Diwali Toolkit

presented by Hindu American Foundation

What's Inside

The Hindu American Foundation is proud to present our Diwali Toolkit, a guide to familiarize you and your students with this Hindu holiday. In this toolkit, you will find materials to teach about the "Festival of Lights" in your classrooms and activities to do at home. This toolkit is constructed as a way to learn more about Diwali in an interactive and enjoyable way, and can be used by educators and parents alike!

Diwali Fact Sheet

The basics of Diwali in an easy yet comprehensive manner which can be used as a starting point to learn all about this illuminating festival.

The Origins of Diwali

This reading primer explains the significance of Diwali as well as narrates some of the popular anecdotes as to why Diwali is celebrated.

Diwali Diya Round-Up!

This fun lesson incorporates Diwali *diyas* with math problem-solving for 3rd – 5th graders.

Draw Your Own Rangoli!

Practice your *rangoli* drawing skills using colored pencils, crayons, glitter glue, and markers.

Cycles of the Moon*

Learn about the lunar calendar and track the moon phases in this 1st – 3rd grade activity.

Signs of Diwali*

For our young learners, we've included an engaging lesson asking them to draw and discuss items found during Diwali.

Word Search

A fun way to test your knowledge about Diwali!

We look forward to hearing about how your Diwali celebrations turn out and encourage you to incorporate your own ideas and share them with us for future toolkits! Share your Diwali celebrations with us using the hashtag #HAFDiwali!

* We are excited to partner with Hybrid Parenting on the activities featuring Lights, Camera, Diwali!

Diwali Fact Sheet

Diwali is known as the "Festival of Lights" and is a Hindu holiday widely celebrated in India[1] and across the Hindu Diaspora. The word Diwali derives from Sanskrit and means "a row of lights." Festivities include the illumination of lights, candles, firecrackers, and *diyas* (clay lamps) to symbolize the victory of good over evil, inner light over spiritual darkness, and knowledge over ignorance. Diwali is a time for gathering with loved ones, celebrating life, and committing to making the right decisions in life.

When is Diwali?

Like many Hindu holidays, Diwali is synchronized with the lunar calendar so the actual dates vary from year to year. Diwali typically falls between October and November. This handy date wheel helps explain when Diwali is next!

Who celebrates Diwali?

Diwali is celebrated by Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists, and people of Indian heritage and non-Indian heritage. Despite each faith having its own historical legends and celebratory events, the holiday represents the same symbolic victory of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, and good over evil.

Where is Diwali celebrated?

Celebrations can take place at home, in *mandirs* (local temples), community centers, and other gathering places. Diwali is celebrated by people around the globe.

Why Is Diwali celebrated?

Many Hindus recognize Diwali as a day celebrating the return of Prince Rama of Ayodhya, his wife Sita, and brother Lakshman after 14 years of exile. Prince Rama is considered to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu and an embodiment of *dharma* or righteousness; and Sita is an incarnation of Lakshmi, who is the Goddess of wealth and prosperity. The residents of Ayodhya were overjoyed at the return of their rightful King and lit lamps in his honor. Thus, the entire city looked like a row of lights.

Other Hindus commemorate Diwali as the day Lord Krishna defeated the demon king Narakasura. For some regions of India, Diwali coincides with the Hindu New Year.
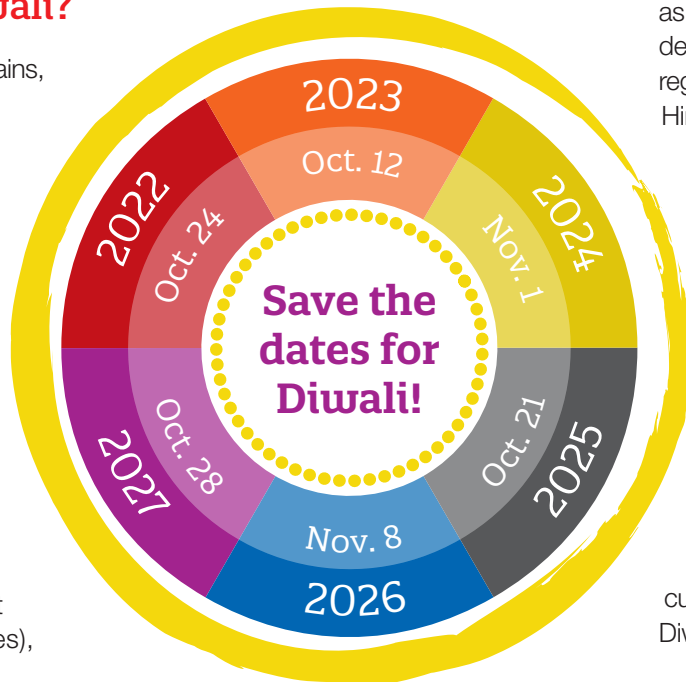
Ever since, people light lamps at Diwali to remember that light triumphs over dark, knowledge prevails over ignorance, and good triumphs over evil.

How is Diwali celebrated?

Diwali is one of the most widely celebrated Hindu festivals in India and around the world. The rituals and customs associated with celebrating Diwali vary based on the regional

Save the dates for Diwali!

2023 — Oct. 12
2024 — Nov. 1
2025 — Oct. 21
2026 — Nov. 8
2027 — Oct. 28
2022 — Oct. 24

1 Ancient India refers to the South Asian countries of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and parts of Afghanistan.

