

# *Celebrate Diwali*

by Donna Rhodenizer

Diwali is not my cultural tradition or part of my faith experience. However, when it is observed by students I teach, my research provides information that helps me make a connection with them. Being aware of things that are meaningful in the lives of my students also helps me facilitate understanding between them and their peers.

When students are able to share the things that have meaning to them, they can feel included, heard, understood and represented.

The simple song, [Celebrate Diwali](#), is a starting point and a gateway to discussion and the search for additional information. To that end, when singing this song, information is included below to help teachers by providing a bit of background that connects to the song. Additional research is encouraged.

Songs that highlight various cultural traditions, celebrations or observances can be used to help foster community. Being part of a community is not about everyone being the same but recognizing and respecting our differences.

## **Background - Diwali**

Diwali celebrates the start of the Indian astrological calendar. It follows the lunar calendar, so the dates change from year to year. It falls between the end of October/early November.

Diwali symbolizes the victory of light over darkness and good over evil.

There are five days of Diwali.

Diwali originated in India but it is also celebrated in countries all over the world.

Hindus interpret the story of Diwali based upon where they live. The focus of the celebration differs by region: northern, southern and western India. However, the common theme of all the celebrations is the victory of good over evil.

### ***Elements associated with Diwali***

Celebrating the new year

Lighting Diyas (clay lamps)

Feasting

Gift giving

Fireworks displays

Decorating with wreaths made from colourful flowers

Decorating with Rangoli (patterns created on the floor using coloured powders or sand)



Thanks to Carolyn Duerksen and her school staff for first-person information about Diwali.

Online Source: <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/pages/article/diwali>