

	Aboriginal Spirituality 2008-2009	Bahá'í 165-166	Buddhism 2552-2553	Cao Dai 2008-2009	Christianity 2008-2009	Hinduism 2065-2066	Islam 1429-1430	Jainism 2534-2535	Judaism 5769-5770	Sikhism 538-539	Wicca 2008-2009	Zoroastrianism 1378-1379	Canadian Holidays 2008-2009
JULY 2008		9 - Martyrdom of the Bab	13-16 - Obon 18 - Asaha Puja Day				30 - Isra and Miraj	18 - Guru Purnima				19 or 20 - Navroze (New Year) (GC) 24 or 25 - Khordad Sal (GC)	1 - Canada Day
AUGUST 2008			5 - Dharma Day 10 - Ulambana	15 - Ram "Trung Nguon"		16 - Rakshabandan 24 - Sri Krishna Janmashtami	16 - Nisfu Sha'ban	28 - Paryushan Parva (begins) 24 - Samvatsari (begins)	10 - Tishah B'Av		1 or 2 - Lughnassadh / Lammass	2 or 7 - Farvardegan (GC) 11 - Navroze (New Year) (SC) 24 - Khordad Sal (SC)	4 - Civic Holiday (ON)
SEPTEMBER 2008	19 - Powley Day		14 or 26 - Lantern Festival	14 - Dieu Tri Kim Mau	11 - Nayrouz (J)	3 - Ganesh Chaturthi 29 - Sharad Navaratri (begins)	2 - Ramadan (fasting begins) 28 - Lailat-ul-Qadr	3 - Dashahana Parva (begins) 4 - Samvatsari (Paryushan ends) 14 - Anant Chaturdashi 15 - Kshamavani	Sept. 30-Oct. 1 - Rosh Hashanah	1 - Installation of Holy Scriptures of Guru Granth Sahib	22 - Harvestide	6 - Farvardegan (SC) Sept. 29 or Oct. 2 - Mehergan (FC)	1 - Labour Day
OCTOBER 2008		20 - Birth of the Bab	14 - Pavarana Day			7 - Durgashami 9 - Vijaya Dashmi / Dashehra 17 - Karva Chauth 29 - Diwali 29 - New Year	1 - Eid-ul-Fitr	28 - Mahavir Nirvan, Diwali 29 - New Year & Day of Enlightenment of Lord Gautamswami	Sept. 30-Oct. 1 - Rosh Hashanah 9 - Yom Kippur 14-20 - Sukkot 20-21 - Simchat Torah	20 - Installation of the Guru Granth Sahib 28 - Bandi Chhor Divas		Sept. 29 or Oct. 2 - Mehergan (FC)	13 - Thanksgiving Day
NOVEMBER 2008	16 - Louis Riel Day	12 - Birth of Baha'u'llah 21 - Day of the Covenant 28 - Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha	9 - Kathina Ceremony	12 - Ram "Ha Nguon"	1 - All Saints Day 25 - First Day of Advent (J)			3 - Gnan Panchami 13 - Dev Diwali		13 - Birth of Guru Nanak 24 - Martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur	1 - Samhain		
DECEMBER 2008			8 - Bodhi Day		25 - Christmas 30 - First Day of Advent		9 - Waqfatu'Arfat 8 or 10 - Eid-ul-Adha 29 - New Year (Hijra)	9 - Maun Agiyaras	22-29 - Chanukah		21 - Yule	26 - Zarathosth-no-diso (FC)	25 - Christmas Day 26 - Boxing Day
JANUARY 2009				3 or 4 - Sakyamuni Buddha's Enlightenment 26 - Vietnamese New Year, Maitreya Bodhisattva Birthday, Chinese New Year	1 - New Year's Day 6 - Epiphany 7 - Christmas (J) 14 - New Year's Day (J) 19 - Epiphany (J)	13 - Lohri 14 - Makar Sankranti 31 - Vasant Panchami	7 - Ashura			5 - Birth of Guru Gobind Singh 13 - Maghi		24 - Jashn-e-Sadeh (GC) 31 - Mehergan (GC)	1 - New Year's Day
FEBRUARY 2009		Feb. 26-March 1 - Intercalary Days	8 - Sakyamuni Buddha's Nirvana Day 9 - Magha Puja	9 - Ram Trung Nguon	25 - Ash Wednesday (Lent begins)	23 - Mahashivaratri					1 or 2 - Imbolc		16 - Family Day (ON)
MARCH 2009		2-20 - Bahá'í Fast 21 - Feast of Naw Ruz (New Year)	15 - Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva's Birthday			11 - Holi 27 - New Year / Vasant Navaratri (begins)	8 or 9 - Milad-un-Nabi		10 - Purim	11 - Holi Mohalla 14 - Sikh New Year	20 - Ladyday	2 - Mehergan (SC) 21 - Navroze (New Year) (FC) 26 - Khordad Sal (FC)	
