

RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC OBSERVANCES 2005

The NCCJ Calendar is a resource designed to encourage public awareness of the great mixture of religious and ethnic groups that live in the United States. However, because of the number, this resource cannot provide an exhaustive list of all cultural faith traditions.

Holidays and festivals are included for select religious, ethnic and public communities. Even here, the list is not exhaustive of the observances of any one religion. For example, regional and ethnic holidays and observances of faith traditions are not included, nor, for the most part, are the traditional holidays celebrated by tribal groups. In cases where these are included, they serve more than one group.

Teachers may find the calendar particularly helpful as it identifies opportunities for objective, non-creedal instruction about particular cultures. Employers will find that it serves as a reminder of those religious observances that may result in employee absences. Those using this calendar also should remember that it is based only on information available at the time of production. **Dates for lunar holidays are subject to change.**

The NCCJ Calendar is intended to increase our sensitivity to each other and to our different needs. Therefore, those using this resource in a classroom setting to enrich a curriculum may wish to add holidays and observances that are not listed in this calendar but are celebrated by students in their classrooms and/or school. As an additional aid to both teachers and employers, an alphabetical glossary of selected observances appears at the back of this *NCCJ Calendar*.

MISSION

The National Conference for Community and Justice, founded in 1927 as the National Conference of Christians and Jews, is a human relations organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry and racism in America. NCCJ promotes understanding and respect among all races, religions and cultures through advocacy, conflict resolution and education.

KEY TO RELIGIOUS GROUPS*

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Baha'i | Ba |
| Buddhist | Bu |
| Christian | C |
| Mormon | Mo |
| Orthodox | O |
| Protestant | P |
| Roman Catholic | RC |
| Hindu | H |
| Jewish | J |
| Muslim | M |
| Sikh | S |



The NCCJ Calendar of Holidays and Festivals 2005



2005

JANUARY

| | | |
|-------|--|----------|
| 1 | New Year's Day | F* |
| 5 | Birth of Guru Gobind Singh | S |
| 6 | Epiphany | O, P, RC |
| 7 | Christmas Day | O |
| 13 | Maghi | S |
| 17 | Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Observed | F |
| 21-24 | 'Id al Adha | M |

FEBRUARY *African-American Heritage Month*

| | | |
|----------|---------------------------------|-------|
| 6 | Four Chaplains Sunday | I |
| 8 | Nirvana Day | Bu |
| 9 | Chinese and Vietnamese New Year | |
| 9 | Ash Wednesday/Lent begins | P, RC |
| 10 | Al Hijra (New Year) | M |
| 20-26 | Brotherhood Sisterhood Week | |
| 21 | President's Day observed | F |
| 25-Mar 1 | Ayyam-i-Ha | Ba |

MARCH *National Women's History Month*

| | | |
|------|----------------------------|-------|
| 2-20 | Nineteen Day Fast | Ba |
| 15 | Lent begins (Clean Monday) | O |
| 21 | Naw-Ruz (New Year) | Ba |
| 20 | Spring Equinox | |
| 25 | Holi | H |
| 25 | Purim | J |
| 25 | Good Friday | P, RC |
| 27 | Easter | P, RC |

APRIL

| | | |
|----------|---------------------|----|
| 13 | Vaisakhi | S |
| 21-May 2 | First Day of Ridvan | Ba |
| 21 | Mawlid al Nabi | M |
| 24 | Wesak | Bu |
| 24-May 1 | Pesach (Passover) | J |
| 29 | Good Friday | O |

MAY *Asian American Heritage Month*

| | | |
|----|---------------------------|-------|
| 1 | Easter | O |
| 5 | Cinco de Mayo | |
| 5 | Ascension Day | P, RC |
| 6 | Yom Hashoah | |
| 15 | Pentecost | P, RC |
| 24 | Visakha Puja (Buddha Day) | Bu |
| 30 | Memorial Day observed | F |

JUNE *GLBT Pride Month*

| | | |
|-------|------------------------------------|---|
| 13-14 | Shavuot | J |
| 14 | Flag Day | |
| 16 | Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev | S |
| 19 | Juneteenth | |
| 19 | Pentecost | O |
| 21 | Summer Solstice | |
| 27 | Anniversary of Stonewall Rebellion | |

JULY

| | | |
|----|------------------|----|
| 4 | Independence Day | F |
| 9 | Martyrdom of Bab | Ba |
| 24 | Pioneer Day | Mo |

AUGUST

| | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|----------|
| 15 | Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary | O, P, RC |
|----|---------------------------------------|----------|

SEPTEMBER *National Hispanic-American Heritage Month*

| | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1 | Installation of the Guru Granth Sahib in the Golden Temple | S |
| 5 | Labor Day | F |
| 22 | Autumn Equinox | |

