

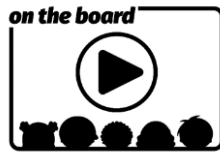
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Transcript - Diwali

Discover this Festival of Lights celebrated by people who follow the Hindu, Sikh and Jain religions.

Oh, I didn't see you there.

Now that you are here, let me tell you a story about a prince and a princess. It is an epic tale of good versus evil and light winning over darkness.

There was once a prince called Rama, who was married to a princess called Sita.

But an evil King, Ravana, who had 10 heads and 20 arms kidnapped Sita.

Rama went to find her with the help of the monkey god, Hanuman.

Rama and Hanuman found Sita imprisoned in a garden on the island of Lanka.

They gathered the monkey army and prepared to fight to save Sita.

It was a fierce battle, but then Rama used a magical golden arrow on Ravana and they defeated him and saved Sita.

They started their journey home and found that the villagers had lit lamps along the way to guide them back safely. I told you it was good!

Now this story is remembered during the festival of Diwali by people who follow the Hindu religion. Diwali comes from the word Deepavali which means rows of lighted lamps. Every year lamps are lit just like the ones that guided Rama and Sita home.

This five-day festival of lights takes place between October and November. The date changes every year because it is based on the lunar calendar. One that follows the moon.

For many Hindus, Diwali is a time to honour Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and good fortune. So, during Diwali people light lamps called diyas and put them along their streets and in their houses. They leave their doors and windows open to help Lakshmi find her way into their homes and bring them good luck.

People also make Rangoli patterns on the floor by their front doors to welcome the gods. These beautiful patterns are made using different flower petals and colourful powders, such as flour, rice and sand. They wear new clothes to visit family and friends and prepare feasts of delicious food.

Fireworks are set off at huge displays to celebrate this Festival of Lights. And because Diwali is a religious festival people follow their faith. Hindus visit temples called mandirs to pray and leave offerings to the gods such as food.

Diwali is a national holiday in several countries around the world, including Fiji, Malaysia, India, Mauritius, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. It is a shared celebration of good winning over bad for people who follow the Hindu, Sikh and Jain religions, all over the world.

And did you know that one of the biggest Diwali celebrations outside of India happens in the UK, in Leicester. Just look at how this Festival of Lights is celebrated.

So, wherever you are in the world – Happy Diwali.