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Diwali Fact Sheet

traditions of India and the cultural customs that are popular in those areas. However, most families light *diyas* or candles in their homes and celebrate this special holiday by enjoying sweets and delicious food. Generally, Diwali is celebrated over five days with each day holding a special significance.

Day 1: Dhanteras

On this day, many dedicate their worship to Goddess Lakshmi. People will clean the house, make *rangolis* or *kolam* (colored patterns made on the floor with flowers, powder, rice or sand), go shopping, and make sweet and savory Indian treats.

Day 2: Chhoti Diwali, Kalichaudas

This day is referred to as small Diwali and people will decorate their homes with *rangolis* and clay lamps are displayed.

Day 3: Diwali

People dress in new clothes, visit the temple to perform a *puja* (a worship service) for Goddess Lakshmi and Lord Ganesh, light *diyas* around the house, keep all the lights on, eat delicious food and sweets, and enjoy fireworks celebrations with family and friends.

Day 4: Annakut, Padwa, Govardhan Puja

This is the first day of the new year for many regions and people celebrate by exchanging gifts and best wishes. Many will take time to be grateful for all of what they have and to share with others.

Day 5: Bhai Duj, Bhai Bheej

This day is dedicated as a siblings day to honor sister-brother bonds. It is common for all siblings to get together on this day. Brothers will visit their sisters and enjoy a nice meal together.

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The Origins of Diwali

Diwali is one of the world's oldest religious holidays. It's celebrated annually by Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains throughout India and the rest of South Asia, the United States, and across the globe.

Celebrations for Diwali last up to five days and while there are several stories about the origins of Diwali, most would agree that the common theme to Diwali is the victory of good over evil, knowledge over ignorance, and light over spiritual darkness.

Inviting Prosperity and Engaging in Service

Most Hindus begin the festival with a deep cleaning of their homes and surroundings, similar to spring cleaning in America. Homes and streets will be illuminated with colorful lights, *rangoli* art, and other festive decorations. It is believed that cleanliness invokes the presence of Goddess Lakshmi, who is the Goddess of Prosperity and Wealth.

Diwali is also a time for *dana* (charitable giving) and *seva* (selfless service), so as to share the blessings of Goddess Lakshmi. Common acts of Diwali celebrations include feeding the hungry, giving money to charities, donating time and materials to worthy causes, and finding ways to alleviate the suffering of others.

The festival is also a time for friends and family to gather, share meals, and take part in special rituals. People often recite scriptural stories and contemplate on their meaning and the values they wish to live by. Many people will start the new business year at Diwali and offer special prayers to the Goddess for a prosperous year ahead.

Regional Celebrations

India is a diverse country with many different cultural customs and traditions so the celebrations of Diwali range from state-to-state and region-to-region. Celebratory foods are prepared and vary based on local traditions and ingredients available. Songs are sung and prayers are said in regional languages heard in different parts of India. For many, Diwali also marks the start of the new year.

One common thread of Diwali is honoring the incarnations of Lord Vishnu and Goddess Lakshmi. In northern India, traditionally the story of Prince Rama's return to Ayodhya is celebrated, whereas, the story of Lord Krishna dominates celebrations throughout the southern

states of India. In western India, the festival marks another story in which Lord Vishnu banished the demon King Bali to the nether world.

The Legends

The Return of the Exiled Prince

One of the most popular stories of Diwali is the Hindu epic, the Ramayana. The Ramayana was originally composed in Sanskrit, but there are hundreds of tellings of it in India's many regional languages. It is also very popular throughout Southeast Asia, in countries like Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand. Very often during Diwali, communities will showcase retellings of the tale through music, dance, and drama.

Thousands of years ago in the kingdom of Ayodhya (located in the northern part of India), there was a kind and humble prince named Prince Rama. Prince Rama was adored and respected by many, and considered to be an embodiment of *dharma* (right living). Prince Rama is believed to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

Prince Rama, as the eldest son, was set to become King, but his evil and jealous

The Origins of Diwali

stepmother banished him to the forest for 14 years in exile so that her own son could become king instead. Prince Rama did not go alone as his wife, Princess Sita, who is considered an incarnation of Goddess Lakshmi and the embodiment of nature, and his loyal younger brother Lakshman, accompanied him.

One day, a powerful king named King Ravana of Lanka saw Princess Sita and fell in love with her immediately. King Ravana hatched a plan to distract Prince Rama and Prince Lakshman so that he could kidnap Princess Sita and make her his wife. When Princess Sita went missing, Prince Rama went searching for King Ravana and sought the help of the great warrior Hanuman who agreed to help find her. Prince Rama, Prince Lakshman, and Hanuman had to fight the powerful King Ravana to get Princess Sita back. After a fierce battle, they all survived and were reunited. After completing their 14 year exile, Prince Rama, Princess Sita, and Prince Lakshman, returned home to Ayodhya, where the people rejoiced and lit lamps all over the kingdom to welcome them back and usher in the just and kind rule of Prince Rama.

The entire city looked like a row of lights and this is part of the reason why Diwali

is referred to as the "Festival of Lights" and is a celebration of the victory of good over evil. This theme is most commonly associated with the celebration of Diwali.

The Prince and The Demon

Another commonly heard story about the origins of Diwali is also centered around another incarnation of Lord Vishnu named Lord Krishna. Many of the stories about Lord Krishna's childhood are found in a sacred text called the Bhagavad Purana, and his lessons about life are found in an epic called the Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita (another sacred text which is a part of the Mahabharata). The original texts were composed in Sanskrit, but are retold in India's many regional languages. They are also reenacted through music, dance, and plays, especially during Diwali.