Interfaith Month

OCTOBER *Diversity Month*

| | | |
|---------|---|----|
| 4-Nov 3 | Ramadan begins | M |
| 4-5 | Rosh Hashanah | J |
| 4-12 | Navaratri | H |
| 10 | Columbus Day | F |
| 11 | National Coming Out Day | |
| 12 | Dusserah | H |
| 13 | Yom Kippur | J |
| 18-24 | Sukkot | J |
| 20 | Birth of Bab | Ba |
| | Installation of the Guru Granth Sahib as Eternal Guru | S |
| 20 | Martyrdom of Guru Har Rai | S |
| 24 | United Nations Day | |
| 25 | Shmini Atzeret | J |
| 26 | Simchat Torah | J |
| 31 | All Hallows Eve | |

NOVEMBER

| | | |
|----|-------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | All Saints Day | O, P, RC |
| 1 | Diwali | H |
| 3 | 'Id al Fitre | M |
| 11 | Veteran's Day | F |
| 12 | Baha'u'llah's Birthday | Ba |
| 24 | Martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur | S |
| 24 | Thanksgiving | F |
| 27 | Advent begins | P, RC |

DECEMBER

| | | |
|----------|-----------------|-----------|
| 8 | Bodhi Day | Bu |
| 21 | Winter Solstice | |
| 25 | Christmas Day | Mo, P, RC |
| 26-Jan 1 | Kwanzaa begins | |
| 26-Jan 2 | Hanukah | J |

*US Federal holidays marked by an F.

Explanatory Notes *Most Civic Holidays and other obvious festivals are not included.*

Advent Period of four weeks in which Christians prepare for Christmas.

Al-Hijra Islamic remembrance of the migration of Mohammed and followers to Medina.

All Saints Day Christian day for honoring all the saints, especially those who do not have a special day.

Ascension Day Celebrates Jesus' Ascension to heaven.

Ash Wednesday Begins Christian Lent. Name derives from symbolic use of ashes to signify penitence.

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Commemorates the assumption of Mary, mother of Jesus, into heaven.

Ayyam-i-Ha This period adjusts the Baha'i year to the solar calendar. It leads to the 19 day fast. Each day of Ayyam-i-Ha is marked by a different virtue like hospitality, gift giving or charity.

Baha'u'llah's Birthday Commemorates the birth of the founders of the Baha'i faith in 1817.

Birth of Bab Anniversary of the birth of one of the twin Prophet Founders of the Baha'i faith, Mirza 'Ali-Muhammed, in 1819.

Birth of Guru Gobind Singh Sikh observation of the 1666 C.E. birthday of the last of the tenth and last human gurus.

Bodhi Day Buddhist celebration of the time when Prince Gautama (Buddha) took his place under the Bodhi tree vowing to remain until he attained supreme enlightenment, ca. 596 B.C.E.

Chinese and Vietnamese New Year A festive holiday celebrated for about two weeks. Each year is symbolized by a different animal.

Cinco de Mayo Celebrated in Mexico and by Mexican-Americans, commemorates the battle of Guadalupe in 1862, when a small Mexican army defeated a large French force.

Diwali Festival of Lights symbolizing the human urge to move toward the light. One of four seasonal celebrations in India.

Dusserah Festival celebrating good over evil; the victory of Lord Rama over Ravana, the demon king of Lanka.

Epiphany End of the 12 days of Christmas; celebrates visit of the Three Kings to baby Jesus; especially important to Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics of Hispanic descent.

Flag Day Commemorates acceptance of the stars and stripes as the U.S. flag in 1777.

Four Chaplains Day Commemoration of the event in World War II when four Chaplains of Jewish and Christian traditions (Catholic and Protestant) gave their life jackets to others as a troop ship sank in the Atlantic Ocean.

Good Friday The Friday of Jesus' crucifixion.

Hanukah Festival of Lights; Eight-day commemoration of the Maacabean recapture and rededication of the second Temple in 165 B.C.E.

Holi Spring festival dedicated to the god of pleasure. It is a carnival occasion featuring bright colors, pilgrimages and bonfires.

'Id al-Adha Festival of animal sacrifice; commemorates the faith of Abraham; also a memorial to the dead. Meat given to the poor.

'Id al-Fitre A 3 day Islamic fast marking the close of Ramadan.

Installation of the Guru Granth Sahib Commemorates the installation of the Sikh scriptures by Guru Gobind Singh; these scriptures were installed as the perpetual guru.

Juneteenth Observed as the day African Americans were emancipated. It is the oldest known celebration of the ending of slavery.

Kwanzaa Seven day celebration of African American values and traditions and their continued vitality. "Kwanzaa is Kiswahili and means "first fruits of the harvest."

Lent Period of preparation for Easter; usually 40 days.

Maghi Commemoration of battle in which 40 Sikhs (the Immortal Ones) laid down their lives for Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

Martyrdom of the Bab Ali Mohammed was executed in 1850 by Persian political and religious powers. Observed by abstaining from commerce and work.

Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Anniversary of the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev in 1606 C.E., the fifth guru who built the Golden Temple of Amristar.

Martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur Anniversary of the martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur in 1675 C.E., the ninth guru.

