



Celebrating Festivals: What makes a day special? Who celebrates what and why?

Age GROUP: 4-5s

**The Agreed Syllabus for
Religious Education in
Telford & Wrekin**

**Non statutory
exemplification**

**This plan helps pupils learn
about these key areas of RE:
Celebrations, Myself,
Symbols.**

Celebrating Festivals: Who celebrates what, and why?

How do we celebrate special times?

What do we do and how do we feel?

AGE GROUP: 4-5s

About this unit:

This unit enables young children in the reception year to focus on celebrations they have experienced and to learn about and from the religious festivals of different faiths. It uses play based learning and speaking and listening approaches which enable children's learning progress in line with some early learning goals.

The focus is on enabling children to reflect on what it means to join in with a festival and why people celebrate in annual festivals like Divali, Christmas, Eid and Hanukkah. The feelings and emotions of celebration are linked to stories, special foods, dressing up and being part of a community.

Children are encouraged to consider what can be learned from their own experiences of celebrations as well as learning about and from the celebrations of others.

Where this unit fits in

This unit will help teachers to implement the requirements for RE by providing them with well worked examples of teaching and learning about the theme of celebrations, using the concepts of special days, beliefs and worship and examples of how people celebrate festivals. This unit contributes to the continuity and progression of pupils' learning by linking with four of the early learning goals. The unit anticipates a further study of celebrations in different religions.

Estimated teaching time for this unit: 7 hours. It is recognised that this unit may provide more teaching ideas than a class will cover in 7 hours. Teachers are invited to plan their own use of some of the learning ideas below, ensuring depth of learning rather than covering everything. Short sessions of RE are often appropriate – there could be work for more than 7 of these here, taking 20 minutes of well focused time is better than a boring hour!

KEY STRANDS ADDRESSED BY THIS UNIT

AT 1: Learning about Religion

- Religious practices and ways of life

AT 2: Learning from Religion

- Questions of Identity, Diversity and Belonging

ATTITUDES FOCUS: Pupils will explore attitudes of:

- **Self awareness** by becoming increasingly aware of the ways celebration can make us happy;
- **Respect for all** by developing a willingness to learn from the celebrations and special days of others;
- **Open mindedness** by engaging with the lives of others and expanding their knowledge and understanding of the world;
- **Appreciation and wonder** by developing their capacity to respond to special events in the life of their family, and others, using some simple skills in creative development.

Background information for the teacher:

Children of this age are naturals when it comes to celebrating and having a good time! When introducing religious concepts to them it is useful to start with examples from their own (possibly non-religious) experiences. Involving all their senses helps children to become familiar with symbols and artefacts which they will not see every day and start to develop awareness that feelings and beliefs can be expressed through the use of these objects. Any religious celebration could be used for this unit and adapted to suit your school's needs. The introduction the unit provides to RE and to Christian and Muslim festivals in particular may link to cultural learning – but good teaching will be wary of merely cultural celebrations (Chinese New Year, Bonfire Night): this is RE.


Vocabulary + concepts	Resources
<p>In this unit, pupils will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:</p> <p>Celebration</p> <p>Special days</p> <p>Specific religions:</p> <p>Christianity</p> <p>Vocabulary linked to a specific celebration/festival</p>	<p>Teachers might use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'Say Hello To...' and 'Share a story with...' RE Today – 6 flash books for the whiteboard introducing a child from different religions to the class simply. A good start in Reception RE, with the story book version (new in 2014) adding another dimension ▪ Talking Pictures: A picture pack by Fiona Moss and Stephen Pett from RE Today, 2012, with a disc and site license. Lots of good visual learning ideas for younger pupils on Islam, Judaism and Christianity ▪ Puddles the Cat: Big books and stories with good RE activities from www.booksatpress.co.uk by Gill Vaisey • RE Today publications include a World Faiths Jigsaw designed for Early Years education ▪ Dottie and Buzz – puppet videos/DVD from Channel 4/Culham College ▪ A Christmas journey – Susie Poole - Stapleford ISBN 9781904637332 ▪ 'My Very First Bible Stories – Baby Jesus' Lois Rock ISBN 0745949509 ▪ The Easter Story – Lois Rock ISBN 9780745960821 ▪ 'Firm foundations' series – Margaret Cooling – ISBN 1851753338 ▪ 'The Hanukkah Story Big Book' Anita Ganeri ISBN 0237526522 ▪ Folens Primary RE Poster pack: for pictures of Sikhism Guru Granth Sahib Romola Chauri ▪ 'The Divali Story Big Book' Anita Ganeri ISBN0237524694 <p>Artefacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of different crosses available from Articles of Faith or Religion in Evidence • Channel 4 broadcasts and videos e.g. Water, Moon, Candle & Sword (video, teachers' guide and activity book available) • There is a very good selection of authentic materials about Islam for children available from the Islamic Foundation in Leicestershire: www.islamic-foundation.com. Story books, audio and video tapes and posters are all useful. • PCET, Folens and Nelson publish some useful photo / picture packs on particular religions. • The Bradford Inter Faith Education Centre (01274 731674) has many useful publications about its local faith communities. <p>Web:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) has two excellent web starting points for these issues: www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts enables pupils to view and judge numerous works of pupil art on key stories and spiritual ideas from young people. ▪ Try www.reonline.org.uk for a good general gateway to RE materials. ▪ www.request.org.uk/infants/festivals One good example is a video clip of a wedding at: www.request.org.uk/main/dowhat/weddings
<p>Contributions to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for spiritual development come from reflecting on celebrations that are important to me; • Opportunities for social development come from thinking about why times spent celebrating are enjoyable and happy (there is a useful SEAL link here); • Opportunities for cultural development come from learning about celebrations of people from different cultures to my own. 	

