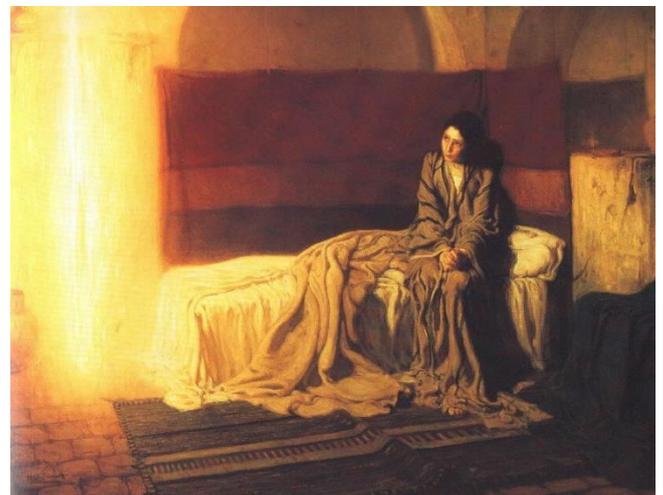
The angel holds a [Madonna lily](#), a symbol of Mary's virginity and of the city of Florence.



It is supposed that [Leonardo](#) originally copied the wings from those of a bird in flight, but they have since been lengthened by a later artist.

Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859-1937)

Henry Ossawa Tanner was an American artist. He was the first African-American painter to gain international acclaim. He moved to Paris in 1891 to study, and decided to stay there, being readily accepted in French artistic circles.





Artist James B Janknegt, an American artist living today, says of his painting:

I've always disliked those renaissance and baroque angels, all tiny pink and effeminate. It seems angels always begin their message with "Don't be afraid". Who would ever be afraid of a pink, floating baby with wings unless you're afraid it's not potty trained! So my angel is big and imposing.

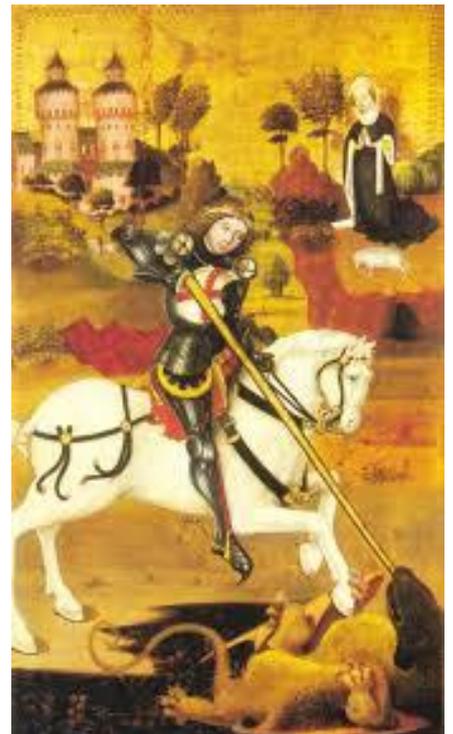
What do the children think Mary and Gabriel might have looked like?

They might do a surprisingly good painting.

23rd April- St George's Day

As with some saints, myth and legend surrounds St George and of how a Roman soldier came to be regarded as the essence of England. He is most famously known as the brave slayer of the dragon and saviour of the maiden but, although this story exists in a number of different medieval texts and art, it has no historical basis.

There is very little information about the life St George, but it is known that he was not English. He is thought to have been an early Christian martyr from the area of modern day Turkey, who was executed in

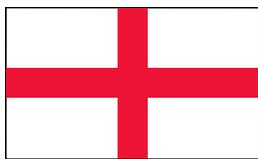


Palestine in the third century. Legends about his valorous deeds as a soldier-saint began in the 6th century and by the 12th century the famous story about his rescuing a king's daughter and slaying a dragon had become widespread. St George was popularised in England by Crusaders, Christian knights returning from religious wars in the Middle East. He became the official patron saint of

England in 1425 after Henry V's victory at the Battle of Agincourt. The Red Cross of St George is England's national flag and it also forms part of Britain's Union Jack.



Do the children know the flags of Great Britain?



Flags are really important in our world sometimes for good, and sometimes not. How many flags do the children know?

If you were making a school flag - what would it look like?

You could design a school flag and have it made into a real one at

<http://www.lancasterprinting.co.uk/shop/?gclid=COzenfnw-csCFRHhGwodwpYD4A>

<http://www.the-flagman.co.uk/flags/>

other flag makers are available !

and, how about a bit of fun IT to design a flag?

