

Wesak



L.O. To examine the Buddhist Festival of Wesak and how Buddhists celebrate it.

How many festivals can you think of?

- Festivals and celebrations are events in which individuals in the community are involved.

A special occasion.

Write down as many festivals that you can think of...they can be religious (Easter) or non religious.

In your books....

Check and correct your answers at the end of this lesson.

I think the girl is...

I think she is doing this because...

One thing I would like to know is...

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- During Wesak, Buddhists celebrate the life of the Buddha.
- They remember the night of his enlightenment and his insights into his previous lives, as well as his revelations about the nature of death, karma and rebirth, suffering and desire.
- Wesak is celebrated with great joy and vivid colours. Homes are cleaned and decorated in preparation.

Finding out more...

WESAK

Wesak is known as 'Buddha Day' as it celebrates the Buddha's birthday, enlightenment and death. It is the most important day in the Buddhist calendar. During Wesak, Buddhists celebrate the life of the Buddha and his teachings. They remember the night of his enlightenment as well as his revelations about the nature of death, karma and rebirth, suffering and desire.

Wesak is celebrated with great joy and vivid colours. Homes are cleaned and decorated in preparation. Celebrations begin before dawn, when followers fill the temple early in the morning to meditate and recommit to living by the Five Precepts. Celebrations of Wesak vary from one country to another. 'The Bathing of the Buddha' often takes place. Water is poured over the shoulders of statues of the Buddha as a reminder of the need to purify the heart and mind. Offerings are made to the Sangha and the temples, and may be laid on the altar as a sign of respect for the Buddha and his teachings.

Many Buddhist temples serve vegetarian food (as many Buddhists avoid eating meat). Special talks about the teachings of the Buddha are given, and candle lit processions take place through the streets.

Giving to others is an important part of Buddhist tradition at Wesak. People often give cards to family and friends to help celebrate this festival. There is also an emphasis on giving to the needy. Followers may visit orphanages, welfare homes, homes for the aged or charitable institutions, distributing cash donations and gifts. Donations of food and drink are made to the Sangha. Some youth organisations organise mass blood donation to hospitals.

In your books,

1. Write a title for each of the paragraphs.
2. What does Wesak remind Buddhists of?
3. How does a Buddhist prepare their home for Wesak?
4. Why do people bathe statues of the Buddha in water at Wesak?
5. What may Buddhists give to the Sangha at Wesak?
6. Who else may be given things at Wesak?

Read through the information on the sheet and answer the short questions.

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Starter answers:



- The Bathing of the Buddha' often takes place.
- Water is poured over the shoulders of statues of the Buddha as a reminder of the need to purify the heart and mind.

Extension Task: Make a paper lantern like the ones used at Wesak.



- 1) **You will need...** Coloured paper or thin card (wrapping paper works well)*
Scissors* Glue, sticky tape or a stapler *
Ruler



- 2) Fold the paper lengthways...



- 3) ...and make a sharp crease in the folded edge with your fingertip



- 4) Use scissors to cut into the folded edge of the card, stopping about 2cm away from the opposite edge.





5) Make another cut in the same way about 2cm away from the first one, and repeat until you've made cuts all the way along the card, stopping about 2cm from the end.



6) Now unfold the card - it should look a bit like this. Decorate it with bright colours.



7) Roll the card around so the two short edges are together. Now glue the edge together..



8) Glue a strip of paper across the inside of the top to make a handle.



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Check your knowledge so far....

1. What is the symbol for the Buddhist religion?
2. Who started the religion?
3. Which three things did the king not want Prince Siddhartha to see when he was growing up?
4. Name all of the noble 8 fold paths.
5. Which flower symbolises the key beliefs of Buddhism and why?
6. Name three things you would expect to see in a Buddhist temple
7. How do Buddhists worship the Buddha?
8. What do Buddhists believe about life after death.
9. Name three famous Buddhists
10. Describe and explain one Buddhist festival.