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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Religion</th>
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<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Asalja Puja Day (Buddhist)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Lailat al Bara‘ah (Islam)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Martyrdom of the Bab (Baha’i)</td>
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<td>13-16</td>
<td>Ulambana/Oban (Buddhist)</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Ramadan begins (Islam)</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Tisha B-Av (Jewish)</td>
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<td>August</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fast in Honor of the Holy Mother of Lord Jesus</td>
<td>Eastern Orthodox Christian</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Lammas (Christian and Wicca)</td>
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<td>Raksha Bandhan (Hindu)</td>
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<td>Transfiguration of the Lord (Eastern Orthodox Christian)</td>
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<td>Krishna Janmashtami (Hindu)</td>
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<td>Laylat as-Qadr (Islam)</td>
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<td>Dormition of the Theotokos (Eastern Orthodox Christian)</td>
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<td>Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Christian)</td>
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<td>19-21</td>
<td>Eid al Fitr (Islam)</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ecclesiastical Year begins (Orthodox Christian)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>His Holiness Sakya Trizin’s Birthday (Buddhist)</td>
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<td>Nativity of Mary (Christian)</td>
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<td>The Elevation of the Holy Cross (Eastern Orthodox Christian)</td>
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<td>Feast of Trumpets (Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)</td>
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<td>17-18</td>
<td>Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Ganesha Chaturthi (Hindu)</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Nativity of the Theotokos (Eastern Orthodox Christian)</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Mabon (Wicca)</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Yom Kippur (Jewish)</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Day of Atonement (Christian, Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)</td>
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<td>October</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>Sukkot (Jewish)</td>
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<td>1-7</td>
<td>Feast of Tabernacles (Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)</td>
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<td>Shemini Atzeret (Jewish)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Last Great Day (Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)</td>
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<td>16-23</td>
<td>Navaratri (Hindu)</td>
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<td>Birth of B’ab (Baha’i)</td>
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<td>Installation of the Scriptures as Guru Granth (Sikh)</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Hajj Day (Islam)</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Duserra (Hindu)</td>
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<td>26-29</td>
<td>Eid al Adha (Islam)</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>All Saints’ Day (Christian)</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Samhain-Beltane (Wicca)</td>
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<td>All Souls’ Day (Christian)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Birth of Baha’u’l-Ilah (Baha’i)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Diwali [Deepavali] (Hindu, Jain)</td>
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<td>Al Hijra – 1st Muharram (Islam)</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Advent/Nativity Fast begins (Eastern Orthodox Christian)</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>The Presentation of the Theotokos to the Temple (Eastern Orthodox Christian)</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Guru Tegh Bahadur Martyrdom (Sikh)</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Day of Covenant (Baha’i)</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Guru Nanak Dev Sahib Birthday (Sikh)</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Ascension of ‘Abdu’l Baha (Baha’i)</td>
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<td>December</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>First Sunday of Advent (Christian)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Bodhi Day (Buddhist)</td>
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<td>Immaculate Conception (Christian)</td>
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<td>9-16</td>
<td>Hanukkah (Jewish)</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Yule (Wicca, Christian)</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Christmas (Christian)</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>The Nativity of Christ (Eastern Orthodox Christian)</td>
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<td>Zarathosht Diso (Zoroastrian)</td>
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<td>January</td>
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<td>Gantan-sai (Shinto)</td>
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<td>Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib (Sikh)</td>
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<td>Epiphany (Christian)</td>
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<td>Feast of Theophany (Eastern Orthodox Christian)</td>
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<td>Nativity of Christ (Orthodox Christian)</td>
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<td>Feast of Epiphany (Eastern Orthodox Christian)</td>
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<td>Feast of Nativity (Orthodox Christian)</td>
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<td>Maghi (Sikh)</td>
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<td>Makar Sankranti (Hindu)</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>World Religion Day (Baha’i)</td>
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<td>Mawlid an Nabi (Islam)</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Tu B’shvat (Jewish)</td>
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<td>February</td>
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<td>The Presentation of Our Lord to the Temple (Eastern Orthodox Christian)</td>
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<td>Imbolc-Candlemas (Wicca)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Chinese New Year (Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist)</td>
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<td>Shrove Tuesday (Christian)</td>
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<td>Ash Wednesday (Christian)</td>
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<td>Nirvana Day (Buddhist, Jain)</td>
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<td>Vasant Panchami (Hindu)</td>
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<td>Purim (Jewish)</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Intercalary Days (Baha’i)</td>
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<td>March</td>
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<td>Maha Shivaratri’s (Hindu)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>L. Ron Hubbard’s Birthday (Church of Scientology)</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Clean Monday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)</td>
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<td>Ostara (Wicca)</td>
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<td>Narouz (Zoroastrian)</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Naw Ruz (Baha’i)</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>The Annunciation/The Annunciation of the Virgin Mary (Eastern Orthodox Christian; Christian)</td>
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<td>Passover (Philadelphia Church of God)</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Khordad Sal (Zoroastrian)</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>First Day of Unleavened Bread (Church of God)</td>
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<td>Days of Unleavened Bread (Philadelphia Church of God)</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Days of Unleavened Bread (Philadelphia Church of God)</td>
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There is a critical difference between practicing religion and Religion in the Classroom. Appropriate lessons about religious holidays could include discussions of the origins and meanings of holidays and how and when they are celebrated. However, teachers should make sure not to cover a single holiday or religion, but instead to teach children about the holiday celebrations of a number of different traditions.