Many years ago, Bhumidevi, who is also known as Mother Earth, had a son named Prince Narakasura who was very easily influenced. Though he was the son of a divine spirit, he gave into wicked temptations of power and greed, and became evil in his thoughts and actions. Narkasura was horrible to all the people of his kingdom and caused destruction on everything around him. He

started taking over neighboring kingdoms and soon set his sights on a beautiful kingdom called Svargaloka.

Narakasura felt unstoppable and decided to kidnap all the beautiful young women in the kingdom of Svargaloka. The residents of Svargaloka were very upset and called upon Lord Krishna to save them from Narkasura's terror. Lord Krishna came as soon as he heard and fought in a fierce battle defeating Narakasura and stopping the evil demon from harming others. As a result of this conflict, Lord Krishna brought back peace and prosperity to the people of Svargaloka.

In this story, we also see the significance of light over darkness and good over evil.

Additional Religious Significance

While it has great significance to Hindus, Diwali is also celebrated annually by Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains throughout the United States and across the globe.

The Sikhs recognize Diwali as a celebration of the release of the Sixth Guru, Hargobind, who was one of their spiritual leaders, from captivity by the Mughal Emperor Jehangir. In his honor, lamps were lit all the way to the Golden Temple, welcoming his return.

For Jains, Diwali is the day Lord Mahavira, the last of the Jain Tirthankaras (the great teachers of Jain *dharma*), achieved *moksha* or enlightenment/nirvana.

Whereas Buddhists, especially newer Buddhists, commemorate Diwali as Ashok Vijayadashami, the day the great Emperor Ashoka embraced Buddhism as his faith.

Diwali Diya Round-Up!

This math problem solving lesson plan integrates *diyas* with numbers! This lesson has scaffolds built in for different grade levels and provides fun challenges for all.

Grade Levels

3rd - 5th

Subject Area

Math, Algebra

Objectives

Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to:

❱ Multiply one-digit and two-digit problems

❱ Solve division problems of one-digit and two-digit numerals

❱ Complete number patterns in a Sudiya puzzle

Standards

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.3.OA.A.1

Interpret products of whole numbers, e.g., interpret 5×7 as the total number of objects in 5 groups of 7 objects each.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.3.OA.A.2

Interpret whole number quotients of whole numbers, e.g., interpret $56 \div 8$ as the number of objects in each share when 56 objects are partitioned equally into 8 shares, or as a number of shares when 56 objects are partitioned into equal shares of 8 objects each.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.4.OA.A.1

Interpret a multiplication equation as a comparison, e.g., interpret $35 = 5 \times 7$ as a statement that 35 is 5 times as many as 7 and 7 times as many as 5.

Diwali Diya Round-Up!

Directions

Part 1: A Table Full of Diyas

❯ Solve the algebra problems in the first column. Once all problems have been solved in Column A, draw a line to match the correct answer to the numbers of diyas in Column B.
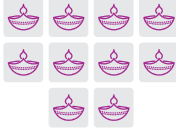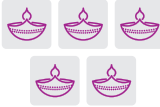
Part 2: Diya Round-Up!

❯ Cut the boxes on the next page into individual cards and place them face down into three piles (numbers, diyas, and mathematical symbols). Each player takes turns drawing one card from each pile and says the total amount (e.g. the total amount for a number "4" card, a "+" symbol card, and a card with "2 diyas" would be 6). The player with the greater amount keeps both players' cards. In case of a tie, each player keeps their own cards. The game ends when there are no cards left. The winner is the player who has the most cards. We suggest printing and cutting two sheets per player so a 4-player game would need 8 sheets.

$81 \div 9 =$ ☐

$9 \times$ ☐ $= 45$

☐ $\times 4 = 16$

$5 \times$ ☐ $= 40$

$8 \div 8 =$ ☐

$9 \times$ ☐ $= 27$

$54 \div 9 =$ ☐

$14 \div 7 =$ ☐

$35 \div$ ☐ $= 5$

Diwali Diya Round-Up!

🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔	1	🪔🪔🪔🪔	6	🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔
9	🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔	4	🪔🪔🪔	10
🪔🪔	5	🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔	2	🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔
×	🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔🪔	8	÷	−
3	+	🪔	7	0

Diwali Diya Round-Up!

Part 3: Sudiya!

❯ Similar to the popular logic puzzle game, Sudoku, Sudiya requires math and concentration to complete! You will see that some of the boxes have numbers and some have a number of diyas. The number of diyas inside a box represent an actual number in the Sudiya puzzle (i.e. three diyas equals the number 3). Fill the 9x9 Sudiya grid with the numbers 1 to 9 so that each of these 9 digits appears in each row, each column and each 3x3 sub-grid once any only once.

3 (diyas)			6 (diyas)				1	
1			6		3			
	6						9 (diyas)	8
		4 (diyas)		1 (diya)	8			
	3			7				4
5 (diyas)							6	1 (diya)
					1	2 (diyas)		6
		4 (diyas)		3				
	5	8						3 (diyas)

Diwali Diya Round-Up!

