

Lesson- 8

Our Festivals



Observe the above pictures. Discuss in groups and answer the questions given below.

- What do you see in the pictures?
- What type of activities can be seen in each of the pictures?
- Why and when these activities are done?
- Write the names of some festivals that you celebrate.

What do we mean by festivals?

By festivals we generally mean delight and happiness, wearing new clothes, having different types of delicacies, dancing, singing etc. Festivals are certain traditional rituals and functions celebrated by the people of different castes, communities and religions. Festivals are celebrated together with pomp and gaiety.

Different communities of Assam can be seen celebrating some particular days of the year by following certain customs and traditions. Activities performed and enjoyed by observing the customs and traditions are **known as festivals**.

Festivals help in developing the feelings of unity and brotherhood among us. Festivals also help in preserving our traditions and culture.

Assam is an agricultural state. Most of the people here are involved with agriculture. In India, some festivals are celebrated which are related to agriculture, such as– Bihu of Assam, Onam of Kerela, Pongal of Tamil Nadu, etc.

Bihu

Bihu is the regional festival of Assam. Bihu is celebrated by all irrespective of caste, religion, language etc. Bihu has an inseparable connection with agriculture. This is the reason Bihu is regarded as an agriculture based festival. There are three Bihus– Bohag Bihu, Kati Bihu and Magh Bihu.

Bohag Bihu starts from the last day of the Assamese month of 'chot'. This Bihu continues for seven days. The first day of this Bihu is 'Goru Bihu'. In the morning of, the Goru Bihu cattles are bathed with black gram and turmeric paste. In the evening, the owner ties the cow with new rope, lights lamp and incense and smokes the cow-shed using a new hand fan to protect the cattles from mosquitoes and flees.



Goru Bihu

In this way, their growth and good health is wished. This is a very wonderful example of the spiritual relation between human and animals.

Discuss in group and say-

- What else is done in your area, besides bathing the cows on the day of 'Goru Bihu'.

The second day of Bohag Bihu is celebrated as 'Manuh Bihu', 'Bihuwan' 'Gamocha' is exchanged among each other during this Bihu. The young ones take blessing from the elders by bowing down and touching their feet. The village folks visit each household and sing 'Husori' with 'Dhol', 'Pepa', 'Gogona' and pray for their well-being. Bohag Bihu is also known as Rongali Bihu as it is celebrated with lots of entertainment and enjoyment. This Bihu is celebrated for seven days starting from the day of Goru Bihu.

Let's know-

The third day of Bohag Bihu is known as 'Gosai Bihu', the fourth day as 'Taat Bihu', the fifth day as 'Nangol Bihu', the sixth day as 'Jiyori Senehi Bihu' and the seventh day as 'Sera Bihu'. All these days are celebrated accordingly with significance.

The Kati Bihu is celebrated on the 'Sangkranti' or 'Domahi' of the 'Ahin' and 'Kati' month of the Assamese calendar. In this Bihu every household



plants the holy basil tree and lights lamp in the evening beneath it and sings religious hymns called 'naam'. Lamps are also lit. In this way, Goddess Lakshmi is also welcomed to the paddy fields. People face a shortage of food grains during this period, so this Bihu is also known as Kangali Bihu.

The 'Magh Bihu' is celebrated on the 'Sangkranti' of 'Pooh' and 'Magh' month of the Assamese calendar. At this time, the people of Assam collect the grain from the fields and store it in their granary (Bharal). The deficit and scarcity problem resolves. Since people relish delicacies (Bhog) in this Bihu, this Bihu is also known as Bhogali Bihu. People have a feast together during the 'Uruka' night in the 'Bhela-Ghar'. People cut leftover



paddy straws from the paddy fields and make the Bhela ghar in an open space. Next morning every one takes bath and burns the 'Meji' built earlier and worships the fire God. In this Bihu various delicacies such as 'Sandah', Curds and varieties of 'Pithas' are also prepared in every house hold.

Discuss in group and write-

- How do you celebrate Magh Bihu?
- Prepare a list of the names of different 'Pithas'.

Just like the various festivals celebrated in Assam, variety of festivals with different names are celebrated in other states of India. Some festivals are celebrated based on the season, some on rituals and religions, and some are based on agriculture. Among these festivals, 'Onam' festival of Kerela, 'Pongal' festival of Tamil Nadu, 'Pous Shankranti' of Odisha, 'Nababarsha' (Bengali New Year) of West Bengal, 'Baisakhi' of Punjab, 'Chat puja' of Bihar and 'Ganesh chaturthi' of Maharashtra are worth mentioning. Moreover various festivals such as Raksha Bandhan, Eid, Christmas, Durga puja, Diwali, Saraswati puja etc. are celebrated throughout India. All these festivals build the feeling of brotherhood, national unity and integrity among us.

