

	Aboriginal Spirituality 2011-2012	Bahá'í 168-169	Buddhism 2555-2556	Christianity 2011-2012	Hinduism 2068-2069	Islam 1432-1433	Jainism 2537-2538	Judaism 5772-5773	Sikhism 541-542	Wicca 2011-2012	Zoroastrianism 1381-1382	Canadian Holidays 2011-2012
JULY 2011		9 - Martyrdom of the Bab	13-15 - Obon 15 - Poson/ Asalha Puja Day 20 - Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva's Enlightenment		15 - Guru Purnima	1-3 - Jalsa Salana 11 - Imam Day 15 or 16 - Nisfu Sha'ban	15 - Guru Purnima				20 - Navroze (New Year) (GC) 25 - Khordad Sai (GC)	1 - Canada Day
AUGUST 2011			15 - Dharma Day/ Ulambana 15 - Buddhist Joy-Day/ Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva's Pravrajya		13 - Raksha Bandan 22 - Sri Krishna Janmashtami	1-30 - Ramadan (Fasting month) 26 or 27 - Lailat-ul-Qadr 30 or 31 - Eid-ul Fitr	26 - Paryushan Parva begins	9 - Tishah B'Av		2 - Lughnassadh/ Lammas	7 - Farvardegan (GC) 19 - Navroze (New Year) (SC) 24 - Khordad Sai (SC)	1 - Civic Holiday (ON)
SEPTEMBER 2011	19 - Powley Day		12 - Lantern Festival	11 - Nayrouz (J)	1 - Ganesh Chaturthi 10 - Anant Chaturdashi 27 or 28 - Sharad Navratri begins		2 - Samvatsari/ Paryushan Parva ends 2 - Daslakshan Parva begins 11 - Anant Chaturdashi 12 - Kshamavani/ Daslakshan Parva ends	29-30 - Rosh Hashanah	1 - Installation of Holy Scriptures of Guru Granth Sahib	23 - Harvestide/ Fall Equinox	6 - Farvardegan (SC)	5 - Labour Day
OCTOBER 2011		20 - Birth of the Bab	12 or 15 - Pavarana Day		4 or 5 - Durgashtami 6 - Vijaya Dashmi/ Dussehra 15 - Karva Chauth 26 - Diwali 27 - New Year's Day		26 - Diwali/Lord Mahavir Nirvan 27 - New Year/ Enlightenment day of Gautamswami 31 - Gnan Panchami	8 - Yom Kippur 13-19 - Sukkot 20-21 - Simchat Torah	20 - Installation of the Guru Granth as Guru 26 - Bandi Chhor Divas	31-Nov 1 - Samhain	2 - Mehergan (FC)	10 - Thanksgiving Day
NOVEMBER 2011	16 - Louis Riel Day	12 - Birth of Bahá'u'lláh 26 - Day of the Covenant 28 - Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá		1 - All Saints Day 27 - First day of Advent 28 - First day of Advent (J)		5 - Waqfatu'Arafat 6 or 7 - Eid-ul Adha 26 - New Year (Hijra)	10 - Dev Diwali		10 - Birth of Guru Nanak 24 - Martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur	1 - Samhain		
DECEMBER 2011			8 - Bodhi Day 11 - Amitabha Buddha's Birthday	25 - Christmas		5 - Ashura 13 - Birthday of Imam Agakhan	6 - Maun Agyaras	22-28 - Chanukah		22 - Yule/Winter Solstice	11 - Jashan-e-Sadeh (FC) 26 - Zarhosht-no-diso (FC)	25 - Christmas Day 26 - Boxing Day
JANUARY 2012			1 - Temple Day 23 - Lunar New Year/ Maitreya Bodhisattva's Birthday	1 - New Year's Day 6 - Epiphany 7 - Christmas (J) 14 - New Year's Day (J) 19 - Epiphany (J)	13 - Lohri 14 - Makar Sankranti 27 or 28 - Vasant Panchami				5 - Birth of Sri Guru Gobind Singh 13 - Maghi		22 - Jashan-e-Sadeh (FC) 31 - Mehergan (GC)	1 - New Year's Day
FEBRUARY 2012		26-March 1 - Intercalary Days	7 - Lantern Festival	22 - Ash Wednesday (Lent begins) 27 - Clean Monday (J)	19 - Mahashivaratri	4 - Milad-un-Nabi				2 - Imbolc		20 - Family Day (ON)
MARCH 2012		1 - Intercalary Day 2-20 - Bahá'í Fast 21 - Feast of Naw Rúz (New Year)	7 - Sakyamuni Buddha's Nirvana Day 11 or 12 - Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva's Birthday		7 - Holl 23 - New Year/Vasant Navratri Begins 31 - Shri Ramnavami		21 - Eid-e-Navroz	8 - Purim	9 - Hola Mohalla 14 - Sikh New Year	22 - Ladyday/ Spring Equinox	1 - Mehergan (SC) 21 - Navroze (New Year) (FC) 26 - Khordad Sai (FC)	
