Days of Significance 2016-2017

This calendar highlights selected secular and creed-based days of significance and is provided as a resource for schools and others when planning educational or other activities. This list includes creed-based observances and holidays, as well as, significant events and celebrations, public holidays, and other important dates that should be considered when planning events, tests or exams, and other activities. This calendar should not be used as a list of dates for creed-based accommodations; accommodation requests must be made formally and determined on an individual case by case basis subject to the operational procedures of the Board regarding creed beliefs, practices and observances. This calendar is not meant to be comprehensive or exhaustive, but rather a selected representation of significant dates. Every attempt has been made to ensure its accuracy.

*Note: Information contained in this document has been sourced from several dozen websites. Please see* ***Days of Significance Resource Guide 2016-2017*** *for further information.*

*Compiled by the Toronto District School Board, Human Rights Office, June 2016.*

**Bold Bolded Titles** are primary holy days of a tradition

\* Holy Days usually begin at sundown the day before this date

\*\* Local/regional customs or moon sightings may cause a variation of this date during this period

Updated: 09 March 201

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***July 2016*** | 1 | Canada Day | Public Holiday |
|  | 6 | 14th Dalai Lama’s Birthday | Tibetan |
|  | **6** | **Eid al Fitr\*** | **Islam** |
|  | 9 | Martyrdom of the Ba’b | Baha’i |
|  | 11 | Imamat Day | Islam |
|  | **13-15** | **Obon\*\*** | **Buddhist/Shinto** |
|  | **15** | **Asalha Puja Day\*\*** | **Buddhism** |
|  | 16 | Ethiopian Constitution Day | Rastafari |
|  | 18 | Nelson Mandela International Day | UN |
|  | 19 | Dharma Day (Termination of Rainy Observances) |  |
|  | 19 | Guru Purnima | Buddism/Jain |
|  | 23 | Birthday of Emperor Hail Selassie | Rastafari |
|  |  |  |  |
| ***August 2016*** | 1 | Lord Simcoe Day | Civic Holiday |
|  | 1 | Lughnassadh/Lammas | Wicca/Pagan |
|  | 6 | Chokhor Korway Ducchen Festival | Tibetan/Buddhism |
|  | 6 | Transfiguration of Christ | Eastern Orthodox |
|  | 9 | International Day of the World’s Indigenous People | UN |
|  | 12 | International Youth Day | UN |
|  | 14 | Tishah B’av | Judaism |
|  | 15 | Feast of the Dormition | Eastern Orthodox |
|  | 17 | Marcus Garvey’s Birthday | Rastarari |
|  | 17 | Ullumbana Festival | Buddhism/Taoist |
|  | 18 | Raksha Bandhan\*\* | Hinduism |
|  | 23 | International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition | UN |
|  | **25** | **Krishna Janmashtami\*\*** | **Hinduism** |
|  | 28 | Paryushana Parva\*\* | Jain |
|  | 29 | Beheading of St. John the Baptist | Christianity |
|  |  |  |  |
| ***September 2016*** | 1 | Installation of the Holy Scriptures of Guru Granth Sahib | Sikhism |
|  | 5 | Ganesh Chauturthi | Hindusim |
|  | **5** | **Labour Day** | **Canadian Public Holiday** |
|  | 6-15 | Samvatsari - Parva | Jain |
|  | 8 | International Day for Literacy | UN |
|  | **9-14** | **Waqf al Arafa (Hajj)\* \*\*** | **Islam** |
|  | 11 | Coptic New Year | Orthodox Egyptian |
|  | **11** | **Eid al Adha\*\*** | **Islam** |
|  | 11 | Ethiopian New Year | Rastafari |
|  | 15 | Anant Chaturdashi | Jain |
|  | 15 | Daslakshan Parva | Jain |
|  | 15 | International Day of Democracy | UN |
|  | 15 | Kshamvaani (Forgiveness Day) | Jain |
