

Diwali (Hinduism)

The Hindu New Year festival Diwali lasts from one to five days. It is a festival of light, with the hanging of lighted lanterns and the setting off of colourful fireworks. The festival marks the beginning of the financial year in India. The origins and stories surrounding the festival vary from one part of India to another. However, it is generally associated with the goddess of wealth and prosperity, Lakshmi, or with the victorious return to Ayodhya of Rama and Sita after their exile.

After a great battle, Rama killed the demon and recovered his wife. Rama's return with his wife Sita to Ayodhya and his coronation as king, is celebrated at Diwali.

When Rama and Sita first returned to Ayodhya it was a dark moonless night and they couldn't see where they were going. Their people put little lamps outside their houses so that the new king and queen could find their way, thus beginning the tradition of the festival of lights.



- ① Sit down with the children and show them the series of pictures overleaf. You may wish to lay the sheets out either on a table or the floor, and then read the story.
- ② Ask the children the following questions and discuss them:-
Which part of the story did you like?
Which picture(s) did you like and why?
Do you know any other stories when good overcomes evil?
- ③ Make some Diya lamps with the children using plasticine/clay, or decorate one using the activity found on iChild. Then place candles in them.
- ④ Ask the children to make some rangoli patterns on a board. Again, you will find an activity for this in the Diwali section on iChild.
- ⑤ The children could try dressing up dolls in Hindu clothes, or making some finger puppets.
- ⑥ Talk to the children about people who love and support them.

The Story of Diwali (Hinduism)



Rama was a good man, married to a beautiful princess called Sita.



**They were sent to
the forest, where
Ravana, the demon
king with ten heads,
tried to kidnap Sita.**



**Rama battled with
Ravana, and eventually
defeated the demon
using a special bow and
arrow from the gods.**



**Rama and Sita returned
to their city in the middle
of the night.**



Rama and Sita could not see their way home, so the people lit up the whole city with little lamps called Diya's. This was to show how much the people wanted them to come back.



**Rama and Sita became the
new King and Queen and
ruled very wisely.**



Today Hindus celebrate by cleaning their homes and making rangoli patterns. These patterns are often made using rice, flour, sand and flower petals and by adding colouring.



They also light Diya lamps.