EXPECTATIONS: At the end of this unit children will:			
ELGs in Understanding the World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children talk about similarities and differences between themselves and others, among families, communities and traditions; They begin to know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people. 	ELGs in Communication and Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children listen with enjoyment to stories, songs and poems from different communities and traditions They respond with relevant comments, questions or actions. 	ELGs in Personal, Social and Emotional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children understand that they can expect others to treat their needs, views, cultures and beliefs with respect; They work as part of group, taking turns and sharing fairly, understanding that groups of people need agreed values. 	ELGs in Expressive Arts and Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children use their imagination in art, music, dance, imaginative play, and rôle- play and stories to represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings; They respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and taste.
ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS <p>A formal assessment of each pupils is neither required nor desirable for every RE unit. Continuing use of assessment for learning methods is best.</p> <p>Teachers can assess this work by observing children throughout the work. The tasks aim to elicit engaged and reflective responses to the material studied throughout the unit across the ability range. In this unit assessment can be made in line with Early Learning Goals.</p> <p>In this unit, the final activity might give good evidence what children are achieving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take one sensory aspect of one of the special celebrations or days, e.g. music, food, clothing, gifts, promises, stories. Provide examples for the children to listen to or taste or enjoy. Talk to pupils about their favourite food / music / clothes / words / promises: what do they like about it? How does it make them feel? What food and music would they choose once a week on a special day? Talk about how the religious believers might find the music or food or clothes or other factors enhance their experience of this special time. Ask children: what have we learned? Whose special days would you like to share, or join in and why? What did you notice about other people's special days? 			

Key questions	LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHING AND LEARNING	LEARNING OUTCOMES	Points to note
What special times do we celebrate? (These 2 lessons are similar to ones in the unit on weddings and baby welcoming celebrations: it may not need to be done here)	Children will: Find out what special times are celebrated and talk about how celebrations happen.	Looking at reminders of special days <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill a box with a selection of cards and wrapping paper depicting different occasions e.g. birthday, wedding, christening, Christmas, Mother's Day. A 'Celebrations Box' A 'spent' firework. Pass the box round for the pupils to choose an item and describe it. Can they guess when we send each card or which wrapping paper we would use? Who would you give the card and gifts to? Explore feelings about celebrations. Use a 'Feelings Box' containing 'feelings' words – happy, full of fun, joyful, glad, together, excited: when do we feel these emotions? Do they link up with any of the things in the celebration box? Talking about some well known celebrations – birthday, Christmas, Divali and others – is good, but will be developed more fully later in the unit. Ask children to choose presents and cards for people celebrating different festivals and events: what would they give to someone for a wedding, birthday, baby naming, Christmas, Eid, Divali celebration? 	Children can talk about a special celebration and how celebration makes people feel.	<i>Links to Early Learning Goals: Respond to significant experiences, showing a range of feelings when appropriate. (PSED)</i> <i>A resource like 'Say Hello to...' from RE today is a good starting point when children first encounter a religion in school. This helps teachers with subject knowledge too.</i>
How do you celebrate a special occasion?	Children will: Learn what happens at a celebration	What special days do we enjoy? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask children what occasions they enjoy celebrating? Ask the pupils to think of a special occasion they particularly enjoy celebrating. What do they do? Where do they go? What do they need? What clothes do they wear? Do they sing any special songs? Do they eat special food? Mime some of the actions and join in some of the songs together. Plan a party with the pupils designing invitations, planning the food, party bags, games and music. Have a pretend party sampling the food and enjoying the games. Depending on the time of the year select a special occasion for the pupils to take part in, for example, use Harvest, Sukkot, Christmas, Easter, Divali, Eid Al Fitr if the Unit is being studied at these times. (See 'What festivals do we celebrate?') All the class choose or draw pictures to do with clothes, food, songs, stories, gifts, families and actions. All these things make a festival special. How about a 6-part collage by the whole class? 	Children can talk about ways in which people celebrate and how they like to celebrate.	<i>Links to Early Learning Goals: Respond to significant experiences, showing a range of feelings when appropriate. (PSED)</i> <i>Use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences. (CLL)</i>

