

CELEBRATION - PHAGWA

Phagwa or Holi is a **Hindu festival of colour**. The observance of Phagwa, or Holi, was introduced to Trinidad by **Indentured East Indian labourers around 1845**.

It brings in the **Spring Season** in India during the months of March and April. The **root of Holi** is derived from the **Sanskrit** word **Holika**, meaning, "**parched grains**." This festival has deep religious significance as a **rite of purification to promote good health**.

A special type of folk song called '**chowtal**', is sung during the course of the festival. Hindus gather at different venues to **sing, dance and have fun**. They spray **abeer**, a coloured powder, on one another. **Hindus fast** during this period by not eating meat or drinking alcohol.

There are many Hindu texts that explain the significance of Phagwa. One story tells of **Prahalad, son of the evil King Hiranyakashipu**. The King wanted desperately to destroy the young boy. He wanted to prevent him and the people of his kingdom **from worshipping God**. However, **Prahalad** stood up to his father and eventually he had victory which symbolizes **the victory of good over evil and righteous over unrighteousness**.

He enlisted the aid of his equally **evil sister Holika**. Holika had powers that rendered her **immune to destruction** by fire. **The King ordered her to take the boy into a large fire to end his life**, but the **child's faith was so great** that not only was he **unharmmed**, but Holika's powers were reduced and she burned in the fire. Today's observance of Phagwa incorporates aspects of this story and an **effigy of Holika** is burnt as a **symbol of purification**.



Answer the following questions.

- 1) **Phagwa** was introduced by _____.
- 2) What activities do this celebration involves?

- 3) What **season** does Phagwa represent in India?

- 4) Why did the King want to kill his son?

- 5) What did the death of **Holika** signifies?

CELEBRATION - SPIRITUAL SHOUTER BAPTIST LIBERATION DAY

Spiritual Shouter Baptist Liberation Day is celebrated on **March 30th** every year. It is a Public Holiday. The Spiritual Baptists of Trinidad and Tobago, expressed great thanks to **Mr. Basdeo Panday**, former Prime Minister, of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, for declaring March 30th as the Spiritual Shouter Baptist Liberation Day.

Baptists have a good reason for this celebration. **For many decades**, they were **forbidden** from practising **their religious beliefs** and **building churches**. They had to hide to hold their religious beliefs and services. When high in spirit, they would **ring their bells and shout** because of this the police found them easily and arrested them.

That is why the Spiritual Baptists also holds Dr. Eric Williams in high respect. It was he who took the first steps to remove the ban and allow them to have **freedom of religion, which is a basic human right**.

The day is celebrated by Baptists assembling all across the country. They dress in their **distinctive garb and headwear, marching through the streets, singing and chanting, accompanied by drumming and clapping**. Some of their symbols are: **the shepherd's rod, the bell and candles**.



Answer the following questions.

1) When is Spiritual Shouter Baptist Liberation Day celebrated in Trinidad and Tobago?

2) For what was **Mr. Basdeo Panday** responsible?

3) When high is spirit what did the Baptists do?

4) What were the Baptists prevented from doing?

5) Write another word that means the same as **forbidden** from the passage.

CELEBRATION - EASTER/GOOD FRIDAY

The Easter weekend spans from **Good Friday** to **Easter Sunday**. Good Friday is observed by Christians to remember **the death, burial and resurrection** of the **Lord Jesus Christ**.

Christians believe that **Jesus Christ died on the cross** and **shed his blood** for the forgiveness of all men.

It is believed that **Jesus Christ was whipped and forced to drag a large wooden cross to Calvary Hills**.

There he was **crucified** (nailed to the cross) between two thieves on the **Friday**, which is celebrated as **Good Friday** and rose from the dead on **Sunday** which is celebrated as **Easter Sunday**.

Many Christians observe this special day by going to church. At their services, they partake in Holy

Communion: This represents the **body of Jesus Christ** and his **blood shed**.

It is customary to have **fish and provision** for lunch on Good Friday. **Hot cross buns** are also a favourite around this time.

Note: Good Friday is celebrated forty (40) days after Ash Wednesday. This is a period of fasting known as **Lent**.



Some Easter activities are:

- Bonnet Parades
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Kite Flying

Answer the following questions.

1) Why do Christians observe **Easter weekend**?

2) What is **Communion**?

3) Name **two activities** people do for Easter.

4) Why is **Easter Sunday** celebrated?

5) Why did **Jesus Christ** die on the cross?
