








HEE NE Faith Summaries

HEE NE is proud to champion workforce equality & diversity in the North East & North Cumbria.

We have developed these Faith summaries as a reference guide to accompany our Multifaith Cultural Calendar.

We hope this resource will support both trainers and trainees when scheduling timetables, rotas and other important events as part of improving awareness and understanding of everyone's wider cultural and spiritual needs. Faith summaries have been created for:



-  **Buddhism**
-  **Christianity**
-  **Hinduism**
-  **Islam**
-  **Judaism**
-  **Sikhism**
-  **UK Cultural Events**

Summary

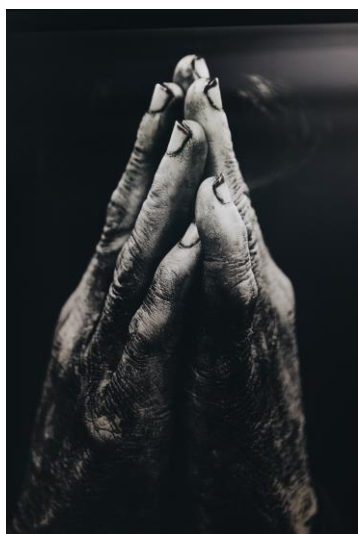
Key Dates

These summaries attempt to capture the essence of each Faith and have been created in collaboration with religious individuals. We appreciate that believers may have differing personal emphases and understanding of their Faith.

This is not intended to be a complete list of every religious event. We concentrated on the key dates those practicing each religion would want those in workforce scheduling and rota planning to be aware of.

In the English language, 'holiday' derives from combining the words 'Holy Day', usually in commemoration of a Christian Saint or event.

Over time some events became Bank Holidays, others moved to the nearest Sunday, some are now celebrated in the evenings. Due to the historical prominence of Christianity in the UK and Europe, this is arguably more prominent in the minds of rota planners than other Faiths. Our hope is to enable a workplace that understands, celebrates and supports all our needs.





Buddhism

Summary

Buddhists follow the teachings of the **Buddha**, which means 'enlightened one'.

The Buddha was a man called **Siddhartha Gautama**, who lived 2,500 years ago.

There are 520 million Buddhists worldwide, with 180,000 living in the UK.



Buddhists aim to overcome suffering and achieve complete peace and happiness (**nirvana**) by eliminating attachment to worldly things.

Buddha taught the **four Noble Truths**, we crave impermanent states and things (dukkha) leading to **Samsāra**, an endless cycle of repeated rebirth, dukkah and death. Liberation is possible to a state of nirvana.

Nirvana is reached by following the **Noble Eightfold Path**:

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| Views | Livelihood |
| Aspirations | Endeavour |
| Speech | Mindfulness |
| Conduct | Meditation |



Key Dates

| Festival Name | Description | Typical Date | Preferred Leave |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Vesak | Birth of Buddha | May | 1 day |
| Māgha Pūjā | Buddha's visit to Veruvana Monastery | March | 1 day |
| Buddhist New Year | First full moon from April for 3 days | April | 1 day |
| Asalha Puja | Budda's first sermon | July | 1 day |
| Loi Krathong | Floating Bowls festival | Oct - Nov | None |
| Bodhi Day | Enlightenment of Buddha | Dec | None |



Christianity

Summary

Christians believe in one **God** who is all powerful and all loving, who created heaven and earth. God eternally exists as the **Trinity**, the **Father**, the **Son** and the **Holy Spirit**. Christianity is focused on the life and teachings of **Jesus Christ**, the Son of God.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago and died for the sins of humanity on the Cross then rose again.

His teachings on the love of God and to love your neighbour as yourself are recorded in the Gospels, part of the **Bible**, the sacred Text of Christianity, consisting of Old and New Testaments.

There are 2.4 billion Christians, making Christianity the most followed religion. 54% of the UK identify as Christian.

Worldwide there are differences in Christians' beliefs and interpretation of the Bible, with the Catholic, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox being the most numerous denominations.



Key Dates

| Festival Name | Description | Typical Date | Preferred Leave |
|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Good Friday | Death of Christ | Mar - Apr | 1 day |
| Easter Sunday | Resurrection of Christ | Mar - Apr | 1 day |
| Christmas Day | Birth of Christ | 25 th Dec | 1 day |
| Boxing Day | Gifts to the poor | 26 th Dec | 1 day |
| Lent | 40 days prior to Easter | Feb - Apr | None |
| Ash Wednesday | First day of Lent | Feb - Mar | None |
| All Saints' Day | Saints Celebration | Nov 1 st | None |
| Epiphany | Revelation of Christ | January | None |



Hinduism

Summary

Hinduism is a family of religions that is a way of life, referred to as **Sanātana Dharma**, 'the Eternal Way'

Hindus believe in one supreme spirit, **Brahman**. Brahman can take the form of many gods and goddesses, known as deities.