<p>What religious festivals do we and other people celebrate</p> <p>Some Jewish Festivals</p>	<p>Children will develop understanding of key religious festivals and some of the celebrations involved.</p> <p>They think and talk about their own big days and those of others.</p> <p>They notice that people celebrate different things and in different ways.</p>	<p>Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell the story of the special candlestick at Hanukkah. Enable children to dramatise the story. Display different kinds of candles and candle holders include a Hanukiah, with 8 candles and one extra to light the others. Teach children how it is used: one candle is lit and placed in the menorah every night of the Festival. • Make stained glass pictures of menorahs. Make candles from old candle stumps • Make some “menorah” seven-branched candelabra. Encourage children to talk about what they want to say ‘thank you’ for as a candle on the menorah is lit. • Make and play a dreidel play the game in a small group. Make Hanukkah cards decorated with a Hanukiah. Enable the children to decorate with their designs. <p>Jewish people celebrate Purim – rescue and safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell the story of Esther. Discuss the issues of right and wrong coming from the story. Show pictures of the main characters and label them with 'good' or 'bad'. With the same characters on sticks as puppets, act out the story. Explain how Jews celebrate this festival. In groups, make the following: kippah, scrolls, greggors, Hamanstachen. • Show artefacts of these objects. Show the things groups have made. Remind them about what Jews do at Purim. Read the story again as it would be done in the synagogue with the children using the things they have made. Eat the Hamnstachen. (The story is read in the synagogue from a scroll, when the 'wicked' Haman's name is read out everyone stamps their feet, shakes their greggor's (rattles), whistles and generally makes a noise. At the end Hamanstachen (biscuits in the shape of his hat) are eaten. 	<p>Children can: Talk about a festival story and say something about how people celebrate the festival.</p>	<p><i>In this section select activities and celebrations appropriate to the children in the school e.g. seasonal, a number of children from a particular faith tradition.</i></p> <p><i>Links to Early Learning Goals; Participate in imaginative role play (CD)</i></p> <p><i>Develop an awareness of some religious clothes, objects and rituals (KUW)</i></p>
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<p>What religious festivals do we and other people celebrate</p> <p>Some Christian Festivals:</p> <p>Christmas</p>	<p>Children will develop understanding of key religious festivals and some of the celebrations involved.</p> <p>They think and talk about their own big days and those of others.</p> <p>They notice that people celebrate different things and in different ways.</p>	<p>Christians celebrate Jesus' birth at Christmas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use role play, drama and songs to tell the story of the Baby at Bethlehem. The more animal costumes, straw, and angel wings, the better. • In the role play area, create Bethlehem: an inn, stable, hillside and manger. You could allow children to play carefully with the figures from a nativity set. • Make a display of Christmas cards (parents will contribute in January for use next December!). Allow children to sort Christmas cards by type – ask them which cards show Mary, Jesus, Joseph, the angel and the shepherds from the story. Alternatively use pack of Christmas picture cards. Talk about what the pictures show and how they help people think about Jesus birth. • Use a book such as 'A Christmas Journey': the story of a little girl trying to find the real meaning of Christmas. • Tell the story of Jesus birth using 'Baby Jesus' by Lois Rock. The book has questions included to help children engage with the story. • 'Firm Foundations' Book 1 has resources in for Christmas. • What would make a nice present for Baby Jesus? Choose, wrap them up and bring them along to the manger. Songs and the nativity play can be incorporated here. • To get them thinking about the deeper meaning of the festival, ask children to make a picture of light and teach them that Christians think Christmas is a festival of light. Ask some 'questions of wonder': Was baby Jesus like a light? What lights were there in the story? What can we think of that lights up our lives?' 	<p>Children can: Talk about a festival story and say something about how people celebrate the festival.</p>	<p><i>Links to Early Learning Goals;</i></p> <p><i>Participate in imaginative role play</i></p> <p><i>Develop an awareness of some religious clothes, objects and rituals.</i></p>
<div data-bbox="1554 619 2045 991" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="1554 995 2045 1098"><i>Ask children to make a picture of light and teach them that Christians think Christmas is a festival of light.</i></p>				