APRIL 2009		21 - Ridvan (1st day) 29 - Ridvan (9th day)	13 - Sinhalese New Year		10 - Good Friday 12 - Easter 13 - Easter Monday 17 - Good Friday (J) 19 - Easter (J) 20 - Easter Monday (J)	2 - Vaisakhi or Baisakhi 3 - Shri Ramnavami		7 - Lord Mahavir's Birth 5 - Last day of Paryushan	9-15 - Pesach (Passover) 21 - Yom HaShoah	14 - Vaisakhi		8 - Fravardigan (FC) 25 or 26 - Zarthost-no-Diso (GC)	10 - Good Friday 13 - Easter Monday
MAY 2009		2 - Ridvan (12th day) 23 - Declaration of the Bab 29 - Ascension of Baha'u'llah	1 or 8 - Sakyamuni Buddha's Birthday 8 - Wesak Day		31 - Pentecost				29 - Shavout		1 - Beltane	25 - Jashn-e-Sadeh (GC) 25 or 26 - Zarthost-no-Diso (SC)	18 - Victoria Day
JUNE 2009	21 - National Aboriginal Day 22-26 - National Aboriginal Week		7 - Posen		7 - Pentecost (J) 15 - All Saints Day (J)					16 - Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev	21 - Litha	24 - Jashn-e-Sadeh (SC)	
JULY 2009		9 - Martyrdom of the Bab	10 - Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva's Enlightenment			6 - Guru Purnima	19 - Isra's and Miraj	7 - Guru Purnima	30 - Tishah B'Av			20 - Navroze (New Year) (GC) 25 - Khordad Sal (GC)	1 - Canada Day
AUGUST 2009			4 - The Buddhist Joy-Day 10 - Ulambana			5 - Rakshabandan 14 - Sri Krishna Janamashtami 23 - Ganesh Chaturthi	4 or 6 - Nisfu Sha'ban 22 - Ramadan (fasting begins)	18 - Paryushan Parva (begins) 24 - Samvatsari, Dashahana Parva (begins)			1 or 2 - Lughnassadh / Lammass	6 or 7 - Farvardigan (GC) 19 - Navroze (New Year) (SC) 24 - Khordad Sal (SC)	3 - Civic Holiday (ON)
SEPTEMBER 2009	19 - Powley Day		3 - Lantern Festival	3 - Dieu Tri Kim Mau		2 - Anant Chaturdashi 19 - Sharad Navaratri (begins) 25 - Durgashami 28 - Vijaya Dashmi / Dashehra	16 - Lailat-ul-Qadr 20 or 21 - Eid ul Fitr	4 - Anant Chaturdashi 5 - Kshamavani	20-21 - Rosh Hashanah 28 - Yom Kippur	1 - Installation of Holy Scriptures of Guru Granth Sahib	22 - Harvestide	6 - Fravardigan (SC)	7 - Labour Day
OCTOBER 2009		20 - Birth of the Bab	6 - Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva's Pravrajya	3 - Dieu Tri Kim Mau		7 - Karva Chauth 17 - Diwali 18 - New Year		18 - Lord Mahavir Nirvan / Diwali 19 - Day of Enlightenment / New Year 23 - Gnan Panchami	3-4 - Sukkot 10-11 - Simchat Torah	17 - Bandi Chhor Divas 20 - Installation of the Guru Granth Sahib as Guru		2 - Mehergan (FC)	12 - Thanksgiving
NOVEMBER 2009	16 - Louis Riel Day	12 - Birth of Baha'u'llah 26 - Day of the Covenant 28 - Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha			1 - All Saints Day 15 - First Day of Advent 28 - First Day of Advent (J)		26 - Waqfatu'Arfat 27 - Eid ul Adha	2 - Dev Diwali 28 - Maun Agiyaras		2 - Birth of Guru Nanak Dev 24 - Martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur	1 - Samhain		
DECEMBER 2009			3 - Amitabha Buddha's Birthday 8 - Bodhi Day	1 - Ram "Ha Nguon"	25 - Christmas		18 - New Year (Hijra) 27 - Ashura		12-19 - Chanukah		21 - Yule	26 - Zarthosth-no-Diso (FC)	25 - Christmas Day 26 - Boxing Day

