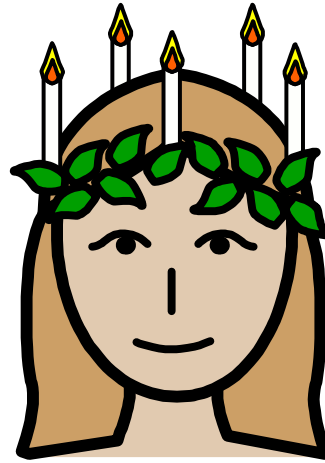


# The story of Saint Lucia



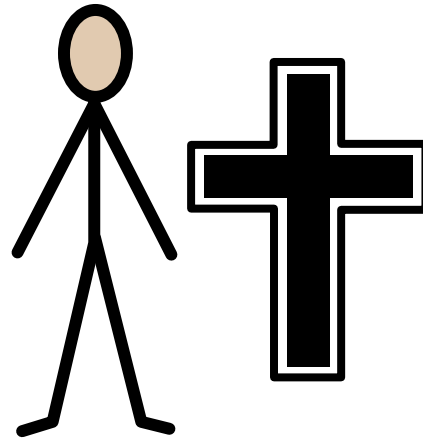


Saint Lucia is a Swedish Festival of Light.

It is on December 13th every year.

December 13th is one of the shortest days of winter.

The Festival helps to brighten up the long winter nights.



Lucia was a Christian girl who lived in Italy a long time ago.

Some people thought she once visited Sweden.

Christians were persecuted in Italy.

They had to meet in secret to worship God.

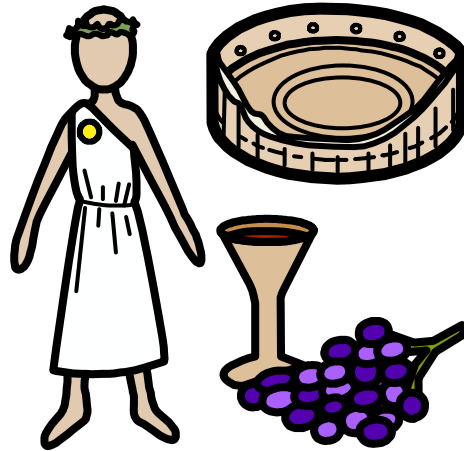


The Christians met in caves at night time to worship.

Lucia used to visit them with food so they would not be hungry.

She found it difficult to carry enough food for all the people.

So she put a crown of candles on her head to light her way.

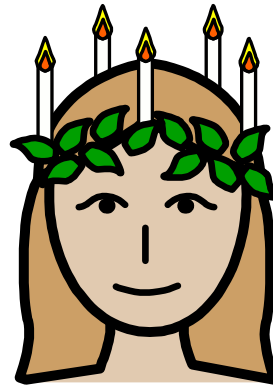


She could then carry more food with her hands.

One day the Romans caught her.

They killed her because she was helping the Christians.

Her kindness is remembered every year.



On December 13th in Sweden, girls dress up as Saint Lucia.

They wear a white dress and a crown of candles.

Today they use modern candles with batteries in them.

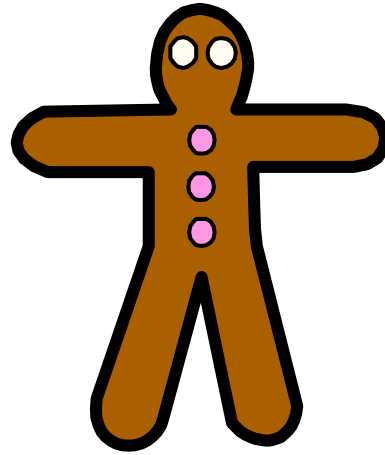
In the past they used real candles but this is too dangerous now.



The girls get up early in the morning when it is still dark.

They take coffee and cakes and ginger biscuits to their family,  
while they are in bed.

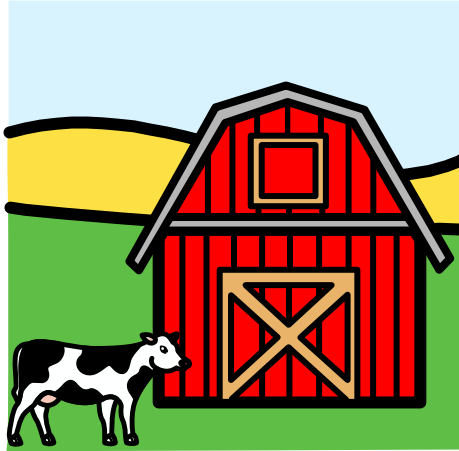
They also take food to neighbours.



