

Mother's Day

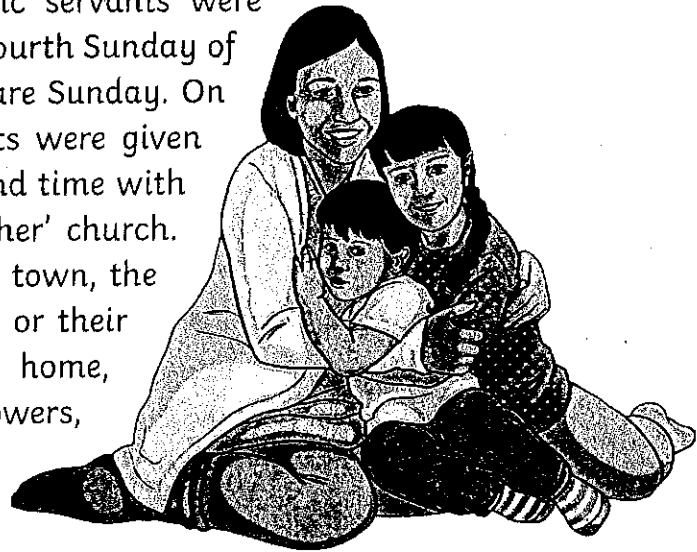
Mother's Day is an annual celebration. It is a day for people to say thank you to their mothers and mother figures, such as grandmas, aunts or guardians, and to show that they appreciate everything they have done to help them.

Mothersing Sunday

The Mother's Day celebrated now is said to be based on the early Christian festival known as 'Mothersing Sunday'. The importance of this day is a reflection of family life in the 16th century.

During the 1500s, it was common for children to leave home around the age of ten years old so that they could begin earning a small income and support their family. Many children began to work as domestic servants in wealthy households. Girls would become housemaids while boys tended to the horses in the stables. They were rarely allowed to go home.

One rare occasion where domestic servants were allowed to leave work was on the fourth Sunday of the season of Lent, known as Laetare Sunday. On this special day, domestic servants were given the day off so that they could spend time with their families and visit their 'mother' church. This was the main church in their town, the church they had been baptised in, or their local cathedral. As they walked home, children would pick the wild flowers, which grew along the side of the paths, to give to their mothers as a small gift.



Mothersing Sunday vs Mother's Day

As time passed, this tradition continued and changed into what was known as Mothersing Sunday. In the early 1900s, UK shopkeepers began to realise how popular Mothersing Sunday was becoming and saw a chance to make the occasion profitable. They began to sell cards and gifts specifically for this purpose and advertised the day as 'Mother's Day'.

Over time, the wild flowers picked by children were replaced by shop-bought gifts and, although children no longer worked as domestic servants, the fourth Sunday in the season of Lent continued to be set aside as a special day for families to spend time together. People in the UK and Ireland started to celebrate

'Mother's Day' on the same day that Mothering Sunday had been celebrated. The two celebrations have now been mixed up, with many people thinking that they are the same thing.

The Fourth Sunday in Lent

Just as the fourth Sunday in the season of Lent is now often known as both Mothering Sunday and Mother's Day, there are many other names given to this day.

Many people refer to this day by a name related to eating, such as Refreshment Sunday, Simnel Sunday and Pudding Pie Sunday (in the county of Surrey). These names are given to reflect how cakes – especially Simnel cakes – would be baked to celebrate families coming back together on this day or eaten on a break from fasting during Lent.

Amongst Christian communities, the date is also sometimes referred to as Rose Sunday. This is in relation to the colour of robes worn in the church. On this day, the robes change from purple to pink – the colour of the rose.

Glossary

Annual – Something which happens once every year.

Cathedral – A very large church which the bishop is linked to.