Bahá'í, Judaism & Wicca - holy days in these faiths begin at sunset on the evening prior to date shown and end at sunset the last day shown; **Christianity** - dates for Christianity are based on the Gregorian calendar unless specified as Julian (J); **Islam** - dates are tentative as some may vary based on the sighting of the moon; **Zoroastrianism** - Fasi Calendar (FC), Qadmi Calendar (QC) and Shahenshahi Calendar (SC).

Dates in **bold** lettering are approved holy days according to the Peel District School Board Leaves of Absence policy #23 and O.P. HRS #42. Staff from faiths not listed in this calendar may submit a written request for exception(s) to the Leaves of Absence policy. Please see O.P. HRS #42 for more information. Canadian and Ontario holidays listed here are recognized by the Peel District School Board as statutory holidays.

The students and staff of the Peel District School Board represent a rich diversity of faith traditions. This calendar helps identify some of the important days of commemoration, however it isn't designed to be a complete listing of religious days. Students and staff from a particular faith background may or may not be absent from school on these special days. If they do attend, certain accommodations may be required.

Time is measured either according to:

- the sun - solar calendar (Aboriginal, Bahá'í, Christian, Sikh and Zoroastrian calendars)
- the moon - lunar calendar (Islamic calendar)
- combination of both the sun and the moon - lunisolar calendar (Buddhist, Cao Dai, Chinese, Hindu, Jain and Jewish calendars)

Faith Forward
Understanding and embracing the wide diversity of faiths and cultures represented by Peel board students and staff is the vision of a series of programs and resources entitled *Faith Forward*. The program includes the following:

- Holy Days and Holidays* calendar with important dates in 12 world religions throughout the school year
- monthly Celebrating Faith and Culture Backgrounder* with information about each religious and cultural celebration observed in the Peel community and throughout the world
- Reflections on World Religions* guide to provide teachers and students with brief information about the origins, scriptures and main beliefs of major world religions
- resources for building inclusive schools
- collaborating with the faith communities in Peel to create stronger partnerships
- training programs to help create sensitivity and awareness of the varying needs of students and staff from all faith and culture backgrounds

Aboriginal spirituality
Native cultures have practiced and maintained their spirituality over centuries through ceremonies, customs and traditions that are an integral part of their being. The Supreme Being, the creator, is a fundamental figure in their religious pursuits. Spirituality for Aboriginal people is closely linked to Nature and Mother Earth. In their quest for spirituality, they strive for balance and harmony in their lives. Their spiritual and cultural life is interconnected. Followers of Aboriginal spirituality celebrate seasonal festivals.

Bahá'í
Bahá'í (1817-1892) founded the Bahá'í faith on the belief of the oneness of God, religion and humanity. Adherents value universal principles such as love, equality, social justice, honesty, kindness etc. while accepting social and scientific changes in their day-to-day lives. Followers of the faith take personal responsibility for their spiritual growth. The Bahá'í faith is governed by spiritual assemblies made up of nine or more members and does not have clergy to guide worship.

In the Bahá'í calendar, there are 19 months of 19 days each with four intercalary days (five in leap year). Each month represents an attribute of God. The first month starts with the New Year (March 21) and the last ends with 19 days fast. The Bahá'í day starts at sunset.

Buddhism
Siddhartha Gautam, the first Buddha, founded Buddhism in the 6th century BCE in Northern India. Two major forms of Buddhism evolved as it spread across Asia. The Theravada (southern) tradition is found in Burma, Cambodia, India, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and parts of Vietnam. The Mahayana (northern) tradition is found in China, India, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Tibet and Vietnam. Buddhist teachings guide followers to attain liberation from rebirth through Dharma (Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path) and Karma (action with cause and effect). Buddhist calendars vary based on the diverse traditions of the adherents' school of thought. This calendar reflects major dates in all three of the Buddhist calendars.