Prayer in the Public School
As a general rule, organized prayer in the public school setting, whether in the classroom or at a school-sponsored event, is unconstitutional. The only type of prayer that is constitutionally permissible is private, voluntary student prayer that does not interfere with the school’s educational mission.

Absence for Religious Purposes
EC 46014. Pupils, with the written consent of their parents or guardians, may be excused from school in order to participate in religious exercises or to receive moral and religious instruction at their respective places of worship or at other suitable place or places away from school property designated by the religious group, church, or denomination, which shall be in addition and supplementary to the instruction in manners and morals required elsewhere in this code. Such absence shall not be deemed absence in computing average daily attendance, if all of the following conditions are complied with:
(a) The governing board of the district of attendance, in its discretion, shall first adopt a resolution permitting pupils to be absent from school for such exercises or instruction.
(b) The governing board shall adopt regulations governing the attendance of pupils at such exercises or instruction and the reporting thereof.
(c) Each pupil so excused shall attend school at least the minimum school day for his grade for elementary schools, and as provided by the relevant provisions of the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education for secondary schools.
(d) No pupil shall be excused from school for such purpose on more than four days per school month.
It is hereby declared to be the intent of the Legislature that this section shall be permissive only.

EC 48205. (a) Notwithstanding Section 48200, a pupil shall be excused from school when the absence is:
(7) For justifiable personal reasons, including, but not limited to…observance of a holiday or ceremony of his or her religion, attendance at religious retreats…when the pupil's absence is requested in writing by the parent or guardian and approved by the principal or a designated representative pursuant to uniform standards established by the governing board.
(b) A pupil absent from school under this section shall be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence that can be reasonably provided…The teacher…shall determine which tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the pupil missed during the absence.
(c) For purposes of this section, attendance at religious retreats shall not exceed four hours per semester.

Source: www.leginfo.ca.gov
The December Dilemma
By Amanda Susskind, Regional Director, Pacific Southwest Region

As the December holidays approach, we at the Anti-Defamation League -- one of the nation's premier organizations defending religious liberty — know that many school districts are faced with difficult questions about how to appropriately acknowledge the December holidays. In an effort to help you comply with the United States Constitution and create a school environment that celebrates diversity by respecting differing points of view concerning religion, we offer the following suggestions.

General Rule: When a school does choose to acknowledge the December holidays, it is essential that the school must never appear to endorse religion over non-religion or one particular religious faith over another.

Public schools must remain free from activities that could involve religious coercion. Because of their young age, students are particularly impressionable and susceptible to pressure to conform to the beliefs of the majority. Schools must take care to avoid endorsing the beliefs, practices or traditions of the majority religion.

Schools must be careful not to cross the line between teaching about religious holidays (which is permitted) and celebrating religious holidays (which is not). Celebrating religious holidays in the form of religious worship or other practices is unconstitutional. Teaching about a holiday will be constitutional if it furthers a genuine secular program of education, is presented objectively, and does not have the effect of endorsing, advancing or inhibiting religion.

Special school events, assemblies, concerts and programs must be designed to further a secular and objective program of education and must not focus on any one religion or religious observance. Religious music or drama may be included in school events, but the reason for including that music or drama must be to advance a secular educational goal. Such events must not promote or denigrate any particular religion, serve as a religious celebration, or become a forum for religious devotion.

Religious symbols are not appropriate seasonal decorations in public schools. The classroom and school premises are the place where children spend the majority of their day. It is important that all students feel comfortable and accepted in their school. Symbols of religious holidays may make some students uncomfortable and unwelcome because their holidays and traditions are not represented or because they do not celebrate religious holidays at all.

In an effort to be ecumenical, it is not advisable to rely on information provided by a representative child of a minority religion. Students should not be put on the spot to explain their religious (or cultural) traditions. The student may feel uncomfortable and may not have enough information to be accurate. Moreover, by asking a student to be spokesperson for his/her religion, the teacher is sending a signal that the religion is too "exotic" for the teacher to understand. Finally, in certain cases, the teacher may be opening the door for proselytizing activity by the student, which must be avoided.

Remember: diversity includes religious diversity. In designing holiday programming it is essential to keep in mind that the children entrusted to your care likely have widely divergent religious points of view. The way you approach the December holidays will determine whether those children whose religious views fall outside of the majority's are made to feel welcome and comfortable in their school building or whether they will feel as if they do not belong.

Of course during non-curricular time, secondary school students may participate in student-led and student-initiated activities that acknowledge or celebrate the holidays on the same terms that they can participate in non-religious activity. School officials may neither discourage nor encourage participation in the event, nor should they be sending the message that the school endorses the event. School officials also have an obligation to ensure that students who are not inclined to participate are not coerced in any way by fellow students who are participating. Finally, school personnel cannot promote or participate in such events in their official capacities, although they may be present to monitor the event for compliance with school rules.

Copies of the following publications are available by calling ADL’s Pacific Southwest Regional office at (310) 446-8000 or by visiting www.adl.org/religious_freedom:

♦ The December Dilemma -- December Holiday Guidelines for Public Schools
♦ Religion in the Public Schools. A comprehensive look at the law of religion in the public schools in an easy to understand and use format.
♦ Religious Issues in your Child's Public School: A Guide For Jewish Parents

From the December 2011 Edition of “Bridges to Success,” a publication from the Division of Student Support Services, LACOE