<p>Christian festivals: Easter</p> <p>How and why do Christians celebrate Easter? (Maybe 2-3 short sessions / lessons)</p>	<p>Children will learn how Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus</p> <p>Christians use special food, objects, words and songs to celebrate.</p>	<p>Learning about a Christian Festival: Christians celebrate Easter – new life in the spring, hope after sadness. Select activities from these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on 'Easter' on a simple mind map – or include it if pupils had not mentioned it before. Discuss how they celebrate it. (This should be possible for non-Christians who will associate Easter with the secular practice of giving Easter eggs) • Ask pupils if they know why Christians celebrate Easter? Simplify and retell the story of Jesus, disliked by some and put to death on a cross. • Focus on the Easter day experience of the women from Matt 28:1-10 (see 'Special Times' – RE Today, for this story and activity) • Or create a feelings graph based on how the women felt that day. • Explain that Jesus having new life is called the resurrection • An Easter Bonnet parade, where children make their own, is good. • 'Firm Foundations' book 2 has resources in for Lent and Easter. Tell the story of Easter using resources suggested. Make an Easter Table display. • Decorate a plaster of paris egg, dipped in paint, with little beads and all sorts of ribbon and fabric: why do people use an egg for a sign at Easter? • Explore symbols of Easter e.g Easter eggs, chicks, hot cross buns. Include and talk about the specific symbols of the Christian Easter, including the cross, Pascal candle, palm cross, Easter garden with empty grave and more. What are the meanings of these things? Why do they matter? How are they connected to stories of Jesus? How are these used at Easter? Draw the symbols. Taste hot cross buns. Have a range of crosses available to show the children. Talk about the crosses – which one is their favourite cross? Why? Children create their own crosses. • Ask a team to make a huge cross, and other individuals to make tiny crosses. • Ask pupils: why is the egg used at Easter – symbol of new life; why is this celebration important for Christians? • Introduce the symbols of the crucifix and the empty cross, asking pupils what they both represent. • Explore some ways Christians celebrate: e.g. Pysanka – the art of decorating eggs in the Ukraine. Painted rings on the eggs represent life without end, red represents love; Greek Orthodox dye eggs red to symbolise the blood of Christ; games like rolling the egg down a hill or cracking an opponent's egg are said to represent the stone being rolled away from the tomb. • The stories of Tattybogle and Rechenka's Eggs parallel the Easter message of new life • A forest school approach would look for signs of new life in the forest; on a walk. 	<p>Talk about why Easter is a special celebration for Christians and Identify some ways in which they celebrate it.</p> <p>Suggest what the symbol of the empty cross represents</p> <p>Handle artefacts associated with Easter and suggest meaning for them.</p>	<p><i>Links to Early Learning Goals:</i></p> <p><i>Respond to significant experiences, showing a range of feelings when appropriate. (PSED)</i></p> <p><i>Use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences. (CLL)</i></p>  <p><i>Early learning uses symbols, food, fun and festivities in RE</i></p>
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<p>What religious festivals do we and other people celebrate</p> <p>Some Hindu Festivals</p>	<p>Children will develop understanding of key religious festivals and some of the celebrations involved.</p> <p>They think and talk about their own big days and those of others.</p> <p>They notice that people celebrate different things and in different ways.</p>	<p>Hindu people Celebrate Diwali: light winning against darkness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get some Indian costumes for dressing up. Use ten face masks to make Ravana. What would make him scary? • Hand painting, thumb pot making • Tell the story of Rama and Sita. In a simple version, for the youngest children, it is fun to use puppets if you can. Use 'goodies and baddies' as a way of telling the story. Emphasise emotions in your re-telling. • Discuss issues of right and wrong. Show pictures of the main characters and label them with 'good' or 'bad'. Pick a character to draw. Look carefully at their clothes, hair, etc. Tell an adult something about the character from the story (eg, Sita was very frightened when she was taken away). • Make a throne to use as part of the story telling, and some golden slippers to put on it, as a reminder of Rama's exile in the story. Use some other props to tell the story in exciting ways. • Explain how Hindus celebrate Diwali. In groups make the following: divas from clay, rangoli patterns, mendhi patterns on cut out hands, cards and presents, Indian sweets. Have a class celebration, including: dancing to Indian music, acting out the return of Rama and Sita, divas could form a track to the thrones (Caution: light divas carefully, and have some water ready, just in case.), use scarves for head covering, eat Indian sweets. • Children can complete the sentence: 'The part of the story I liked best was...' 	<p>Children can: Talk about a festival story and say something about how people celebrate the festival.</p> <p>Recognise their own cultures and beliefs, and those of others</p>	<p><i>In this section select activities and celebrations appropriate to the children in the school e.g. seasonal, a number of children from a particular faith tradition.</i></p> <p><i>Links to Early Learning Goals; Participate in imaginative role play</i></p> <p><i>Develop an awareness of some religious clothes, objects and rituals</i></p>
