

Secondary Teacher Guide 5

Festivals and Related Theme/Topics

The following table related festivals to specific concepts, values and themes. The list is not complete, and teachers may add to it as they develop ideas.

Festival <i>Also refer to Book, page 67, which lists corresponding deities and stories</i>	Related Topics <i>Concepts, values, themes, etc. (concepts in blue)</i>
Introduction To Festivals <i>(topics relevant to all)</i>	The Hindu year and calendar. The nature of time . Also, the purposes of festivals and the main activities performed during them.
1. Sarasvati Puja and Vashanta Panchami	The role of learning and the arts in Hinduism (see book, page 90); knowledge versus ignorance; new beginnings – rebirth and reincarnation ; time as cyclical e.g. through the seasons
2. Mahashivaratri	The three gunas , as related to the Trimurti (see book page ref). Destruction, death etc. as a necessary part of life for re-creation. God , gods and goddesses.
3. Holi	The nature of God and where he is found (e.g. everywhere, even inside a pillar, as through story of Prahlada.) Maya – how King Hiranyakashipu was illusioned, and tricked by God (do we feel that we will never die?). Celebration and happiness as natural state of soul in communion with God.
4. Rama Navami	Dharma – the duties of the king, husband, wife, brother, etc. The concept of avatar . Creation – everything as the property of a God (with reference to Ravana trying to steal Sita)
5. Hanuman Jayanti	Real friendship (i.e. demonstrated through accepting great difficulties, as did Hanuman). Loyalty and service. The proper use of strength (to protect the pious, those who are weak and dependant). Pets; attitudes towards animals. Samsara .

<p>6. Raksha Bandana</p>	<p>Family affection and obligation; the protection of dependants. Varnashrama dharma. Giving and receiving</p>
<p>7. Janmashtami</p>	<p>Who is God and why He comes here. God, and the soul (atman) as eternally youthful. God as reservoir of all qualities (e.g. mischievousness). God with whom we can build a loving relationship.</p>
<p>8. Ganesh Chaturthi</p>	<p>Dealing with challenges and obstacles in life. God as our resort/ dependence on God. Asking for help when we need it.</p> <p>Ganesh as scribe of Mahabharata, helping sage Vyasa - Guru and Scripture.</p>
<p>9. Navaratri</p>	<p>The importance of mother (our own mother, the earth, the cow, etc.). The gender of God = male, female, neither or both? (See Worksheet 7)</p>
<p>10. Durga Puja</p>	<p>The features of Mother Nature; benign and bountiful (as through Parvati); also quite terrible, as through Durga and Kali.</p> <p>Prakriti (matter) and the three gunas</p>
<p>11. Dussehra</p>	<p>Good over evil; what do we mean by evil. Karma (Ravana received his just rewards). Understanding the consequences of our actions – on us as well as on others.</p>
<p>12. Diwali</p>	<p>Light over darkness; opposites (duality); how not all opposites are equal (e.g. light drives away darkness). The soul (which is like the light within the body, illuminating it with consciousness). Respecting others because they feel pain and pleasure just as we do.</p> <p>Good fortune and luck; it's nature (chanchala – flickering). Dealing with transience.</p>