

Calendar of Religious Observances 2011-2012

This calendar is annually reviewed and approved by Parkway's Religious Leaders organization, a diverse group of invited leaders of Parkway's religious community who serve in an advisory capacity to the superintendent. It is intended to increase awareness about many of the religious obligations and celebrations that may affect students, colleagues and neighbors. Board Policy IHAL.BP contains guidance regarding religion and teaching about religion in Parkway.

Dates	Observance
Aug. 1, 2011	Ramadan begins * # @ - Islam (students may fast during the day until Aug. 30 or 31)
Aug. 19, 2011	Jamshedi Norouz - Zoroastrian
Aug. 30 or 31, 2011	Eid ul Fitr*# - Ramadan ends - Islam
Sept. 29-30, 2011	Rosh Hashanah * - Jewish
Oct. 8, 2011	Yom Kippur * - Jewish
Oct. 13-19 (Oct. 13-14 are primary obligation days)	Sukkot * - Jewish
Oct. 20, 2011	Shemini Atzeret * - Jewish (Also Simchat Torah * for Reform Jewish)
Oct. 21, 2011	Simchat Torah * - Jewish
Oct. 26, 2011	Diwali (Deepavali) # @ - Hindu, Jain, Sikh
Nov. 6 or 7, 2011	Eid al-Adha * # - Islam
Nov. 12, 2011	Birth of Baha'u'llah * - Baha'i
Dec. 21-28, 2011	Hanukkah * @ - Jewish
Dec. 25, 2011	Christmas * @ - Christian
Jan. 23, 2012	Lunar (Chinese) New Year - Confucian/Daoist/Buddhist
Feb. 22, 2012	Ash Wednesday - Lent begins - Christian
March 8, 2012	Purim * - Jewish (may involve daytime fasting on March 7)
March 21, 2012	Feast of Naw Ruz (Iranian New Year and Baha'i New Year)* Jamshedi Norouz - Zoroastrian
April 5, 2012	Holy (Maundy) Thursday - Christian
April 6, 2012	Good Friday - Christian
April 7-8, 2012	Pesach (Passover) First two days * - Jewish (may involve daytime fasting on April 6)
April 8, 2012	Easter @ - Christian
April 13-14, 2012	Pesach (Passover) final two days * - Jewish
May 13, 2012	Buddha Day (Visakha Puja/Vesak) # - Buddhist
May 27-28, 2012	Shavuot * - Jewish

* Means that religious observance begins at sundown the day before this date.

Regional customs, group preferences or moon sightings may cause a variation of this date.

@ Not expected to affect school attendance.

Other resources: www.adl.org/education/calendar_of_observances.asp; www.interfaithcalendar.org;
<http://www.jrcstl.org/explanation.php#five>

Explanation of Religious Observances

(Listed in Alphabetical Order)

Ash Wednesday	Christian observance to begin the 40-day season of Lent. Ashes are marked on worshippers as a sign of penitence.
Birth of Baha' u' llah	Baha'i celebration of the birth of their founder and teacher. Refrain from work.
Buddha Day	Buddhists celebrate the birthday of Buddha.
Christmas	Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Observed by prayers, exchanging of gifts and family parties.
Diwali	Hindu Festival of Lights symbolizes the human urge to move toward the light. Gift exchanges, fireworks and festive meals. Jain celebration of Lord Mahavira's day of final liberation.
Easter	The most holy of Christian sacred days. The day commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ from his death by crucifixion. Observances include worship services beginning at sunrise, special music, feasting and parades.
Eid al-Adha	Islamic Feast of Sacrifice. The most important feast of Islam. It concludes the Hajj and is a three-day festival recalling Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience to Allah.
Eid ul Fitr (Id al-Fitr)	Islamic event marking the close of Ramadan. It is a festival of thanksgiving to Allah for enjoying the month of Ramadan. It involves wearing finest clothing, saying prayers and fostering understanding with other religions.
Feast of Naw Ruz	Iranian New Year and Baha'i observance of the vernal equinox symbolizing spiritual renewal.
Good Friday	Christian remembrance of the crucifixion of Jesus and related events.
Hanukkah	Jewish Festival of Lights. It commemorates the Maccabean recapture and rededication of the Jerusalem Temple in 165-164 b.c.e. Special readings and praise songs focus on liberty and freedom. The eight-candle Menorah is lighted.
Holy (Maundy) Thursday	Christian observance commemorating the Last Supper, at which Jesus and the Apostles were together for the last time before the Crucifixion. Celebrated on the Thursday before Easter.
Jamshedi Norouz	Zoroastrian New Year celebration.
Lunar (Chinese) New Year	Begins a 15-day festival for Chinese and other East and Southeast Asian people of all religions. Family reunions with thanksgiving and remembrance of departed relatives take place. Traditionally a religious ceremony honors Heaven and Earth.
Pesach (Passover)	Jewish eight-day celebration of the deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt. The story of the Exodus is recounted, and the ongoing struggle of all peoples for freedom from internal and external tyranny is celebrated. Special meals are a central feature.
Purim	Commemorates the rescue of the Jews in ancient Persia from a plot to exterminate them, and celebrates religious freedom.
Ramadan	Ninth month on the Islamic calendar, devoted to the commemoration of Prophet Muhammad's reception of the divine revelation recorded in the Qur'an. The event begins when the new moon of the ninth month is sighted. It is the holiest period of the Islamic Year. There is strict fasting from dawn to sunset each day for the entire month.
Rosh Hashanah	Marks the beginning of the Jewish year and begins a ten-day period of prayer and repentance, which ends on Yom Kippur. The holiday may be observed for one or two days.
Shavuot	Commemorates Moses' receiving the Torah (law) from God on Mt. Sinai. It is often the day of confirmation from weekend religious schools, usually while in the 10 th grade in public school.
Shemini Atzeret	"The Eighth (Day) of Assembly" is observed on the day immediately following Sukkot.
Simchat Torah	Marks the completion of the yearly cycle of reading the first five books of the Bible, known as Torah, or Jewish law, and starting the cycle over again.
Sukkot	Jewish festival of thanksgiving, marked by erecting booths as Jews did in ancient times during the harvest. May be celebrated for seven or eight days. Commemorates the 40-year wandering of the Israelites in the desert on the way to the Promised Land. The first two days are full holidays.
Yom Kippur	Jewish Day of Atonement. This holiest day of the Jewish year is observed with strict fasting and repentance.

Many sources are used for these definitions. They include books, Web sites, individuals, and journal articles. Check other online, print, or personal sources when in doubt. Regional and sectarian use of terms differs considerably.