

R.E. Curriculum

DIWALI ASSEMBLY SCRIPT

Concept developed by Dave Morris.

The following script can be used in a Diwali assembly celebration. It was designed for Year 5 children to perform in front of children aged between 3 and 11.

Narrator 1: Welcome to our assembly. Recently the Hindu community celebrated a special religious festival called Diwali. The religion Hinduism is one of the world's oldest religions. People who follow the religion are called Hindus. Hinduism began in India many centuries ago.

Narrator 2: Like other religions Hindus have special festivals during the year. Diwali is one of the best-known Hindu festivals. It is a New Year festival and takes place in the autumn around October and November. The festival has different parts to it. As a New Year Festival it is about new beginnings.

Narrator 3: (group of children decorate pretend house; use tinsel etc) Before the festival day the house is cleaned from top to bottom. It is then decorated with different coloured glitter and tinsel. Little clay lamps called divas are lit and placed in the windows and outside the front door. This is to attract the attention of Lakshmi and to welcome her to the house (show picture of Lakshmi). Lakshmi is the Hindu goddess of wealth and all Hindus hope she will visit their homes and bless them with a prosperous new year. (Light up divas for 4 children, play *euphoric* music and 4 children walk round hall.)

A play: The missing Diwali Tinsel

Dad: (needs tinsel attached to bottom!!) Come on you two hurry up with that cleaning, get that dustpan and brush moving. If you don't hurry up your mum will be back soon and you know how she wants everything clean.

Son: But dad why does everything have to be so clean? Have we got the queen coming round tomorrow for jelly and ice cream?

Daughter: No silly Billy it's November and it's that special time of the year called Diwali We have to decorate the house with tinsel and glittering objects to celebrate.

Son: Dad I know I might sound a little silly, but why are these little lamps called BEAVERS? I don't know why they are called after furry animals that live in America.

Dad: Oh dear how silly you are. They are called Divas; look I will spell it for you, here D.I.V.A.S. Now do you get it? (Son nods) just aswell I am not silly like you. Well let's carry on now. Right, where is that green tinsel I need for the mantelpiece? Can you see it children?

Son: Er, well I thought I saw it on that chair over there. Er, but it's not there now.

Daughter: Yes, I thought I saw it there too. The mice must have eaten it! (Mum enters)

Mother: My word you three have been busy sorting out the house for Diwali Hmm floor looks tidy. Mantelpiece is a bit drab though, where is that tinsel we left in the chair? (Looks at dad) Er, what is that on your bottom father?

Dad: Oh whoops, it's the tinsel. It must have stuck to the seat of my trousers when I was having a sleep.

Son: Oh I see now who is a silly Billy; it's not just me after all (all laugh!!)

Narrator 4: Diwali is also a time for people to pay off their debts and sort out everything to do with money and business. Diwali cards like Christmas cards are sent to both friends and relatives (show cards). Diwali is a time of decoration as mentioned earlier. Children and adults create special designs called Rangoli and mendhi patterns. We have designed some of our own patterns for you to see (show patterns).

Narrator 5: These patterns are a way of welcoming visitors. A pattern may be geometric or in the form of a fruit, flower, tree or religious Hindu figure. If the rangoli patterns are beautiful then perhaps even Lakshmi will visit! Rangoli patterns can be made with coloured rice or with different coloured sands or powders. At Diwali Hindus may also decorate their hands and feet with mendhi patterns, again these are to make people look beautiful. These patterns are painted with a brown dye called henna. Henna lasts for several days on the skin. These patterns are also used at Hindu and Muslim weddings.

Narrator 6: During the festival of Diwali the sharing of food is especially important. When people go and visit family and friends they often take a tray of sweets with them. (Family exchanges sweets) Sometimes, when Hindus return home they have more of these sweets on the tray than they had at the start of their visits! One of the most popular sweets that are eaten at this time of the year is barfi. Barfi is like sweet fudge made from evaporated milk, ground up coconut and golden granulated sugar. Dance and music feature a great deal in Diwali celebrations. Here are some girls performing a traditional Diwali dance. (Perform dance to music if possible – may need input from local community!)

The Story of Rama and Sita

(The pictures referred to can be drawn by the children or you can send for them from Doveland's Primary School Leicester. There will be a basic charge to cover printing and postage.)