Cao Dai
Cao Dai was founded in 1926 in Vietnam by Ngo Minh Chieu, also known as Ngo Van Chieu. The seminal principle of Cao Dai is that all religions have one divine origin and similar spiritual teachings. They believe that the Supreme Being shares his spirit with everything in the universe. Adherents accept prayer, meditation, purification, supplication and pilgrimage as paths to self-realization and reunification with God. Karmic law guides their spiritual quest and daily life. Spiritual messages of Cao Dai are always in the form of

verses. Love, justice for all and peace constitute important tasks for Cao Daiists. Followers of Cao Dai also believe in the Mother Goddess, The Divine, All-Seeing Eye is symbolic of personal and universal consciousness for Cao Daiists.

Cao Dai followers believe that Cao Dai (God) wants them to spread the message to the world that all the religions should unite and return to the One Form from which all religions sprang over time. Cao Dai follows the lunisolar calendar.

Christianity
Christians follow the life and teachings of Jesus, also called Christ. Christianity shares its roots and some religious texts with Judaism. Jesus was born a Jew. His followers spread Christianity after his death. It is the world's largest religion. There are many denominations, traditions and churches within Christianity. Three main branches of the faith are Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and Protestant. Both the Old and New Testaments guide followers in their spiritual quest. Christians believe in one God, the Holy Trinity and divinity of Christ. Adherents follow either the Julian or Gregorian calendars.

Hinduism
Hinduism, also called Sanatana Dharma, is the world's oldest organized religion. It evolved over many centuries in the Indian subcontinent and has no single founder or scripture. Adherents believe in one omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient God. Followers refer to a number of holy texts - Veda, Purana, Gita, Ramayana, Mahabharata - and may worship many male and female manifestations of God either in a temple or at home. Hinduism's core beliefs include:

- dharma (righteous practices)
- karma (action with cause and effect)
- moksha (liberation from cycle of rebirth)
- atman (eternal soul)
- ahimsa (non-violence)
- bhakti (devotion)
- jnana (knowledge for spiritual enlightenment)

The Hindu calendar - Vikram Samvat and Panchang - uses both lunar and solar calculations.

Islam
Islam, meaning "peace" in Arabic, was revealed through the Prophet Muhammad. The message is recorded in the *Quran*, which is the holiest book for followers of Islam. Muslims believe in submission to one God (Allah), Muhammad as his messenger, angels of God, holy books revealed to mankind, other prophets (Adam to Jesus), the day of judgement and resurrection after death. Followers of the faith have five duties (Pillars of Islam) to perform:

- declaration of faith
- five prayers daily
- fasting in the month of Ramadan
- payment of Zakat (annual charity)
- hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) at least once during their lifetime

Sunni and Shia are the two main schools of Islam. All Muslims follow a code of behaviour that clearly lays out what is Halal (acceptable / permitted) and what is Haram (prohibited / unacceptable) in their daily lives. Islam follows a lunar - Hijri - calendar.

Jainism
Jainism was founded on the teachings of 24 Tirthankaras (liberated and enlightened persons), of whom Vardhamana Mahavira was the last. The religion has its roots in the Indian sub-continent. Jain philosophy provides a way of life for adherents. Shwetamber and Digamber are the two divisions of Jainism. These two sects differ in some of their religious beliefs, interpretations of scripture and daily and ascetic practices. Jains believe in:

- jiva (eternal soul)
- ahimsa (non-violence)
- veganism
- aparigraha (non-acquisition)
- karma (cause and effect action)
- samsar (cycle of transmigration, birth and death)
- anekantavada (multiplicity of views)
- moksha (liberation from cycle of birth)

Jains fast regularly during the course of a year and also during many festivals and holy days. Jains follow the Vir Nirvan Samvat calendar with its roots in the Hindu calendar.