|  | 18 | Fall Ohigon (Japanese) | Buddhism |
|  | 19 | Powley Day | First Nation, Métis |
|  | 21 | Eid ul Ghadeer | Islam |
|  | 21 | International Day of Peace | UN |
|  | **22** | **Mabon\* (Autumnal Equinox)** | **Wicca/Pagan** |
|  | 26-30 | LGBTTQQI2S Ally Week | YMCA |
|  | 27 | Elevation of the Cross | Orthodox Christianity |
|  | 30 | Orange Shirt Day | First Nation, Métis, Inuit |
|  |  |  |  |
| ***October 2016***  *- Women’s History Month*  *- Islamic Heritage Month*  *- Somali Heritage Month (City of Toronto)*  *- Hispanic Heritage Month* | 1 | International Day of Older Persons | UN |
| **1-10** | **Navaratri\*\*** | **Hinduism** |
| **2** | **Al-Hijra New Year\* \*\*** | **Islam** |
| **3-4** | **Rosh Hashanah\*** | **Judaism** |
| 5 | International Walk/Bike to School Day (Adopted by TDSB Motion April 2015) | National Centre for Safe Routes to School (USA) |
|  | 5 | World Teachers’ Day (Adopted by TDSB Motion April 2015) | UN |
|  | 7-11 | Durga Puja (Saptami) | Hinduism |
|  | 7-9 | Jalsa Salana | Islam |
|  | 9 | Durga Ashtami | Hinduism |
|  | 10 | Ashura\* | Islam |
|  | 10 | Thanksgiving Day | Public Holiday |
|  | 10 | Vijaya Dashami (10th Day of Navaratri) | Hinduism |
|  | 10 | World Mental Health Day | WHO |
|  | 10-17 | Week Without Violence (TDSB Date) | YMCA |
|  | **11** | **Dasehra\*\*** | **Hinduism** |
|  | 11 | International Day of the Girl | UN |
|  | 11 | Maun Agiyaras (Falls on 11th Day of Magshar Calendar = Oct-Nov) | Jain |
|  | **12** | **Yom Kippur\*** | **Judaism** |
|  | 16 | Kathina Ceremony/Pavarana Day | Buddhism |
|  | 16 | World Food Day | UN |
|  | 17 | International Day of the Eradication of Poverty | UN |
|  | 17-23 | Sukkot\* | Judaism |
|  | 19 | Karva Chauth | Hinduism |
|  | **20** | **Birth of the Ba’b** | **Baha’i** |
|  | **20** | **Installation of Guru Granth as Guru** | **Sikhism** |
|  | 24 | Shemini Atzeret\* | Judaism |
|  | 25 | Simchat Torah\* | Judaism |
|  | **29** | **Diwali Kali Puja** | **Hindusim** |
|  | **30** | **Bandi Chhor Divas** | **Sikhism** |
|  | **30** | **Diwali\*\*** | **Jain, Hinduism, Sikhism** |
|  | 31 | All Hallow’s Eve (Hallowe’en) | Christianity |
|  | 31 | New Year (Enlightenment of Gautam Swami) | Jain |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| ***November 2016***  - *Aboriginal Education Month* | 1 | All Saints Day | Eastern Orthodox & Roman Catholic |
| **1** | **Samhain\*** | **Wicca/Pagan** |
|  | 2 | Crowning of Emperor Haile Selassie I | Rastafari |
|  | 4 | Gyana Panchami | Jain |
|  | 11 | Remembrance Day | Canada |
|  | 12 | Birth of Baha’hu’llah | Baha’i |
|  | **14** | **Birthday of Guru Nanak** | **Sikhism** |
|  | 14 | Lokashaha Jayanti | Jain |
|  | 14 | Prakash | Sikhism |
|  | 14 | World Diabetes Day | WHO |
|  | 16 | Louis Riel Day (Toronto) | First Nations, Métis |
|  | 20 | Universal Children’s Day | UN |
|  | 20 | International Transgender Day of Remembrance | Gwendolyn Ann Smith, US Trans Advocate |
|  | 20-26 | Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week | Government of Ontario |
|  | 21 | Presentation of the Virgin Mary | Russian Orthodox Church |
|  | **24** | **Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur** | **Sikhism** |
|  | 25 | International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women | UN |
|  | 26 | Day of the Covenant\* | Baha’i |
|  | 26 | National Holodomor Memorial Day | Ukrainian Canadian Association |
|  | Nov 27-Dec 24 | Advent | Christianity |
|  |  |  |  |
| ***December 2016*** | 1 | World AIDS Day | UN |
