MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Each year, York Region District School Board welcomes students, staff and families into our many vibrant learning and working communities. The diversity of our schools and workplaces is reflected in the 2015-16 Holidays and Observances Calendar, which recognizes the significant dates observed by many of the faith communities who make York Region their home.

Through our programs, practices and people, we are able to honour our commitment to the principles of equity, inclusiveness and diversity. We respect and celebrate the various faiths, cultures and backgrounds that are represented in our schools, communities and workplaces.

The artwork featured in the Holidays and Observances Calendar highlights the talents of York Region students and celebrates our many cultural backgrounds. I hope this calendar will serve as a useful planning resource for you and your family.

All the best for 2015-16.

Sincerely,

J. Philip Parappally
Director of Education

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Teresa Chan
King City Secondary School

Vivian Chan-Simao
Richmond Hill High School

Fatima Jessa
Beckett Farm Public School

Joan Lachhman
Inclusive School and Community Services

Peter Tse
Inclusive School and Community Services

Mounir Mounir
Information Technology Services

Suganja Sinnathamby
Maple High School

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Staff and Students of the York Region District School Board
Calendar Coordination: Joan Lachhman
Inclusive School and Community Services

Layout & Design: Chris Jasper
Learning, Design & Development, YRDSB

For information please call the office of Inclusive School and Community Services, (905) 884 2046 ext. 252, (416) 969 7170 ext. 2409 or e-mail: joan.lachhman@yrdsb.ca

This calendar is a selected representation of special days and holy days of the major faith communities in York Region and it is intended to be used primarily as a learning resource. Note that the Calendar does not contain all the dates of a particular faith. This calendar is not applicable in determining faith day/religious holidays for employees. Please refer to the appropriate collective agreement or contact Human Resources at Ext. 2220 or 2304.

For accommodation requirements or additional information on faith, please refer to the document Program Planning for Faith Purposes.

F.Y.I.

- Christian system is used for dating years.
- B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) is used in preference to B.C. (Before Christ)
- C.E. (Common Era) is used in preference to A.D. (Anno Domini)
- (pbuh) - Peace be upon Him
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<th>Faith</th>
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<td>Raksha Bandhan</td>
<td>Sri Krishna Jayanti</td>
<td>Ganesha Chaturthi</td>
<td>Navaratri (Fall)</td>
<td>Vasant Panchami</td>
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**Buddhism**

- September 28: Pavarana
- September 29: Kathina
- January 1: Temple Day
- February 8: Lunar New Year
- March 20: Spring Ohigon
- April 13/14: Saka New Year
- May 15: Wesak
- July 19: Wasanna

**Christianity**

- September 12: Coptic New Year
- October 4: World communion Sunday
- November 1: All Saints’ Day
- November 29: First Sunday of Advent (Western)
- December 25: Christmas (Western)
- January 6: Epiphany (Western)
- January 7: Christmas (Eastern)
- January 19: Epiphany (Eastern)
- February 10: Ash Wednesday (Western)
- March 14: First Day of Lent (Eastern)
- March 20: Palm Sunday (Western)
- March 24: Maundy Thursday (Western)
- March 25: Good Friday (Western)
- March 27: Easter Sunday (Western)
- April 24: Palm Sunday (Eastern)
- April 29: Holy Friday (Eastern)
- May 1: Easter Sunday (Eastern)
- May 5: Ascension Day (Western)
- May 15: Pentecost (Western)

**Hinduism**

- August 29: Day of Arafat (Hajj)
- September 22: Eid-ul-Ahda
- October 14: First Day of Muharram
- October 23: Ashura
- November 5: Miraj-un-Nabi
- November 23: Nisfu Shaban
- December 6: First day of Ramadhan
- July 1: Eid-ul-Qadr
- July 7: Eid-ul-Fitr

**Islam**

- September 27: Anata Chaturdasi
- November 11: Mahavira Nirvana
- November 16: Jnana Panchami
- December 21: Manu-agiyaras
- April 19: Mahavir Jayanti

