

**Diwali, known as the Festival of Lights, is a very special holiday that is celebrated in India every year. Lighting oil lamps and decorating homes with lights are important traditions on this holiday. Many people also enjoy firecrackers and sweets as they celebrate goodness and light!**

Materials Needed: Mini flashlights

Ask children to recall the name of the celebration we are learning about this week--Diwali. Diwali is a festival of lights. The word Diwali begins with the letter D. D makes the /d/ sound. Do any children have a name that begins with D? Point that out. Can they remember what the word "Diwali" means--row of lights. What is a row (a line)? The festival of Diwali lasts for five days and is the biggest, grandest, and the brightest festival of India. Why do you think it would be described as the 'brightest' festival? What celebrations do we have in the USA that also involve lights in a big way (Christmas)? The festival marks the victory of good over bad. Ask children to name some things that make light...lamp, light, lantern, candle, flashlight. What is the opposite of light (dark)? Ask children what kinds of things they can do when it is light. What kinds of things can they do when it is dark? Turn out the lights in the classroom (and close the curtains or blinds if you can). Ask children which they like better, light or dark. Ask why they like one better. Ask children what they can do to bring more light into the room (hand each one a mini flashlight). Turn on the flashlights. Caution children about shining the light in someone's eyes. Have them stand up and arrange themselves in rows of 5. They are a 'row of lights.' Ask children if they have ever played with sparklers. Encourage them to twirl the lights like they would a sparkler.

Teach the children a Diwali song (to the tune of London Bridge):

*Little lamps are burning bright,  
Burning bright, burning bright.  
Little lamps are burning bright,  
It is Diwali.*

*See them lighting up the night,  
Up the night, up the night.  
See them lighting up the night,  
It is Diwali.*

### Domains - Skills and Concepts

### PTLA Alignment

**Physical-** standing up/sitting down, waving flashlights like sparklers, following safety rules  
**Language and Communication-** India, Diwali, light, row, bright, light, sparkler, responding to questioning, recalling previous knowledge; Pre-literacy-phonological awareness, beginning sounds, rhythm, rhyme and repetition (song)  
**Cognitive-** Math-number sense- 5, creating sets of 5; Science-light and dark; Technology-using tools (flashlights); Cultural/Social Studies- India, Diwali  
**Social/Emotional-** interact positively in a group, self-regulation, working together to achieve a goal  
**Approaches to Learning-** attentiveness, eagerness, willingness

**3K:** 3-PD.1  
 3-LLD.6,9,10  
 3-CD.9,10,12,17  
 3-SED.6,10  
 3-AL.1,2,7  
**4K:** 4-PD.1  
 4-LLD.8,14  
 4-CD.9,12,13,15,19  
 4-SED.7,8,9,12  
 4-AL.1,2,8

**Diwali, known as the Festival of Lights, is a very special holiday that is celebrated in India every year. Lighting oil lamps and decorating homes with lights are important traditions on this holiday. Many people also enjoy firecrackers and sweets as they celebrate goodness and light!**

*Materials Needed: Picture of diyas found in **Appendix 1.2**, air-dry clay, small shiny objects for decorating (sequins, beads, gemstones), battery operated tea lights, cardamom spi*

Explain to children that a diya is a small lamp, traditionally made from clay and containing oil and a wick. The lamps are lit to celebrate the triumph of light (good over evil) during Diwali. Do you ever use lights for decorating at holidays (candles at birthday parties, strings of lights on a house or tree at Christmas, fireworks and sparklers on the Fourth of July)? Have you ever seen your neighborhood decorated with lights? When did you see it? What did you think about it? Why do you think the lights were on display in your neighborhood?

Tell children that, today, they will be able to make their own diya and that we will use battery tea lights instead of oil and wicks...because it is safer! Give each child some clay and invite them to form it into a ball.

Next, let the children smell the cardamom. Cardamom is a type of spice produced in India. Spices make our foods taste better. Ask children which spices they like best (salt, pepper, cinnamon, etc.)? Allow children to decide if they would like to add some cardamom into their clay to make it smell nice. If they decide to use it, sprinkle a bit of cardamom spice on the children’s clay and have them knead (push, pull, pound, and fold) the clay to work it in. Instruct children to flatten the balls, use their fingers to mold them into small bowls, and then decorate them. Test that a tea light will fit in the center of each bowl before letting them dry.

Let the diyas dry and then use them throughout the week as Diwali decorations during meal times. The children can place their diyas in a row down the center of the table and light the lights while they enjoy meals together. Remember Diwali means “row of lights.” Ask children to think of other ways they can use their diyas during the Diwali celebration week.

*Younger children- You may need to help them to manipulate the clay in order to make room for the tea light.*

*Older children- If the tea light doesn’t fit into their mold, ask them what they need to do to solve that problem.*

**Domains - Skills and Concepts**

**PTLA Alignment**

**Physical:** fine motor, molding clay, manipulating small objects

**3K:** 3-PD.5,6

**Language and Communication:** diya, tea light, Diwali- row of lights, knead, cardamom, gaining understanding through listening, responding to questioning,

3-LLD.6,8

**Cognitive:** Science- using senses, lights, cause and effect; Engineering- designing their pot with space for the tea light; Art- creativity; Culture/Social Studies- India, Diwali holiday, cardamom spice

3-CD.10,13,17

3-SED.8

**Social/Emotional:** confidence in abilities, planning

3-AL.2,7,13

**4K:** 4-PD.5,6

**Approaches to Learning:** creativity, imagination and inventiveness, persistence, effort

4-LLD.2,3,8

4-CD.13,17,19

4-SED.5

4-AL.2,10,15