Answer Keys

Part 1: A Table Full of Diyas

$$81 \div 9 = \boxed{9}$$

$$9 \times \boxed{5} = 45$$

$$\boxed{4} \times 4 = 16$$

$$5 \times \boxed{8} = 40$$

$$8 \div 8 = \boxed{1}$$

$$9 \times \boxed{3} = 27$$

$$54 \div 9 = \boxed{6}$$

$$14 \div 7 = \boxed{2}$$

$$35 \div \boxed{7} = 5$$

Part 3: Sudiya!

| 3	4	2	7	8	9	6	1	5
1	8	9	6	5	3	4	7	2
7	6	5	1	2	4	3	9	8
6	2	4	9	1	8	5	3	7
8	3	1	5	7	6	9	2	4
5	9	7	3	4	2	8	6	1
4	7	3	8	9	1	2	5	6
2	1	6	4	3	5	7	8	9
9	5	8	2	6	7	1	4	3

Draw Your Own Rangoli!

A *rangoli* is a Indian folk art form that consists of patterns created with colored rice, dry flour, colored sand, grains, or flower petals in entryways, backyards or any place that has a smooth surface.

Rangolis are created during festivals like Diwali and other auspicious occasions like weddings to welcome guests, bring good luck, and simply decorate the home. Many Hindus create fresh *rangolis* sometimes on a weekly, even daily basis, sweeping away the old design and creating a new one. This reminds us that change is constant.

The spiritual significance of this exercise requires focusing your mind on creating intricate designs.This beautiful art form has traditionally been done by the women in the family but now everyone joins in and participates.

Our "Draw Your Own Rangoli!" activity is a great way to try out different designs and get some practice!

Examples of Rangolis
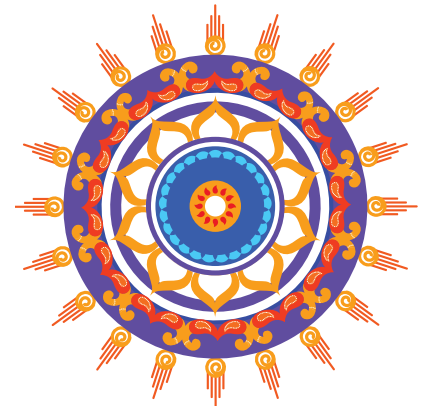
Draw Your Own Rangoli!

Directions

Are you ready to create your own rangoli artwork?

It is actually quite easy. Once you create the first part, the pattern repeats. Take a look at the example provided.

Step 1: Pre-planning.

❯ Divide the dot grid in equal parts from the center like a pie. Think about how complex you want the design to be. Remember, it is traditionally a repeating pattern. The dot grid will serve as basic guidance.
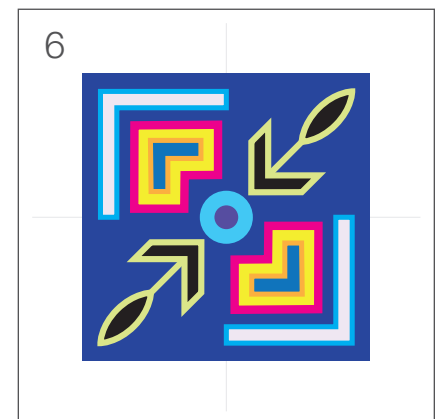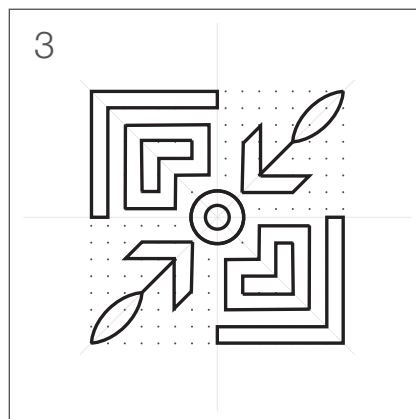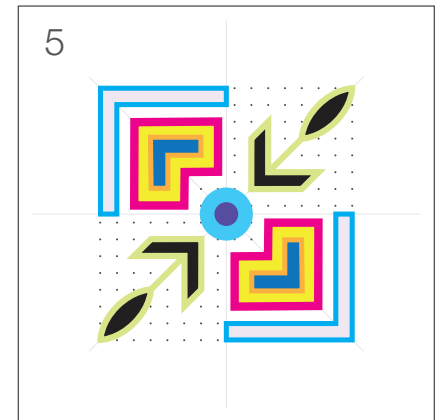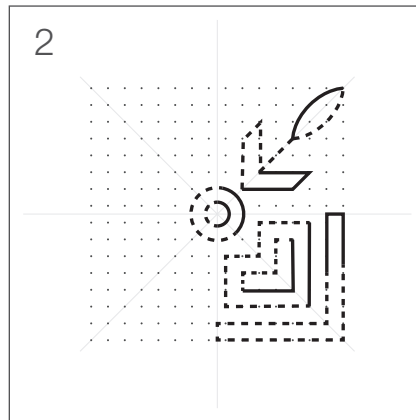
Step 2: Start drawing!

❯ Let's put pencil to paper! Pick a half, quadrant or an eighth based on how you've decided to create the repitition. We recommend that you start with small design elements to get practice with pattern making.

Step 3: Repeat the pattern.

❯ Using the section you've designed, rotate from the center and repeat the pattern in the other sections.

Step 2: Color it in.

❯ Have fun coloring it in as you see fit.

❯ Remember, it doesn't need to be a square. It can be however you want. Some don't even follow a pattern. The key is to have fun!