|  | 2 | International Day of the Abolition of Slavery | UN |
|  | 3 | International Day of Persons with Disabilities | UN |
|  | TBA | Buddha’s Descent from Tushita Heaven | Tibetan Buddhism |
|  | 6 | National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women | Canada |
|  | 8 | Bodhi Day (Buddha Enlightenment) | Buddhism |
|  | 8 | St. Clements or Ohrid Patrons Day | Orthodox Macedonian |
|  | 10 | Human Rights Day | UN |
|  | 12 | Mawlid-al-Nabi | Islam |
|  | 13 | Birthday of Imam Agakhan | Islam |
|  | 18 | International Migrants Day | UN |
|  | **21** | **Winter Solstice – Yule\*** | **Wicca/Pagan** |
|  | **Dec 24-Jan 1** | **Hanukkah\*** | **Judaism** |
|  | **25** | **Christmas** | **Christianity and Public Holiday** |
|  | 26 | Ashu Zarathosht’s Death | Zoroastrianism |
|  | 26 | Boxing Day | Public Holiday |
|  | Dec 26-Jan 01 | Kwanzaa | African Canadian and American |
|  |  |  |  |
| ***January 2017***  *- Tamil Heritage Month* | **1** | **Gantan-sai New Year** | **Shinto** |
| 1 | New Year’s Day | International Public Holiday |
|  | **5** | **Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh** | **Sikhism** |
|  | 5 | Twelfth Night | Christianity |
|  | 6 | Feast of the Epiphany/Dia de los Reyes | Othodox and Western Christianity |
|  | 7 | Feast of the Nativity (Christmas – Julian Calendar) | Orthodox Christianity |
|  | 7 | Ethiopian Christmas | Rastarfari |
|  | 8 | Baptism of Jesus | Orthodox Egyptian |
|  | 8 | Pausha Putrada Ekadashi | Hindusim |
|  | 8-15 | Theravada Days of Mindfulness | Buddhism |
|  | 12-15 | Mahayana New Year\*\* | Buddhism |
|  | 13 | Punjabi Lohri | Hinduism (Punjabi) |
|  | 13 | Maghi | Sikhism |
|  | 14 | Makara Sankranti | Hindusim |
|  | 14 | New Year | Eastern Orthodox |
|  | 15 | World Religion Day | Baha’i |
|  | 16 | Martin Luther King Jr. Day | USA Federal Holiday |
|  | 16-20 | No Name Calling Week | Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network |
|  | 21 | Feast of the Wedding of Cana at Galilee | Orthodox Ethiopian |
|  | TBA | Birthday of Lord Zoroaster (Khordad Sal) in Pakistan | Zoroastrianism |
|  | 27 | International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust | UN |
|  | 27 | St. Sava Devine Service | Orthodox Serbian |
|  | 28 | Mehergan (1st Full Moon) | Zoroastrian |
|  | **28** | **Lunar New Year (Spring Festival)** | **Confucian, Daoist, Buddhism** |
|  | 29 | Jashan-e-Sadeh | Zoroastrian |
|  |  |  |  |
| ***February 2017***  *- African Heritage Month*  *- Black Queering Month*  *- Chinese Heritage Month* | **1** | **Imbolc\*** | **Wicca/Pagan** |
| 1 | Vasant Panchami\*\* | Hinduism |
| **3** | **Setsubun-sai\*\*** | **Shinto** |
| 6 | Bob Marley’s Earth Day | Rastafari |
|  | 6 | International Day of Zero Tolerance on Female Genital Cutting/Mutilation | WHO |
|  | 12-17 | Sexual and Reproductive Health Awareness Week | Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights |
|  | 14 | Day Promoting Rights to Sexual Health Education and Sexual Health Care for Youth Rights | International |
|  | **15** | **Buddha’s Death - (Nirvana Day of Miracles)\*\*** | **Buddhism - Mahayana** |
|  | 15 | Meeting of Our Lord | Orthodox Russian |
|  | 20 | Family Day | Ontario Public Holiday |
|  | 20 | World Day of Social Justice | UN |
|  | 21 | International Mother Language Day | UN |
|  | **23** | **Tibetan Buddha’s Birthday (14th Dalai Lama)** | **Buddhism - Tibetan** |
|  | 25 | Maha Shivaratri | Hinduism |
|  | 25-27 | Intercalary Days | Baha’i |
|  | 27 | Clean Monday | Eastern Orthodox |
