



Happy Holidays!

From November through to early January many religions celebrate their holy days. There's something beautiful about many faiths all celebrating at the same time and the opportunities that offers us to learn about one another.

We invite you to share this resource in your workplace, school, place of worship or community centre. Recognizing the religious holidays of others can be a powerful way to connect.

- For those in the minority, a holiday greeting from a colleague, neighbour or classmate can help people feel seen and acknowledged.
- A heartfelt acknowledgement of religious observances can also open a conversation, create a safe space for others to share more about their lives, and help build a sense of belonging and community for all. Even just sharing resources like this one can communicate that everyone is welcomed.
- Lastly, and perhaps most beautifully, knowing more about one another can provide an opportunity to authentically share in the joy of the season's many celebrations.

Whatever you celebrate at this time of year, the team from Encounter wishes you a very happy holiday season!



Encounter World Religions

November 2021



November 1 – **Pagan and Wiccan: Samhain** A festival marking the new year and the end of the harvest season.

November 1 – **Christian: All Saints Day** Also known as the Day of the Dead or Día de los Muertos, it commemorates saints who have attained heaven.

November 2 – **Rastafarian: Coronation Day** Anniversary of the Crowning of Haile Selassie. On this day, Ras (Prince) Tafari Makonnen became Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia.

November 4 – **Hindu: Diwali** A five-day festival of light celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains across the world. Celebrations vary, honouring different deities, the achievement of enlightenment, and liberations both spiritual and physical.

November 5 – **Jain: New Year** Following the Diwali festival, Jains celebrate the new year on the first day following the month of Kartika.

November 7 – **Bahá'í: Birthday of the Bab** Honours the birth of God's messenger in the Bahá'í faith who foretold the coming of the Bahá'í founder and prophet.

November 19 – **Sikh: Guru Nanak Ji's Birthday** Commemorates the birth of the founder of Sikhism.



November 29 to December 6 – **Jewish: Hanukkah** This eight-day celebration commemorates the victory of the Jews over the Syrian Greeks, which ended a period of political oppression and religious persecution.

November 30 – **Roman Catholic: Feast of St. Andrew** Honors the patron saint of Scotland, Greece, Russia, Ukraine, Barbados, and Romania.



December 2021

December 8 – **Roman Catholic: Feast of the Immaculate Conception** This Roman Catholic feast celebrates how Mary (the mother of Jesus) was conceived without original sin. Mary is understood to have lived a life without sinning.

December 8 – **Mahāyāna Buddhist: Bodhi Day** Commemorates the day that the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama (Shakyamuni), experienced enlightenment, known as 'bodhi' in Sanskrit and Pali.



December 12 – **Roman Catholic: Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe** A religious holiday in Mexico commemorating the appearance of the Virgin Mary near Mexico City in 1531.

December 13 – **Christian: St. Lucia's Day** This festival of light in Scandinavia and Italy commemorates the martyrdom of St. Lucia, a young Christian girl killed for her faith in 304 C.E. She secretly brought food to persecuted Christians in Rome. She wore a wreath of candles on her head to light her way, keeping both hands free to carry as much food as possible.

December 16 to 24 – **Christian: Las Posadas** A nine-day celebration commemorating the trials Mary and Joseph endured during their journey to Bethlehem. This festival emerged in Mexico but is also celebrated in other parts of Latin America, in Spain and the Philippines.



December 21 – **Pagan and Wiccan: Yule** This holiday begins at sundown on the winter solstice as the great horned hunter god is reborn. This celebration on the shortest day of the year focuses on rebirth, renewal and new beginnings as the sun makes its way back to the Earth.

A solstice is an astronomical event that happens twice each year when the sun reaches its most northerly or southerly position in the sky.



December 2021

December 25 – **Christian: Christmas** The birthday of Jesus for Protestants and Roman Catholics, celebrated by countries across the world.



December 26 – **Secular: Boxing Day** A secular holiday celebrated in the U.K., Canada, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and South Africa.

December 26 – **Christian: St. Stephen's Day**
A day to commemorate St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, or protomartyr.

December 26 to January 1 – **Cultural: Kwanzaa**
An African-American and pan-African holiday started by Maulana Karenga in 1966 to celebrate African heritage.

December 26 – **Zoroastrian: Zartosht No-Diso (Death of Prophet Zarathushtra)** A day of remembrance in the Zoroastrian religion, commemorating the death anniversary of the prophet Zoroaster or Zarathushtra.

December 26 – **Roman Catholic: Feast of the Holy Family**
A liturgical celebration in the Catholic Church in honor of Jesus, his mother and his foster father, St. Joseph, as a family.

December 28 – **Christian: Feast of the Holy Innocents**
A Christian feast in remembrance of the massacre of young children in Bethlehem by King Herod the Great in his attempt to kill the infant Jesus.



December 31 – **Christian: Watch Night**
A day for Christians to review the year that has passed, make confessions, and then prepare for the year ahead by praying and resolving.



January 2022

January 6 – **Christian: Feast of the Epiphany**

For Catholics and Protestants, this day commemorates the first manifestation of Jesus to the Gentiles, when the three kings arrived in Bethlehem. For Orthodox Christians, it marks Jesus' baptism.

January 7 – **Orthodox Christian: Christmas**

The date that Orthodox Christians celebrate Jesus's birth in the Julian calendar.



January 13 – **Sikh: Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh**

A celebration of the tenth Sikh Guru and spiritual master. He is the last human guru in Sikhism.

January 14 – **Eastern Orthodox: New Year**

The "Old New Year" celebrates the start of the Julian calendar.

January 16 – **Bahá'í: World Religion Day**

A day in the Bahá'í faith that celebrates common themes for faiths across the world.

January 18, 2022 – **Mahāyāna Buddhist: New Year**

A time for meditation, self-reflection and rituals of cleansing and purification.



For over 20 years, Encounter has helped people, organizations and communities explore what it means to become religiously literate and enhance their understanding of each other and their world.

Learn more about our engaging programs and resources at worldreligions.ca



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