<http://www.designmyownflag.com/>

or

<http://flag-designer.appspot.com/#d=7&c1=2&c2=6&c3=0&o=6&c4=3&s=4&c5=4>

The English are not the only people to stake a claim in St George. St. George is the patron saint of Aragon, Catalonia, England, Ethiopia, Georgia, Greece, Palestine, Portugal, and Russia, as well as the cities of Amersfoort, Beirut, Ferrara, Freiburg, Genoa, Ljubljana, and Moscow, as well as a wide range of

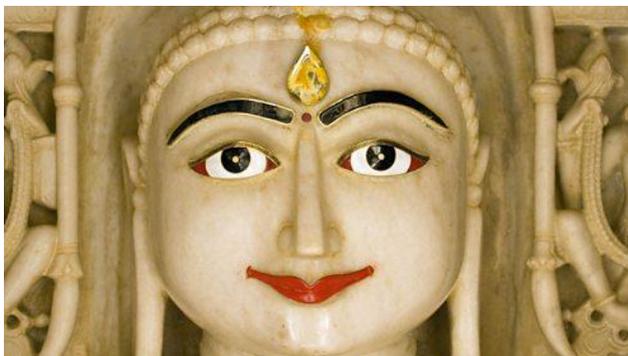
professions and organisations. In many countries St George is associated with fertility and his day marks the very beginning of summer.

In Lithuania he is revered as the guardian of animals and in parts of Spain St George's day is celebrated with feasts and gift giving.

Other Faiths

9th April - Mahavir Jayanti

Mahavir Jayanti is the most important religious holiday for Jains. It's celebrated in the Hindu month of Caitra (late March/early April).



Mahavir Jayanti celebrates the birth of Mahavira, a contemporary of the Buddha. Mahavira was last Tirthankara (great sage) and the most important prophet of the Jain faith. Mahavir Jayanti is marked with prayer and fasting.

13TH April - Lailat al Miraj

A Muslim holiday that commemorates the Prophet Muhammad's nighttime journey from Mecca to the 'Farthest Mosque' in Jerusalem where he ascended to heaven, was purified, and given the instruction for Muslims to pray five times daily.



14th April - Baisakhi (VAISAKHI)

Baisakhi, also spelled Vaisakhi, is the festival which celebrates Sikh New Year and the founding of the Sikh community, known as the Khalsa, in 1699.

It is celebrated on April 13 or 14.



It was originally a harvest festival in the Punjab before it became the Sikh's most important festival.

The story of Baisakhi

In 1699, Sikhs from all over the Punjab gathered together to celebrate the local harvest festival of Baisakhi.

Guru Gobind Singh came out of a tent carrying a sword and requested that anyone prepared to give his life for his religion come forward.

A young Sikh came forward and disappeared into the tent with the Guru. Then the Guru reappeared alone with his sword covered in blood and asked for another volunteer.

This was repeated another four times until a total of five Sikhs had gone into the tent with him.

Everyone present was very worried until eventually all five emerged from the tent alive, with Guru Gobind Singh, and wearing turbans.

The five became known as the Panj Piare, or 'Beloved Five'.

The men were then baptised into the Khalsa by the Guru. He said some prayers over the five and they were sprinkled with the amrit.

This is how the Amrit ceremony came into being and these five Sikhs became the first members of the Khalsa.

31st April - Passover (Pesach)

Passover starts with a special dinner called 'seder'. The foods eaten at seder have a symbolic meaning related to the escape from slavery.

At Passover, Jews remember the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt.



It's one of the most important festivals of the year. Passover lasts for eight days. Jewish people celebrate with special ceremonies, and observe specific customs which remember the escape from Egypt, as told in the Book of Exodus. You may have a seder plate in your school multifaith box - now is a good time to get it out and find out about it.

http://www.chabad.org/kids/article_cdo/aid/1608/jewish/The-Seder-Plate.htm

What else is on in April?

Stress Awareness Month

This event has been held every April, since 1992.
Tell the teachers!



During this annual thirty day period, health care professionals and health promotion experts across the country will join forces to increase public awareness about both the causes and cures for our modern stress epidemic. A special site for teachers

http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/teacher-stress-burnout-preventing.shtml

1 April - 7 May - National Pet Month

It's National Pet Month from 1 April to 4 May 2018, your chance to show the special creature in your life just how much you love them!

