Diwali: The Festival of Lights with Max and Zara

Learning objective: To understand the origins, significance, and traditions of Diwali within Hinduism, Sikhism, and Jainism.

Join Max the monkey and Zara the zebra as they explore the vibrant traditions of Diwali! Read the facts carefully and answer the questions below to test your knowledge.

Answer Key: 1. A (Victory of light over darkness); 2. True; 3. Diyas; 4. B (To welcome Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth); 5. Rangoli; 6. False (It is a five-day festival); 7. Rama; 8. Ayodhya; 9. Bandi Chhor Divas; 10. False (It is also celebrated by Jains and Sikhs).

Word bank: Diyas · Rangoli · Lakshmi · Rama · Light · Darkness · Ayodhya · Bandi Chhor Divas

1. 1. What is the central symbolic meaning of Diwali? A) The start of the harvest season B) The victory of light over darkness* C) The celebration of the winter solstice D) A competition of music and dance (1 mark)

2. 2. True or False: Diwali is celebrated by millions of people across the globe, not just in India. (1 mark)

3. 3. What are the small clay lamps called that are lit to signify the triumph of light? (1 mark)

4. 4. Why do people clean their homes thoroughly before Diwali? A) To prepare for spring cleaning B) To welcome Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth* C) To make room for new furniture D) To prepare for a house inspection (1 mark)

5. 5. What is the name of the colorful, intricate floor patterns made from colored sand or flower petals? (1 mark)

6. 6. True or False: Diwali is strictly a one-day celebration. (1 mark)

7. 7. In the Hindu tradition, which prince returns from exile to his kingdom, marking the start of Diwali? (1 mark)

8. 8. What is the name of the city Prince Rama returned to? (1 mark)

9. 9. What is the specific name of the festival celebrated by Sikhs during the same time as Diwali, marking the release of Guru Hargobind Ji? (1 mark)

10. 10. True or False: Diwali is only celebrated by Hindu families. (1 mark)

Draw: Draw an elaborate Rangoli pattern using geometric shapes and symmetrical lines, as Zara the zebra would design, featuring a small, glowing diya in the center.

Extension challenge: Greater Depth Challenges: 1. Explain why the concept of 'light versus darkness' is a universal theme found in many cultures. 2. Compare and contrast how different religions (Hinduism, Sikhism, and Jainism) celebrate this period—how do their historical reasons for celebration differ? 3. Justify why the preparation for Diwali is just as important as the festival day itself. 4. What might happen if the traditions of Diwali were lost to future generations? 5. If you were organising a community Diwali event, how would you ensure it is inclusive for people of all faiths? 6. Analyze the importance of light as a metaphor in human history.