

Las Cruces de mayo

May Crosses

Background information

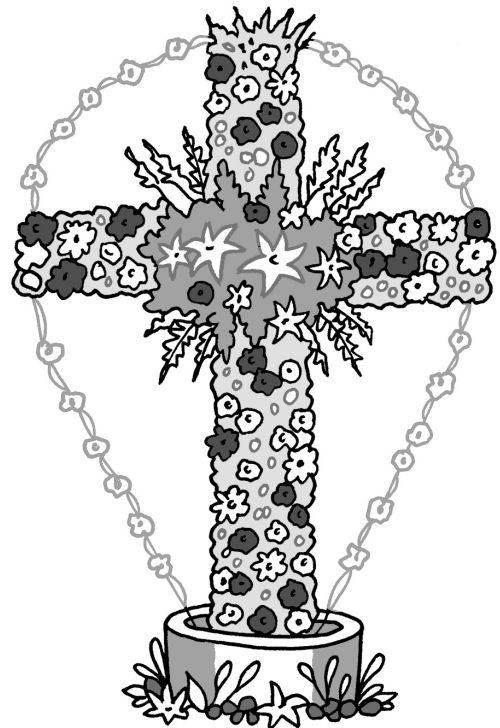
The May Crosses Festival (*Las Cruces de mayo*) is celebrated in many parts of the world, especially in Latin America and Spain. In Spain, the festival holds special importance, especially in Córdoba, Andalucía which has the most famous celebration. Córdoba is the 10th largest city in Spain but is very popular as it has the feel of a small town, due to a historical centre and lots of history. It has a beautiful mosque, *la mezquita de Córdoba*, dating back to 785. It also has a synagogue, and some beautiful gardens with historical links to Christopher Columbus.

Saint Helen had a son who was in battle. Her son had a dream about a cross which was going to help him win his fight. Legend has it that a cross was then built and taken into battle – the war was then won. This inspired Saint Helen to go to Jerusalem in search of the cross Jesus was crucified on. Three crosses were found, but only one produced miracles, such as healing the sick. She then campaigned for people to continue to worship the cross, even after her death.

The May Crosses festival in Córdoba is more than just a festival, it is also a contest. People began decorating the crosses with flowers in 1953 and it has been a tradition ever since. There is also a parade called 'Battle of the Flowers', followed by a long procession of floats decorated with flowers. This celebration is to welcome springtime. Dancing, food, drink and fireworks are also an intrinsic part of this festival. Temporary bars are set up and there is drinking and dancing late into the night.

Teaching activities

- ◆ Use the photocopiable sheet on page 33 to draw and label a May Cross.
- ◆ Can you explain the story of the May Crosses?
- ◆ Can you find Córdoba on a map of Spain? How could we travel there?
- ◆ Why would people want to celebrate the arrival of Spring? Think of three reasons.



Vocabulario

las flores	flowers
las carrozas	floats
la primavera	spring
Las Cruces de mayo	May Crosses
el desfile	parade

Las Cruces de mayo



Nombre:

Fecha:

I understand how and why *Las Cruces de mayo* is celebrated in Spain.

When are the *Cruces de mayo* in Spain?

How do the Spanish people celebrate?

Draw a picture of a May Cross below.

Extension activity

Use the Internet to find out the history of May Crosses.