Narrator: 7 One of the major features of Diwali is the famous story of Prince Rama and his wife Sita. The story comes from a book called the Ramayana, and is popular among Hindus everywhere. An important part of Diwali is the telling of the story through dance or pictures. Look at our pictures as we tell you the story of Rama and Sita

Picture 1: This is the story of Diwali The story comes from India and happened many years ago. This picture shows Rama. He was a handsome prince. His father was a wealthy king in India. One day Rama decided to go and visit a very attractive princess.

Picture 2: The princesses' name was Sita and she was very pretty. Rama liked Sita a great deal and wanted to marry Sita. Sita's father said to Rama that he could marry his daughter but he had to do something rather special. Sita's father asked Rama if he was strong enough to use a very heavy bow that no one else had used.

Picture 3: Rama replied, " Of course I am strong I can manage the bow without any problem." He picked up the heavy bow and pulled the string. The bow broke into tiny pieces. Sita's father said, " Rama, you are strong and therefore you can marry my daughter Sita. " So Rama and Sita were married. Rama took Sita back home to meet his father. Rama's father was becoming a very old king. One day the King said to Rama, " My son I am becoming too old to rule this land I want you to become the new king. " The queen however was not keen on the idea and wanted Rama's brother called Prince Bharat to be the new king. She asked the king to send Rama away.

Picture 4: The king not wanting to upset his wife the queen had to make a sad decision. He summoned Rama and told him that he must leave the kingdom. He told Rama that he was not to come back to the palace for 14 years.

Picture 5: Both Rama and Sita went away and one of Rama's brothers called Prince Lakshman went with them too. Rama and Sita lived in the forest for a long time. Sadly after a time the old king died.

Picture 6: After the king's death the queen said to Prince Bharat, " The old king is dead now and Rama is not here therefore you can be the brand new king." Prince Bharat said, " No!! My father wanted my brother Rama to be the new king, not me. I will go to the forest and bring Rama and Sita back to the palace."

Picture 7: Prince Bharat went to the forest and he found Rama, Sita and Lakshman. The prince said to Rama, " Rama our father is dead, please come back now and become the new king as father requested." Rama replied, " No, I can not come back yet because I promised our father that I would not come back for 14 years and I can not break my promise. I will not come back yet. Prince Bharat said, " Please give me your golden sandals Rama." Rama took off his sandals and gave them to his brother. Prince Bharat took them back to the palace.

Picture 8: When he got back to the palace, Bharat put the golden sandals on the throne, which is a special seat for the king. He said to all at the palace, " Rama is the new king not I. He will come back one day. In the meantime I will care for you all until Rama returns from the forest. However I will not sit on the throne. It is Rama's throne!! "

Picture 9: Meanwhile back in the forest a rather evil, nasty demon was watching Sita. This nasty demon was called Ravana; he had 10 arms and 10 heads. He wanted Sita for himself and wanted her in his castle. Ravana watched and waited in the forest until Rama and Lakshman went hunting for food. This meant that the pretty Sita was on her own.

Picture 10: Whilst the two young men were away Ravana caught Sita. She was very scared and frightened. Ravana took her to an Island far away.

Picture 11: Ravana placed Sita in his castle, which was on an island. She was locked away in a dark horrible room. Ravana asked Sita to marry him but Sita said, " NO!! " She

was a prisoner in the castle for a long time. Rama and Lakshman stopped hunting for food and were concerned that they could not find Sita. They looked all over the forest but she had vanished.

Picture 12: Whilst Rama was trying to find Sita in the forest a friend of his named Hanuman came to see him. Hanuman was the king of the monkeys. Hanuman told Rama that he had seen Sita locked away in the nasty Ravana's castle. Rama was very angry and decided it was time to sort out the nasty demon.

Picture 13: Rama asked his friends if they would join him in fighting Ravana and help him save his lovely Sita. His friends agreed to fight the demon Ravana. They all went to the castle and there was a huge battle. Rama killed Ravana. Rama then went into the castle and saved Sita. Both Rama and Sita were happy because they were together again at last.

Picture 14: (last picture) Rama had been away for 14 years and now it was time to return to his palace. They travelled the long distance on an elephant. When they reached their palace it was very dark and there was no moon to light their way. To help Rama and Sita all the people placed little lights outside their houses so that their new king and queen could find their way. These little lights were called divas and that is why the story you have heard is called Diwali

Narrator 8: Everyone was happy because Rama had come home again. Now every year Hindu and Sikh people remember the story of Rama and Sita and have little lights in their houses and fireworks outside at Diwali time. As you know the lights are called Divas. We now want to bring our assembly to an end and celebrate Diwali by giving all the children, teachers and support staff some delicious Barfi. Thankyou for listening to us.