**Christian Festival**

**Introduction to Christian Festivals**

Lent, Easter and Christmas are the main religious festivals of the Christian Year. Most people in Britain celebrate Christmas and Easter. School children have two weeks off school during Christmas and Easter.

The Christian Year

The Christian year is divided up with events which remind us of the life of Jesus. It begins with the season of Advent, at the very end of November, which is a period of preparation for the coming of Christ, and then moves through the story of his life to the important focus of Holy Week and Easter. After celebrating the resurrection of Jesus, the story focuses on the founding of the Church itself, with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, before settling down for a period of teaching and consolidation of the faith during the weeks of Trinity.

Some festivals, like Christmas Day, happen on the same date every year, while others move around within a range of dates.

**Why are some of the Christian festivals not on the same date each year?**

The reason is because the Christian Calendar grew out of two other Calendars, the Jewish and the Roman.

In their distant past, the Jews were a nomadic ( wandering) people. As they often travelled at night, the moon was of great importance to them, and they based their calendar on its phases. The first great Christian festivals sprang from Jewish ones.

The Christian Church grew and expanded under the Roman Empire which followed a calendar controlled by the sun. When the church began to introduce festivals of its very own, not based on the Jews, they fixed them on dates already in the Roman Calendar. The Christian Calendar is thus a dual one, with 'fixed' feats based on the Roman 'solar' calendar, and 'moveable' ones based on the Jewish 'lunar' calendar.