|  | **27** | **Losar – Tibetan New Year** | **Tibetan** |
|  |  |  |  |
| ***March 2017***  - *Greek Heritage Month* | 1 | Ash Wednesday | Christianity |
| 8 | International Women’s and United Nations Day for Women’s Rights and International Peace | UN |
|  | **12** | **Purim** | **Judaism** |
|  | **11-12** | **Magha Puja Day/Lantern Festival** | **Buddism** |
|  | 13 | Holi\* | Hinduism |
|  | 13 | L. Ron Hubbard’s Birthday | Church of Scientology |
|  | **14** | **Sikh New Year** | **Sikhism** |
|  | 16 | Kuan Yin Birthday (Guan Yin) | Taiwanese |
|  | 19 | Holy Cross Day | Orthodox Greek |
|  | **20** | **Persian New Year (Spelling:Naruz or Nawruz)** | **Iranian National Holiday** |
|  | **20** | **Ostara\*/Lady Day (Spring Equinox)** | **Wicca/Pagan** |
|  | 20 | Spring Ohigan | Buddhism (Japanese) |
|  | 21 | Eid-e-Navroz (New Year Holy Day) | Baha’i/Zoroastrian |
|  | 21 | International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination | UN |
|  | 22 | World Water Day | UN |
|  | 24 | Hola Mohalla | Sikhism |
|  | 25 | The Anunciation | Eastern & Wester Christianity |
|  | 26 | Prophet Asho Zarthosht’s Birthday | Zoroastrian |
|  | 28 | Saka New Year (Nyepi) | Buddhism |
|  | 29 | Hindusim New Year (Ugandi) | Hinduism |
|  |  |  |  |
| ***April 2017***  - *Hispanic Heritage Month*  *- Latin American History Month*  *- Genocide Awareness Month*  *- Sikh Heritage Month* | 1 | Laudation of the Mother of God | Orthodox Russian |
| 5 | Shri Rama Navami | Hinduism |
|  | 7 | Annunciation | Orthodox and Western Christianity |
|  | 7 | World Health Day | WHO |
|  | **8** | **Japanese Buddha’s Birthday (Flower Day) (see 10 May 2017 footnote as well)** | **Buddhism - Japanese** |
|  | **9** | **Mahavir Jayanti\*\*** | **Jain** |
|  | **10-18** | **Pesach/Passover[[1]](#footnote-1)** | **Judaism** |
|  | 11 | Memorial to Christ’s Death | Jehovah’s Witness |
|  | 12 | International Day of Pink | Nova Scotia, Canada High School (unnamed) |
|  | **13** | **Vaisakhi** | **Sikhism** |
|  | **14** | **Good Friday** | **Christianity, Cdn. Public Holiday** |
|  | **14** | **Holy Friday** | **Orthodox Eastern** |
|  | **14** | **Mesha Sankranta - Solar New Year** | **Hinduism** |
|  | 14 | Vaisahki (Tamil New Year) | Taoist |
|  | **15** | **Sukyamuni Buddha’s Enlightenment** | **Buddhism** |
|  | **16** | **Easter** | **Christianity** |
|  | **16** | **Easter (Pascha)** | **Eastern Orthodox** |
|  | 17 | Easter Monday | Christianity |
|  | 17 | International Day of Silence | GLSEN |
|  | 20 | First Day of Ridvan | Baha’i |
|  | 21 | Grounation Day | Rastafari |
|  | 22 | Earth Day | UN |
|  | 23-24 | Yom HaShoah\* | Judaism |
|  | 24 | Isra’a and Miraj | Islam |
|  | 25 | The Recognition of the True Puh | Muslim |
|  | Apr 27- May 26 | Nisfu Shaban | Islam |
|  | 28 | Akshaya Tritya | Hinduism |
|  | 28 | National Day of Mourning | Canada |
|  | 29 | Ninth Day of Ridvan\* | Baha’i |
|  |  |  |  |
| ***May 2017***  *- Asian Heritage Month*  *- Jewish Heritage Month*  *- Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month* | **1** | **Beltane\*** | **Wicca/Pagan** |
| 2 | Twelfth Day of Ridvan | Baha’i |
|  | **3** | **Mahayana Buddha’s Birthday** | **Buddhism - Mahayana** |
|  | **3** | **Theravada Buddha’s Birthday** | **Buddhism - Theravada** |
|  | 8 | Feast of St. Mark | Orthodox Egyptian |
|  | **10** | **Wesak/Vesak/Saga Dawa/Buddha’s New Year (Buddha’s Birthday, Enlightenment, Death)[[2]](#footnote-2)** | **Buddhism - All Sects** |