**Jainism**

- September 29: Raksha Bandhan
- September 5: Sri Krishna Jayanti
- September 17: Ganesha Chaturthi
- October 13-21: Navaratri (Fall)
- October 10: Diwali
- November 12-16: Skanda Shasti Vratham
- January 14: Makar Sankranti
- February 12: Vasant Panchami
- March 8: Mahashivaratri (Shivaratri)
- March 23: Holi
- April 7-15: Navaratri (Spring)
- April 14: Chaitra New Year
- April 15: Ramanavami

**Judaism**

- September 14-15: Rosh Hashanah
- September 23: Yom Kippur
- Sept/Oct 28-4: Sukkot
- October 5: Shemini Atzeret
- October 6: Simchat Torah
- December 7-14: Chanukah
- March 24: Purim
- April 23-30: Pesach/Passover
- June 12-13: Shavuot

**Sikhism**

- September 1: First Parkash
- November 24: Birthday of Guru Tegh Bahadar Ji
- November 25: Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Ji
- January 5: Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Ji
- January 13: Maghi
- March 14: Sikh New Year’s Day
- April 14: Vaisakhi
- June 16: Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji

**Wicca**

- August 1: Lammas
- September 22: Mabon
- October 31: Samhain
- December 21: Yule
- February 2: Imbolc
- March 20: Ostara
- May 1: Beltane
- June 20: Litha

**Zoroastrianism**

- September 22: Day of Arafat (Hajj)
- September 23: Eid-ul-Adha
- October 14: First Day of Muharram
- October 23: Ashura
- November 5: Miraj-un-Nabi
- November 23: Nisfu Shaban
- December 6: First day of Ramadhan
- July 1: Eid-ul-Qadr
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- September 27: Anata Chaturdasi
- November 11: Mahavira Nirvana
- November 16: Jnana Panchami
- December 21: Manu-agiyaras
- April 19: Mahavir Jayanti

- August 18: Naw Ruz (Shenshai)
- December 26: Death of Prophet Zarathustra
- March 17: Ghambar Hamapasthmaedem
- March 21: Naw Ruz (New Year’s Day)
- March 28: Birthday of Prophet Zarathustra
- June - July 29 -3: Ghambar Maidyoshem

This excerpt is referenced in the Scheduling of Events on Faith Days document – “we are committed to affirm and value equally the faith diversity in our schools and workplaces. Therefore, INTERNALLY scheduled events such as field trips, school concerts, conferences, meetings, workshops, other professional events, co-curricular activities, and exams/tests SHALL NOT be scheduled on these dates referred to as ‘Diamond Days’ in the YRDSB”. Exceptions to the above may be considered where dates for special events are set EXTERNALLY to our Board and after consultation with superintendents who will present requests to Senior Team to determine participation. Please refer to the YRDSB Religious Accommodations Guidelines for more information.

Tentative dates subject to the sighting of the new moon each month. Some Jain and Buddhist dates are tentative at the time of publishing.

These dates follow the Nanakshahi calendar. Please check our website for updated information: www.yrdsb.ca

Please note that observances of these faith days begin on the eve of this event. The same guidelines apply to the ‘Diamond Days’.
HINDUISM  
August 29  
Raksha Bandhan ("to tie protection on") is a celebration where girls and married women tie an amulet on the right wrists of their brothers to ward off evil influences.

WICCA  
August 1  
Lammas meaning "loaf-mass", time of first harvest and bread making. It is when the plants of spring wither and drop their fruits or seeds for our use, as well as to ensure future crops. The God symbolically loses some strength, as the Sun rises farther in the South each day and the nights grow longer.

ZOROASTRIANISM  
August 18  
Naw Ruz. New Year's Day in accordance with the Shenshai calendar.
Please note:
- Muslim dates are tentative and subject to the sighting of the moon each month.
- All Jewish Holy Days commence on the preceding evening at sunset.

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BUDDHISM
September 28  Pavarana signals the completion of the Rains of Retreat.
September 29  Kathina marks Buddha’s "descent from heaven." The day is dedicated to remembering the dead and respecting elders.

CHRISTIANITY
September 12  Coptic/Ethiopian Orthodox New Year. This is the day for Copts (Christians of Egyptian origin) to celebrate the New Year and the Feast of Martyrs. For members of the Ethiopian Orthodox community, the New Year is a chance to celebrate the new month as well as the Feast of St. John the Baptist.

