

CELEBRATIONS

Coming Of Age

1. Warmer

In your country, at what age can people do these things legally for the first time?

- get married
- vote in a political election
- drive a car
- drink alcohol
- hold a full-time job
- sign their own phone contract

2. Key words and expressions

a. Scan the four short texts to find and underline the key words and expressions.

b. Match them with their definitions.

c. Then read the texts again to see and understand how they are used in context.

Texts a. & b.

accountable	ball gown	commandment	court	liberal
mass	milestone	Sabbath	prayer shawl	tiara

1. the main religious ceremony of the Roman Catholic church _____
2. a special long dress worn usually at a formal social event at which there is dancing and usually a meal _____
3. a piece of jewellery that a woman wears on top of her head on formal occasions. It looks like a small crown _____
4. people who surround, help, and work for a king or queen _____
5. according to the Bible, one of the ten rules of behaviour that God gave people to obey _____
6. in a position where people have the right to criticise you or ask you why something happened _____
7. a day for people of some religions to rest and pray _____
8. an event or achievement that marks an important stage in a process _____
9. a long, specially decorated piece of cloth that is worn over the shoulders for religious occasions _____
10. used about societies, institutions, religions, etc that allow people a lot of personal freedom _____

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Worksheet

Texts c. & d.

adolescent	extravagant	filig	grazes	heirloom
lavish	pass down	rite of passage	transition	wrath

11. a ceremony or event that marks an important stage in someone's life, for example becoming an adult _____
12. rubbing something down in order to make it smooth _____
13. very great anger _____
14. lightly touches _____
15. the process of changing from one situation, form, or state to another _____
16. a boy or girl who is changing into a young man or woman _____
17. an event that is big, grand, and usually costs a lot of money _____
18. give something to younger people, especially those in your family _____
19. a valuable or special possession that has belonged to a family for many years _____
20. costing a lot of money, especially more than is reasonable _____

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Worksheet

a. Quinceañera

Sometimes simply called quince, this is the celebration of a girl's fifteenth birthday and marks her passage from girl to woman. It is the most important religious and social celebration for the majority of 15-year-old girls in Mexico, Latin America, and on Caribbean islands such as Cuba. The celebration begins with a mass and is followed by a grand party with food, cake, music and dancing. The girl (also called the quinceañera), wears a ball gown and a tiara and is accompanied by her closest friends; her 'court of honour'.

Quinceañera traditions include the presentation of a doll to her younger sister, and the 'changing of the shoes' in which her father changes the girl's flat shoes for high heels. Both these acts symbolise that the quinceañera is ready to give up her childhood.

b. Bar Mitzvah

According to Jewish law, once they reach the age of 13 boys become a bar mitzvah (Hebrew for son of the commandment). They become accountable for their own actions and may participate in all areas of Jewish community life. A Jewish boy becomes a bar mitzvah on the Sabbath nearest his 13th birthday. Most families choose to celebrate this milestone with a special ceremony. Boys prepare for their bar mitzvah by taking lessons. Usually the boy reads from the Torah and delivers a speech in the synagogue. He wears a special prayer shawl called *tallit*. After the service, there is usually a party to which the rabbi, and the boy's family and friends are all invited.

Liberal Jewish communities also celebrate a girl's bat mitzvah (Hebrew for daughter of the commandment) in a similar way.

c. Metatah

The most important rite of passage for every Balinese teenager is the tooth filing ceremony, or Metatah ceremony.

During this ceremony a Hindu priest symbolically cuts down or files away the six negative traits of: lust, greed, wrath, pride, jealousy, and intoxication.

These days, the 'filing' is usually done with a piece of bamboo that only lightly grazes the teeth.

If a family cannot afford the expensive ceremony it can be postponed or integrated into a wedding celebration, but it must be carried out before a Balinese person gets married as it marks the transition from adolescent to adult.

This mostly private ceremony is limited to family members and involves purification ceremonies and prayers.

d. Sweet sixteen

Mainly celebrated in the United States and Canada, sweet sixteen parties that celebrate a girl's (or occasionally a boy's) 16th birthday can range from a small family party at home to a lavish party in a hotel ballroom with hundreds of guests. This celebration shares many similarities with a quinceañera such as the father-daughter dance, the shoe ceremony, and the lighting of candles to acknowledge the family and friends who are important in the celebrant's life. Some families choose this celebration to pass down a family heirloom such as a piece of jewellery. Others give the celebrant extravagant presents such as the keys to her first car. As well as making the day special, these acts show that the girl is respected, responsible and can be trusted by her parents.

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3. Find the information

Answer the questions with the names of the appropriate celebrations.

Which celebrations:

1. are connected to birthdays? _____
2. just celebrate boys? _____
3. just celebrate girls? _____
4. have a strong religious element? _____
5. partly take place in a religious building? _____
6. are specific to one country? _____
7. share some of the same traditions? _____
8. require the person coming of age to attend special lessons? _____

4. Using the key words and expressions

Look back at task 2. Choose ten of the key words and expressions that you would like to be able to use correctly. Write your ten words onto the beginning of the lines below – one word or expression per line.

Then write a new sentence of your own for each word or expression onto the lines.

_____ - _____

_____ - _____

_____ - _____

_____ - _____

_____ - _____

_____ - _____

_____ - _____

_____ - _____

_____ - _____

_____ - _____

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Worksheet

5. Discussion topics

a. Circle the most important birthday in your country or culture.

13 15 16 18 21 other ___

Talk about how this special birthday is celebrated.

Say:

- who is involved
- where the celebration is held
- what special traditions are connected to it
- what presents are given
- what food is eaten
- what greeting people say on this day

b. Apart from special birthdays, is there another *coming of age* tradition in your country, culture or religion?

Explain it to someone who knows nothing about this celebration.