

Superstitions around the world

Read the text. Place the headings into the correct place.

A lucky or crappy day

Three times the church bell rang

The evil eye

Walking under a ladder is supposedly unlucky

Spilling salt is bad luck.

In the Netherlands, you will regularly hear church bells at specific moments during the day. Legend has it that if you look in the mirror while the bell is ringing, your face will be permanently stuck the way it is at that moment. You'd better smile!

This superstition likely stems from the importance of the number three in certain religions. In Christianity, the doctrine of the trinity is the belief that there exists one God, who is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — and since the trinity is sacred, the number three is sacred by extension, too.

When a ladder leans against a wall, it forms a triangle shape with the wall on which it's leaning and the ground. Walking underneath the latter could be seen as "breaking" the trinity — a blasphemous offense.

For every person around the world that takes a paracetamol to ease their headache, a grandma somewhere in Greece is dripping oil in a bowl of water to release her grandchild, remove the curse and of course the headache that comes with it. This is usually the product of jealous thoughts, it can affect anybody and can cause fatigue, headaches, bad luck and a lousy mood.

While nobody would really enjoy cleaning their shoe of dog poo, at least one can be comforted by the idea that stepping into it with your left foot will bring good luck. Avoid stepping into it with your right foot, however. That will lead to bad luck instead.

Merde alors!

Take a close look at Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting, "The Last Supper." Judas Iscariot — the aforementioned unlucky 13th guest at Jesus' dinner — is depicted knocking salt over on the table with his elbow.

Because Judas betrayed Jesus, the salt he knocked over started getting associated with his misdeeds. Luckily, throwing salt over your left shoulder supposedly blinds the devil and counteracts any bad juju you incur for spilling it in the first place.