HINDUISM
September 5  Sri Krishna Jayanti (also known as Janmashtami) celebrates the birthday of Lord Krishna. According to the Hindu epics, Lord Krishna was the eighth incarnation of the God Vishnu. His purpose was to destroy the demon Kansa who was responsible for the increase of evil in the world.
September 17  Ganesh Chaturthi celebrates the birthday of Ganesha, God of success and one of the major Hindu deities. He is invoked at the beginning of all new undertakings.

ISLAM
September 22  Day of Hajj (Day of Arafat), or Pilgrimage to Mecca, is undertaken once in a lifetime for those who can afford it. Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam after the Belief in One God, daily prayers, fasting and charity. On the Islamic calendar, it falls on the 9th day in the last month of Zul-Hijjah.
September 23  Eid-ul-Adha is the Festival of Sacrifice. It honours Prophet Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son Ishmael to God. In commemoration, Muslims sacrifice a sheep or goat and donate the meat or its equivalent value in cash to charity. This is the “minimum” requirement for those who can afford it.

JAINISM
September 27  Ananta Chaturdasi is regarded as the holiest period of the year. Fasting, worship, meditation and confession characterize this period.

JUDAISM
Sept. 14 - 15  Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, marks the start of a ten day period of spiritual self examination and repentance which ends with Yom Kippur. Families celebrate with a festive dinner at which apples dipped in honey are eaten. (New Year’s Day, 5776).
September 23  Yom Kippur, the day of Atonement, is the most solemn of the Jewish Holy Days. At synagogue, the evening service is called Kol Nidre. People ask for forgiveness of their sins and forgive others. Jews refrain from all eating and drinking on this day.
Sept. 28 - Oct. 4  Sukkot is a harvest festival or thanksgiving. Small huts are constructed in which meals are eaten, weather permitting, to commemorate the time when the Israelites dwelled in booths in the desert for 40 years.

SIKHISM
September 1  First Parkash observes the installation of the Guru Granth Sahib, the first edition of the Sikh Scriptures, in the Golden Temple by the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev, in 1604 C.E.

WICCA
September 22  Mabon Autumn Equinox and the second harvest. Wiccans take a moment to pay their respect to the impending dark. They celebrate the aging Goddess as she passes from Mother to Crone, and her consort the God as he prepares for death and rebirth.
◆ Conferences, meetings, workshops, exams, field trips, etc. are not to be scheduled on these dates.
Please refer to the Board’s Scheduling of Events on Faith Days document list before scheduling Conferences, Workshops, Co-curricular activities, staff meetings, exams/test, field trips etc.

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**SEPTEMBER 2015**

**AUGUST**

**OCTOBER**
**BAHA’I FAITH**

October 20  **The Birth of the Bab**. The Bab was born Siyyid’ Ali Muhammad in Shiraz in southwestern Iran in 1819 C.E. His title, in Arabic, means “The Gate”. Work and academic studies are suspended on this day.

**CHRISTIANITY**

October 4  **World Communion Sunday** is observed worldwide. Communion is the most fundamental of all Christian rituals.

**HINDUISM**

October 13 - 21  **Navaratri (Fall)** is a nine-day celebration of the Divine Goddess for good health, happiness and knowledge.

**ISLAM**

October 14  **Muharram** (New Year’s Day) begins the new Islamic year. This is the year 1437.

October 23  **Ashura** falls on the 10th day of Muharram. The 10th day commemorates the martyrdom of Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

**JUDAISM**

October 5  **Shemini Atzeret** is a festival marking the end of the holiday of Sukkot on which a special prayer for rain is recited.

October 6  **Simchat Torah** is marked by singing and dancing which celebrates the end of public reading of the Torah in the synagogue and the beginning of its reading anew.

**WICCA**

October 31  **Samhain**. The third harvest, meaning "summer’s end", when the ancestors are honoured. It is a magical interval when the mundane laws of time and space are temporarily suspended, and the thin veil between the worlds is lifted, symbolized by the Crone and her aged Consort.
Please note:
Midterm break for Bill Crothers S.S., Keswick H.S., Maple H.S., Markville S.S. and Sutton D.H.S. is from October 19 - October 23, 2015.