1

2

3

4

5

6

Draw Your Own Rangoli!

Now you try it by using markers, crayons, or glitter to make your own rangoli design!

Draw Your Own Rangoli!

Now you try it by using markers, crayons, or glitter to make your own rangoli design!

Draw Your Own Rangoli!

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Now you try it by using markers, crayons, or glitter to make your own rangoli design!

Cycles of the Moon

In this activity, students will learn about the lunar calendar and prepare for Diwali by tracking the moon cycles leading up to this Hindu holiday!

Grade Levels

1st – 3rd

Objectives

Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to:

❱ Acquire knowledge about the different phases of the moon

❱ Graph the different lunar patterns

❱ Communicate about Diwali and its significance

Standards

1-ESS1-1 Earth's Place in the Universe

Use observations of the sun, moon, and stars to describe patterns that can be predicted.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.7

Participate in shared research and writing projects.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.8

With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

Directions

❱ Read the children's book *Lights, Camera. Diwali* with your students.

❱ On the next page, track the moon cycles leading up to Diwali by shading in the circle to replicate the lunar pattern of that day.

Cycles of the Moon

"Cycles of the Moon" activity was developed in partnership with Hybrid Parenting.
For more information, please visit http://hybridparenting.org.
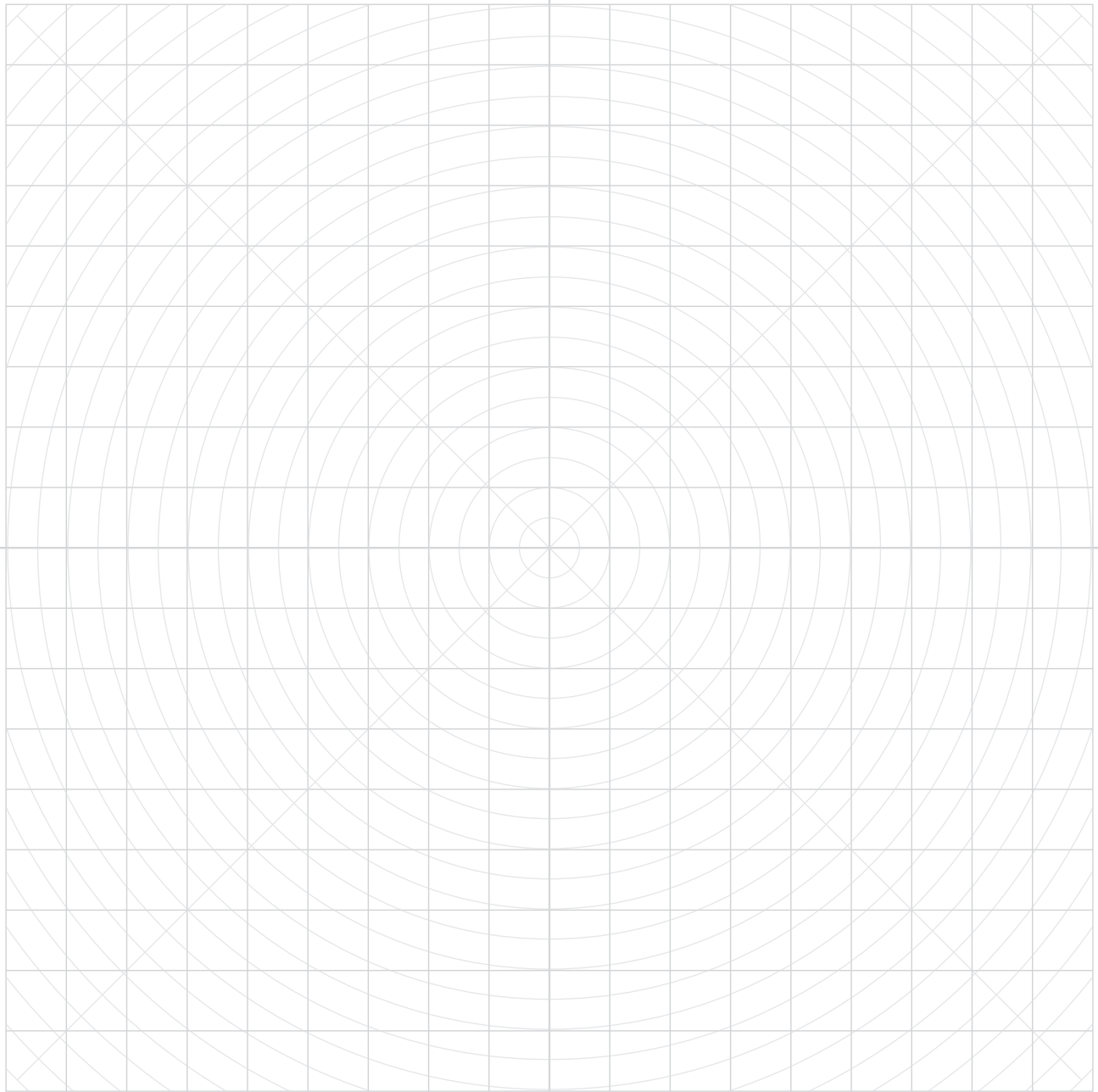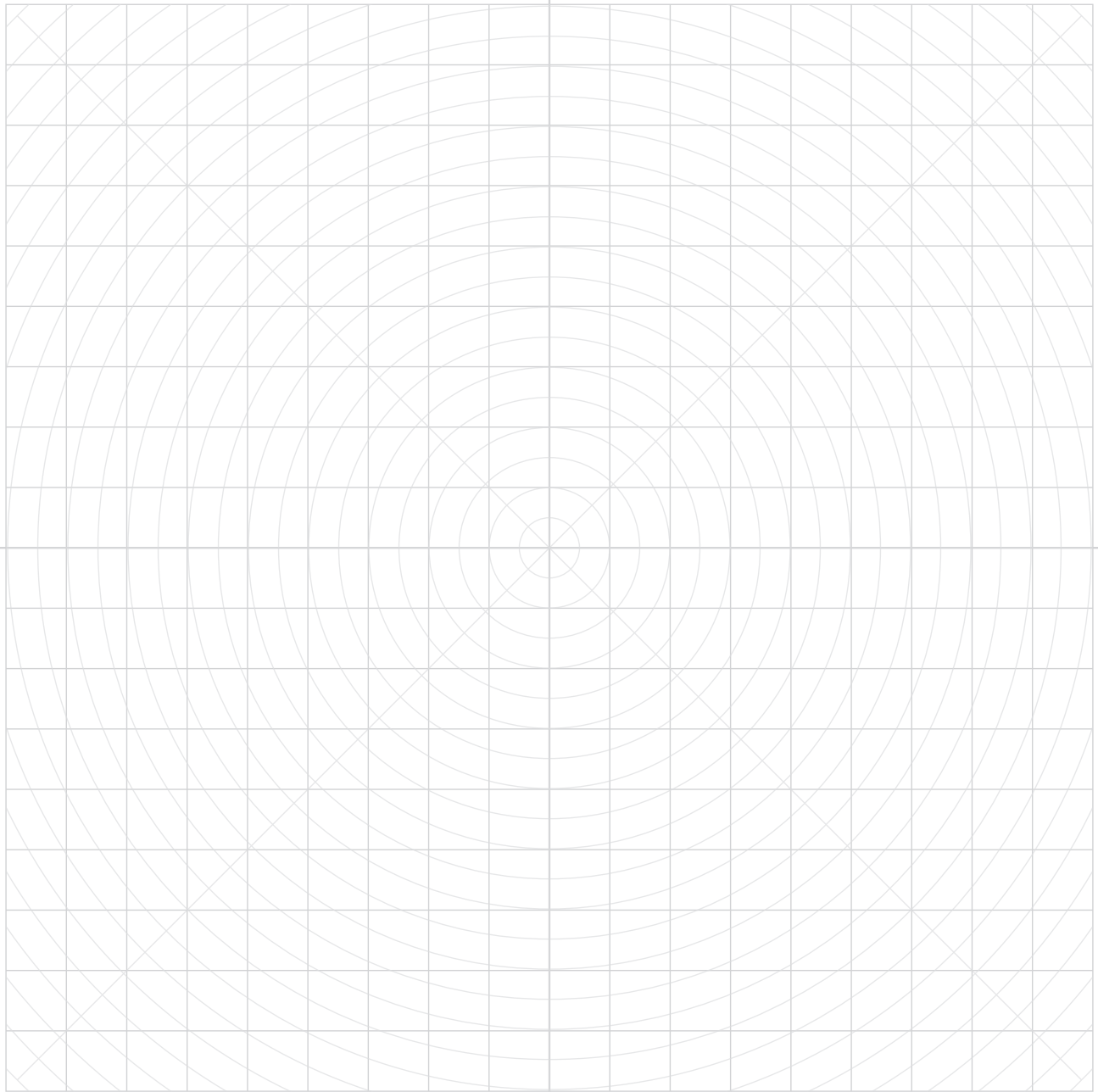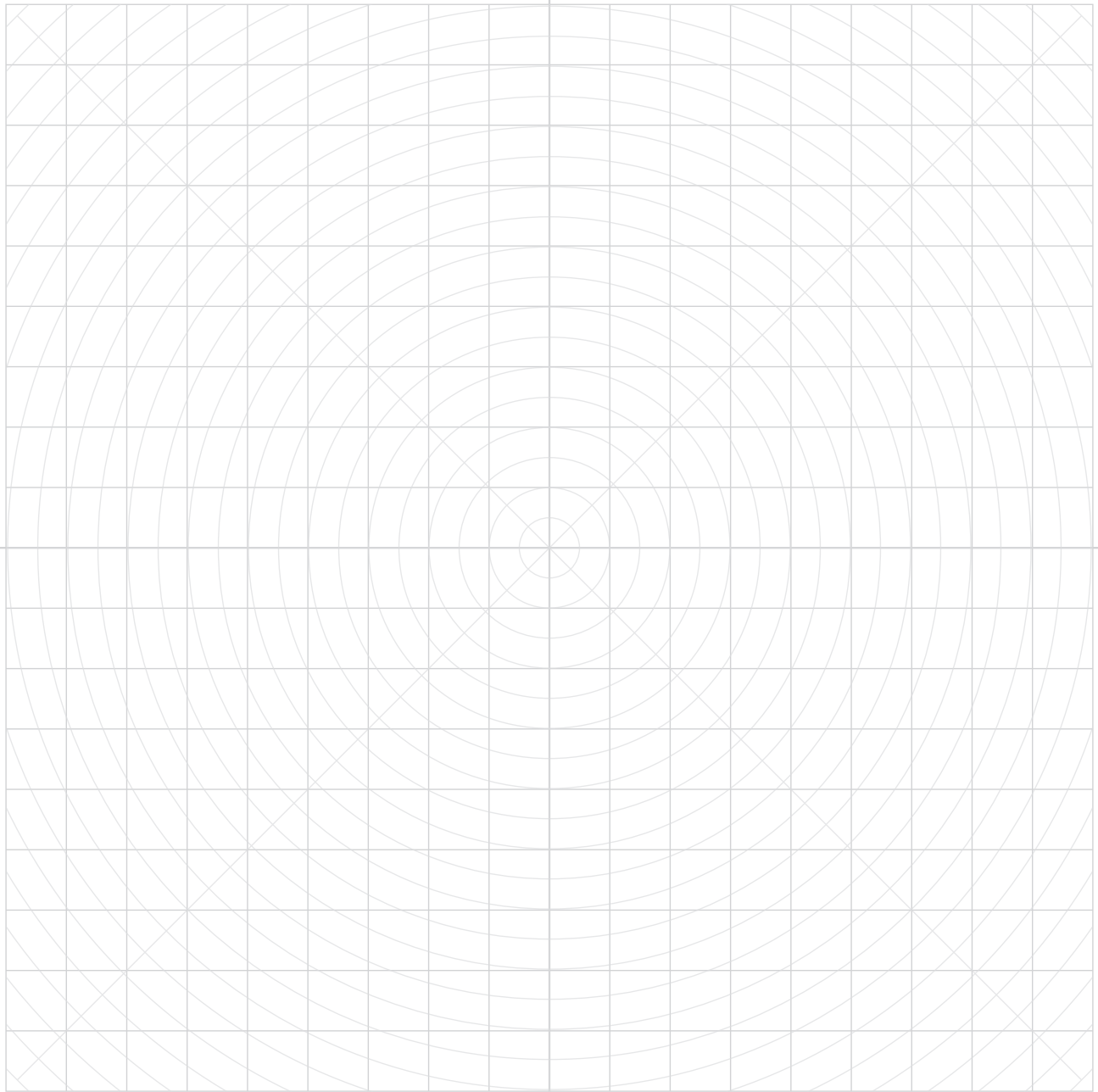
It's time for
Diwali!