The charity holds the event each year. The aim is to promote responsible pet ownership, make the public aware of the benefits of pets and the contribution they make to our society, as well as letting owners know about the pet services available to them.

Each year a whole host of pet-tastic events are held, from dog shows to fairs and perfect pet competitions!

At the [National Pet Month](http://www.nationalpetmonth.org.uk/) website you can find out about everything happening in your area, and you can even register to put on an event of your own!

You can also find out more about the great work of the charity at the site and make a donation or become a sponsor.

<http://www.nationalpetmonth.org.uk/>

All the money goes towards bringing together animal welfare charities, pet businesses, youth groups and simply pet owners, to improve the welfare of pets

National Pet Month 1 April - 7 May 2018

Responsible Pet Ownership

Thousands of people up and down the UK will be celebrating life with their pets, spreading the word on responsible pet ownership or raising money for their favourite charity in fun-filled events.

[Learn more](#)



2nd April - International Children's Book Day

www.ibby.org/awards-activities/activities/international-childrens-book-day/

2nd of April is Hans Christian Andersen's birthday and since 1967 **International Children's Book Day** has been celebrated on or around this day to inspire a love of reading and to call attention to children's books.

Each year the Day is sponsored by a different country member of the International Board on Books for Young People. It decides on a theme and invites an author from that country to write a message to the children of the world and a well-known illustrator to design a poster.



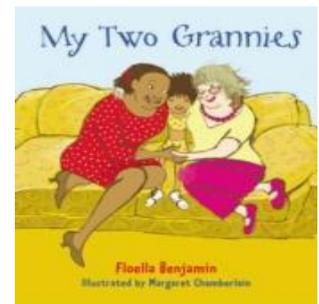
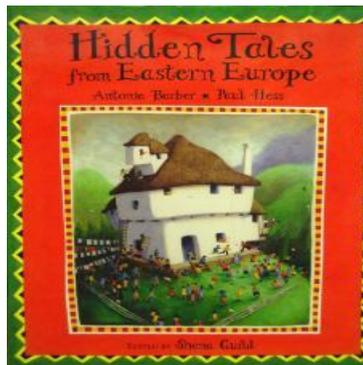
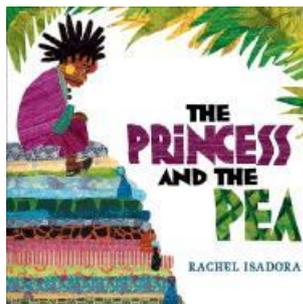
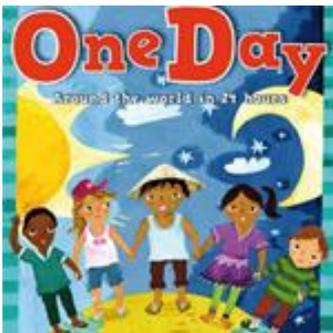


This is a great opportunity to make sure that your children are getting an accurate view of where they live. The cultural diversity of Britain is very rich - even if it is not in your particular village or area.

Check your book boxes in school - do they reflect a multicultural country ?

Why not have a look at this brilliant website and see if you can give the children a more representative diet of good children's literature.

<http://www.willesdenbookshop.co.uk/>



30th April - 6th May National Gardening Week
Art, beauty and science - Yes, we're talking about gardening!



National Gardening Week 2017 will aim to encourage everyone to get involved in gardening as an ongoing hobby - or for the first time!

Gardens have been around for a really long time! It all started with prehistoric families trying to improve the general area they lived in. They did this by

removing species they didn't want in the environment, while improving and nurturing what they did want in their environment.

This went on to see the Romans building gardens with fountains and water features and nowadays, we have all different types all over the world!

But why bother? Well we grow some beautiful flowers, plants and even food from gardening. I thought it was really interesting to hear Blue Peter gardener [Chris Collins](#) thoughts on gardening. He said that working a plot involves maths, designing a garden takes 'art' and that plant care is science! Phew!

Are you thinking of doing some growing at school this season - go to

<http://www.nationalgardeningweek.org.uk/>

What you can do in school this month

Sow any outdoor vegetables - carrots, cabbage, kale, peas, broad beans, radish, spring onions, onion sets.....