Mawlid al-Nabi Birthday of the Prophet Muhammed, ca. 570 C.E.

National Coming Out Day An international event which gives GLBT people the opportunity to "come out" to others about their sexuality. In the United States, the day is facilitated by the Human Rights Campaign's National Coming Out Project (NCOP).

Naw Ruz Baha'i and Iranian New Year.

Navaratri A Hindu Festival of the divine mother honoring Durga, wife of Shiva, and seeking her blessings. It is celebrated according to local custom.

Nirvana Day In the Northern tradition, this is the anniversary of Buddha's passing away. In the Southern tradition, the Buddha's death is commemorated during Visakha

Pesach (Passover) An 8 day commemoration of the deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt.

Pentecost Observation of the day when the Holy Spirit came to the disciples, following ascension of Jesus. The name indicates 50 days after Easter.

Pioneer Day Observance of the arrival of Brigham Young and first settlers to Great Salt Lake, Utah on July 24, 1847.

Purim Feast of Lots; celebrates deliverance of the Jewish minority in Persia from genocide.

Ramadan The ninth month in the Islamic calendar; 30 days of strict fasting from sunup to sundown. In honor of the first revelations to the Prophet Muhammed.

Ridvan Commemoration of the declaration of Baha'u'llah to his followers in 1863. Work is to be suspended for the 1st, 9th, and 12th days.

Rosh Hashanah New Year; beginning 10 days of penitence concluded on Yom Kippur.

Shavuot Festival of Weeks; celebrates harvest of first fruits and commemorates Moses' descent from Mt Sinai with the torah and Commandments.

Shmini Atzeret Celebration of the eighth and last day of Sukkot.

Simchat Torah Festival celebrating the completion of the reading cycle of the Torah. Symbolized by singing, dancing and marching around the synagogue. The first book is begun again.

Stonewall Rebellion Commemorates the 1969 rebellion when transgender, gay, and lesbian patrons of the Stonewall Inn in NY stood their ground against police harassment and became the catalyst for the modern political movement for GLBT liberation.

Sukkot Jewish Feast of Tabernacles or Booths which celebrates the fall harvest and the wandering of Israel in the desert wilderness dwelling in tents.

Vaisakhi Hindu and Sikh solar new year. Anniversary of the creation of the Khalsa (the army of the Pure Ones) in 1699. It is the most important holy day of the year for Sikhs.

Visakha (Buddha Day) The Day Buddha was born, attained enlightenment and passed away.

Wesak In the Northern tradition, this is the anniversary of Buddha's birth. In the Southern tradition, this is celebrated during Visakha.

Yom Hashoah Jewish Holocaust Remembrance Day. This day has been established to remember the six million Jews killed by the Nazis in 1933-45.

Yom Kippur Jewish Day of Atonement This holiest day of the Jewish year is observed with strict fasting, prayer, and ceremonial repentance.

Notes

All Baha'i, Jewish and Muslim holidays begin at sunset the previous day.

Buddhist and Hindu holidays may be observed at different times than those indicated in the calendar. The observance date is dependent on both religious group affiliation and region. For example, Buddha's birthday is one of the most widely celebrated of Buddhist holidays. However, there is no one date accepted by all Buddhists. Therefore, the observance of Buddha's birthday will vary by both tradition and region, as seen by the inclusion of Wesak, Bodhi Day and Buddha Day in this calendar. (Please note that for all other Buddhist observances, this calendar provides the dates followed by the Theravada tradition.)

Christians follow a number of different calendars depending on their denomination and/or their region. **The NCCJ Calendar** includes both the dates of the Western calendar which is followed by the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches and the dates for the Orthodox New Calendar which is the same as the

Western calendar for fixed holidays and observances but uses the Julian Calendar for moveable feasts. The Orthodox New Calendar is primarily used by the Greek and Cypriot Orthodox Churches.

We recognize that, for many Christians, an integral part of their faith is the observance of days that commemorate the lives of saints. These days have not been included as part of this calendar because they often differ by region, religious affiliation and personal belief.

Jewish dates in this calendar are in accordance with the Orthodox tradition. The length of some holidays and the extent to which they are observed may vary according to denominational affiliation.

Muslim holidays are subject to change because observance is dictated by the phases and sightings of the moon.

The Sikh calendar - their own Nanakshahi calendar was adopted for use on March 14, 1999 and aligns with the Gregorian Calendar.

The National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) works to create a more inclusive society, so that all people will have access to our nation's opportunities and be included in its promise. NCCJ is a human relations organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry, and racism and promoting understanding and respect among all races, religions, and cultures. This broad-based rather than single-constituency approach makes NCCJ unique, and we work against all forms of discrimination and bias. With headquarters in New York City and Washington, D.C., and regional offices in 32 states and the District of Columbia, NCCJ is uniquely positioned with a nationwide, locally-driven delivery system to provide the tools and programs necessary to engage individuals and groups to create positive intergroup relations.



nccj

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