The purpose of life for Hindus is to achieve four aims, called **Purusharthas**.



- Dharma** (ethics / duties)
- Kama** (passions)
- Artha** (prosperity)
- Moksha** (liberation from the cycle of rebirth)



These provide Hindus with opportunities to act morally and ethically and lead a good life. It is the 3rd largest religion in the world with 1.3 billion followers.

Although there are different denominations of Hinduism and many festivals throughout the year, the key dates summarise some of the most widely celebrated festivals.

Key Dates

| Festival Name | Description | Typical Date | Preferred Leave |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Diwali | 5 day festival, incorporating Hindu New Year | Oct - Nov | 2 days |
| Holi | Arrival of Spring | March | None |
| Janmashtami | Celebration of Krishna | August | 1 day |
| Navaratri | 9 day festival | October | None |
| Ganesh Chaturthi | Celebration of Ganesh | Aug - Sep | 1 day |
| Raksha Bandhan | Sibling / cousin appreciation | August | 1 day |
| Maha Shivaratri | Celebration of Lord Shiva | Feb - Mar | None |
| Sri Rama Navami | Celebration of Lord Rama | April | None |



Islam

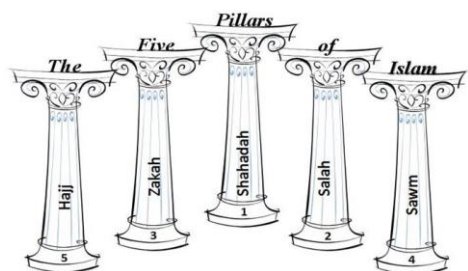
Summary

Islam means 'submission to the will of God'. Followers of Islam are called Muslims. Muslims who worship one, all-knowing God, who in Arabic is known as **Allah**.

The **Prophet Muhammad** (peace be upon him) received messages from Allah and this forms the **Qur'an**, Islam's holy scripture.

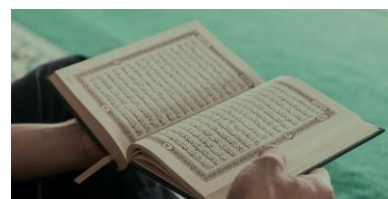
Islam is the world's 2nd largest religion of 1.9 billion followers, with over 3 million Muslims living in the UK.

The foundation of Islamic faith is the **Five Pillars of Islam**:



- Shahadah** there is no God but Allah and the Prophet Muhammad is His last messenger
- Salah** five daily prayers
- Sawm** fasting in the month of Ramadan
- Zakah** giving money to charity
- Hajj** undertaking holy pilgrimage to Makkah

The Islamic calendar started in 622 CE and is lunar so holidays do not always fall in the same calendar month



Key Dates

| Festival Name | Description | Typical Date | Preferred Leave |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Eid al-Fitr | Festival of the breaking of the Fast - End of Ramadan | May - Jun | 1 day |
| Eid al-Adha | Festival of the Sacrifice | Aug - Sep | 1 day |
| Ramadan | Holy Month of fasting, 9 th month of Islamic calendar | Mar - Apr | None |
| Al-Hijra | Islamic New Year | Sep - Oct | None |
| Ashura | Central festival in Shia Islam, Death of Husayn | Sep - Oct | None |
| Isra' and Mi'raj | Night Journey commemoration | Feb - Mar | None |



Judaism

Summary

Judaism began 4,000 years ago when the **Prophet Abraham** received a vision from God. Jews believe that there is one God, **Yahweh**, with whom they have a special agreement called a **covenant**.



The holy scripture is the Hebrew Bible including the **Torah** and festivals use the Hebrew Calendar.

Judaism is marked by numerous special days in which Jews take time out of their lives and work to focus on God and his mitzvot (commandments).

The **Sabbath** is the weekly day of rest from sundown on Friday until Saturday evening. Many festivals follow the rules of the Sabbath. For medical staff there are no religious restrictions on working the Sabbath if required.



In Judaism all days begin at sunset, so holidays begin the day before and end at sundown.

