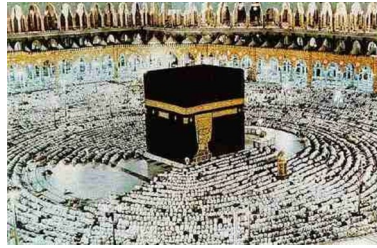


Knowledge Organiser: Festivals and pilgrimage

Pilgrimage: Hajj, Islam

Why is it important?

For Muslims it is a duty to go on pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetime, as long as they are physically able and can afford it. The pilgrimage is the fifth Pillar of Islam and shows a Muslim's devotion, loyalty and belief.



The pilgrimage to Mecca reminds Muslims of their key belief in the equality of all humankind before Allah. It allows Muslims to reflect and think on their own lives and gives Muslims the opportunity to switch off from their daily lives and to re-connect with their spiritual side.

What rituals have to be carried out?

Kabbah: On the first day of the Hajj, pilgrims walk around the Kabbah seven times. This represents the belief that all Muslims are equal.

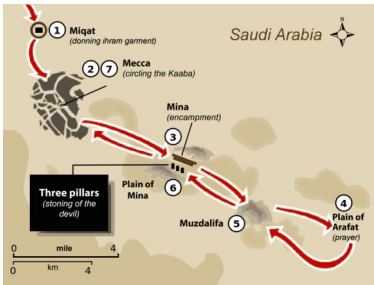
Safa and Marwah: Pilgrims next run between the hills of Safa and Marwah 7 even times. Pilgrims often take its water with them when they return home.

Arafat: Muslims stand on the Mount of Mercy praising Allah. They believe that this represents what it will be like on the Day of Judgement when

all of humanity will be judged by Allah.

Muzdalifah: Muslims collect small stones to use on the third day when they return to Mina. They throw these stones at three pillars which represent the devil. Muslims also make promises to fight the devil themselves and to strive against temptation.

Once they have completed the Hajj, a Muslim man may call himself a **Hajji** and a woman can call herself a **Hajjah**.



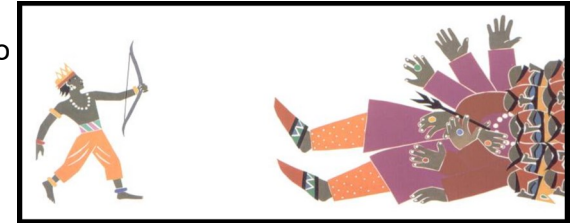
Festival: Diwali, Hinduism

Why is it important?

Diwali means 'row of lights' and it is the Hindu festival of light. Diwali celebrates the idea that light is better than darkness, and the hope that good will happen.

What is the story behind the festival?

Hindus remember the story of Prince Rama and Princess Sita who were exiled to the forest for 14 years by Rama's evil stepmother, Ravana, the Demon king with ten heads, heard of Sita's beauty and kidnapped her.



Ravana flew away on his chariot back to his island, Lanka. Rama asked Hanuman, king of the monkey army, for help as Hanuman could fly. He found Sita imprisoned on the island and a battle took place. It looked as though Ravana was going to win, until Rama borrowed a special bow and arrow from the gods. Rama shot Ravana and the battle was won. Rama rescued Sita and they decided to go home. As it got dark, the people of the kingdom put out little oil lamps (divas) in their windows to show the way home.

How they celebrate it?

- Many lights and oil lamps, called divas and oil lamps are lit on the streets and in houses. The lamps are lit to help the goddess Lakshmi find her way into people's homes.
- People visit their relatives and have feasts
- Fireworks and festivities are an essential part of the occasion
- Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of wealth, is worshipped as the bringer of blessings for the new year



Knowledge Organiser: Festivals and pilgrimage

Pilgrimage: Lourdes, Christianity

Why is it important?

Every year, it is visited by millions of Christians, particularly Roman Catholics. It is a pilgrimage in France dedicated to Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

What is the story behind the pilgrimage?



Bernadette was a poor girl born in 1844. One day, while collecting firewood in a cave, Bernadette is said to have seen Mary, the mother of Jesus, dressed in white. Bernadette is said to have witnessed the same vision 16 times.

During one vision, the figure of Mary asked Bernadette to drink at the spring beneath her feet. Even though this area was muddy, the next day, the ground flowed with clear water and it was later claimed to have healing properties. Bernadette was

then told to have a chapel built in the exact spot where the vision had taken place.

What happens there today?

It is believed that spring water from the grotto can heal people if they are sick. Millions of sick and disabled visitors come to Lourdes each year in the hope being cured. It is claimed that 69 miracles and over 6000 other cures have taken place.

The opportunity to focus closely on their faith helps pilgrims feel secure in the knowledge that God will look after them, forgive them for their sins and even cure them of their illnesses.

Pilgrims also visit Lourdes to pray at the grotto where Mary appeared, to recite the rosary.



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Festival: Passover, Judaism

Why is it important?

The festival of Passover (Pesach) reminds Jews of their escape from slavery in Egypt, to the promised land. The story is found in the book of Exodus.

What is the story behind the festival?

The Jewish people (called the Israelites) were being kept in slavery by the ruler of Egypt, called Pharaoh. So Moses went to see Pharaoh to ask him to let them go, but Pharaoh refused. God therefore sent 10 plagues to punish him.



God told Moses to tell the Israelites to paint lamb's blood on their doorposts. This way, the angel of death would know that Jewish people lived there. It would pass over their houses and not kill their first-born children. For the last plague, even Pharaoh's own son was killed. He summoned Moses and told him to take the Israelites out of Egypt immediately. Finally, after 200 years of slavery, the Jewish people were free.

How they celebrate it?



There is a special Seder plate which has certain things on it:

A lamb bone - This symbolises the sacrifice and blood from the lamb

An egg - This is a symbol of the Israelites' determination when they were going through such a difficult time, as the cooked egg is hard

A green vegetable to dip in salt water - The green vegetable symbolises new life, while the salt water symbolises the Israelite slaves' tears

Bitter herbs, often horseradish - This symbolises the bitter suffering

Charoset - This is a symbol of the material used by the Israelites to make bricks while they were working as slaves