**Paques en France (Easter in France)**

Bonjour! I thought you might like to know a little bit of detail about how Easter is celebrated in France. Have a read through and there is a quiz at the end.

You might also like to have a go at creating your own Happy Easter card (Joyeux Paques) or picture and adding new French vocabulary from the information here or you could design your own Poisson d’Avril (read on to find out what this is!)

**Mardi Gras**- It actually means ‘Fat Tuesday' and it is known as Shrove Tuesday in English. It is the last day when you can eat everything you like before the fasting period of Lent every Spring (Printemps).  On Mardi Gras, French people traditionally eat doughnuts (*les beignets*) or pancakes (*les crêpes*).

**Ash Wednesday (*mercredi des Cendres*)** is the first day of Lent which lasts for 40 days.

**Palm Sunday (*le dimanche des Rameaux*)** is the Sunday before Easter and it marks the beginning of the Holy Week.

**Les Cloches (the bells)** On the evening of Easter Thursday (le Jeudi Saint) in France all the church bells fly away to Rome in Italy. They visit the Pope (le Pape) in the Vatican to be involved in remembering the death of Jesus and to be blessed by the Pope. So, all the church bells in France are silent until the morning of Easter Sunday.

**Vendredi Saint** **(Good Friday)** commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

**Le Dimanche de Paques (Easter Sunday**) when Jesus was resurrected. Early on the morning of Easter Sunday the Easter bells (les cloches de Paques) fly back to France. They drop chocolate eggs (oeufs en chocolat), chickens (poulets), bells and bunnies (lapin) in the gardens of the French towns. The children get up early excited because it is time for the chocolate egg hunt (la chasse aux oeufs) and all the bells ring again to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus.

**Les œufs de Pâques (Easter Eggs) –** traditionally the eggs that were not eaten during Lent were decorated.

**Le Repas (the meal) -**There is generally an enormous amount of delicious food to eat on Le Dimanche de Paques. French people spend a lot of the day eating with the whole family altogether. It is a very special and happy day.  People traditionally eat roast lamb (l'agneau). There are lots of vegetables, for example, potatoes (les pommes de terre).

**Poisson d’avril (April fish)** In France, April fish are also an Easter symbol and that is why you will find chocolate fish (la friture) in the shops too. You can buy chocolate goodies in sweet shops (*les confiseries*) or in shops specialising in chocolate (*les chocolateries*).

Another important date is April Fools’ Day, on the 1st of April. The tradition is that children play a trick on adults (parents, teachers…) by sticking decorated paper fish onto their back. Every time they manage to trick a grown-up, they run away shouting out *“Poisson d'avril!”* - and laughing lots too.

**French Easter quiz;**

1. **The word for Easter is** a) Paquet b) Paques c) Papillon
2. **Easter is in the season of** a) hiver b) ete c) printemps
3. **The French for Shrove Tuesday is** a) Mardi Gras b) Carnaval c) Mardi des crepes
4. **What do people traditionally eat on Shrove Tuesday**? a) les crepes b)le chocolat c) les oeufs
5. **Palm Sunday is** a) le dimanche des Rameaux b) le Dimanche de Paques c) le Dimanche de chocolat
6. **What is an oeuf de Paques?** a) an Easter card b) an Easter bunny c) an Easter egg
7. **According to French tradition where do all the church bells fly to at Easter?**

a)Madrid b)Rome c)Paris

1. **In French the bells are called** a) les lapins b) les cloches c) les oieseaux
2. **An egg hunt is** a) une chasse aux oeufs b) un panier d’oeufs c) un coquille des oeufs.
3. **An April Fool’s trick is called** a) un lapin d’Avril b) un moulton d’Avril c) un poisson d’Avril