

## HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL SERVICES DURING THE YEAR

### Objective

The children obtain an overview of holidays and special services celebrated by New Apostolic Christians in the course of a year.

### Contents

- The significance of Christian holidays and feasts.
- Their chronology in the calendar year.



## Introductory Remarks

A few current calendars could come in handy for this lesson.

In addition, (self-stick) notes and possibly two large coloured card-board sheets are to be brought.

The teacher requires

- the Bible text which the Chief Apostle provided at the beginning of the year. (The children need it for exercise 3.)
- the Bible text from the service which the Chief Apostle conducted at Pentecost.

Some of the holidays referred to in exercise 1 are not celebrated in all countries: such as Good Friday, Ascension, Thanksgiving Day, Day of Repentance and Prayer, Advent. Nevertheless, with the help of the description, the names for the individual days can be elaborated on with the children.

## Lesson Plan

### Lead-In

Distribute sufficient (self-stick) notes and ask the children to write down the holidays and special services they are aware of. A separate note is to be used for each.

### Result

Collect and sort the notes, separating state holidays and commemoration days from Christian holidays. (You could use two large coloured cardboard sheets for this.) Notes with identical holidays and feasts are combined. Chronology should not yet be taken into consideration. It is also not important whether or not all holidays were suggested. If holidays of other religions or religious denominations are included, explain to the children that only church holidays observed in the New Apostolic Church will be gone into.

## Implementation

### Discussion

Together with the children discuss the difference between the two sets of holidays.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ State commemoration days and holidays are celebrated in remembrance of events which are important to a particular country.</li> <li>■ Church holidays are celebrated in remembrance of events in salvation history and are of substantial significance in our faith.</li> </ul>
Workbook, Exercise 1	The children do the exercise and compare their answers.
Discussion	<p>Discuss with the children when the various feasts and holidays are celebrated. There are feasts and holidays which are bound to a specific date in many countries, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New Year's Day on 1 January,</li> <li>■ Christmas Day on 25 December (in Russia on 7 January), and</li> <li>■ New Year's Eve on 31 December.</li> </ul>
Teacher's Presentation	<p>In addition, there are feasts, holidays, and divine services the dates of which change from year to year and are generally referred to as movable feasts.</p> <p>This includes Easter, for example, which is celebrated on the first Sunday following the first full moon in Spring.</p>
Question Prompt	Which feasts and holidays are chronologically connected to Easter?
Discussion	<p>Work out the following with the children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter Sunday,</li> <li>■ Good Friday, the Friday before Easter Sunday,</li> <li>■ Ascension Day, 40 days after Easter Sunday, and</li> <li>■ Pentecost, the seventh Sunday after Easter Sunday.</li> </ul>
Question Prompt	<p>What is the period preceding Christmas called?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ In some countries, Christians celebrate the four Sundays preceding Christmas Day as the Sundays of Advent.</li> </ul> <p>The divine services for the departed are of special significance in the church year.</p>
Question Prompt	How often and when do we have services for the departed?

	<p>■ Three times a year and always on the first Sunday of the months of March, July, and November.</p>
Discussion	<p>Discuss which holidays we observe as church feasts (all those which are directly linked to salvation in Jesus Christ: Christmas, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter, and Pentecost). In addition to this there are holidays that are observed only in a particular region, such as the Day of Repentance and Prayer.</p>
Workbook, Exercise 2	<p>The children work on the exercise with the help of a current calendar. These holidays and special days recur annually.</p>
Discussion	<p>Repeat that church holidays remind us of important events in Jesus' life.</p> <p>In the past decades, their religious significance has crept more and more into the background. Even many Christians no longer know the origin of the holidays. Discuss what meaning has been given to the individual feasts and holidays today instead. For example, Christmas has become a feast of giving. Naturally we too are happy to receive presents, but they should not replace what is most important, namely, that we rejoice about Jesus' birth, the greatest gift of all. At Easter, the Easter bunny and Easter eggs are not what is most important, but rather the remembrance of Christ's resurrection.</p> <p>On certain holidays and special days the Chief Apostle conveys a special Bible text to God's people. The Bible text for the new year service points the way ahead. Remind the children of the Bible text for the new year and the Bible text of the last Pentecost service. The children look up both in the Bible and read them aloud.</p>
Bible	<p>Bible text from the first service of the new year and the Bible text from the Pentecost service.</p>
Workbook, Exercise 3	<p>The children do the exercise.</p>
Teacher's Presentation	<p>Holidays are not a Christian invention. They are celebrated in many cultures and religions. Already the Old Testament reports about festive days celebrated by the people of Israel: such as Passover, the Feast of Tabernacles (Succoth), Shavuot (volume 2, lesson 24).</p>

**Conclusion****Game**

One of the children leaves the group. The others select a holiday which this child is to guess. He or she should only ask questions which can be answered with yes or no.

Depending on the amount of time remaining, this game can be played several times.

**Notes**