

## 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.

<b>Festival</b> <i>Also refer to Book, page 67, which lists corresponding deities and stories</i>	<b>Related Topics</b> <i>Concepts, values, themes, etc.                      (concepts in <b>blue</b>)</i>
<b>Introduction To Festivals</b> <i>(topics relevant to all)</i>	The Hindu year and calendar. The nature of <b>time</b> . Also, the purposes of festivals and the main activities performed during them.
<b>1. Sarasvati Puja and Vashanta Panchami</b>	The role of learning and the arts in Hinduism (see book, page 90); knowledge versus ignorance; new beginnings – rebirth and <b>reincarnation</b> ; <b>time</b> as cyclical e.g. through the seasons
<b>2. Mahashivaratri</b>	The <b>three gunas</b> , as related to the Trimurti (see book page ref). Destruction, death etc. as a necessary part of life for re-creation.  <b>God</b> , gods and goddesses.
<b>3. Holi</b>	The nature of <b>God</b> and where he is found (e.g. everywhere, even inside a pillar, as through story of Prahlada.) <b>Maya</b> – 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.
<b>4. Rama Navami</b>	<b>Dharma</b> – the duties of the king, husband, wife, brother, etc. The concept of <b>avatar</b> . <b>Creation</b> – everything as the property of a God (with reference to Ravana trying to steal Sita)
<b>5. Hanuman Jayanti</b>	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. <b>Samsara</b> .

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