

# St. George's Day

## When Is St. George's Day?

St. George's Day is celebrated on 23<sup>rd</sup> April each year. This date was chosen as people believe that it is the date on which Saint George died in AD 303.



## Who Was Saint George?

Not many things are known for certain about Saint George. Stories about him have been told for almost two thousand years. In these stories, Saint George's father is called Gerontius and was in the Roman army. His mother is called Polychronia.

## Where Did Saint George Live?

Saint George's mother was from a place known as Syria Palaestina. This is where Saint George lived until his mother died when he was seventeen years old.

## What Was Saint George's Job?

When Saint George was seventeen, he travelled to the city of Nicomedia. He joined the Roman army, just like his father had done. He travelled around the world as a soldier and he was part of the group of soldiers who looked after the emperor of Nicomedia.

## What Happened to Saint George?

In AD 303, the Roman emperor Diocletian gave an order. He said that every soldier who was a Christian would have to give up their job and any money they had. To keep their job, they would have to stop being a Christian and believe in the Roman gods instead.

Saint George did not want to stop being a Christian. He decided to visit emperor Diocletian to try to change his mind. Diocletian would not listen to Saint George and Saint George refused to give up his beliefs.

Saint George was arrested and put into prison. Whilst in prison, he told other people about Christianity. Many other people became Christians due to Saint George's teachings.

## Did Saint George Slay a Dragon?

There is no proof that Saint George fought a dragon. This story was first told seven hundred years after Saint George had died.

Instead of a real dragon, it is thought that the dragon in the story represents evil. Saint George managed to win the battle by refusing to stop being a Christian, even when he knew that he would be punished.

This is what is remembered each year on 23<sup>rd</sup> April.

### Did You Know...?

- The flag of England is called the Saint George's Cross.
- Even though Saint George is so special to England, he probably never even visited!

# Questions

1. How old was Saint George when his mother died? Tick one.

- 17  
 23  
 30  
 33

2. In which city did Saint George join the Roman army? Tick one.

- Polychronia  
 Syria Palaestina  
 Nicomedia  
 Diocletian

3. What did Saint George do whilst he was in prison? Tick one.

- write letters to the Roman emperor  
 teach people about Christianity  
 worship the Roman gods  
 look after the emperor of Nicomedia

4. Draw three lines to match the person to their relationship to Saint George.

Gerontius ●

Diocletian ●

Polychronia ●

● Saint George's mother

● Emperor of Rome

● Saint George's father

5. On which date is St. George's Day celebrated each year?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Fill in the missing words.

He said that every soldier who was a \_\_\_\_\_ would have to give up their \_\_\_\_\_ and any \_\_\_\_\_ they had.

7. Why was Saint George put into prison?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Answers

1. How old was Saint George when his mother died? Tick one.

- 17  
 23  
 30  
 33

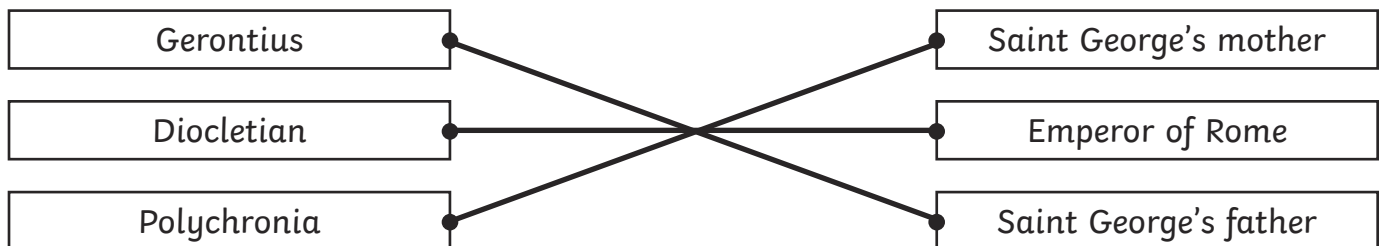
2. In which city did Saint George join the Roman army? Tick one.

- Polychronia  
 Syria Palaestina  
 **Nicomedia**  
 Diocletian

3. What did Saint George do whilst he was in prison? Tick one.

- write letters to the Roman emperor  
 **teach people about Christianity**  
 worship the Roman gods  
 look after the emperor of Nicomedia

4. Draw three lines to match the person to their relationship to Saint George.



5. On which date is St. George's Day celebrated each year?

**23<sup>rd</sup> April**

6. Fill in the missing words.

He said that every soldier who was a **Christian** would have to give up their **job** and any **money** they had.

