

Religious Celebrations and Festivals

The Story of Rama and Sita



10) Christmas	
What is it?	Celebrates the birth of Jesus
What happens? Advent	Period of preparation (the month before Christmas day). A candle is lit every Sunday until the 25 th December when the middle candle is lit.
What happens? Nativity	Churches recreate the birth of Jesus through nativity plays. It helps teach the story of Jesus.
What happens? Christingle	Christingle services take place. There is an orange with a candle in it – it reminds that Jesus was the light of the world
What happens? Carols	Carols are sung about the events of Jesus' birth
What happens? Midnight Mass	Communion often takes place at midnight on Christmas Eve to mark the beginning of Christmas
What happens? Presents	Gifts are exchanged because Jesus was a gift to the world and the three wise men gave Jesus gifts upon his birth.
Why important?	Remembering the incarnation (Jesus was God in human form) Celebrates the birth of a saviour. His birth led to people being saved from their sins.

11 Easter	
What is it?	The festival that remembers Jesus' death and resurrection.
What happens? Lent	Lent is the 40 days before. Remembers the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert fasting and praying. People often 'give up' something for Lent as a symbol of their spiritual preparation for Easter.
What happens? Maundy Thursday	It commemorates the Last Supper Jesus had with his disciples. They often have communion on this day. Sometimes the church will wash people's feet as well as Jesus did on this day.
What happens? Good Friday	The day Jesus' death is remembered. Often black will be placed on the altar to recognise the sadness. Often churches perform the passion play (Jesus last day)
What happens? Easter Sunday	Remembers the resurrection of Jesus and the empty tomb. It is the most important day for Christians. Easter eggs are given to symbolise new life.
Why important?	It remembers the resurrection of Jesus (power of good over evil) and it reminds Christians that they too will be resurrected and have a new life with God. It reminds them of the omnipotence of God. Death is not the end.

DIWALI

An annual celebration, where the importance of new beginnings, food, decorations and specific preparations are made to encourage Lakshmi to visit and bring wealth and good fortune for the year ahead. It is known as the festival of lights and houses, shops and some public places are decorated with small oil lamps called diyas. Hindus celebrate the festival by spring-cleaning their home, wearing new clothes, exchanging gifts, decorating with lights and having firework displays.

6) The Crucifixion	
What is crucifixion?	A roman form of execution, designed to make the criminal suffer.
Why was Jesus crucified?	Jewish and Roman authorities charged him with blasphemy (saying he was the son of God).
Importance of the crucifixion	It brought salvation to people. Part of God's plan. Crucifixion was needed to allow resurrection to take place (this was prophesied about in the Old Testament)
Importance for Christians	Act of atonement for the sins of people in the world. Salvation is offered because Jesus did this. "You will be with me in Paradise". It allowed eternal life and resurrection. Jesus suffered "My God, My God why have you forsaken me"



Ramadan	* Ramadan is the holy month of fasting – when Muslims do not eat or drink during daylight hours – they eat before the sun comes up and after it has gone down. It is important to them as it helps bring them closer to Allah and become better people by giving to charity and spending more time with friends and family. Muslims believe that their good actions bring a greater reward during this month than at any other time of year, because this month has been blessed by Allah.
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8) Resurrection of Jesus	
Key events	Women visit the tomb with spices, the stone is rolled away and no sign of Jesus' body. Two men in shining clothes appear and say "Why are you looking among the dead for one who is alive. He has risen!" They return and tell the disciples who do not believe them at first.
Visits to the disciples	After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples. He proved he was fully human by getting them to touch him and he ate fish with them.