|  | **10** | **Tibetan Buddha’s Enlightenment** | **Buddhism - Tibetan** |
|  | **10** | **Theravada Buddha’s Death** | **Buddhism - Theravada** |
|  | 11 | Bob Marley’s Transformation Day | Rastafari |
|  | 15 | International Day of Families | UN |
|  | 17 | International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia | Grassroots LGBTQ |
|  | 17 | International Family Visibility Day | Grassroots LGBTQ |
|  | **22** | **Queen Victoria Day** | **Public Holiday** |
|  | **23** | **Declaration of the Ba’b** | **Baha’i** |
|  | 25 | Ascension Day | Eastern Orthodox and Western Christianity |
|  | 25 | African Liberation Day | Rastafari |
|  | **May 26-Jun 24** | **Tibetan Buddha’s Enlightenment** | **Buddhism - Tibetan** |
|  | **May 27-Jun 26** | **Ramadan\*\*** | **Islam** |
|  | **29** | **The Ascension of Baha’u’llah\*** | **Baha’i** |
|  | 31 | World No Tobacco Day | WHO |
|  | May 31-Jun 1 | Shavuot\* | Judaism |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| ***June 2017***  *- Italian Heritage Month*  *- Portuguese Speaking Heritage Month*  *- PRIDE Month* | 1 | Intergenerational Day | Toronto Intergenerational Partnerships (TIGP) |
| Jun 1-July 2 | LGBTTQQI2S Pride Month (Toronto) | Toronto Pride |
|  | **4** | **Pentecost** | **Judaism, Eastern Orthodox and Western Christianity** |
|  | 5 | World Environment Day (WED) | UN |
|  | **9** | **Saga Dawa Festival - See Also 10 May 2017** | **Buddhism - Tibetan** |
|  | 12 | World Day Against Child Labour Day | UN |
|  | **16** | **Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib** | **Sikhism** |
|  | 17 | World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought | UN |
|  | 20 | World Refugee Day | UN |
|  | 21 | National Aboriginal Day (Canada) | First Nations, Métis, Inuit |
|  | 21 | Lailat al Qadr | Islam |
|  | **21** | **Litha/Summer Soltice\*** | **Wicca/Pagan** |
|  | 23 | Jumu’ahtual Wida | Islam |
|  |  | St. Jean Baptiste Day | Quebec and Francophone Culture |
|  | **25** | **Eid al Fitr\* \*\*** | **Islam** |
|  | 26 | International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking | UN |
|  | 26 | International Day in Support of Victims of Torture | UN |
|  |  |  |  |
| ***July 2017*** | **1** | **Canada Day** | **Public Holiday** |
|  | 6 | 14th Dalai Lama’s Birthday | Tibetan |
|  | 9 | Dharma Day - Asala | Buddhism |
|  | 9 | Duru Purnima | Buddhism/Jain |
|  | 9 | Martyrdom of the Ba’b | Baha’i |
|  | 11 | Imamat Day | Islam |
|  | **13-15** | **Obon\*\*** | **Shinto** |
|  | **15** | **Asalha Puja Day\*\*** | **Buddhism** |
|  | 16 | Ethiopian Constitution Day | Rastafari |
|  | 18 | Nelson Mandela International Day | UN |
|  | 27 | Chokor Korway Ducchen Festival | Tibetan |
|  | July 31-Aug 1 | Tishah B’av | Judaism |
|  |  |  |  |
| ***August 2017*** | 1 | Lughnassadh/Lammas | Wicca/Pagan |
|  | 6 | Transfiguration of Christ | Eastern Orthodox |
|  | 7 | Lord Simcoe Day/Founder’s Day | Civic Holiday |
|  | 7 | Raksha Bandham\*\* | Hinduism |
|  | 9 | International Day of the World’s Indigenous People | UN |
|  | 12 | International Youth Day | UN |
|  | 15 | Feast of the Dormition | Eastern Orthodox |
|  | 15 | Krishna Janmashtami\*\* | Hinduism |
|  | 17 | Marcus Garvey’s Birthday | Rastafari |
|  | 18 | Paryushana Parva | Jain |
|  | 23 | International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition | UN |
|  | 25 | Ganesh Chauturthi | Hinduism |
|  | 29 | Beheading of St. John the Baptist | Christianity |
|  | **Aug 30-Sept 4** | **Waqf al Arafa (Hajj)\* \*\*** | **Islam** |
|  |  |  |  |