Shemini Atzeret
Simchat Torah

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Thanksgiving
Navaratri begins
First Day of Muharram

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The Birth of the Bab

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Ashura

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World Communion Sunday

Notes

Shirley Liu, Donald Cousens P.S., Gr. 8

Miyu Igeta, Bogart P.S., Gr. 5
**BAHA’I FAITH**

November 12  **The Birth of Baha’u’llah.** Baha’u’llah was born to the noble family of Mirza Husayn Ali in 1817 C.E. His name is a title in Arabic meaning “the Glory of God.” He is the founder of the Baha’i faith. Work and academic studies are suspended on this day.

November 26  **The Day of the Covenant.** The eldest son and appointed successor of Baha’u’llah, Abdu’l-Baha, is referred to as the “Centre of the Covenant.” The covenant was established by Baha’u’llah to safeguard the unity of the Baha’i community. It was Abdu’l-Baha’s wish that the Covenant be celebrated rather than his own birth date.

November 28  **Ascension of Abdu’l-Baha.** After years of serving both his father and the growing Baha’i community, Abdu’l-Baha passed away in Haifa, Israel in 1921 C.E.

**CHRISTIANITY**

November 1  **All Saints’ Day** is observed as a special day in many Christian churches.

November 29  **First Sunday of Advent** begins the period of preparation for Christmas. In homes and churches, Christians set out special candle holders or Advent wreaths (Western).

**HINDUISM**

November 10  **Diwali** (Deepavali) both names mean a row or garland of lights. Also known as the Festival of Lights, Diwali is probably the most widely celebrated Hindu festival. This festival may be celebrated over a five-day period. The divas (clay pots filled with oil and a wick) herald the start of the new year and symbolize the triumph of good over evil, of light over darkness. For many Hindus, November 11, New Year’s Day, is also very important.

November 12-16  **Skanda Shashti Vratham** is a six-day fasting period. It commemorates the destruction of evil by the Lord Murugan (Subramanya), who is the second son of Lord Siva and is celebrated with the dramatic enactment of Soora Samhaaram.

**JAINISM**

November 11  **Mahavira Nirvana.** The Jain year begins with Moksha (attainment of final enlightenment and release) by Lord Mahavira. It is popularly known as Deepavali, festival of lamps. Lamps symbolize the light of knowledge.

November 16  **Jnana Panchami,** the day of knowledge, observed with Pooja (ritualistic offering) to pay homage to Saraswati Devi, the deity of knowledge and learning.

**SIKHISM**

November 24  **Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadar Ji.** The Guru was executed in 1675 C.E. by a Mughal emperor. Sikhs believe that he gave his life to save the Hindu faith and religious liberty.

November 25  **Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.** The founder of the Sikh faith was born in 1469 C.E.

◆ Conferences, meetings, workshops, exams, field trips, etc. are not to be scheduled on these dates.
The Holidays and Observances Calendar is presently being drafted for the 2016-2017 school year. Included again this year will be student artwork from **Elementary and Secondary Schools** for the calendar cover and for each month. Keep an eye out for the memo outlining the details.

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**OCTOBER 2015**

Natalie Bowsher, Bogart P.S., Gr. 5

Nivetha Killivalavan, David Suzuki P.S., Gr. 4

◆ Diwali

Remembrance Day
Mahavira Nirvana

The Birth of the Bab’u’llah
Skanda Shashti
Yratham begins

Diwali

Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Ji

The Day of the Covenant

P.A. Day Elementary/Secondary

Ascension of Abdu’l-Baha

First Sunday of Advent

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**NOVEMBER 2015**

**December 2015**
CHRISTIANITY
December 25 ◆ Christmas (Western calendar) celebrates the birth of Jesus about 2000 years ago in Bethlehem. Christians believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the son of God, and accept him as their Saviour and Lord. In many families, Christmas Eve is celebrated with big dinners, visiting and carol-singing, often followed by midnight church services.

ISLAM
December 23  Mawlid-un-Nabi celebrates the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

JAINISM
December 21  Maun-agiyaras is a day of fasting, silence and meditation.

