

All About the Diwali Festival Artefacts



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Also, a Diwali Storybook and Bag

Please note contents and designs may vary.

1. Dandiya Sticks

Dandiya sticks are decorated wooden sticks used in traditional Indian dances. They often have a 'ghungroo' (small bell) attached to the end. One interpretation of the use of the sticks is that the dancers represent the warriors in the battle between Lord Rama and Ravana in the Ramayana, the story of Rama and Sita.

Explore further - Make dandiya sticks to use when dancing.

2. Hindu greeting Cards

Diwali is the most popular occasion for card giving. Diwali Cards often depict scenes from the story of Rama and Sita and are sent to family and friends as greetings cards during the festival of Diwali. Diwali is known as the festival of lights. It is celebrated each year between mid-October and mid-November. It lasts for five days.

Design and make own greeting cards and think about why people send cards and what they mean.

3. Rangoli Patterns

Rangoli is a decorative folk art from India that is created on the ground during celebrations, and especially Diwali. Hindus believe that rangoli brings good luck and welcomes gods and goddesses. The details in rangoli decorations can include lotus flowers, mango leaves and geometric shapes. The elaborate designs can be made with rice, coloured sand, chalk and flower petals.

Explore further – Use online resources to show videos of rangoli patterns being created. Create rangoli patterns using chinks, coloured sand and flowers. Print own patterns onto t-shirts, bags, cloth and explore different colours and designs.

4. Ramayana

The Ramayana is an ancient Sanskrit epic about Rama. Sanskrit is the classical language of India. The story of the Ramayana is about Prince Rama and tells of his childhood through to the rescue of Sita and the battle with Ravana. The Ramayana artefact shows Rama, Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman.

Explore further – What are the seven parts of the Ramayana epic?

5. Ganesh

Ganesh is considered as the God of Intellect, Remover of Obstacles and Lord of Beginnings. Hindus pray to Ganesh when embarking on something for the first time, as they believe he bestows wisdom and good fortune. Hindus traditionally worship Ganesh and Lakshmi together at Diwali as it is believed that to have good fortune one must also acquire knowledge.

Explore further – Why is Ganesh depicted with one broken and one unbroken tusk? Can you find other stories relating to Ganesh?

6. Lakshmi

Lakshmi is Goddess of Wealth and Beauty. Hindus believe that Sita is an incarnation of Lakshmi. Particularly worshipped during the festival of Diwali, Hindus believe that worshipping Lakshmi sincerely and not in greed, will bring fortune and success. It is believed that Lakshmi resides in places of hard work, virtue and bravery, but leaves when these qualities are no longer present.

Explore further – On which day of Diwali are candles lit to guide Lakshmi to Hindu's homes?

7. Rangoli Diya Candles

The word Diwali means 'rows of lighted lamps.' In the story of Rama and Sita lamps were lit to guide them home and welcome them back. During the Diwali celebrations people light their homes and outside areas with clay diya lamps. The lighting of a diya is a symbolic action in itself; Hindus believe that by lighting a diya, you are removing the darkness and bringing in light, removing the negative energies that could be present in a space and bringing in positivity.

*Explore further what happens on each of the 5 days of the festival of Diwali.
Design and make own diya lamps out of clay.*

Useful Tips

- *Be sensitive using religious and cultural artefacts and understand any special requirements in handling them.*
- *Avoid creating stereotypes and understand that not all people from the same culture may use the artefact in the same way.*
- *Use the appropriate language to talk about the artefacts.*
- *Teach the children to handle and store the artefacts with respect and sensitivity.*

Activity Ideas using Diwali Festival Artefacts

Artefact Identification

- Use the information above to identify and name each of the artefacts.
- Give time for pupils to explore the artefacts.
- How are the artefacts used and what do they represent?

Fact Sharing

- Use the information above and the *Explore further* suggestions, to create fact files about Diwali.
- Put the fact files together to create one shared piece of information.
- Find out if someone in the school or wider community would like to visit and share their experiences of Diwali.

PE

- Learn how to perform traditional Indian dance steps.
- Use online resources to view videos of how to use the musical sticks (*dandiya sticks*) when dancing.
- Create an opportunity for a dance to be performed to an audience.

Art and design

- Create rangoli patterns using chalks, coloured sand and flowers.
- Design and make a clay diya lamp.
- Use hand templates to design mehndi patterns.

Storytelling

- Listen to the story of Diwali and use or make puppets or masks to retell the story and explore the meaning.



For more ideas about ways to use religious artefacts, see our other free download – Learning with Artefacts. We hope you find the information useful.