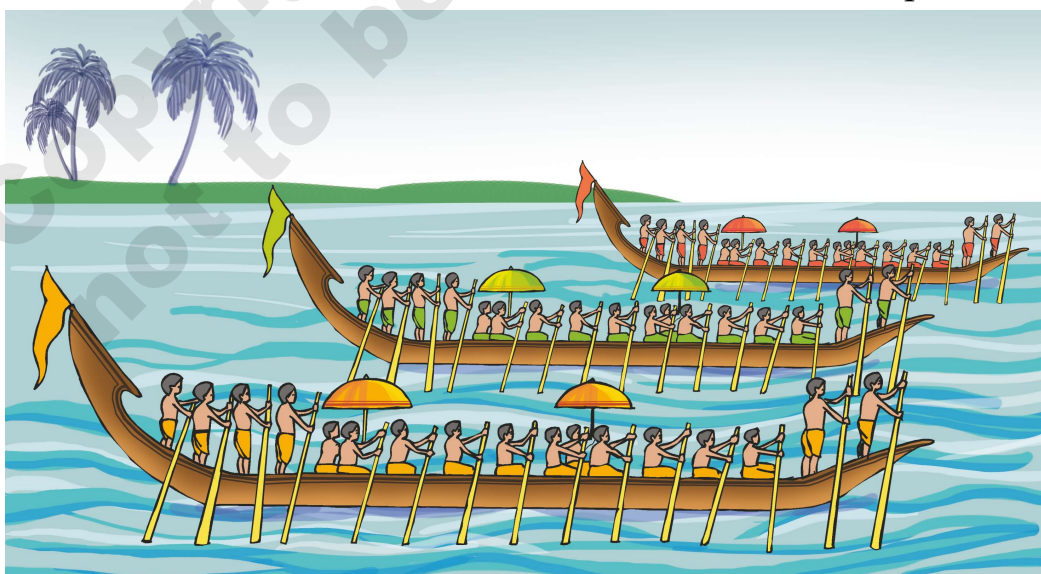
Onam Festival

Onam is the prime festival of the state of Kerela, situated in the south western part of India. In the morning of Onam festival, young children come out to collect flowers and sing songs. This festival is celebrated after the collection of grains from the field during the Assamese month of 'Sawan' and 'Bhada'. This festival



Kaikottikali dance

continues for ten days. This festival has an inseparable relation with the **Kaikottikali** dance and **Vallamkali** boat race. All the classes of people of this state associated themselves with this festival. Onam is a secular festival. Hindus, Muslims and Christians celebrate this festival with equal interest.



Vallamkali boat race

Pongal festival

Pongal festival is celebrated in the state of Tamil Nadu. Pongal festival can be compared to the Bhogali Bihu of our state. On that day every one cleans their homes and collect the garbage in one corner. After having a social dinner at night, in the next morning they put fire just like we do with 'Meji' in 'Magh Bihu'. In this festival everyone enjoys playing the Drum together.



Let's try to locate-

➤ Locate the state of Kerela and Tamil Nadu in the map of India.

In our state Assam, people of different caste, community and religion live together with unity and harmony. Among the tribes of Assam the Dimasa, Bodo, Rabha, Mising, Tiwa, Deuri, Karbi, Sonowal Kachari, Tea Tribe etc. are singnificant .These tribes have their own festivals. The names of some tribes of Assam and the festivals celebrated by them are mentioned in the list below.

Name of Tribe	Festivals Celebrated
1. Mising	Ali Ayi Ligang
2. Tai-Ahom	Me-Dum-Me-Phi
3. Buddhist Tai (Tai Phake, Tai Khamyang, Tai Khamti Tai Aaiton and Tai Turung)	Poi Sangken
4. Bodo	Baishagu, Kherai festival
5. Rabha	Baikho or Khuksi
6. Karbi	Chomangkan, Hacha Kekan
7. Dimasa	Busu Dima
8. Tiwa	Langkhon Puja
9. Tea Tribe	Karam Parva
10. Thengal Kachari	Taro Chira

Picture of various festivals are given below. With the help of your teacher discuss in group and identify the festival that belongs to the particular group-



In our country India, people of different religions reside together. Festival of every religion is celebrated with lots of enjoyment. Such as- Diwali, Eid, Gurunanak Jayanti, Christmas, Buddha Purnima etc.

Diwali

Diwali is the festival of lights. We light lamps, and candles in the evening and have sweets. Don't we?

- What do you do on the festivals of Diwali?



Do you know?