JUDISM
Dec. 7 - 14  Chanukah (Festival of Lights) celebrates religious freedom by commemorating the victory of the Jews over Antiochus who tried to outlaw the practice of Judaism. Starting on the evening of December 6, candles are lit in increasing numbers for eight nights in a “Chanukiah” which is a special candelabrum containing nine candles.

KWANZAA
December 26  Kwanzaa named after the Swahili word for “first fruits” is a seven day cultural celebration initiated by African Americans starting on December 26th. Each day a candle is lit and placed in a seven-cup candelabrum called a kinara that sits on a straw mat adorned with fruit and vegetables. The participants discuss the principles or Nguzo Saba of Kwanzaa: unity, self-determination, collective responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith. On the final night of the celebration, friends and relatives gather for a feast known as Karamu.

ZOROASTRIANISM
December 26  Death of Prophet Zarathustra who was the founder of the Zoroastrian faith. His dates are uncertain but Westerners believe he lived in the first or the second millennium B.C.E.

◆ Conferences, meetings, workshops, exams, field trips, etc. are not to be scheduled on these dates.

Kealin Taylor-Martin, Highgate P.S., Gr. 6
Sung Hun Choi, Silver Stream P.S., Gr. 6
Lauryn Rotaru, Parkview P.S., Gr. 8
George Keylin, Willowbrook P.S., Gr. 6
Jason Chen, Parkview P.S., Gr. 8
Mindy Chanphakfo, Vellore Woods P.S., Gr. 3
**Please note:**
The Religious Accommodations Guidelines document has been posted on the BWW. To learn more about these guidelines and corresponding resources, please visit the equity page on the BWW.

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**December 2015**

- **1st-6th**: Chanukah begins

**WINTER BREAK**

- **21st-27th**: Kwanzaa

**Notes**

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**Rebecca Revizada, Bakersfield P.S., Gr. 4**

**Sunny Zhu, Doncrest P.S., Gr. 5**
BUDDHISM
January 1
Temple Day has become a day for Canadian Buddhists to attend a special service in the local temple.

CHRISTIANITY
January 6
Epiphany (Western Calendar) is the 12th day of Christmas and the end of the Christmas season. It comes from a Greek word referring to the baptism of Jesus and the arrival in Bethlehem of the Three Wise Men who came to worship Jesus. The Armenian Orthodox Church celebrates the nativity of Jesus on this day.

January 7
Christmas (Eastern Calendar). In York Region, this is often referred to as “Ukrainian Christmas”. Some Orthodox churches celebrate the birth of Jesus on this day. The Julian (Eastern) calendar is currently 13 days behind the Gregorian (Western) calendar.

January 19
Epiphany (Eastern Calendar). The Eastern Church associates the date with the baptism of Jesus by John and the miracle of Cana in which Jesus turned water into wine. This day is also known as Theophany in Orthodox churches.

HINDUISM
January 14
Makar Sankranti, is also known as Lohri, Thai Pongal and Til Sankranti. It marks the winter solstice and is primarily a rice harvest festival.

SIKHISM
January 5
Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Ji. The tenth guru (1666-1708 C.E.) was the final master who created the Sikh Brotherhood, the Khalsa.

January 13
Maghi commemorates the forgiveness shown by Guru Gobind Singh to forty deserters who returned to fight the Mughal army and sacrificed their lives under the leadership of a brave Khalsa woman named Mae Bhaago.

◆ Conferences, meetings, workshops, exams, field trips, etc. are not to be scheduled on these dates.
JANUARY 2016

Notes

December

January

February

WINTER BREAK

1 January 2016

Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Ji

Epiphany

Epiphany (Western)

◆ Christmas (Eastern)

Makar Sankranti

P.A. Day

Elementary

P.A. Day

Bill Crothers S.S.

Praviya Prabagar, David Suzuki P.S., Gr. 7

Chloe Lam, Beckett Farm P.S., S.K.
BAHA’I FAITH
Feb. 26 – Mar. 1
Intercalary Days are four days (five in a leap year) that do not belong to any month. They are days of celebration, gift-giving, hospitality and charitable works.

