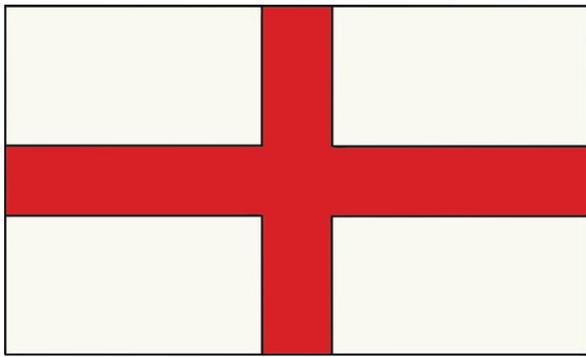


# Saint George's Day

## Patron Saints

Patron saints are chosen to be special protectors for different areas of life. There are many patron saints, who are guardians of lots of different things. England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales each have their own patron saint, who is guardian and protector of that nation. Each patron saint has their own day named after



them. The patron saint of England is Saint George and Saint 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 is a part of the flag of Great Britain. Saint George's symbol was adopted by Richard the Lionheart in the 12th century. The king's soldiers wore it on their tunics during battle.

## The Legend of Saint George

There is a famous legend about Saint George slaying a dragon to rescue a princess. This is probably the most famous story about Saint George. During the Middle Ages (5th - 15th century), dragons were often used to symbolise the devil. The story says that Saint George travelled around the world for many years until he came to a country called Libya. He met a man, who told him that the country was in danger from a dragon. The dragon was killing young girls and the King was worried because his daughter was next to be killed. According to the legend, Saint George wanted to save the princess and fought the dragon, slaying it and ending the danger.

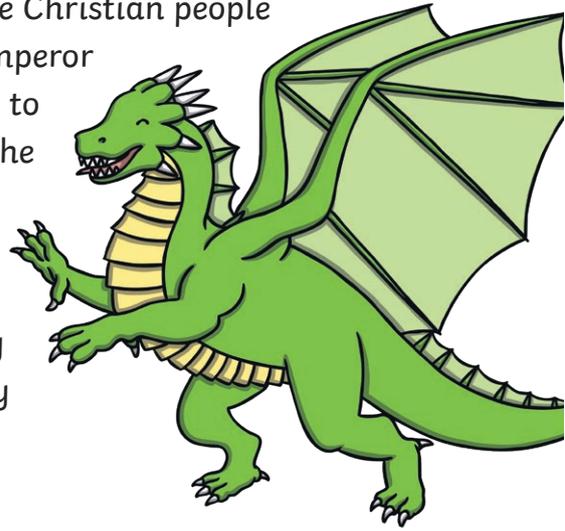
## Who Was the Real Saint George?

The real Saint George was actually a soldier. Although he is the patron saint of England and is connected with English values, he was not actually English. It is also thought that he may never have even visited England! He is thought to have been born in the year AD 270 in Cappadocia, which is now Eastern Turkey.



He and his family were Christian and lived their lives following Christian values. When he was 17, he joined the Roman army.

The emperor at the time began to persecute Christian people and Saint George often pleaded with the emperor to stop this persecution. He is considered to be extremely brave because even though he was tortured, he refused to deny his faith. Sadly, he was beheaded near Lydda in Palestine on 23rd April in AD303. The 23rd April was named Saint George's Day in 1222 and became a national feast day in 1415.



### **Celebrating Saint George's Day**

Many people wear a red rose, England's national flower, to recognise Saint George's Day.

In some parts of the country, there are festivals where people dress up and stage 'dragon-slaying' events! However, many people do not celebrate Saint George's Day - there are a lot of people trying to get the day recognised as a national holiday.

### **Interesting Facts**

Saint Edmund the Martyr was the original patron saint of England. He was replaced by Saint George in the 14th century.

Many patron saints' days are national holidays, for example, Saint Patrick's Day in Ireland and Saint Andrew's Day in Scotland. However in England, Saint George's Day is a normal working day.

Saint George is also the patron saint of scouts, soldiers, archers and farmers. There are church services for scout troops across the country on 23rd April to celebrate Saint George.

# Questions

1. What is a patron saint and why are they celebrated?

---

---

2. Why was Saint George put in prison?

---

---

3. Why is 23rd April named as Saint George's Day?

---

---

4. Why was the king of Libya worried?

---

---

5. Who was the original patron saint of England?

---

---

6. Why is it unusual that Saint George became the patron saint of England?

---

---

7. Why do you think this legend of Saint George slaying the Dragon has been created and told for centuries?

---

---

8. The emperor at the time was a pagan. What do you think this means and why

---

---

## Challenge

Can you find out which other things/places Saint George is patron saint of? There are a few!

# Answers

1. What is a patron saint and why are they celebrated?

**A patron saint is chosen to represent and protect a variety of different things.**

2. Why was Saint George put in prison?

**He was put in prison because he refused to deny his Christian faith even though the emperor was persecuting Christians.**

3. Why is 23rd April named as Saint George's Day?

**23<sup>rd</sup> April was named as Saint George's Day because this was the day in which Saint George was beheaded.**

4. Why was the king of Libya worried?

**The king of Libya was worried because a dragon was terrorising his country and he thought that the beast might kill his daughter.**

5. Who was the original patron saint of England?

**Edmund the Martyr was originally the patron saint of England.**

6. Why is it unusual that Saint George became the patron saint of England?

**This might be thought of as unusual as Saint George was not English and probably never even visited England**

7. Why do you think this legend of Saint George slaying the Dragon has been created and told for centuries?

**Various answers. Answers may discuss that this was a time when myths and legends were created. Also, the dragon was associated with the devil and as Saint George was a brave fighter this legend was created to symbolise and portray this bravery. Also, not much is known about the real Saint George so people created a legend to symbolise his bravery.**

8. The emperor at the time was a pagan. What do you think this means and why

**A pagan is someone who does not believe in the main religions around the world. Many years ago, it meant non-Christian.**