Don't sow any tender vegetables yet - but you can start off some things in the windowsill - like tomatoes, cucumber, pumpkin, squash - sow them in trays (chinese takeaway trays are ideal - make sure you put some holes in the bottom) and keep them warm and, if possible, on a south facing windowsill. Give some children the job of keeping them damp, but not muddy.

More help and ideas - try these websites

<http://www.buddinggardeners.co.uk/?gclid=CLChrs6z9cQCFskGwwod1pIAxw>

<http://www.saps.org.uk/primary/beyond-the-classroom/233-gardening-for-primary-schools-suggestions-for-investigations>

<http://www.gardeningwithchildren.co.uk/school-zone/>

<http://www.thegrowingschoolsgarden.org.uk/explore-the-garden.htm>

23rd April - 4th May - The Big Pedal

The Big Pedal is the UK's largest inter-school cycling and scooting challenge. It inspires pupils, staff and parents to choose two wheels for their journey to school.



<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/>

28th April - 3rd May - Save the Children Week

The fight is ongoing to tackle issues like malnutrition and ensure that children living in places affected by and conflict of disasters are able to get an education.

As little as £10 can buy a school desk for two people and £300 will clothe 30 children. We take these things for granted because they seem so simple but for some they are luxuries they dream of never having.



So how can you take part in April? There are loads of ways! Get some people together and organise a fundraiser: it could be a party, a treasure hunt or maybe a car boot sale. The options are limitless and you find all the details about how you can get involved at the website. Think about it ...

<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/get-involved/fundraising/save-the-children-week>

or at

www.savethechildren.org.uk/



And..... It's time to be thinking about leavers' gifts. What will you be presenting to the children when they leave you this summer?



Bible?

Book Token?

Autograph Book?

Photograph of the class/ school?

Holy socks? <http://www.holysocks.co.uk/>

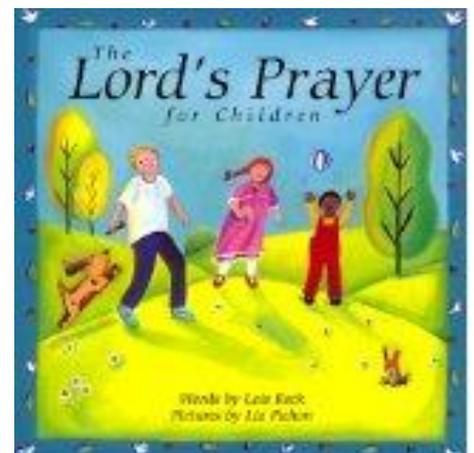
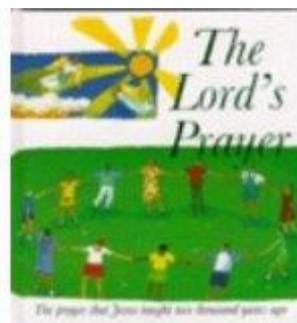
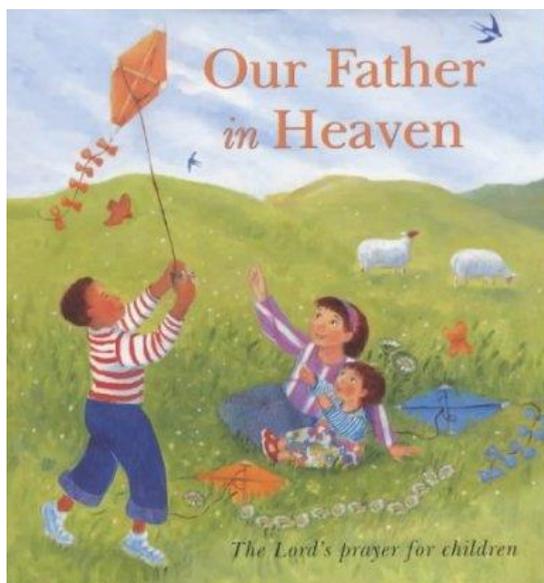
A 'BEE' booklet? <http://www.wishestobe.co.uk/>

A School Logo gift? <http://www.schoolleaversgiftsuk.co.uk/>

A personalised mug? <http://www.ptapitstop.co.uk/school-leavers-gifts/school-leavers-mugs-261-7-547.php>



And, what about your new starters in September? Why not get them a copy of this great book?



What a lovely gift - they would be able to go through it at home with their parents and get used to the words.

Don't forget to put a special message in the frontcover - the children will still have this book when they are parents themselves !

Make sure you get the same version that you use in school and in your local church.