Judaism
Judaism is a monotheistic faith. Followers believe that God entered into a covenant with Abraham, and it was later renewed with Moses and the Jewish people to reveal his laws and teachings through the Torah. The Jewish people practice these teachings in their worship and customs. The synagogue is their place of worship. Jews observe the Sabbath weekly, beginning at sunset on Friday and ending at sunset on Saturday. It is the time for spiritual reflection for adherents and they spend work for the day. Followers of the faith may pray three times - morning, afternoon and night - each day. Many Jews observe kashrut (or kosher) dietary rules. The Jewish faith is divided into groups depending on adherents' religious beliefs and practices. Some of these include Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist. The Jewish calendar is a combined lunar and solar calendar. The holy days may be celebrated either for a day or over two days based on their religious beliefs.

Sikhism
Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak (1469-1539). The religion was further developed and defined by nine gurus that came after him and has its roots in the Indian sub-continent. Holy scriptures called *Guru Granth Sahib* have guided adherents, spiritually after the ten gurus. Sikhs believe in one Supreme Being. The key beliefs of Sikhism include:

- oneness of humanity
- the release from birth-cycles through enlightenment
- worship, meditation and service
- rejection of caste system, rituals and idol-worship.

Khalsa (baptised) Sikhs are required to follow Reht Maryada (the Sikh code of conduct) at all times. Reht Maryada includes both the religious and social practices for Sikhs. The Sikh calendar was modified in 1999 and has moved from lunar to tropical solar calculations. Some groups within the faith continue to use the previous calendar and therefore some holy day celebrations may vary based on adherent's affiliation.

Wicca
Wicca is a newly revived religion with roots in pre-Christian religious beliefs, traditions and practices of Europe. Wiccans worship the one Supreme Being and its two aspects - male and female - equally. The faith also recognizes many other deities venerated from ancient times. Earth-centered practices and harmony with nature are important beliefs of the faith. Followers believe in Karma (actions with cause and effect) and reincarnation. Many Wiccans are members of covens (local Wicca groups). They gather for worship in sacred circles. Most rituals of the faith relating to life cycle and seasonal changes are held in a circle, outdoors when possible. Wiccans celebrate eight Sabbats (seasonal celebrations) spaced 45 days apart during a year. Wiccans follow a yearly cycle of the sun in a fixed calendar.

Zoroastrianism
Zarathushtra, also called Zoroaster, founded the faith in ancient Persia (Iran). Believers worship Ahura Mazda - the one God. Zoroastrians believe that an individual has a choice between good and evil in life. The path for perfecting oneself is through good thought, good speech and good actions. Fire is sacred to the faith and it is always kept burning in the temple and in followers' homes. Followers also believe in angels, heaven and hell. God and Satan, an immortal soul and the last judgement. Priesthood is hereditary in Zoroastrianism, and all religious ceremonies are led by priests. Both male and female followers are initiated into the faith through the Navjote ceremony. Initiated adherents have to follow dress codes of the faith. Shenshah, Qadmi and Fasi are three major denominations and the three calendars that followers of the Zoroastrian faith use.

Canadian Holidays
Canada, like many other countries of the world, has identified holidays that are of religious and historical significance to the nation. The nine holidays - Canada Day, Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day, Good Friday and Victoria Day - are mandated by federal legislation. These holidays celebrate and/or commemorate special events or individuals.

Provincially the number of statutory holidays vary. Ontario has ten recognized holidays. Remembrance Day is not a statutory holiday in Ontario. The Civic Holiday and Family Day are regionally designated holidays in Ontario.

The dates in this calendar have been verified by the following members of each faith community:
Aboriginal Spirituality - Bonny Cann, Gail Boyd
Buddhism - Ven. Abbot Thich Tam Hoa, Bhante Saranapala, Ven. Man Yee
Cao Dai - Thomas Phan
Christianity - Father Peter Mentis, Rev. Michael Dooder, Father Walter Makarenko, Rev. Neil Young, Rev. Rinaldo Vecchiato, C.S.
Hinduism - Surendra Sharma Shastri, Pt. Roopnath Sharma
Islam - Imam Omar Subedar, Mr. E. Gad
Jainism - Prakash Mody
Judaism - Rabbi L.A. Englander
Sikhism - Jasjit Singh Bhullar, Pradeep Nagra
Wicca - Richard James, High Priest
Zoroastrian - Nozer Kotwal, Daraius Bharucha

For further information, contact -
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