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OSTERN IN DEUTSCHLAND EASTER IN GERMANY

TEACHERS' NOTES

Introduction

Easter, like Christmas, is a curious mixture of Christian and pre-Christian celebrations. Although a Christian festival, Ostern in Germany has many features which are enjoyed by all children and often their parents, too.

For children especially the symbol and great joy of Easter is the Easter egg (*Osterei*). The egg has long been regarded as a symbol of fertility and new life and was eaten with particular relish at Easter after forty days' abstinence during Lent (*Fastenzeit*).

Whatever the actual origin of the custom, children themselves are in no doubt as to where their eggs come from. In general they are supposed to be personally made (or laid) and decorated by the "Easter Bunny" (*Osterhase*), which was formerly regarded by the Germans as a sacred animal. The Easter Bunny is even more elusive than St. Nicholas, but he often leaves a life-size chocolate version of himself together with the eggs on Easter Morning and is also to be seen on Easter cards, transfers or on bought cardboard eggs, used as containers for Easter gifts.

The following slides will guide you through some of the more important German Easter traditions.

Slide

Explanation

- 1 This slide can be used to introduce the topic to the pupils. The teacher might like to start out by asking about how the children in Scotland celebrate Easter, which traditions they know etc. The first slide also offers an important phrase that you can hear and read everywhere in Germany during the Easter days: "*Frohe Ostern*" (Happy Easter!)
- 2 The teacher can use this slide to give a very brief outline of the presentation. The following slides will be associated with the season in which Easter takes place ("*Wann?*"), followed by a variety of German Easter customs and traditions ("*Wie?*"). First indications are given by the pictures: the daffodil indicates spring, whereas the second picture already points to one of the German Easter traditions, i.e. looking for easter eggs. This picture also shows that Easter in Germany is a celebration which is very much associated with children and offers a lot of activities for them.

- 3 – 4** The Easter season
- 3** 1) The slide starts off with the information that Easter is celebrated in spring time. Spring is the time when many different beautiful flowers can be seen in the gardens.
- 2) 5 pictures of spring flowers, typical of Germany, will be shown. The pictures will be shown first, so that the pupils can guess the names of the flowers. When all the pictures have been shown, the German expressions will be shown on the respective picture.
- 4** The aim of this slide is to give the names of the different days associated with Easter. The question *“Was gehört in den Osterkalender?”* (Which days are connected with the Easter celebration?) will appear first. The teacher might like to ask his pupils about their knowledge of Easter (They might know that Good Friday plays a role etc.). Six German expressions to do with holidays will appear, two of which have nothing to do with Easter at all (*“Heiligabend”* and *“Silvester”*). The pupils are expected to name the right days.
- 5 - 12** German Easter customs and traditions
- 5** On the Saturday of the Easter weekend, the children in Germany paint Easter eggs. This tradition is very popular, as it usually gets the family together and obviously, nearly all children love to paint and draw! Painting the eggs is something that kindergartens and schools would do in the days preceding Easter, so that the children can take home brightly painted eggs to give to their parents. A description of how the eggs are prepared and painted will be given later on in this presentation.
- 6** In this slide you can see a so-called Easter nest, filled with painted eggs. These nests are supposedly being hidden by the “Easter bunny”, which you will be able to speak about later on in the presentation.
The present slide contains two little activities to revive the pupils’ knowledge of German expressions for colours and numbers.
- 7** This slide shows how children make the painted eggs. Picture A shows a tree on which they hang the eggs. Pictures B show how the eggs are being prepared: the children blow the egg and attach a string to it. In picture C you can see how the egg is being painted. Therefore, the right order is: B – C – A

- 8** On Easter Sunday, the Easter nests are being hidden in the garden (or if it's too cold, inside the house ☐). For most children, it is the most exciting part of the Easter celebration to go looking for their Easter nest. Nowadays they would not only be filled with painted eggs, but with lots of sweets (e.g. chocolate eggs, chocolate bunnies) or little presents.
- 9** In this slide you can see the so-called "Osterstrauß", the Easter bouquet, which is just one of the colourful ways of decorating a home. A large variety of Easter decorations can be bought in shops, but the nicer way is to make them yourself with your parents, brothers or sisters. Apart from eggs, children might also like to draw little paper decorations that can be attached to the Easter bouquet.
- 10** This slide is a little quiz to bring some fun into your lesson on German Easter traditions.
Depending on how old the child is, it might believe that the Easter goodies are being brought by the Easter bunny. The bunny is one of the animals that is seen most frequently during the Easter days. You can see it on cards, sweets ... everywhere!
The pictures will appear one after the other, the bunny appears last.
- 11** Easter in Germany is also a time very much connected with delicious food.

Gebäck aus Hefeteig: pastries made from yeast dough
Such pastries are very popular, as they can take the shape of all the different Easter symbols (egg, bunny, chick,...) and again, the process of baking it is a convivial activity.

Lammbraten: roast lamb
The lamb is an animal very much connected to the Easter celebration. In spring, the lambs can be seen in the countryside, and they also hint to the Christian tradition of Easter. Roast lamb with vegetables and potatoes is a dish that can be found on German dining tables on Easter Sunday.
- 12** The children might be familiar with the tradition of writing cards to friends and family when there are celebrations around. Easter is a time of year when Germans think about their loved ones and send them a "*Frohe Ostern!*". Such cards can be bought or again be made by the children themselves.
This slide also provides an activity for young learners. They can make their own Easter card and give to someone as a present.

Suggestion for the card:

front: *"Frohe Ostern"*

inside: *"Liebe/r ..."*

Ich wünsche dir Frohe Ostern und einen fleißigen Osterhasen!

Dein/e ..."

13 - 16

The great Easter quiz

These slides are meant to provide a little resume of the information that the teacher has given to the pupils.

The right answers are:

13: b) *im Frühling*

14: a) *bemalte Eier*

15: c) *Sie bemalen und suchen die Eier.*

16: c) *Er versteckt Eier.*

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The final slide contains pictures of baby animals and Easter eggs.

The teacher can use this slide to ask the children about what information they have gained from the presentation, which traditions they personally like and what are the differences to celebrating Easter in Scotland.