

EASTER AND PASSOVER

In America, many children are told stories about the Easter Bunny. He is said to bring eggs, chocolates and other sweets, and hides them for children to find on Easter morning.

The Easter Bunny tradition probably developed from a German celebration of spring. Germans first settled in North America in the eighteenth century. They celebrated the Goddess of Spring, Eostre. Ancient images of Eostre show her carrying eggs and young bunnies. Eggs are an almost worldwide symbol of birth. The young animals represent the ability to reproduce, to make new life.

Individual families often organize Easter egg hunts. But egg hunts can also be public gatherings. In New York City, one Brooklyn neighborhood is holding such an event for a seventh year. On Saturday, the Brooklyn Bridge Park will welcome children and their families for an egg hunt. Other activities include face painting, egg decorating, music and storytelling.

Children in America might also enjoy a movie this Easter Sunday. Hollywood released “Hop” just in time for the holiday. It tells the story of E.B., the teenage son of the Easter Bunny. E.B. runs away to Hollywood, where he hopes to become a rock and roll musician. Here, he talks with a human friend, Fred.

E.B.: “No you’re right. It’s not your concern. And in two weeks maybe you can explain to the children of the world why they didn’t get their Easter baskets.”

FRED: “Easter.”

E.B.: “Oh, yes, Fred. I am the Easter Bunny.”

FRED: “Hop in.”

Many Christians in America attend religious services on Easter Sunday. There are also non-Christian holy days around this time of year. Jews observe Passover, for example.

This year, none of the major Muslim holidays are close to Easter or Passover. But that will change in future years because Muslim holidays follow the Islamic calendar.