Date of Diwali

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Signs of Diwali

Using the boxes below, students will locate and draw each of the items commonly found around Diwali time!

Grade Levels

Kindergarten

Objectives

Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to:

❱ Identify settings, events, and characters of a story

❱ Follow sequenced verbal and visual directions

❱ Recognize that all families look different

Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.7

With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.5

Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.6

Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.

Directions

❱ Read the children's book *Lights, Camera. Diwali* with your students.

❱ Draw the items below and have students discuss how each item relates to the story they've read.

Signs of Diwali

*"Signs of Diwali" activity was developed in partnership with Hybrid Parenting.
For more information, please visit http://hybridparenting.org.*

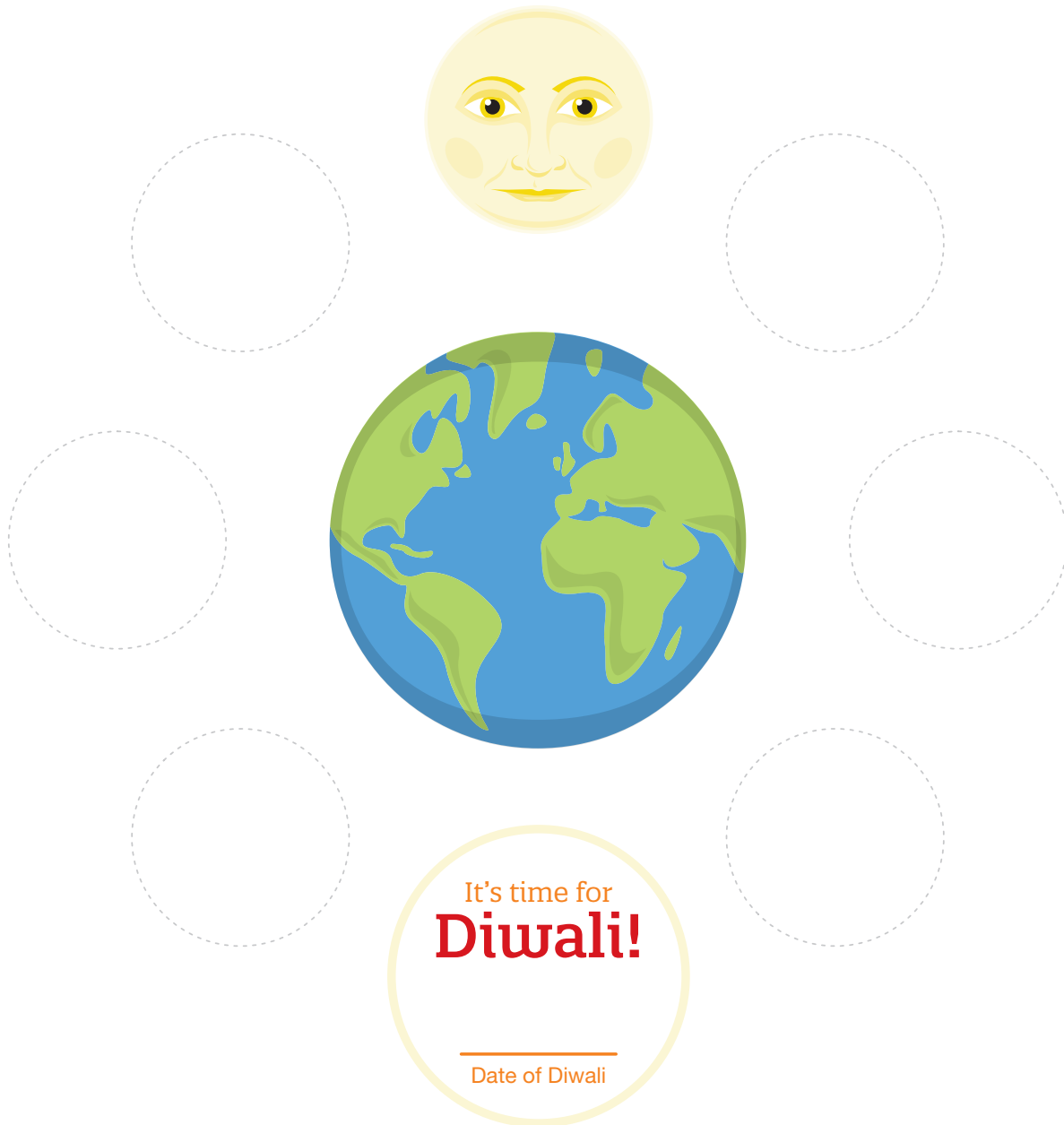|		
Fall Leaf	Clay Lamp	Sparklers
Fireworks	Ladoos	Presents
Rangoli	Family	Candle

