

Dwali

With special thanks to Coralie Navile a music teacher who “nudged” me into writing this song, Sunita Navile, who generously shared her Diwali family traditions with me, and all the wonderful Hindu families here in Seattle who have invited me into their homes to help celebrate their children’s birthdays. I have never left hungry!

Hinduism is the third largest religion in the world, and Diwali (pronounced Divali) also goes by many other names, including Deepavali. It is one of the most important and joyful Hindu celebrations. Popular stories of gods and goddesses teach the triumph of good over evil, and light over darkness. Like most major celebrations, the actual traditions vary from region to region, and from household to household. But typically it’s a 3 or 5 day celebration. Diwali literally means, “row of lights,” referring to the traditional “Diyas,” small clay lamps filled with oil. It is a lunar holiday, usually happening in October or November after the monsoon season, when the weather turns pleasant again. It is a colorful, joyful, spiritual, and history-rich celebration, and I encourage you to spend some time visiting the websites listed below to learn more. They are especially for children, and include “fun facts,” and simple crafts and activities

You may also want to visit your local library and check out an easy non-fiction book about Diwali, and show children where India is on a map or globe. Holiday songs are such a great way to learn about the world around us, and songs have a way of bringing us together in a way that nothing else can.

As is my style, this holiday song is intended only to be a simple introduction to a celebration my audience may not know about. And my audience is young and school aged children and their families. To my Hindu friends, I hope you enjoy this song, and encourage you to download the instrumental version so you can make up and use lyrics about your own family traditions. Happy Diwali!

Diwali

Suggested hand motions below:

For “**Diwali**,” hold hands together, then open fingers up as if making a small flame, or light)

All around the world (hold index finger out and circle in front of body)

Our Hindu friends (put one hand over the other for “friends)

are getting ready (open both hands out in front)

To celebrate Diwali the most joyful (open fingers and shoot hands out from body) time of year

The festival of lights (open fingers of each hand alternately, like fireworks)

and a new year brings Diwali

For family (cross arms in front) and friends (open hand out)

the most joyful (clap once) time of year (open hands out)

CHORUS: Five days long, (wave five fingers back and forth)

we will sing a joyful song (touch hands to lips and move hands out and up)

Five days long (wave five fingers back and forth)

light the Diyas join along (clap hands and sway back and forth)

On the first day clean the house (hold up one finger)

and help to make the decorations (hand on hand, and reverse, as if patting)

On the second day (hold up two fingers)

put on your brand new clothes (sweep hands down body)

and light the lights (index fingers in front, swaying (CHORUS)

The third day (hold up three fingers)

brings the new moon, (hold hand up in a “C” position for crescent)

and the biggest celebration

Let the fireworks and Diyas (hands alternate flicking up and out for fireworks)

chase the demons all away (“shoo” hands away from body (CHORUS)

On the fourth day (hold up 4 fingers)

pass around the sweets (Open hands sweep from left to right)

and such delicious food to eat (fingers together, moving toward mouth in rhythm)

The fifth days brothers join your sisters (join hands together)

all across the land (open hands out) (CHORUS)

Happy Diwali (hands together in prayer position)

to you and your family (hands open out, then hug body)

REPEAT