BUDDHISM
February 8
◆ Lunar New Year the day after the new moon, marks the beginning of the new lunar year. It is the year of the Monkey. Irrespective of their religion or country, all Chinese, Vietnamese and many Koreans celebrate the cultural aspect of this day. This is the beginning of year 4714 in the Chinese calendar. It is a time for renewal and personal relationships, and pledges of prosperity.

CHRISTIANITY
February 10
Ash Wednesday (Western Calendar) is the beginning of Lent, the forty day period (excluding Sundays) of prayer, repentance and self-denial that precedes Easter. It is a reminder of the days Jesus spent alone in the wilderness.

HINDUISM
February 12
Vasant Panchami is particularly celebrated in Northern India. This festival marks the advent of spring. Also known as Shri Panchami, it is a celebration commonly associated with Shri or Lakshmi (Goddess of Wealth). It is also commonly linked with the Goddess of Learning, Saraswati.

◆ Conferences, meetings, workshops, exams, field trips, etc. are not to be scheduled on these dates.
**Please note:**
The deadline to submit student artwork for the Holidays & Observances Calendar is Friday, February 19, 2016. Please submit all artwork to Joan Lachhman, Inclusive School & Community Services at Dr. Bette Stephenson Centre for Learning.

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| P.A. Day
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| ◆ Lunar New Year | | | Ash Wednesday | | Vasant Panchami | | |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
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**Notes**

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Please note:
The deadline to submit student artwork for the Holidays & Observances Calendar is Friday, February 19, 2016. Please submit all artwork to Joan Lachhman, Inclusive School & Community Services at Dr. Bette Stephenson Centre for Learning.
BAHA’I FAITH
March 2 - 20  |  The 19-Day Fast is observed every year from March 2 until March 20. During this time those who are physically able, abstain from food and drink from sunrise until sunset each day.
March 21  |  Naw Ruz (Baha’i New Year). Baha’is celebrate New Year on the first day of spring. Work and academic studies are suspended on this day.

BUDDHISM
March 20  |  Spring Ohigon is a special time to listen to the teaching of the Buddha and to meditate on the perfection of enlightenment. This day is of particular importance for Jodo Shinshu Buddhists.

CHRISTIANITY
March 14  |  First day of Lent (Eastern Calendar), which is the great fast, is the last six weeks of a ten week period before Easter. This day is also known as Clean Monday. Some Eastern Churches may start Lent a week before on March 7.
March 20  |  Palm Sunday  The Sunday before Easter; the beginning of the Holy Week celebrating Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem. (Western Calendar)
March 24  |  Maundy Thursday  (Holy Thursday) is the commemoration of the institution of the Lord’s Supper (Western Calendar).
March 25  |  Good Friday commemorates Jesus’ death by crucifixion (Western Calendar).
March 27  |  Easter Sunday celebrates the resurrection of Christ. It is the most important festival in the Christian year (Western Calendar).

HINDUISM
March 8  |  Mahashivaratri (or Shivaratri, “Great Shiva Night”) is a special night of prayer. Devotees sing the praises of Shiva, one of the major Hindu deities.
March 23  |  Holi is a colourful spring festival observed widely in Hindu communities around the world. The myths, customs and rituals associated with Holi vary considerably from place to place.

JUDAISM
March 24  |  Purim celebrates the victory over an oppressive ruler by Queen Esther and her Uncle Mordecai.

SIKHISM
March 14  |  Sikh New Year’s Day is the first day of the new Nanakshahi solar calendar. This is year 548 of the new era.

ZOROASTRIANISM
March 17  |  Ghambar Hamaspathmaedem celebrates the creation of human beings.
March 21  |  Naw Ruz (New Year’s Day) in Fasli calendars. This is the first day of the Zoroastrian and Persian year. It is a time of religious observance preceded by ten days of remembrance of the dead. It symbolizes the renewal of the world after winter. Irrespective of their religion, many Iranians celebrate this day. This celebration may also fall on March 20.
March 28  |  Birthday of Prophet Zarathustra, the founder of the Zoroastrian faith.

◆ Conferences, meetings, workshops, exams, field trips, etc. are not to be scheduled on these dates.

