

Celebrating at the temple

The temple is where the **Buddhist community** comes together for celebrations and festivals.

Q1. What are three things a Buddhist might do at the temple on a holiday?







Q2. What is another name for Buddha Day?



Q3. What events does Buddha Day celebrate?







Q4. (i) What Buddhist festival is only celebrated in Thailand?



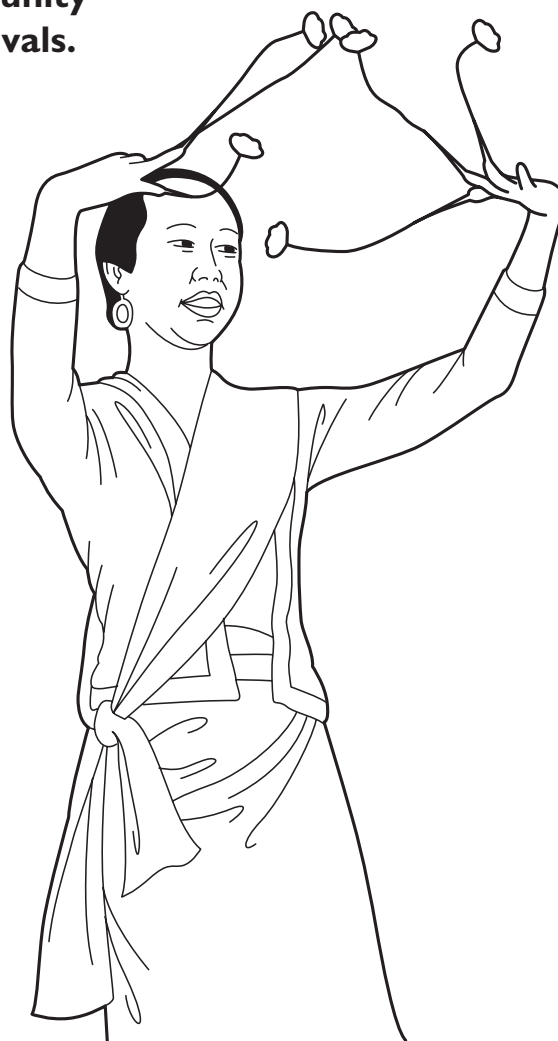
(ii) What happens on this day?





Q5. At what time of the month do most Buddhist festivals happen?





Answers

1. **Worship with the monks and nuns, eat special food, listen to talks, watch dances, sing, give donations or offerings to the temple.**
2. **Vesak Day.**
3. **The birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha.**
4. **(i) Songkran. (ii) People put fish in the rivers, splash each other with water and have boat races.**
5. **The full moon.**

Lesson objectives

- ▶ To show that there are many Buddhist festivals celebrated at the temple.
- ▶ To show that there are a wide variety of Buddhist festivals celebrated around the world.

Lesson outcomes

- ▶ The children know that Buddhist festivals are always happy events.
- ▶ The children know what is celebrated on Buddha Day.
- ▶ The children know details of some other Buddhist festivals.

Teaching notes

Festivals

There are hundreds of Buddhist festivals and holidays throughout the world and many of them are specific to a particular country or ethnic group. Even festivals that are celebrated throughout the Buddhist world can be celebrated in many different ways, depending on cultural traditions.

Other common festivals include Dhamma Day,

which celebrates the Buddha's first sermon to his first five followers in a deer park near Sarnath (near modern day Benares). It usually falls on the full moon in July. Sangha Day (also called Magha Puja) commemorates the time during the Buddha's life when 1,250 of the Buddha's disciples gathered (without anyone telling them to) in Sarnath to pay respect to the Buddha. It is usually celebrated on the full moon in March.

Festivals celebrating the beginning and end of the monsoon season are also popular. The monsoon (rainy) season is often seen as a sort of Lenten or retreat period for monks and nuns. At the end of the three month rain retreat season there is a festival called kathina, which is a traditional time to offer the monks and nuns new robes and other necessary items.

Vesak

Vesak is generally considered the biggest holiday in the Buddhist calendar. It normally occurs on the full moon in May or June. It primarily focuses on the Buddha's enlightenment and on the enlightenment of other Buddhist masters and is also a time to reflect on what enlightenment means. So, many of the readings in the temple at this time discuss enlightenment. However, like all Buddhist festivals, Vesak is a happy, joyous event.

Complementary work

The children could use secondary sources to find out about different Buddhist festivals and how they are celebrated.

Resources

Information about Buddhist festivals. See tourism web sites from various Buddhist countries for more information and photos. Photos of festivals can also be viewed (with watermarks) on sites such as www.corbis.com by entering the festival name in the site's search engine.