



Diwali

This year Diwali is on Sunday 30th October 2016. Diwali is the Hindu festival of light which celebrates the New Year. Diwali lasts for 5 days. The 3rd day is Diwali and the 4th day of Diwali is the New Year. Diwali is usually during October/November. The festival of light is held in honour of Lakshmi – the Hindu goddess of wealth and prosperity. Hindu's pray to Lakshmi to bring good luck in the coming year. Diwali celebrates the return of Rama and Sita in the story of Ramayan and shows how good won over evil. Prince Rama and his wife Sita were banished from their home in Ayodhya by their father who was the king. Rama's brother Lakshman went with them to live in the forest. They were banished for 14 years. After many happy years, Sita was kidnapped by the 10 headed demon god Ravana. He took Sita to his island – Lanka. With the help of the monkey god Hanuman, Rama was able to rescue his wife. The people of Ayodhya lit Diva's in rows to welcome Rama and Sita back from the forest to Ayodhya. On their return Rama was crowned King.

Diwali means rows of lighted lamps. It is called the festival of light because people light hundreds of diva lamps and place them around the home, in courtyards, gardens and outside their front doors to commemorate the return of Rama and Sita from the forest back home to Ayodhya. The more Diva's that are lit will mean that it is more likely that Lakshmi will come and visit them. Hindu's believe that the goddess will bring them good luck and prosperity for the forthcoming year.

During Diwali people exchange gifts. Homes are decorated, rangoli patterns are created with coloured powder, rice, lentils, chalk or other creative materials. New clothes are worn and lots of nice food is eaten. In the evening many people hold a small prayer in their homes in honour of the elephant god Ganesh, who is the god of wisdom and good luck and the one who removes all obstacles from life.

By Kiran Makwana age 9