7. Why was Saint George put into prison?

**Saint George was put into prison because he refused to give up his Christian beliefs when ordered to by the Roman emperor Diocletian.**

# St. George's Day

The life of Saint George is remembered and celebrated each year on 23<sup>rd</sup> April. Saint George is the **patron saint** of many countries around the world, including England, Malta and Romania.

## Early Life

Not much is known for certain about Saint George but stories about him have been told since the fourth century. According to these stories, Saint George's father is thought to have been called Gerontius and he is believed to have been in the Roman army. His mother is thought to have been called Polychronia and is said to have been from an area known as Syria Palaestina.



When Saint George was fourteen years old, his father died. He and his mother returned to Syria Palaestina and they lived there together for three years.

## Life in the Army

When Saint George was seventeen, he travelled to the city of Nicomedia. Just like his father, he joined the Roman army and began to travel around the world. By the age of thirty, Saint George had risen to the rank of military tribune – a respected role within the Roman army. He was part of the group of soldiers trusted to guard the emperor of Nicomedia.

Saint George's success within the army continued to grow. He was promoted to the rank of **legatus** within just a few years and became highly respected within society.

## Imprisoned

On 24<sup>th</sup> February AD 303, the Roman emperor Diocletian gave an order. He announced that every Christian soldier within the Roman army would have to give up their job and their money. They would also have to stop being a Christian and worship the Roman gods instead.

Saint George did not want to give up his Christian beliefs. He gave away all of his money and possessions as he was told. Then, he decided to visit emperor Diocletian to try to change his mind. Diocletian would not listen to Saint George and Saint George refused to give up his beliefs.

Diocletian ordered his guards to arrest Saint George. Despite this, Saint George kept his faith and went on to spread the word of Christianity whilst in prison. Many other people became Christians due to Saint George's teachings.



### Saint George and the Dragon

Despite the popularity of the story, the idea of Saint George slaying a dragon only began to appear seven hundred years after his death. Instead of a real dragon, it is thought that the dragon slain by Saint George represents evil. Saint George defeated evil by refusing to give up his Christian faith, even when he would be punished. This is remembered each year on 23<sup>rd</sup> April – a day which has become known as St. George's Day. This date was chosen as it was believed to have been the date on which Saint George died in AD 303.



### Glossary

**Patron saint** – The saint who protects or guides a person or place.

**Legatus** – A high-ranking member of the Roman army who was in charge of other soldiers.

# Questions

1. Why is Syria Palaestina significant? Tick one.
  - It is where Saint George was imprisoned.
  - It is where Saint George was a soldier.
  - Saint George's mother was born there.
  - The emperor Diocletian ruled there.
2. Which two ranks did Saint George hold during his time in the Roman army? Tick two.
  - Military Tribune
  - Emperor
  - Legatus
  - Official
3. How old was Saint George when his father died? Tick one.
  - 14
  - 17
  - 23
  - 30
4. Number the events to show the order in which they happened during Saint George's life. The first one has been done for you.
  - Diocletian ordered his guards to arrest Saint George.
  - He was promoted to the rank of legatus.
  - The Roman emperor Diocletian gave an order.
  - He travelled to the city of Nicomedia.
  - 1 He and his mother returned to Syria Palaestina.
5. Which city did Saint George travel to in order to join the Roman army?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Which two things did Diocletian order all Christian Roman soldiers to give up?
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_

7. Using the information in the section **Imprisoned**, explain why Saint George was a role model for Christians.

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8. Why might many countries around the world have chosen Saint George as their patron saint?

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# Answers

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  - 5 Diocletian ordered his guards to arrest Saint George.
  - 3 He was promoted to the rank of legatus.
  - 4 The Roman emperor Diocletian gave an order.
  - 2 He travelled to the city of Nicomedia.
  - 1 He and his mother returned to Syria Palaestina.
5. Which city did Saint George travel to in order to join the Roman army?  
**Nicomedia**
6. Which two things did Diocletian order all Christian Roman soldiers to give up?  
**Accept the two following answers: their job, their money**



7. Using the information in the section **Imprisoned**, explain why Saint George was a role model for Christians.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Saint George was a role model for Christians because he did not give up his faith in the face of punishment. He also used his imprisonment as an opportunity to teach others about Christianity.**

8. Why might many countries around the world have chosen Saint George as their patron saint?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Countries may have chosen Saint George as their patron saint because he showed bravery in the face of punishment and remained true to God until his death. These are attributes that countries might want their citizens to show.**

# St. George's Day

St. George's Day is celebrated annually on 23<sup>rd</sup> April. It is celebrated in honour of Saint George, the patron saint of many countries around the world, including England, Malta and Romania.

