

While festivals from *religious traditions and secular practices* **are not to be equated with each other**, they point to a human need to be together in ways that are particular for those who claim them, and which very often, are invitational for those desiring to be present as guests.

Catholic Identity, prayer, feast days and celebrations are privileged and observed in our schools and Catholic Education Office. Mindful that our communities are plural, it's also important to acknowledge and respect the traditions and practices of others when and where possible, without *giving away* Catholic Identity.

Those of other faiths and those who are not religious are consistently invited to be present alongside the particular prayer culture of the Catholic Dialogue School.

The Catholic Dialogue School is open for dialogue with diversity –not only as host but also as guest. The school community gladly accepts the invitation to be present alongside the particular character of the prayer cultures and rituals of other-believers and other-than-believers, either on or off campus.

(10 Characteristics of Prayer in a Catholic Dialogue School – applying also to a Catholic Ed Office)

Who/what might Catholic school/Catholic Education Office communities be celebrating/recognising this month?

Here's a **snapshot** from November leading into December.

November 2023

1 Nov	All Saints' Day	This Christian day honours saints, known and unknown. Saints are men and women recognised for lives of holiness and devotion to God or who were martyred for their faith.
2 Nov	All Soul's Day	All Souls Day is an annual Christian tradition dedicated to honouring loved ones who have passed away and praying for their souls.

11 Nov	Remembrance Day	Remembrance Day is a memorial day observed in Commonwealth member states. This day marks the anniversary of the armistice that ended the First World War (1914-18). Australians observe one minute's silence at 11 am in memory of the millions who died or suffered in all wars and armed conflicts.
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12 Nov	Deepavali (also known as Diwali and Tihar or the Festival of Lights)	Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains celebrate Deepavali (Diwali) or the Festival of Lights, which celebrates the victory of good over evil, light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance.
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December 2023

3 Dec	First, Sunday of Advent	Christians celebrate Advent by lighting Advent candles, displaying wreaths and hosting special ceremonies. Advent also anticipates the coming again to Earth of Jesus Christ.
10 Dec	Second Sunday of Advent	The celebration of Advent takes place on the four Sundays prior to Christmas and follows four weekly themes; hope, peace, joy and love.
17 Dec	Third Sunday of Advent	
24 Dec	Fourth Sunday of Advent	
6 Dec	Feast of St. Nicholas	Advent ends on Christmas Eve
		This day originated in Europe centuries ago. It honours Saint Nicholas, a Christian Bishop who had a reputation for secret gift-giving and generosity. Every year, people exchange gifts and treats to honour the spirit of Saint Nicholas, spreading joy and goodwill around them.

7 - 15 Dec	Chanukah Festival of Lights	Chanukah is the Jewish eight-day, wintertime “festival of lights,” celebrated with a nightly menorah lighting, special prayers and fried foods. The Hebrew word Chanukah means “dedication,” and is thus named because it celebrates the rededication of the Holy Temple.
		In the second century BCE, the Holy Land was ruled by the Seleucids (Syrian-Greeks), who tried to force the people of Israel to accept Greek culture and beliefs instead of mitzvah observance and belief in G-d. Against all odds, a small band of faithful but poorly armed Jews, led by Judah the Maccabee, defeated one of the mightiest armies on earth, drove the Greeks from the land, reclaimed the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and rededicated it to the service of G-d.
		When they sought to light the Temple's Menorah (the seven-branched candelabrum), they found only a single cruse of olive oil that had escaped contamination by the Greeks. Miraculously, they lit the menorah and the one-

		day supply of oil lasted for eight days, until new oil could be prepared under conditions of ritual purity.
		To commemorate and publicise these miracles, the sages instituted the festival of Chanukah.

8 Dec	Bodhi Day	Bodhi Day commemorates the day Buddha attained enlightenment under a Bodhi tree. It generally falls on the eighth day of the twelfth month of the lunisolar calendar. Mahayana Buddhists in China, Korea and Vietnam celebrate Lunar Bodhi day on the eighth day of the twelfth lunar month. In Japan, Bodhi Day follows the Gregorian calendar and is celebrated on 8 December every year.
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25 Dec	Christmas Day	Christmas is the Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus and is celebrated by many in Australia regardless of religious affiliation. Christmas lights and trees are displayed, carols are sung, and individuals come together to exchange gifts and spend time with family and friends.
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31 Dec	New Year's Eve	This date commemorates the arrival of a new year following the Gregorian calendar. New Year's Eve is a time for communities, families and friends to celebrate the year past and the year to come.
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For an extensive list of Feast Days, festivals, and celebrations to help us recognise and respect each other and what is particular to us:

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/multicultural-affairs/about-multicultural-affairs/calendar-of-cultural-and-religious-dates>