

8

The Festivals We Celebrate

Lesson Plan

Contents

- ▶ What are festivals?
- ▶ Festivals in India
- ▶ National Festivals
- ▶ Religious Festivals
- ▶ Harvest Festivals
- ▶ Birthdays

Objectives

- ▶ Understanding the celebration of festivals
- ▶ The occasions for celebrating festivals
- ▶ National Festivals – Independence Day – Republic Day – Gandhi Jayanti.
- ▶ Religious Festivals – Holi, Dussehra, Diwali, Gurupurab, Eid-ul-Fitr, Christmas, Navroz.
- ▶ Harvest Festivals – Baisakhi, Bihu, Pongal, Onam.
- ▶ The Birthdays – Ramnavmi, Janmashtami, Buddha Purnima, Mahavir Jayanti, Children’s Day, Teacher’s Day.
- ▶ Others - Shivaratri, Teej, Good Friday, Easter, Eid-ul-Zuha, Basant Panchami, Navratra, Chhath, Ganesh Cathurthi, etc.

Teacher’s Aids

- ▶ Charts, Greeting cards, Internet, etc.

Tips for Teacher

- ▶ Ask students to share what are the festivals they celebrate and how.
- ▶ Gear Up, Background and Reading
- ▶ Gear Up refers to A. 1. Holi and 2. Diwali. B can have any reasonable answer.
- ▶ Explain what festivals are – celebrations usually religious or associated with a season – and generally occur at regular intervals.

- ▶ Read the lesson and points to remember aloud and explain.
- ▶ Celebrated in different ways in different parts of the world.
- ▶ India – three major kinds – National, Religious and Harvest. Several other local festivals too. Birthdays also marked by festivals.
- ▶ We celebrate – fun, singing, dancing, new clothes, food, fairs, etc.
- ▶ Some festivals – entire country; some – in states.

/// National Festivals

These are celebrated by everyone in the country.

- ▶ **Independence Day** – 15 August 1947 – India became independent – main function at Red Fort – Prime Minister hoists National Flag and addresses the people of India – all states have functions – remember freedom fighters – schools, colleges have cultural programmes – fancy dress competitions, etc.
- ▶ **Republic Day** – 26 January 1950 – India became a republic – main function at Rajpath, New Delhi – special parade – armed forces, police, school children, folk dancers – Bravery award winners – President of India takes the salute – tableaux from different parts of the country.
- ▶ **Gandhi Jayanti** – 2 October: Gandhiji's birthday – Used non-violent means against the British for freedom in India – 'Father of the Nation' – main function at Rajghat, New Delhi : Samadhi –Prime Minister, President, etc., pay respects.

/// The Religious Festivals

- ▶ Several religions in India – each with their own festivals.
- ▶ **Holi** – festival of colours – mainly North India – coloured powder called gulal and water – time when wheat crop is ripe.
- ▶ **Dussehra** – Vijayadashami – victory of good over evil – Lord Rama killed Ravana – Ram Lila for 10 days – celebrated as Durga Puja in Bengal and other places – Ravava, Kumbhakarana and Meghnad effigies burnt.
- ▶ **Diwali** – Deepawali – festival of lights – Lord Rama returns to Ayodhya after 14 years of exile – Diwali marks his return – houses cleaned, lit and decorated to welcome Goddess of Wealth – *diyas*, candles, lights, new clothes, sweets etc.
- ▶ **Gurpurab** – festivals celebrating the birthdays of the 10 Sikh Gurus – prayers, processions, food in *langars* – Main function at Golden Temple, Amritsar.
- ▶ **Eid-ul-Fitr** – festival of Muslims – end of month long fast during Ramzan – namaz in mosques – embrace each other, share sweets, Eid Mubarak – Sewain prepared – new clothes worn and distributed.
- ▶ **Christmas** – birth of Christ on 25 December – prayers in churches – Christmas trees decorated, cakes, gifts, Santa Claus.
- ▶ **Navroz** – New Year celebrated by Parsis in March – end of winter, beginning of spring – homes cleaned and decorated – rangolis, greetings, sweets – prayers at Fire Temple – sandalwood sticks offered – Faluda, pulao special lunch.

/// The Harvest Festivals

Many festivals linked to harvesting seasons –

- ▶ Baisakhi – North, particularly Punjab – 13 April – farmers start harvesting wheat – Guru Gobind Singh started the Khalsa Panth this day – bhangra, gidra, dhols.
- ▶ Bihu – harvest festival Assam – girls wear traditional dresses and dance *Bihu* – bonfires, singing, dancing, feasting.
- ▶ Pongal – harvest festival of Tamil Nadu – three day celebration in January – harvesting of rice – draw kollams, decorate houses, rain god, sun god and cow worshipped – pongal made –cows fed with it.
- ▶ Onam – harvest festival of Kerala – festival of flowers – in honour of King Mahabali – snake-boat races, decorated elephants –special meal called Onam sadya.

/// The Birthdays

- ▶ Ramnavmi – of Lord Rama
- ▶ Janmashtami – of Lord Krishna
- ▶ Buddha Purnima – of Lord Buddha
- ▶ Mahavir Jayanti – of Jain Tirthankara, Mahavira
- ▶ Children’s Day – of Jawaharlal Nehru – 14 September
- ▶ Teacher’s Day – of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan – 5 September