

# HAPPY DIWALI

Today we'll learn about Diwali, the most important celebration each year in all of India and South East Asia.

It is celebrated all around the world too, including San Antonio.

Lasting for five days, Diwali, known as the “The Festival of Lights,” represents the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness. This year Diwali is on October 27<sup>th</sup>.





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Diwali also marks the end of one year and the beginning of a new year in many parts of India.

It's a time to consider how one has lived during the past year. And to reflect on how to live better in the coming year. One way to do this by strengthening family relationships and friendships, for example.





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People of many religions celebrate Diwali, including Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, & Buddhists.

While each religion has its own sacred story that is retold and celebrated during Diwali, all share the themes of the victory of good over evil and light over darkness.





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For example, Sikhs celebrate the day that Guru Hargobind Ji, the sixth guru, was freed from wrongfully being put in prison. This celebration is also known as Bandi Chhor Diwas.

For those whose religion is Jainism, Diwali marks the nirvana or spiritual awakening of Lord Mahavira, on October 15, 527 B.C.





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Zoroastrian followers celebrate when those of their faith migrated from Persia to India in order to freely practice their faith.

Upon arrival in the Indian state of Gujarat, they were offered refuge after explaining that they would only sweeten or enrich their new homeland.

As a way to do this and to participate in their new land's way of life, Zoroastrians in India began celebrating Diwali.





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Many whose religion is Hinduism honor Lakshmi, goddess of wealth and prosperity, during Diwali.

Some in Hinduism celebrate the day that Krishna defeated the evil king named Narakasura.

Others celebrate the story of the prince Lord Rama, who left home to live in the forest for fourteen years; fought an evil king to rescue his wife, Sita; and then returned to his kingdom, to jubilant greetings.





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To celebrate Diwali, whether one is Jain, Sikh, Hindu, or Zoroastrian, people clean their homes and decorate them with beautiful rangolis, designs made from colored rice, flour, sand, and even flower petals sometimes.





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People also light diyas, like the one lit here today at chapel and outside of E.C. and just like the ones on today's slides.

Diyas are clay lamps that are lit, symbolizing the victory of light over darkness. Many people also leave their doors and windows open to invite Lakshmi into their homes.



Thanks to *Every Month is a New Year* by M. Singer & S. Roth (2018) for much great info included here.



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To ensure good defeats evil on Diwali, people set off firecrackers and fireworks to chase away any evil.

With friends and family, those celebrating Diwali feast and exchange sweets and gifts.

Diwali is one of the biggest of all Indian holidays, and the most joyous as people celebrate the triumph of good over evil and darkness over light!





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As we learn about Diwali today, let us reflect on this important question, “How can we ensure good triumphs in our world?”

Now, the students up here with me will recite a traditional prayer or mantra called the “Asatoma,” which speaks to being led from darkness to light.





asato ma sadgamaya  
tamaso ma jyotirgamaya  
mrtyorma amrtam gamaya

From ignorance, Lead me to truth  
From darkness, Lead me to light  
From death, Lead me to immortality

Brhadaranyaka Upanishad — I.iii.28

