DIWALI

Victory of Light over Darkness

Stories • Traditions • Meaning • Global Celebration

For Middle School Students

Grades 6–8 | Hindu Parents Network

More Than a Festival of Lights

Deepavali = A Row of Lamps

Diwali (Deepavali) is one of the most cherished Hindu festivals. Lamps, worship, sharing, and celebration express a deeper message.

Light over Darkness

Truth over Untruth

Knowledge over Ignorance

Why Does Light Matter?

Darkness

- Ignorance
- Fear
- Harmful Choices

Light

- Knowledge
- Courage
- Truth

Dharma

- Doing what is right, even when difficult

Discussion: What does “bringing light” mean without using a lamp?

The Story of Rama’s Homecoming

A Return to Ayodhya

In the Ramayana tradition, Rama, Devi Sita, and Lakshmana return to Ayodhya after 14 years of exile and Rama’s victory over Ravana.

The people welcome them with rows of glowing lamps.

Central theme: Courage, duty, righteousness, and joyful homecoming

Rama: Choosing Dharma

1

Exile

Rama accepts hardship to honor duty.

2

Challenge

Rama and allies confront Ravana.

3

Victory

Goodness and courage prevail.

4

Homecoming

Ayodhya celebrates with lights.

Think: Is doing the right thing always the easiest choice?

When Is Diwali Celebrated?

The Hindu Lunisolar Calendar

Diwali usually falls in October or November. Its main night is Amavasya—the new-moon night of the Kartika period.

Different regions and families may observe one to five days.

Why might a festival fall on a different Gregorian date each year?

Five Days, Many Traditions

1	2	3	4	5
Dhanteras	**Naraka Chaturdashi**	**Diwali**	**Govardhan Puja / Bali Padyami**	**Bhai Dooj**
Health, prosperity, gratitude	Krishna’s victory over Narakasura	Worship, light, prosperity	Care, food, generosity	Affection between siblings

Not every community observes every day, or in exactly the same way.

Day 1 & 2: Health and Courage

Day-1: Dhanteras

Dhanteras marks the **beginning of Diwali and honors Bhagavan Dhanvantari**, the divine physician. Families pray for **health and prosperity**, and make **auspicious purchases**.

Day-2: Naraka Chaturdashi

Recalls Shri Krishna and Satyabhama's victory over Narakasura, **celebrating liberation from captivity and the triumph of good over evil.**

A festival can celebrate both well-being and moral courage.

Day 3: Diwali And Lakshmi Puja

Prosperity With Gratitude

Many families honor Devi Lakshmi,seeking blessings for prosperity and well-being.

On the new-moon night, they light diyas, offer prayers, and seek well-being and prosperity.

Prosperity also brings a responsibility to share.

Reflection: What is the difference between wealth and well-being?

Days 4 & 5: Community and Family

Day 4: Govardhan Puja

Govardhan Puja **honors Shri Krishna** and expresses gratitude for nature and its abundance.

Families offer **Annakut (a mountain of food)** and share it with others.

Day 5: Bhai Dooj

Bhai Dooj celebrates the **bond between brothers and sisters.**

Siblings exchange **greetings, blessings, and gifts** to show their love and care.

Both days celebrate gratitude, sharing, and family bonds.

Many Regions, Many Meanings

North India

Rama’s return to Ayodhya

West India

Lakshmi Puja; new-year traditions in parts of Gujarat

East India

Kali Puja in many Bengali traditions

South India

Naraka Chaturdashi; Bali Padyami in some communities

Shared values, diverse stories: there is no single way all families celebrate.

How Is Diwali Celebrated?

LIGHT

Diyas, lanterns, decorations

CREATE

Rangoli and colorful entrance art

GATHER

Puja, family meals, sweets

GIVE

Gifts, charity, community service

How might one family's celebration differ from another's?

Diwali Across Communities

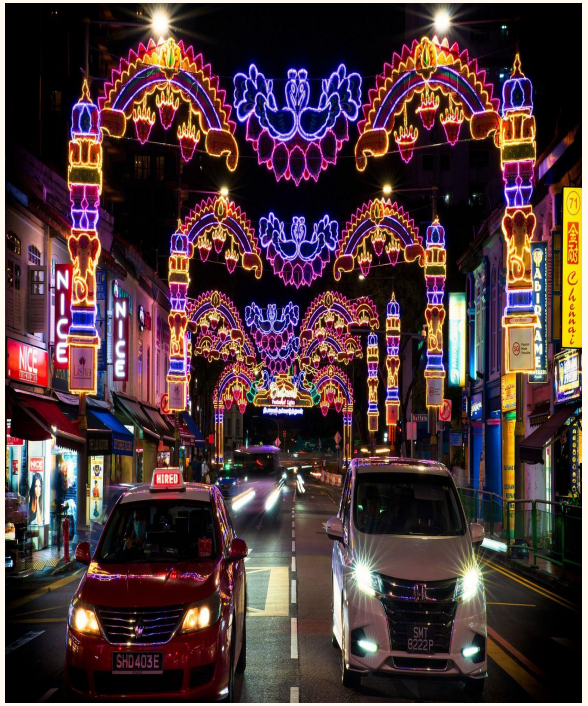
Shared Festival, Distinct Meanings

- ★ Hindus celebrate Diwali through many regional traditions.
- ★ Jains associate Diwali with Mahavira’s liberation (moksha).
- ★ Sikhs observe Bandi Chhor Divas at this time.
- ★ Some Buddhist communities also observe Diwali-related traditions.

One Festival, Many Traditions, Shared Joy.

Diwali Around the World

Amritsar, India



Little India, Singapore

London, United Kingdom

Times Square, NY, United States

Diwali is celebrated by communities around the world.

Diwali in Historical Sources

7th century

King Harsha’s Nagananda refers to a festival of lamps.

9th century

Rajasekhara’s Kavyamimamsa describes illuminated homes and markets.

11th century

Al-Biruni records observance on the Kartika new moon.

Traditions develop over time while preserving recognizable practices.

From Lamp to Life: A Thought Experiment

If light represents goodness, what does darkness represent in our daily lives?

How can knowledge help us overcome fear or misunderstanding?

How can we show respect for classmates whose traditions are different from ours?

Can one small act of kindness brighten someone's day? Give an example.

Diwali Quick Check

1. What does Deepavali mean?

2. What does the light of a diya symbolize?

3. Why does Diwali fall on different dates each year?

4. What does Dharma mean in the context of Diwali?

HAPPY DIWALI!

Bring light through truth, knowledge, compassion, and dharma.

Hindu Parents Network

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