## Early Life

Although not much is known about Saint George for certain due to the lack of historical records, stories about him have been told since the fourth century. According to legend, Saint George was the son of wealthy Christian parents. His father is thought to have been Gerontius, an official in the Roman army, and his mother Polychronia is thought to have been from the area known as Syria Palaestina. After his father's death when Saint George was just fourteen years old, he returned to Syria Palaestina with his mother and they lived there together for three years.



Following his mother's death when he was seventeen, Saint George travelled to the city of Nicomedia. Just as his father had before him, he joined the Roman army and began to travel around the world.

## Career

Before the age of thirty, Saint George had been promoted to the rank of military tribune – a respected role within the Roman army – and he was part of the group of soldiers trusted to guard the emperor of Nicomedia. Saint George's success within the army continued to grow and he was promoted to the rank of legatus within just a few years. This meant that he was in charge of up to 5,000 soldiers and he was highly respected in society.

**Diocletian's Command**

On 24<sup>th</sup> February AD 303, the Roman emperor Diocletian gave an official order. He announced that every soldier within the Roman army who was a Christian would have to give up their job and all of their possessions. They would also have to stop being a Christian and worship the Roman gods instead.

## Diocletian's Command

Saint George did not want to give up his Christian beliefs. He gave away all of his money and possessions as ordered and decided to visit emperor Diocletian in an attempt to change his mind. Diocletian would not listen to Saint George, offering him gifts, money and land to give up his Christian beliefs but Saint George refused.

This angered Diocletian and he ordered his guards to arrest Saint George. Despite this, Saint George kept his faith and went on to spread the word of Christianity whilst in prison, with many other people becoming Christians due to Saint George's teachings.

### **Saint George and the Dragon**

Although it is commonly associated with the saint, stories of Saint George slaying a dragon only began to appear in the 11<sup>th</sup> century – seven hundred years after Saint George's death. It is thought that the dragon slain by Saint George represents evil and that Saint George triumphed over evil by refusing to give up his Christian faith in the face of punishment. Saint George's victory is commemorated each year on 23<sup>rd</sup> April – a day which has become known as St. George's Day. This date was chosen as it was believed to have been the date on which Saint George died in AD 303.



# Questions

1. **St. George's Day is celebrated annually on 23<sup>rd</sup> April.**

In this sentence, what does the word annually mean? Tick one.

- once per month
- once per year
- twice per year
- once every two years

2. In which century did stories about Saint George slaying a dragon begin to be told?

- 4<sup>th</sup>
- 9<sup>th</sup>
- 11<sup>th</sup>
- 20<sup>th</sup>

3. List three things offered to Saint George by Diocletian in return for abandoning his faith.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Write the full date on which Saint George is thought to have died.

\_\_\_\_\_

5a. Find and copy a phrase from the text which shows that the facts we know about Saint George may be inaccurate.

\_\_\_\_\_

5b. Explain why the information known about Saint George may be inaccurate.

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6. Comment on the impact of Saint George's time in prison.

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7. Explain what the dragon commonly associated with Saint George represents and why it is important.

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# Answers

1. **St. George's Day is celebrated annually on 23<sup>rd</sup> April.**

In this sentence, what does the word annually mean? Tick one.

- once per month
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2. In which century did stories about Saint George slaying a dragon begin to be told?

- 4<sup>th</sup>
- 9<sup>th</sup>
- 11<sup>th</sup>**
- 20<sup>th</sup>

3. List three things offered to Saint George by Diocletian in return for abandoning his faith.

**Accept the three following answers: gifts, money, land.**

4. Write the full date on which Saint George is thought to have died.

**23<sup>rd</sup> April 303**

5a. Find and copy a phrase from the text which shows that the facts we know about Saint George may be inaccurate.

**The facts may be inaccurate because it states in the text that, 'stories of Saint George slaying a dragon only began to appear in the 11th century – seven hundred years after Saint George's death.'**

5b. Explain why the information known about Saint George may be inaccurate.

**The information we know about Saint George may be inaccurate due to the lack of written historical records about his existence.**

6. Comment on the impact of Saint George's time in prison.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Whilst in prison, Saint George spent his time teaching others about Christianity and spreading the word of his faith. This meant that other people were able to become Christians due to his teachings.**

7. Explain what the dragon commonly associated with Saint George represents and why it is important.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: The dragon associated with Saint George represents evil. It is important because Saint George defeated evil by refusing to give up his faith in the face of punishment.**