At school now children sing Saint Lucia's song  
to remember her kindness.

They make the spicy gingerbread biscuits called pepparkakor  
and the small saffron tasting buns with raisins called lussekatter.



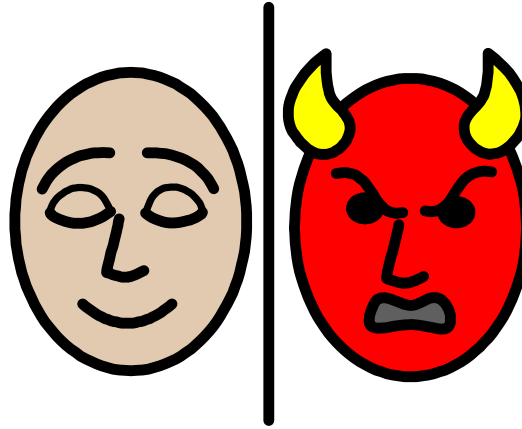


In the past a Lucia Queen or bride was chosen in each village.

She would have to visit homes and farms delivering trays of food.

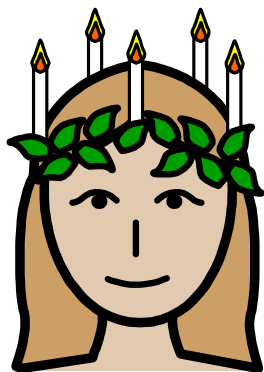
She would be wearing the crown of candles on her head.

Lucia would also visit the barns full of animals.



This was thought to bring light and good luck  
to the animals and people.

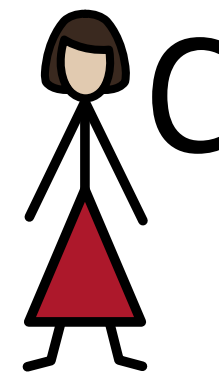
This festival symbolises light overcoming darkness,  
and good overcoming evil.



