



## What is Mother's Day? How did it come to be?

Every year, we celebrate our mothers on one special day – the second Sunday in May. A woman named Anna Jarvis (1864-1948), who lived in Grafton, West Virginia, created the holiday. She wanted a special to celebrate mothers and motherhood. The corresponding holiday to Mother's Day is Father's Day.

**HAPPY  
MOTHER'S  
DAY!**

Anna Jarvis trademarked two phrases in the year 1912: "Mother's Day" and "second Sunday in May." She also created the Mother's Day International Association. She was very specific about the apostrophe placement in the word mother. It was to be singular and possessive, which indicates that each family is honoring their own particular mother. If there were no apostrophe, it would indicate that the day celebrates all the mothers in the world.

Before Ms. Jarvis created the day we cherish today, early women's peace groups had begun similar celebrations. These observances were more of a way for mothers whose sons had fought or died during the American Civil War.

The holiday was officially declared beginning in West Virginia in 1912. The US Congress passed a law decreeing that the second Sunday of every May would be Mother's Day, a day for American citizens to honor the mothers whose sons had died in the way.

Carnations were known as the flower to represent Mother's Day – and were chosen because they were Anna Jarvis's mother's favorite bloom. Florists urged people to wear a red carnation on Mother's Day if their mother was living, and a white carnation on if she was no longer living.

Today, Mother's Day is primarily a day for children and partners to acknowledge the important role that mothers play in their lives.

In the later years of her life, Anna Marie Jarvis felt that Mother's Day had become over commercialized, and eventually campaigned against it. Although she had originally wanted a day for each family in America to recognize their mother, she felt that too many people sent their mothers a printed greeting card. She is quoted as saying "A printed card means nothing except that you are too lazy to write to the woman who has done more for you than anyone in the world. And candy! You take a box to Mother—and then eat most of it yourself. A petty sentiment!"

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Multiple Choice Questions

Circle the correct answer.

1. Anna Jarvis was born in the year:
  - a. 1854
  - b. 1864
  - c. 1874
  - d. 1884
  
2. What is the corresponding holiday to Mother's Day?
  - a. Easter
  - b. Father's Day
  - c. Christmas
  - d. Thanksgiving
  
3. When is Mother's Day?
  - a. The first Sunday in May
  - b. The second Sunday in May
  - c. The third Sunday in May
  - d. The fourth Sunday in May
  
4. Anna Jarvis also created\_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Father's Day
  - b. The Mothers Union
  - c. The Mother's Day International Association
  - d. The National Mothers League
  
5. What type of flower is most widely associated with Mother's Day?
  - a. The Rose
  - b. Delphinium
  - c. Jasmine flowers
  - d. The Carnation
  
6. In its early days, why was Mother's Day popular?
  - a. It was a day for mothers whose sons had died in the Civil War to spend time together. It was also a day to recognize the mothers who had lost sons in the war.
  - b. It was also considered the first day of spring.
  - c. It was the day mothers were allowed to vote.
  - d. It was the day that the most babies were born every year.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Short Answer Questions

1. Who created Mother's Day?
2. Why was the creator of Mother's Day so adamant about where the apostrophe was placed in the word "mother"?
3. Explain Anna Marie Jarvis's viewpoint on Mother's Day towards the later years in her life.
4. Read the quote from Anna Marie Jarvis included in the reading. Explain what you think she meant.
5. Betty and Jane and one of their mothers are attending a church service on Mother's Day. Betty wears a red carnation and Jane is wearing a white carnation. Whose mother is sitting next to them? Explain.
6. What do you do in your family to celebrate Mother's Day?
7. Explain why the Mother's Day flower was chosen.

ANSWER KEY:

Multiple Choice:

1. B
2. B
3. B
4. C
5. D
6. A

Short Answer:

1. Anna Marie Jarvis created Mother's Day.
2. She wanted it very clear that the holiday was to recognize each individual mother, not mothers in general.
3. She felt the holiday had become over-commercialized.
4. Individual Response.
5. Since Betty is wearing a red carnation, it means her mother is living. Jane's wearing a white carnation, indicating her mother is dead. Therefore, it must be Betty's mother sitting next to them.
6. Individual Response.
7. The carnation was chosen as the Mother's Day flower because it was Anna Marie Jarvis's mother's favorite flower.