APRIL 2012		21 - First day of Ridván 29 - Ninth day of Ridván	6-9 - Theravada New Year 13-14 - New Year	6 - Good Friday 8 - Easter 9 - Easter Monday 15 - Good Friday (J) 15 - Easter (J) 16 - Easter Monday (J)	13 - Vaisakhi/Baisakhi 13-14 - New Year		5 - Mahavir Jayanti (Birthday)	7-14 - Pesach (Passover)	14 - Vaisakhi		8 - Farvardegan (FC) 25 - Zarhosht-no-Diso (GC)	6 - Good Friday 9 - Easter Monday
MAY 2012		2 - Twelfth day of Ridván 23 - Declaration of the Báb 29 - Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh	5 - Wesak/Buddha Day/ Sakyamuni Buddha's Birthday 5 - Magha Puja	27 - Pentecost						1 - Beltaine	22 or 24 - Jashn-e-Sadeh (GC) 25 - Zarhosht-no-Diso (SC)	21 - Victoria Day
JUNE 2012	18-22 - National Aboriginal Week 21 - National Aboriginal Day			3 - Pentecost (J) 10 - All Saints Day (J)		16 or 17 - Isra and Mi'raj		27-28 - Shavuot	16 - Martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjan Dev	22 - Litha/Summer Solstice	21 or 23 - Jashn-e-Sadeh (SC)	
JULY 2012		9 - Martyrdom of the Báb	3 - Poson/ Asalha Puja Day 7 or 10 - Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva's Enlightenment 13-15 - Obon		3 - Guru Purnima	4 or 5 - Nisfu Sha'ban 6-8 - Jalsa Salana 11 - Imam Day 19 or 20 - Ramadan (Fasting month)	3 - Guru Purnima	28-29 - Tishah B'Av			19 - Navroze (New Year) (GC) 24 - Khordad Sai (GC)	2 - Canada Day
AUGUST 2012			2 or 5 - Dharma Day/ Ulambana 5 - Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva's Pravrajya/ The Buddhist Joy-Day		1 - Raksha Bandhan 9 - Sri Krishna Janmashtami	14 or 15 - Lailat-ul-Qadr 17 - Jamatul Wida 19 or 20 - Eid-ul Fitr	14 - Paryushan Parva begins			2 - Lughnassadh/ Lammas	6 - Farvardegan (GC) 18 - Navroze (New Year) (SC) 23 - Khordad Sai (SC)	6 - Civic Holiday (ON)
SEPTEMBER 2012	19 - Powley Day		30 - Lantern Festival	11 - Nayrouz (J)	19 - Ganesh Chaturthi 28 or 29 - Anant Chaturdashi		20 - Samvatsari/ Paryushan Parva ends 20 - Daslakshan Parva begins 29 - Anant Chaturdashi 30 - Kshamavani/ Daslakshan Parva ends	17-18 - Rosh Hashanah 26 - Yom Kippur	1 - Installation of Holy Scriptures of Guru Granth Sahib	22 - Harvestide/ Fall Equinox	5 - Farvardegan (SC)	3 - Labour Day
OCTOBER 2012		20 - Birth of the Báb	4 or 29 - Pavarana Day		15 - Sharad Navratri begins 21 or 22 - Durgashtami 23 - Vijaya Dashmi/ Dussehra	25 - Waqfatu'Arafat 26 - Eid-ul Adha		1-7 - Sukkot 8-9 - Simchat Torah	20 - Installation of the Guru Granth as Guru	31-Nov 1 - Samhain	2 - Mehergan (FC)	8 - Thanksgiving Day
NOVEMBER 2012	16 - Louis Riel Day	12 - Birth of Bahá'u'lláh 26 - Day of the Covenant 28 - Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá	30 - Amitabha Buddha's Birthday	1 - All Saints Day 28 - First day of Advent (J)	2 - Karva Chauth 13 - Diwali 14 - New Year's Day	15 - New Year (Hijra) 24 - Ashura	13 - Diwali/ Lord Mahavir Nirvan 14 - New Year/ Enlightenment day of Gautamswami 18 - Gnan Panchami 28 - Dev Diwali		13 - Bandi Chhor Divas 28 - Birth of Guru Nanak 24 - Martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur	1 - Samhain		
DECEMBER 2012			5 - Amitabha Buddha's Birthday 8 - Bodhi Day 28 - Sakyamuni Buddha's Enlightenment	2 - First day of Advent 25 - Christmas		13 - Birthday of Imam Agakhan	23 - Maun Agyaras	9-16 - Chanukah		22 - Yule/Winter Solstice	26 - Zarhosht-no-diso (FC)	25 - Christmas Day 26 - Boxing Day