Saint Lucia



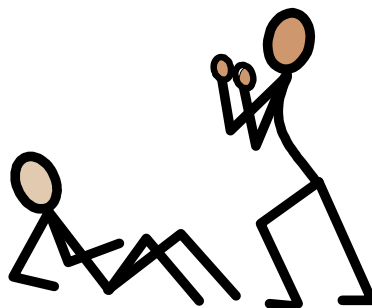
Sweden



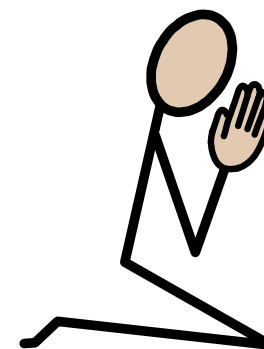
Christian



Italy



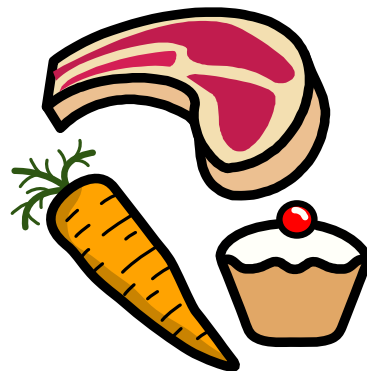
persecuted



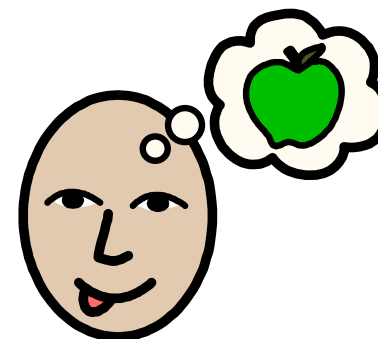
worship



God



food



hungry



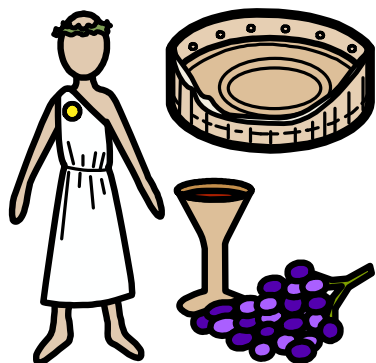
difficult



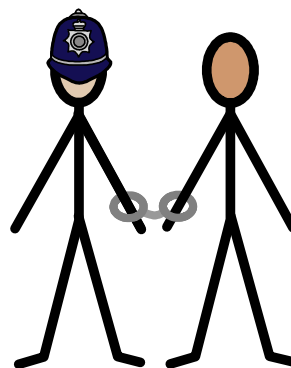
Festival of Light



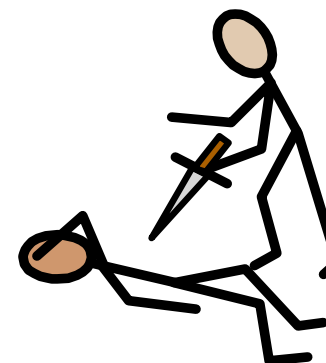
evil



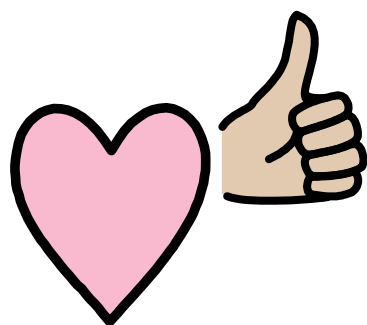
Romans



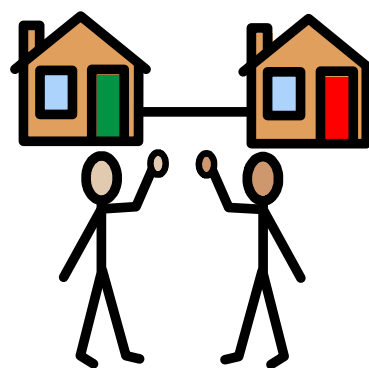
caught



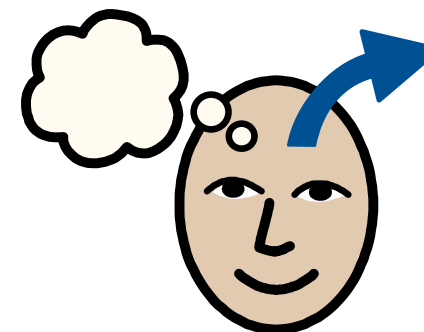
killed



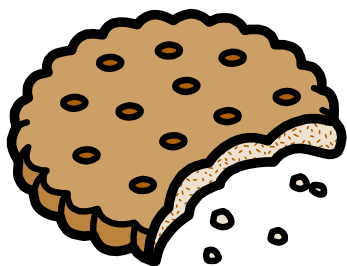
kindness



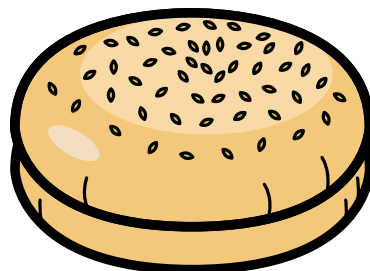
neighbours



remember



pepparkakor



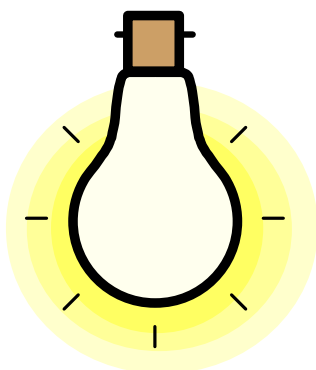
lussekatter



good



luck



light



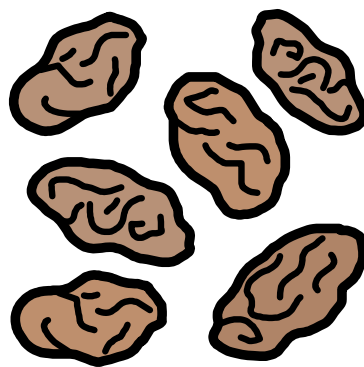
darkness



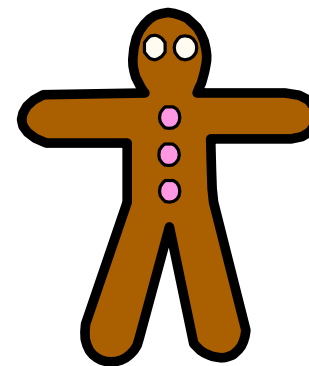
overcoming



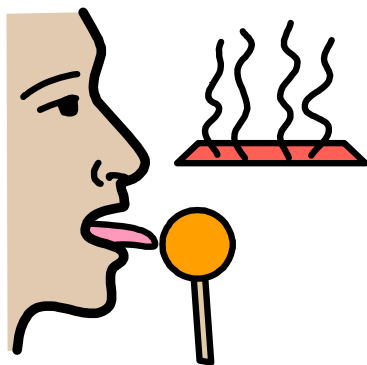
saffron



raisins



gingerbread



spicy



visited



festival