

Valentine's Day

Celebrated around the world on the 14th of February, Valentine's Day is a day to celebrate all types of love, from romantic love to love for family and friends. Many people send cards and gifts to their loved ones or enjoy delicious meals together. But where did these traditions begin? There are several different legends about Saint Valentine the martyr, which are all slightly linked. Read on to find out more.

Legend #1

In the 3rd century, a priest named Saint Valentine of Rome was questioned by the Roman Emperor Claudius II. At the time, Christians like Valentine were being persecuted. Claudius hoped that he could save Valentine by persuading him to give up his Christian beliefs, but Valentine refused. Instead, Valentine tried to get Claudius to believe in Christianity. Because of this, Valentine was imprisoned and sentenced to death.

While in jail, Valentine met Asterius, the jailer. Asterius had a daughter named Julia, who was blind, and a large household of almost 50 people. They didn't believe in Christianity either, but when Valentine performed a miracle and cured Julia's blindness, Asterius's entire household converted.



Another twist on the story, which leans more towards the romantic side of Valentine's Day as we know it, includes Valentine falling in love with Julia. He wrote Julia love letters from his jail cell and signed them 'from your Valentine'. This tradition became popular in modern Valentine's Day cards and letters.

Legend #2



Legend #3

A further twist on the legend gives a different reason for Saint Valentine's imprisonment. During Claudius II's reign, the ruler wanted to focus on building a strong army. He believed that married men did not make good soldiers and banned them from marrying. Valentine didn't agree with this and performed wedding ceremonies for soldiers in secret. He even wore a special purple ring that let Roman soldiers know that he was available for weddings. Unfortunately, Valentine was caught and asked to stop what he was doing. He refused and was thrown into jail.



This legend is about a different Saint Valentine, who was a Christian bishop from Terni, a city in Italy. Known for his miracles, Valentine was asked by a scholar to heal his son, who was unable to speak. After a night of prayer, the boy was cured. The scholar, his household and all the scholars who visited converted to Christianity after that. When the authorities found out that Valentine was converting people to Christianity, he was arrested and sentenced to death.

Legend #4

Legend #5

Another legend tells of the festival of Lupercalia, which was celebrated by Pagans in ancient Rome. Celebrated between the 13th and 15th of February, the Romans would enjoy a feast and make sacrifices, believing that this would help to purify the city and promote health and fertility. Some people believe that this festival was later adapted by Christians to become a celebration of Saint Valentine.



There's no way of finding out which of these legends is true, or which of the Saint Valentines the day is actually about. Either way, it is widely believed that a Saint Valentine died on the 14th of February and that is why the date was chosen. Beginning as a feast, the day grew into a celebration of love with some help from famous writers Chaucer and Shakespeare. It is thought that the first Valentine's Day card was sent in 1415 by a duke who was imprisoned in the Tower of London. Today, many cards include Cupid, the Roman god of love, who is believed to have helped people fall in love with his magical bow and arrows. Whatever the origins, Valentine's Day is a popular holiday that encourages people to celebrate love in all its forms.

Disclaimers:

We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. As far as possible, the contents of this resource are reflective of current professional research. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. The information given here is intended for general guidance purposes only and may not apply to your specific situation.

Questions

Question Difficulty Key

- 1 easy
- 2 medium
- 3 difficult

1

Fill in the blanks to complete the sentences about Valentine's Day.

Valentine's Day is celebrated on the of .

It celebrates all types of , from love to love for and .

People celebrate Valentine's Day by sending and .

2

Match the person with their role in the legend of Valentine's Day.

Julia

A Christian priest who was questioned by the Roman Emperor.

Cupid

A Christian bishop who cured a scholar's son.

Saint Valentine of Terni

A Roman Emperor who did not believe in Christianity.

Chaucer

A jailer.

Saint Valentine of Rome

The jailer's daughter.

Asterius

A writer who helped to link Valentine's Day to romance.

Claudius II

The Roman God of Love.

3

At the time, Valentine was being persecuted for being a Christian.

What does **persecuted** mean?

4

Why do you think Claudius didn't want his soldiers to be married?



In the legends, Saint Valentine is described as a martyr.

Which of these statements do you think best describes a martyr?

- someone who performs miracles
- someone who dies because of their beliefs
- someone who celebrates love



Summarise each of the legends in one sentence each.

Legend #1 _____

Legend #2 _____

Legend #3 _____

Legend #4 _____

Legend #5 _____

Legend #6

7

Which of the legends, if any, do you think is true and why?