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Diwali Word Search

Find the words listed below. Words will appear straight across, backwards, up and down, and diagonally.

Word Bank

Diya	Auspicious
Rama	Puja
Krishna	Rangoli
Lakshmi	Ramayana
Celebration	Regional
Vishnu	Ravana
Chhoti	Hanuman
Hindu	Epic
Narakasura	Diverse
Sita	Ayodhya
Five	Lamps
Seva	Festival
Dana	Traditions
Diwali	Customs
Exile	Family

I	N	C	V	C	A	Y	O	D	H	Y	A	I	X	D	F
H	K	B	R	U	X	M	H	A	N	U	M	A	N	I	E
Z	M	E	O	V	C	Q	C	V	L	X	R	N	M	V	S
C	U	X	P	H	A	A	S	G	Y	U	F	H	R	E	T
T	E	I	S	I	I	L	A	K	S	H	M	I	A	R	I
R	J	L	R	E	C	O	A	A	A	S	R	N	V	S	V
A	S	E	E	A	V	C	K	D	U	A	E	D	A	E	A
D	G	I	T	B	N	A	Q	I	S	M	G	U	N	H	L
I	B	H	T	W	R	G	G	W	P	Z	I	E	A	X	A
T	P	K	D	A	N	A	O	A	I	J	O	F	Q	C	C
I	X	R	N	U	A	N	T	L	C	H	N	A	D	U	Z
O	E	I	C	H	H	O	T	I	I	L	A	M	P	S	Y
N	P	S	O	D	L	K	Z	Y	O	J	L	I	H	T	D
S	Y	H	V	I	S	H	N	U	U	N	Y	L	G	O	W
Q	G	N	I	Y	I	C	U	P	S	Y	M	Y	O	M	T
A	R	A	M	A	Y	A	N	A	E	E	N	L	C	S	H

Diwali Word Search

Answer Key

I	N	C	V	C	A	Y	O	D	H	Y	A	I	X	D	F
H	K	B	R	U	X	M	H	A	N	U	M	A	N	I	E
Z	M	E	O	V	C	Q	C	V	L	X	R	N	M	V	S
C	U	X	P	H	A	A	S	G	Y	U	F	H	R	E	T
T	E	I	S	I	I	L	A	K	S	H	M	I	A	R	I
R	J	L	R	E	C	O	A	A	A	S	R	N	V	S	V
A	S	E	E	A	V	C	K	D	U	A	E	D	A	E	A
D	G	I	T	B	N	A	Q	I	S	M	G	U	N	H	L
I	B	H	T	W	R	G	G	W	P	Z	I	E	A	X	A
T	P	K	D	A	N	A	O	A	I	J	O	F	Q	C	C
I	X	R	N	U	A	N	T	L	C	H	N	A	D	U	Z
O	E	I	C	H	H	O	T	I	I	L	A	M	P	S	Y
N	P	S	O	D	L	K	Z	Y	O	J	L	I	H	T	D
S	Y	H	V	I	S	H	N	U	U	N	Y	L	G	O	W
Q	G	N	I	Y	I	C	U	P	S	Y	M	Y	O	M	T
A	R	A	M	A	Y	A	N	A	E	E	N	L	C	S	H

The Hindu American Foundation (HAF) is an educational and advocacy organization established in 2003.

HAF focuses on educating the public about Hindus and Hinduism and advocating for policies and practices that ensure the well-being of all people and the planet. We work directly with educators and journalists to ensure accurate understanding of Hindus and Hinduism. We also work with policymakers and key stakeholders to champion issues of concern to Hindu Americans, including defending civil and human rights and protecting all living beings. Inspired by our guiding principles and Hindu teachings, HAF promotes dignity, mutual respect, and pluralism.

HAF is a non-partisan, non-profit tax-exempt public charity pursuant to Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)3.

To learn more, please visit our website at hinduamerican.org and follow us on social media: @HinduAmerican.

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