Bahá'í, Judaism and Wicca - holy days in these faiths begin at sunset on the evening prior to the date shown and end at sunset on the last day shown; **Christianity** - dates for Christianity are based on the Gregorian (G) calendar unless specified as Julian (J); **Islam** - Dates are tentative as some may vary based on the sighting of the moon; **Zoroastrianism** - Dates are based on Fasi Calendar (FC), Qadimi Calendar (GC) and Shenshahi 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. See Exceptions to Staff Approved Holy Days on Human Resources' webpage. Highlighted Canadian and Ontario holidays are recognized 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, Wicca and Zoroastrian calendars)
- the moon - lunar calendar (Islamic calendar)
- or in combination of both the sun and the moon - lunisolar calendar (Buddhist, Hindu, Jain and Jewish calendars)

The expectation is that Peel schools and worksites not schedule events on significant holydays (marked in bold in the calendar) that would exclude observing staff and students from participating.

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

- *Holy Days and Holidays* calendar with important dates in 11 world religions throughout the school year
- monthly *Celebrating Faith and Culture Roundtable* with brief 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 background information about the origins, scriptures and main beliefs of major world religions
- resources for building inclusive schools
- consultation 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'u'lláh (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 Buddhism 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' schools of thought. This calendar reflects major dates in all three of the Buddhist calendars.

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 *Qur'an*, 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 Digambar 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)
- Anekantvada (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 Smavat 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 suspend 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 adherent's 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 rituals
- rejection of caste system, rituals and idol-worship

Khalsa (baptized) 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. Sikh calendar was modified in 1939 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. Followers of the Wicca faith follow a yearly cycle of the sun in a fixed calendar.

Zoroastrianism
Zarathustra 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 to perfecting oneself is through good thought, good speech and good actions. Fire is sacred for 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 judgment. 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. Shenshahi, Qadimi 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 some of statutory holidays vary. Ontario has eight recognized holidays. Remembrance Day is not a statutory holiday in Ontario. The Civic Holiday, also known as Simcoe Day, 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 - Joseph Paquette
Bahá'í - Ba Lih Le
Buddhism - Ven. Abbot Thich Tam Hoa, Ven. Man Yee, Ven. Ahangama Rathansiri, Dao Tran
Christianity - Father Peter Mentis, Father Walter Makrenko, Rev. Neil Young, Father Roman Pankiw
Hinduism - Acharya Surendra Sharma Shastri, Pt. Roopnath Sharma
Islam - Imam Omar Subedar, Mr. E. Gad, Dr. Aslam Daudi, Gulshan Shivji
Jainism - Prakash Mody
Judaism - Rabbi L. A. Englander, Rabbi Yitzchok Slavin
Sikhism - Pradeep Nagra, Jasjit Singh Bhullar
Wicca - High Priest, Richard James; High Priestess, Nicole Cooper
Zoroastrian - Nozer Kotwal, Daraius Bharucha

For further information, contact:
Varsha Naik, Community Liaison Coordinator at (905) 890 1010 (or 1 800 668 1146) ext. 2573, or by email at varsha.naik@peelbs.com