All of you love to burst different types of fire crackers during Diwali isn't it? As a result of fire crackers, air pollution, sound pollution and light pollution are created. These pollutions cause harm to the living beings. The tremendous sound created by firecrackers can cause death of some birds and animals. Discuss and know about this topic from your teacher.

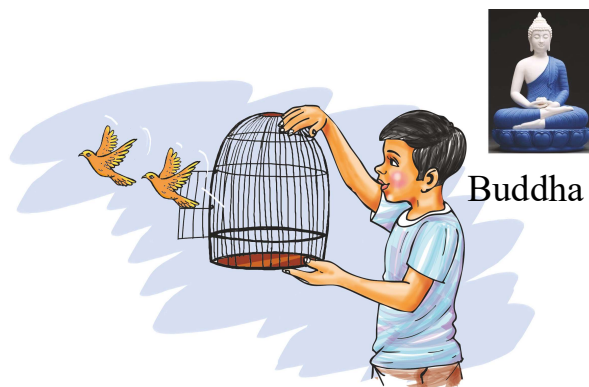
Eid

Eid is celebrated by the people of the Islam religion. There are two Eids, Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-zuha. In Eid everyone wears new clothes and reads the Namaj collectively. They forget the difference about rich and poor, hug and wish each other. Variety of delicacies are prepared in each household. The poor are given donations so that they can get their necessary food items. They can also buy a pair of new cloth and celebrate Eid with lots of happiness with everyone around.



Buddha Purnima

The propagator of Buddhism is Gautam Buddha. The birth, enlightenment and death of Buddha took place on the 'Purnima Tithi' of the 'Bohag' month. Thus the day of full moon of the 'Bohag' month is celebrated as **Buddha Purnima** by the Buddhist people. Along with India, people of different countries who follow Buddhism celebrate this day. Birds and other animals are released from their cages on this day in accordance to the preaching of non-violence by Buddha.



Christmas

Christmas is a festival which is celebrated by the Christians. This festival is celebrated on the 25th of December to mark the birthday of Jesus Christ.



In this festival the people of the Christian religion buy new clothes and pray collectively at the church. A christmas tree is decorated with colourful lights and toys in this festival. Everyone circles around the tree dancing and singing songs. They wish each other and the elders give gifts to the young ones. Family friends and relatives get together and have a feast. This festival brings family and friends closer to each other.

Gururnanak Jayanti

Gurunanak was the propagator of the Sikh religion. The birthday of Gurunanak is celebrated as Gurunanak Jayanti by the Sikh people which falls on the 'Purnima Tithi' (Full moon) in the month of 'Kati'. The Sikh people go to the Gurudwara on that day. There they read the messages or sayings of their Guru with great devotion. In the Golden Temple of Amritsar and other Gurudwaras, the people who take part in the celebration are served with food. This food is known as 'Guru ka Langar'.



Gurunanak

Holi:

Holi is celebrated all over india. This festival is celebrated on the 'Purnima Tithi' in the month of 'Phagun'. People of different religion enjoy by taking part in this festival. Holi is celebrated in different ways in different parts of India. In Assam, this festival is known as 'Doul Utsav'.

Although at first the festival of Holi was celebrated as the festival of Lord Shri Krishna and his Gopis, but with the change in time people of all regions have started to celebrate this festival. Being celebrated during the spring season, this festival is also known as 'Basanta festival' in some places.

know from your teachers and guardians and write-

➤ In which districts of Assam is the 'Doul Utsav' celebrated with full of devotion great respect and enjoyment?

Be careful when you play with colours during Holi, so that the chemicals donot enter your eyes. Play with organic colours as much as possible. Do not put colours on the animals. The chemicals contained in the colours may damage the skin.

Exercise

1. Write short answers-
 - (a) What is the name of the festival celebrated by the people of the Sikh religion?
 - (b) Christmas is celebrated by people of which religion?
 - (c) Which festival of Assam has similarity with Pongal?
 - (d) When is Buddha Purnima celebrated?
 - (e) What is the name of the festival of colours that is celebrated all over India?
2. Put '✓' mark on the correct answer-
 - (a) Gurunanak is the propogator of Buddhism/Sikhism/Christianity.
 - (b) Bihu/Holi/Diwali is a festival based on Agriculture.
 - (c) 'Bhelaghar' is made during Rangali Bihu/Kangali Bihu/Bhogali Bihu.
3. Write down what do you understand by the word festival.
4. Why should we celebrate festivals?
5. Write five sentences about any festival that you like.
6. How is Holi celebrated?
7. Write five sentences about what is done on Magh Bihu.
8. What is done on the day of Goru Bihu other than bathing the cow?
9. Draw a picture of a christmas tree.
10. Draw a big picture of a balloon and make a collage.