Victor Chung, Roy H. Crosby PS., Gr. 6
Karina Rabkin, Anne Frank PS., Gr. 7
Parveen Rashid, Black Walnut PS., Gr. 2
Sobhan Pakniat, Doncrest PS., Gr. 4
Aaliya Mulla, Ellen Fairclough PS., Gr. 6
**MARCH 2016**

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**Notes**

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- **First Day of Lent (Eastern)**
- **Naw Ruz**
- **Birthday of Prophet Zarathustra**
- **Mahashivaratri**
- **Ghambar Hamaspathmaedem**
- **March Break begins**
- **Sikh New Year’s Day**
- **First Day of Lent (Eastern)**
- **Spring Ohigon**
- **Palm Sunday (Western)**
- **Good Friday (Western)**
- **Maundy Thursday**
- **Purim**
- **Mahashivaratri**
- **Birthday of Prophet Zarathustra**

**MARCH BREAK**

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**BAHA’I FAITH**
April 21  
◆ **Ridvan.** Baha’u’llah, the founder of the Baha’i Faith, declared his mission as the most recent messenger of God. Baha’is observe the first, ninth and twelfth days of this period. The actual event occurred in a garden, called Ridvan (Paradise) in Baghdad, Iraq in 1863 C.E. Work and academic studies are suspended on this day.

**BUDDHISM**
April 13/14  
**Saka (New Year’s Day).** This is New Year’s Day according to the Saka calendar. This day is both a religious and cultural celebration.

**CHRISTIANITY**
April 24  
**Palm Sunday,** the Sunday before Easter (Eastern Calendar).  
April 29  
◆ **Holy Friday** (Eastern) commemorates the passion of Jesus Christ, i.e. his submission to death by crucifixion. The Eastern churches focus on his burial.

**HINDUISM**
April 7 - 15  
**Navaratri (Spring)** is a nine-day celebration of the Divine Goddess for good health, happiness and knowledge.  
April 14  
**Chaitra New Year** The first day of the Solar year is an agricultural festival celebrating the harvest. This day is also celebrated as the Tamil New Year; Varusha Pirappu, Vishu, Ugadi, Rongali Bihu and Naba Barsha.  
April 15  
**Ramanavami.** On this day Lord Rama the 7th incarnation of Lord Vishnu is said to have been born.

**JAINISM**
April 19  
**Mahavir Jayanti** is the celebration of the birthday of Lord Mahavira (meaning the Great Hero) of Jina (the Conqueror).

**JUDAISM**
April 23 - 30  
**Pesach (Passover)** is a “Festival of Freedom” that commemorates the exodus of the Jews from slavery in Egypt. Symbolic foods, such as matzo, are eaten and leavened products are prohibited. First Seder is on the evening of April 22nd. The second and last two days of Pesach are also observed as full holy days by Jews.

**SIKHISM**
April 14  
◆ **Vaisakhi.** This day celebrates the founding of the Khalsa order (Sikh religion) in 1699 C.E. by Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Many Sikhs choose to be baptized into the Khalsa Panth (Brotherhood of the Pure) on this day. Also on this day, male Khalsa Sikhs are named Singh (lion), female Khalsa Sikhs are named Kaur (princess). It is the most important holy day of the year for Sikhs.  
◆ Conferences, meetings, workshops, exams, field trips, etc. are not to be scheduled on these dates.
Please note:
Second Semester break for Bill Crothers S.S, is from April 18 - April 22, 2016.

Notes

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Jasleen Sandhu, Coppard Glen P.S., Gr. 7

Lindsay Burnett, Sharon P.S., Gr. 2
**BAHA’I FAITH**

May 23  **Declaration of the Bab.** On this day in 1844 C.E., a man known as the Bab, a title which means “the Gate,” announced his mission as a manifestation of God whose purpose was to prepare the world for the coming of the promised manifestation of all religions, Baha’u’llah. The Baha’i calendar is dated from this day. Work and academic studies are suspended on this day.

May 29  **Ascension of Baha’u’llah.** This date marks the passing in 1892 C.E. of Baha’u’llah, the prophet-founder of the Baha’i Faith, near Haifa, in the Holy Lands. Work and academic studies are suspended on this day.