In Summer there are 5 fasting days, of which Tish B'Av in July is the most important.

Key Dates

| Festival Name | Description | Typical Date | Preferred Leave |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Yom Kippur | Day of Atonement | Sept - Oct | 1 day |
| Rosh Hashanah | Jewish New Year | Sept - Oct | 1 - 2 days |
| Passover | Festival of Unleavened Bread | Spring | 1 day at each end of festival |
| Sukkot | Festival of Booths | Sept - Oct | 1 day at each end of festival |
| Purim | Joyous 'Feast of Lots' | Mar | 1 day |
| Tu B'Shevat | New Year of Trees | Jan - Feb | None |
| Tish B'Av | Fast Day | July | 1 day |
| Yom HaShoah | Holocaust Remembrance | Apr - May | 1 day |
| Hannukah | Victory of the Maccabees, an 8 day festival | Dec | None |

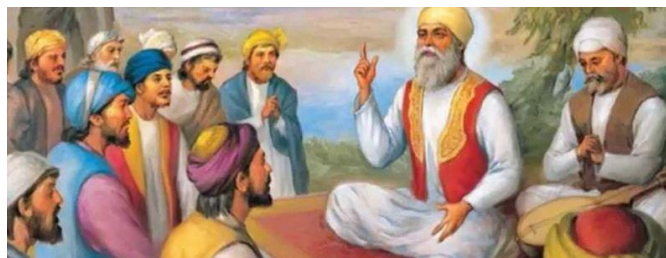


Sikhism

Summary

Sikhs believe in one God called **Waheguru** which means 'Wonderful Lord and Teacher'

Sikhism has 27 million followers worldwide, with 80% living in India. Over 430,000 Sikhs live in the UK.



Sikhs follow the teaching of the **Ten Gurus**, who were special religious teachers who led the Sikh people for 200 years. The purpose of life is to reconnect with **Akal** (the Timeless One) by overcoming egotism resulting in salvation. The primary scripture is the **Gurū Granth Sāhib**, regarded as an eternal Guru.

Sikhs worship in a **Gurdwara**, the most famous of which is the Harimandir Sahib in India, pictured right.



Sikhs place importance on five items that they wear and begin with K in Punjabi;

- kara* steel bangle
- kesh* uncut hair
- kangha* comb
- kaacha* undershorts
- kirpan* short sword

Key Dates

| Festival Name | Description | Typical Date | Preferred Leave |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Guru Nanak Gurpurab | Guru Nanak was born on this day | Late November | 1 day |
| Parkash Utsav Dasveh Patshah | Celebration of the Divine Light | January | 1 day |
| Holla Mohalla | The 'Sikh Olympics' | March 17 | 1 day |
| Bandi Chhor Divas | The release of Guru Hargobind | October - November | 1 day |
| Vaisakhi | Birth of the Khalsa | April | None |
| Guru Granth Sahib | Commemorates the Guru Granth Sahib as eternal Guru | September | None |
| Martydor of Guru Arjan | Martydor of Guru Arjan | June | None |

UK Cultural Days

Summary

There are a number of important cultural days and months that are observed and celebrated in the UK. On the Multifaith calendar months have been denoted on the first day.

Remembrance Day and **Sunday** mark the Armistice at the end of the First World War. Now, this represents a time to reflect on those who have given and who continue give their lives for the benefit of others.



There are months and dates which celebrate cultural diversity in the UK and across the World, such as **Pride**, **Black History** and **Windrush Day**. **Stephen Lawrence Day** is a reminder of his families' fight for justice following his murder at 18 years old in 1993.



Other events include **Bonfire Night**, **Chinese New Year** and the individual Saint's Day for each of the four Nations of the UK which have become increasingly secular over time.

Key Dates

| Festival Name | Description | Typical Date | Preferred Leave |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Stephen Lawrence Day | Celebrating the life of Stephen Lawrence | 22nd April | None |
| Mother's Day | Celebration of Mothers' and family | Mar - May | None |
| Pride Month | Celebration of the LGBTQ+ community | June | None |
| Black History Month | Celebration of African and Caribbean contributions | October | None |
| Father's Day | Celebration of Fathers' | 3rd Sunday of June | None |
| Guy Fawkes / Bonfire Night | The foiling of the gunpowder plot | 5th Nov | None |
| Remembrance Day | Remembering those that died serving others | 11th Nov and closest Sunday | 2 minutes silence |
| UK Disability History Month | Awareness of needs of the less able | Nov - Dec | None |