1. Passover is divided into two parts: The first two days commemorate God’s punishment of the Egyptians by taking the life of their first born .The last two days commemorate the Splitting of the Red Sea by Moses to facilitate the escape of the Jews from their captures. On these four days no work, driving, writing or switching on or off of electrical devices is allowed. The middle four days are known as *Chol Hamoed* (semi-festive “intermediate days”), when most forms of work are permitted.

   <http://www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/pesach_cdo/aid/871715/jewish/What-Is-Passover-Pesach.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ***Visaka Puja/Wesak/Vesak/Saga Dawa/Buddha New Year) is on 10 May 2017 (All Buddhist, regardless of sect, celebrate this day) It is a combined Holy Day celebrating Buddha’s birth, enlightenment and death***

   ***Buddha’s Birth (where religious accommodation may be requested other than 10 May 2017)***

   1. Japanese Buddha’s Birthday is 08 April 2017 (Flower Day)
   2. Tibetan Buddha’s Birthday is 23 Feb 2017 (The 14th Dalai Lama’s Birthday, he is considered the 14th reincarnation of the original Buddha)
   3. Mahayana Buddha’s Birthday is on 03 May 2017
   4. Theravada Buddha’s Birthday is on 03 May 2017

   ***(footnote continued on next page)***

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   ***Buddha’s Enlightenment (where religious accommodation may be requested other than 10 May 2017***

   1. Japanese: 08 December 2017

   (Footnote continued on next page)

   1. Tibetan: 10 May 2017
   2. Mahayana: 08 December 2017
   3. Theravada: 10 May 2017

   ***Buddha’s Death (where religious accommodation may be requested other than 10 May 2017***

   1. Japanese: (use Main Holy Day) 10 May 2017
   2. Tibetan: Saga Dawa (Celebration of Buddha’s Birth Enlightenment and Death) 09 June, 2017
   3. Mahayana Buddha’s Death 15 Feb 2017
   4. Theravada Buddha’s Death: (use Main Holy Day) 10 May 2017

   [↑](#footnote-ref-2)