Exploring Festivals: A Journey of Celebration

Learning objective: To understand the significance of festivals across different religions and worldviews, recognising how they connect communities through shared traditions and values.

Read each flashcard carefully. On the front is a question or key term, and on the back, you will find the answer. Use these to test your knowledge of how people celebrate around the world.

What is the primary purpose of a festival in most religious traditions?

A festival is a period of celebration, often marking a significant historical event, a seasonal change, or a spiritual milestone to bring a community together.

Diwali is known as the 'Festival of Lights'. What does the lighting of lamps (diyas) symbolise?

It symbolises the victory of light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance.

Which festival marks the end of Ramadan, a month of fasting in Islam?

Eid-al-Fitr, often called the 'Festival of Breaking the Fast'.

How do Christians typically celebrate Easter?

Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, often through special church services, sharing meals with family, and symbols of new life like eggs.

What is the significance of the Menorah during the Jewish festival of Hanukkah?

It commemorates the miracle of the oil, where a small amount of oil lasted for eight days in the Temple.

Vaisakhi is a major festival for Sikhs. What does it celebrate?

It celebrates the spring harvest and the formation of the Khalsa, the community of initiated Sikhs.

Why do many festivals include specific, traditional foods?

Foods often act as symbols to remind people of their history, gratitude, or the season being celebrated.

What is a 'ritual' in the context of a festival?

A ritual is a sequence of actions performed in a specific order, often during a ceremony, to show respect or to celebrate a belief.

Compare and contrast: How are Diwali and Hanukkah similar in their use of light?

Both festivals use light (lamps or candles) to represent hope and the triumph of good over difficult circumstances.

Explain why communities feel it is important to gather together during a festival.

Gatherings strengthen social bonds, allow for the passing down of traditions to younger generations, and create a sense of shared identity.

Justify your answer: Does a festival have to be religious to be meaningful?

No, a festival can be meaningful by celebrating cultural heritage, human achievements, or the natural world, which can bring people together without a religious focus.

What might happen to a community if they stopped celebrating their annual festivals?

The community might lose its connection to its history, find it harder to maintain shared values, and lose the opportunity for collective joy and reflection.