

1. Read the key words and combinations of the text and define its theme *customs and traditions; ancient rituals; public celebration; personal event; religious origin; special day ;mysterious pagan holidays; perform traditional dances; light bonfires; light bonfires; weave coronets*
2. Read the text and say what the most interesting Belarusian special holidays are.

Belarusian customs and traditions

Belarusian life is full of customs and traditions. Ancient rituals may be seen in our customs and holidays. Like other countries Belarus has its own holidays. They are of two kinds – traditional national holidays and religious holidays. National holidays are both – a public celebration and a personal event in the family. Some holidays and traditions have a religious origin, for example Christmas and Easter.

A lot of people think that New Year's Day is the most exciting time of the year for children and adults. The New Year has three marvelous aspects — both giving and receiving presents, making beautiful decorations and preparing the most wonderful food. The central decoration for New Year must be a fur-tree decorated with toys and lights. Long before New Year's Eve people begin to buy New Year's cards, toys and presents. Most families see the New Year in at home. A lot of delicious food is cooked for the night meal which usually starts at 10 o'clock. This day is a traditional family reunion day and a special day for children.

We have some special holidays. For example, “Kupalle” is one of the most mysterious pagan holiday in Belarus. People light bonfires, dance and sing songs around them. Kupalle is celebrated on the 7th of July. At night, people light bonfires and perform traditional dances, sing folk songs and jump over the fire. Bathing in the river and jumping over the fire are supposed to be the acts of purification. Girls gather flowers and weave coronets which they wear during the holiday and then at dawn, they throw their coronets into the river. One of the culminating moments of the event is the search for a magic fern-flower in the forest, which is considered to be a symbol of love.

Another interesting holiday is Belarusian “Kalyady”. On “Kalyady” Belarusians like to visit each other, celebrate weddings and arrange fairs. Groups of merry young boys and girls in smart clothes go from house to house. Hosts and hostesses usually treat them to delicious things and thank them for well-wishing and carol-singing. The main purpose of “Kalyady” is to get rid of everything bad and to begin a new life cycle with joy and optimism.

Of course it's very important to follow our grandparents' traditions, because we should know our past, our historic roots and national culture. Belarusian national culture has always maintained (поддерживала) its national traditions, at the same time remaining an integral part of the world cultural heritage. So we are responsible for this heritage and shouldn't forget our history.

3. Say what holiday it is about:

- The central decoration for this holiday must be a fur-tree decorated with toys and lights.
- People light bonfires, dance and sing songs around them.

- Groups of merry young boys and girls in smart clothes go from house to house.
- Children write letters and expect presents from Santa Claus.
- People colour eggs and make kulichi for this holiday.

4. Put questions in the correct order to reflect the content of the text and answer them.

1. Why is New Year's Day the most exciting time of the year?
2. What is the main purpose of "Kalyady"?
3. "Kupalle" is one of the most mysterious pagan holiday in Belarus, isn't it?
4. What holidays have a religious origin?
5. Do you think it is important to follow our grandparents' traditions? Why?

5. Are you proud of our national holidays and traditions? Why?(Why not?)

6. Which holiday celebration in Belarus will you recommend your British friend to visit? Why?

7. Now let's talk about your favourite holiday in Belarus?