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<p>How and why do Muslims celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr?</p>	<p>Pupils will learn that Eid-ul-Fitr is a Muslim festival that celebrates the end of Ramadan, the month during which the prophet Muhammad received the first revelation of the Qur'an. Muslims use special food, objects, words and gifts to celebrate.</p>	<p>Learning about a Muslim festival</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on 'Eid-ul-Fitr' on a simple mind map extending it as the teaching and learning progresses; • Why would a book have a special stand and silk cloth? Show pupils a Qur'an (or picture) on its stand. This is a clue behind the festival. Tell them about the importance of the Qur'an as God's message, given to humans through his Prophet Muhammad. Encourage pupils to reflect on prior learning and establish that Muhammad received the Qur'an during the month of Ramadan. Muslims remember this important time by fasting during daylight hours. Fasting reminds them about caring for the poor, being patient, keeping going when things are difficult, and about the goodness of Allah. Eid-ul-Fitr is the great celebration to mark the end of the month of fasting. Why is it such an exciting celebration? • Refer to the mind map of celebrations, asking pupils to suggest how Muslims might celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr. If possible, ask Muslim pupils who are present in the class how they celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr • Read a Muslim story book like 'My Eid-ul-Fitr' (use it as a literacy text) <p>Explore the important practices and customs of Eid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sending Eid cards to friends and family – look at example and talk about 'who, when, why?' • visiting neighbours, friends, family – link to children's experiences • receiving gifts and new clothes – talk about how it feels, why it is fun and when • going to say prayers at the Mosque, remembering Ramadan stories, giving to charity, showing happiness <p>Children might tackle some of these tasks in small groups, and share their learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making Eid cards. These should open from right to left because the Arabic language is written in this direction. Use patterns, buildings, or other decorations for the front (not people) and write a message inside (Eid Mubarak). Talk about why it is good to think of others at special times. • making a prayer mat or Qur'an stand. Talk about how these help Muslims to show respect to God. • making some of the food associated with Eid and having an Eid party in class. Talk about how food helps to make a celebration special. Compare their own experiences of special food with Muslim celebrations of Eid. 	<p>I can talk about what happens at Eid-ul-Fitr and say why Muslims give gifts</p> <p>I can say how I think Muslims will feel at Eid-ul-Fitr and talk about whether I have ever felt like that and why</p>	<p><i>Special Times, ed Joyce Mackley from RE Today Services, includes some activities on Eid-ul-Fitr</i></p>
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<p>What did we notice about all the festivals? What can we learn?</p>	<p>Children learn to talk thoughtfully about different religious festivals</p>	<p>What did we learn?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show pupils reminders of all the festivals they have learned about. Can they remember which is which, what the different objects and artefacts are used for and what they mean? • Ask pupils to think about how it feels for, e.g. Muslims to celebrate Eid and Christians to celebrate Easter. Collect all the 'feelings words' they can think of. • Ask pupils if and when they feel these emotions. • Ask pupils if Jewish people celebrating Hanukkah or Purim, or Hindu people celebrating Divali might feel the same. • Ask pupils what is the same and what is different about the festivals. • Can pairs of pupils come up with questions they would like to ask about the festivals? They may get answers to these in RE lessons later on in school. • Ask pupils what they like about each of the different festivals. 	<p>Speak about my experience and the experience of others.</p>	<p>Circle time is a good place for this final activity.</p>
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