**BUDDHISM**

May 15  **Wesak** is celebrated on the full moon. It is considered the most auspicious day of the year, celebrating Buddha’s Birth, Enlightenment, and Final Demise. In Canada, many Buddhist groups join together to celebrate the three festivals of Buddha’s life as one event. They do this on the day of the fourth full moon after the lunar new year, or the Sunday closest to that day. This is usually around mid-May.

**CHRISTIANITY**

May 1  **Easter Sunday** in the Orthodox churches. The church calendar year begins with Pascha (Eastern Calendar).

May 5  **Ascension Day** (Western) marks Jesus’ ascension into heaven and is observed through prayers and music. It occurs forty days after Easter.

May 15  **Pentecost** (Western) celebrates the renewal of faith that Jesus’ followers felt after his death. It commemorates the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples of Jesus. It comes fifty days after Easter.

**ISLAM**

May 5  **Miraj-un-Nabi** commemorates Prophet Muhammad’s (pbuh) famous night journey (al-Isra) from Mecca to Jerusalem and his subsequent ascension (al-Miraj) to paradise.

May 23  **Nisfu-Shaban** is known as the Night of Forgiveness or repentance. Many Muslims spend the preceding night in prayer seeking God’s guidance.

**WICCA**

May 1  **Beltane** meaning “May”, the greening of the Earth, blossom time, when Goddess and God are reunited. Beltane has long been celebrated with feasts and rituals.
Do you need a translator/interpreter? The translator/interpreter list is posted on the Portal at bww.yrdsb.ca. Select Board Services and then click on the Inclusive School and Community Services page.

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Ramadhan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. All Muslims who are physically able, fast during this month abstaining from food and drink each day from dawn to sunset. The beginning of Ramadhan depends on the sighting of the moon on the previous evening.

Shavuot celebrates the Israelites receiving the Torah.

A day declared by the Assembly of First Nations. All First Nations’ organizations cease work during this day. This is a day where all Canadians can celebrate the contributions Aboriginal peoples have made to Canada. This day was chosen because it is also the summer solstice, the longest day of the year. For generations, many Aboriginal people have celebrated their culture and heritage on or near this day. For more information about the day’s activities, visit the Indian & Northern Affairs Canada Website at www.inac.gc.ca and look in the “Culture and History” section. Additional resources on First Nation, Metis, Inuit (FNMI) can be found on the Equity page, as well as on:
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/index.html

Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji. The fifth Guru (1563 - 1606 C.E.), who built the Temple of God in Amristar, was martyred on this day.

Ghambar Maidyoshem celebrates the creation of water, the sowing of the summer crop and the harvesting of grain.
If you haven't received a copy of the 2015-2016 Holidays & Observances calendar please call Joan Lachhman at Inclusive School and Community Services at 905-884-2046 ext. 252, 416-969-7170 ext. 2409 or email joan.lachhman@yrdsb.ca
BAHA’I FAITH
July 9
Martyrdom of the Bab. The Bab was put to death at the age of 31, by a firing squad in the market square of Tabriz (Persia), in 1850 C.E. The event is observed at noon. Work and academic studies are suspended on this day.

BUDDHISM
July 19
Wassana is celebrated on the full moon. It marks the beginning of the three month Rains Retreat for monks and nuns.

Canada Day
July 1
149th anniversary of Confederation.

ISLAM
July 1
Lailat-ul-Qadr (literally the Night of Power) commemorates the night in 610 C.E. on which the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) received the first revelation of the Islamic Holy scriptures (the Qur’an) from God through the Angel Gabriel. For many Muslims, any odd nights in the last ten days can be observed as Lailat-ul-Qadr.

July 7
◆ Eid-ul-Fitr is a celebration that marks the end of Ramadhan, the month of fast. It falls on the first day of the following month Shawal. The beginning of the month depends on the sighting of the new moon. It is the first day in which those who were fasting can eat and drink during the day.

◆ Conferences, meetings, workshops, exams, field trips, etc. are not to be scheduled on these dates.
**Looking for funds for inclusive activities?**
Go to the Board’s Portal Site at [https://bww.yrdsb.ca](https://bww.yrdsb.ca), Board Services, select Inclusive School and Community Services and click on Road to Inclusivity Grants.

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**Notes**

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