Lesson Plan

Let's Celebrate Diwali!

Grades: 1–2

Overview
Children will learn about the Hindu Diwali festival and make a decorated candle holder in keeping with the tradition. Related Lesson Plans are Let's Celebrate Hanukkah! and Let's Celebrate Ramadan!

Objective

Students Will:
- List prior knowledge of Diwali.
- Listen to books.
- Compare and contrast Diwali to other celebrations.
- Create a project.
Materials

- *Diwali* (Rookie Read-About Holidays) by Christina Mia Gardeski, David F. Marx
- *Here Comes Diwali: The Festival of Lights* by Meenal Pandya
- Self-hardening clay for Diwali Diya
- Sandwich-size Zip Lock baggies
- Tempera paint
- Brushes
- Tea candles (one per child)
- KWL Chart. Add KWL charts for Hanukkah and Ramadan (if available)

Set Up and Prepare

- Check paint and brushes for condition
- Divide up clay into bowl size balls and put in Zip Lock baggies

Directions

**Step 1:** As a group, list what the children already know about Diwali using a KWL chart. If they have already done this exercise with Hanukkah and/or Ramadan, put up the other KWL chart(s).

**Step 2:** Read *Diwali* (Rookie Read-About Holidays) by Christina Mia Gardeski, David f. Marx and *Here Comes Diwali: The Festival of Lights* by Meenal Pandya, et al. As an alternative, you can also read about the festival online at [diwalifestival.org](http://diwalifestival.org).

**Step 3:** List what the children learned about Diwali.

**Step 4:** Compare and contrast the Diwali KWL chart with KWL charts for Ramadan/Hanukkah if available from previous work.

**Step 5:** Create a Diya. Using self-hardening clay the children create a small bowl to hold a tea candle. (The children could create the candle out of clay also to avoid a fire hazard). After the clay has hardened, paint the Diya and the candle.

**Step 6:** As a group, create a letter to parents explaining about Diwali and the Diya.
Background

Diwali is one of the biggest festivals of Hindus, celebrated with great enthusiasm and happiness in India. The festival is celebrated for five continuous days, where the third day is celebrated as the main Diwali festival or 'Festival of lights'. Different colorful varieties of fireworks are always associated with this festival. On this auspicious day, people light up diyas and candles all around their house. They perform Laxmi Puja in the evening and seek divine blessings of Goddess of Wealth. The festival of Diwali is never complete without exchange of gifts. People present diwali gifts to all near and dear ones.

The exact day of the festival is decided by the position of the moon. According to the Hindu calendar, Amavasya or 'no moon day' is considered as the perfect day to celebrate Diwali. This dark night comes after every fortnight and in the month of Kartik, it marks this festival of lights and diyas. As per the English calendar, the festival generally comes in the month of November and December. For all Hindu people, the festival holds an imperative meaning since the festival is reckoned with Lord Rama's victory as the King of Ayodhya after his return to the kingdom from 14 years of exile along with his wife Sita & brother Laxman after killing the demon, King Ravana. The festival is celebrated by lighting diyas and candles to drive away the darkness of Amavasya.

Pasted from <http://www.diwalifestival.org/>

- Subjects:
  Ceremony and Tradition, Arts and Crafts, Compare and Contrast, Writing, Culture and Diversity, Creativity and Imagination, Religion, Diwali, Understanding Self and Others
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do I know?</th>
<th>What do I want to find out?</th>
<th>What did I learn?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>