

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

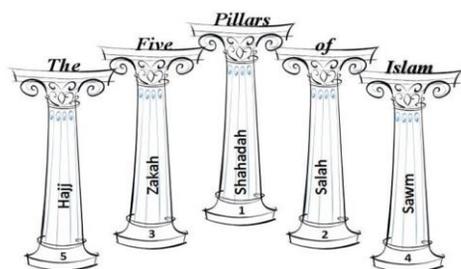
Summary

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.

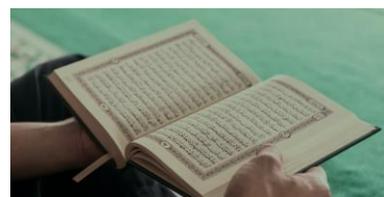
Islam is the world's 2nd largest religion of 1.9 billion followers, with over 3 million Muslims living in the UK.

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

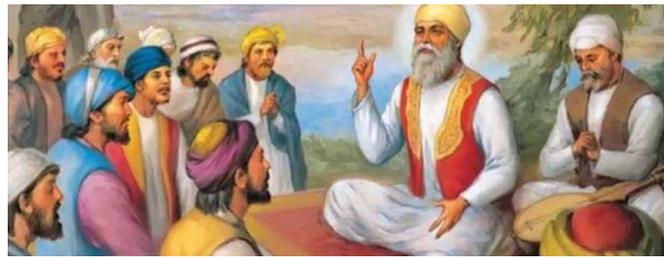


Sikhism

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