

## A Diwali Celebration Story

The light outside was quickly fading as, with one final sweep of his broom, Vihaan looked around him to see that the room was looking much cleaner and tidier.

"Anika, how are you getting on in the kitchen?" he called through to his sister.

"Almost done," she replied, "I think we are nearly ready for the celebrations to begin. Why do we have to do all this cleaning though? It's only going to be untidy again after all our visitors and celebrations on Diwali!"

"It's important that we clean the dust and darkness from the house so we can welcome the new year and a new start," Vihaan explained, "Diwali is a celebration of light and new beginnings. If we don't have a clean home, we may not have a joyous year ahead".



At that moment, Mum came in and admired the work they had done. She told Vihaan and Anika to head to bed as they'd have to be up early in the morning ready to exchange gifts and their clean house meant they would be able to welcome the Goddess Lakshmi into their home. While they finished the cleaning, she had been busy decorating the house and garden with colourful Rangoli patterns on the floor made of rice.

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Next morning, Anika was full of excitement about the day ahead as she rushed into her brother's bedroom at 6.30am. She remembered that mum had given them an important job to do that morning and needed her brother's help.

"Wake up, Vihaan! Come on, we've got to put the lights outside ready for Lakshmi!" she shook him awake hastily, "What are they called again?"

"Diyas," mumbled Vihaan from under his duvet, "they're called diyas."

Reluctantly, he pulled himself out of bed and went with his sister to place the diya lamps all around the outside of the house to ensure the Goddess



Lakshmi would visit their home. All around them, they could see diya lamps on every doorstep. Once all the lamps had been lit, the children went back inside to get dressed for their day of celebrations. Mum was wearing her finest red and silver sari, Dad was wearing a green and gold kurta and dhoti (traditional tunic and trousers) and the children's colourful clothes were ready for them to put on quickly. As well as the colourful clothes, mum had decorated her hands with elaborate henna patterns.

"Oh, I do love all these beautiful colours and patterns!" exclaimed Anika.

Settling down together to say their prayers, the family shared gifts of sweets and fruit with each other. These sweets represent wealth and prosperity in the year ahead.

Once they had shared their own gifts and prayers, they stepped out in their colourful clothes. As they walked to the temple, the family were joined by friends and neighbours all going together to give thanks for the past year, receive forgiveness for wrongdoings and look forward to a joyful new year. The rest of the day passed by in a whirl of taking gifts to friends, family and people in need, eating favourite foods, receiving blessings and plenty of music!



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"Gosh, I'm so tired," yawned Vihaan, "this is more exhausting than yesterday's cleaning!"

"But the best bit is still to come! You can't go to bed yet!" Anika said, "Tell him, Dad, why do we have the fireworks?"

Dad explained that the celebrations are about good and light sweeping aside evil and darkness just like Rama rescues Sita from the demon Ravana with the help of Hanuman.

"And the fireworks remind us of why we are celebrating. They keep the skies around our homes full of light and welcoming for the Goddess Lakshmi," Vihaan answered.

"They really are spectacular," gasped Anika, "but do you think I'll sleep well tonight".



# Questions

1. What time of day is it as the story begins? How do we know?

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2. Why are Vihaan and Anika cleaning the house?

In preparation for the new year. ☐

Mum told them their rooms were untidy. ☐

They celebrated Diwali yesterday. ☐

It's Dad's birthday tomorrow. ☐

3. Who are they hoping will visit tomorrow?

Rama ☐

Sita ☐

Goddess Lakshmi ☐

Their grandparents ☐

4. What does the word Rangoli mean?

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5. What was the first thing the children needed to do in the morning?

Say prayers with their family. ☐

Put their colourful clothes on. ☐

Exchange gifts. ☐

Light the diya lamps. ☐

6. What are the names of the clothes mum and dad wear on Diwali?

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7. Match up the sentences.

Mum had decorated gifts of sweets and fruit.

The family shared her hands with henna patterns.

They joined their friends to go to temple.

8. Explain what the sweet gifts represent.

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9. Name two ways that Diwali is celebrated.

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10. Who did Rama rescue from the demon Ravana?

Hanuman ☐

Sita ☐

Lakshmi ☐

Vihaan ☐