



PUBLIC SCHOOL DARBHANGA

SESSION (2020-21)

SUBJECT– ENGLISH CLASS VIII

Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow:

1. The evergreen fir tree has traditionally been used to celebrate winter festivals (Pagan and Christian) for thousands of years. Pagans used branches of it to decorate their homes during the winter solstice, as it made them think of the spring to come. The Romans used Fir Trees to decorate their temples at the festival of Saturnalia. Christians use it as a sign of everlasting life with God.
2. Nobody is really sure when Fir trees were first used as Christmas trees. It probably began about 1000 years ago in Northern Europe. Many early Christmas Trees seem to have been hung upside down from the ceiling using chains, hung from chandelier's hooks.
3. Other early Christmas trees, across many parts of northern Europe, were cherry or hawthorn plants that were put into pots and brought inside so they would hopefully flower at Christmas time. If you couldn't afford a real plant, people made pyramids of woods and they were decorated to look like a tree with paper, apples and candles. Sometimes they were carried around from house to house, rather than being displayed in a home.
4. It's possible that the wooden pyramid trees were meant to be like Paradise Trees. These were used in medieval German Mystery or Miracle Plays that were acted out in front of Churches on Christmas Eve. In early church calendars of saints, 24th December was Adam and Eve's day. The Paradise Tree represented the Garden of Eden. It was often paraded around the town before the play started, as a way of advertising the play. The plays told Bible stories to people who could not read.
5. The first person to bring a Christmas tree into a house, in the way we know it today, may have been the 16th century German preacher Martin Luther. A story is told that, one night before Christmas, he was rambling through the forest and looked up to see the stars shining through the tree branches. It was so beautiful, that he went home and told his children that it reminded him of Jesus, who left the stars of heaven to come to earth at Christmas.

On the basis of your reading of the passage above, answer the following questions.

- a. Which tree has customarily been used to celebrate winter festivals?
- b. Why did the Romans use fir trees?
- c. How did the early Europeans use Christmas trees?
- d. Why were the cherry and hawthorn trees put into pots?
- e. How would people decorate pyramids of wood?
- f. What was the 'Paradise tree'?
- g. What reminded Martin Luther of Jesus?
- h. Find a word/phrase which means the same as 'walking casually'. (Para 5)