

## Is This My Class?

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This morning started off like any other morning. I woke up, got dressed and was dropped off to school. As I stood in line waiting for my teacher to open the door, I goofed around and chatted with the other children as I do every morning. But this morning was not the same as every other morning.....

When Madame opened the door, she was wearing very different clothes from usual. Her outfit was very colorful and had lots of glittery stuff on it. She didn't say, "Bonjour," like other mornings. She joined her hands together and said, "Namaste. Diwali Mubarak," to each one of us with a little bow.

As I walked in, I couldn't believe my eyes. The lights were dim. There were little candles lit up all over the room (battery-operated ones to keep us safe ☺) and bright colorful fabrics and clothes hung up on the walls. There was music playing – it was beautiful, but I couldn't understand the words. Everyone's eyes were huge and we all wondered what was going on and if we had walked into the wrong classroom.

We put our stuff in the cloakroom and, instead of writing in our agendas like usual, Madame called us over to the carpet. She told us that it was a very special day for many people around the world called Diwali. Diwali is very important to lots of people just like Christmas is to so many people. She asked us if we knew about Diwali and if we knew why and how it was celebrated and did we know that there is a legend which explains why it is celebrated. We all held our breath, gasping at times as Madame told and gestured the story of Diwali to us.

We explored the idea of good vs. evil, and sang a song which told about how Diwali is celebrated over 5 days and what the families do each day. We acted out parts of the story and we had a discussion about whether one of the characters was truly good or evil. We did not all agree at the end, but decided that not everything or everyone is one or the other. Sometimes, they are somewhere in the middle.

Later, we were able to taste some of the foods that families eat and share during Diwali. We did so much that day.....I couldn't wait to go home and tell my family all about my day and my learning.

*This entire day was devoted to developing an understanding of the festival of Diwali. Imaginative cognitive tools put into effect were: change of context, story, forming images, rhyme/rhythm and musicality, binary oppositions, role play, mystery and wonder among others.*

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