



# 2026 Religious Holidays



We invite you to share this resource in your workplace, school, place of worship or community centre. Recognizing the religious holidays of others can be a powerful way to connect.

- For those in the minority, a holiday greeting from a colleague, neighbour, or classmate can help people feel seen and acknowledged.
- A heartfelt acknowledgement of religious observances can also open a conversation, create a safe space for others to share more about their lives, and help build a sense of belonging and community for all. Even just sharing resources like this one can communicate that everyone is welcomed.
- Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, knowing more about one another can provide an opportunity to authentically share in the joy of different communities' many celebrations.

*Please note that some celebration dates vary according to region or lunar calendars. We have been as accurate as possible and have prioritized using North American sources.*



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# January 2026

## January 1-3 - **Shinto: Shōgatsu**

A new year's celebration which includes the year's first visit to the Shinto shrine where new omamori charms are bought, and old ones are returned for cremation.

## January 3 – **Mahāyāna Buddhist: New Year**

A time for meditation, self-reflection and rituals of cleansing and purification.

## January 5 – **Sikh: Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh**

A celebration of the tenth Sikh Guru and spiritual master. He is the last human guru in Sikhism. (Dates may vary in different regions)

## January 7 – **Orthodox Christian: Christmas**

The date that Orthodox Christians celebrate Jesus's birth in the Julian calendar.



## January 7 – **Buddhist: Bodhi Day (Lunar)**

Bodhi Day celebrates the day Siddhartha Gautama, Sakyamuni Buddha, achieved enlightenment. Dates vary but in Japan and the West, Bodhi Day is often celebrated on Dec 8. In China, Korea and Vietnam it is celebrated on the date determined by the lunar calendar.

## January 14 – **Eastern Orthodox: New Year**

The "Old New Year" celebrates the start of the Julian calendar.

## January 14 – **Hindu: Makar Sankranti**

Makar Sankranti celebrates the sun. The festival includes flying kites to symbolize spiritual uplift, lighting bonfires in the evening, and taking ritual baths in rivers and ponds.



## January 16 – **Muslim: Lailat al Miraj**

Muslims remember Prophet Muhammad's journey from Mecca to Jerusalem on this holy day. After his arrival, he ascended to Heaven.

January 18 – **Bahá'í: World Religion Day** A day in the Bahá'í faith that celebrates common themes for faiths across the world.



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# February 2026

February 1 – **Wiccan: Imbolc**

Pagans and Wiccans celebrate this festival as the halfway point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox, which honours light, fire, and the return of life after a long winter.

February 2 – **Jewish: Tu Bishvat \***

This Jewish holiday is celebrated as an ancient Earth Day, where trees are planted annually.

February 15 – **Buddhism: Parinirvana**

Known as Nirvana Day in Mahāyāna Buddhism, this day honours Buddha's death and his attainment of final nirvana.

February 15 – **Hindu: Maha Shivaratri**

Hindu celebration of the birth of Lord Shiva, one of the most worshipped Hindu deities.

February 18– **Christian: Ash Wednesday**

This day marks the start of Lent, 40 days of fasting and prayer for Christians before Easter.

February 18 – **Muslim: Ramadan begins**

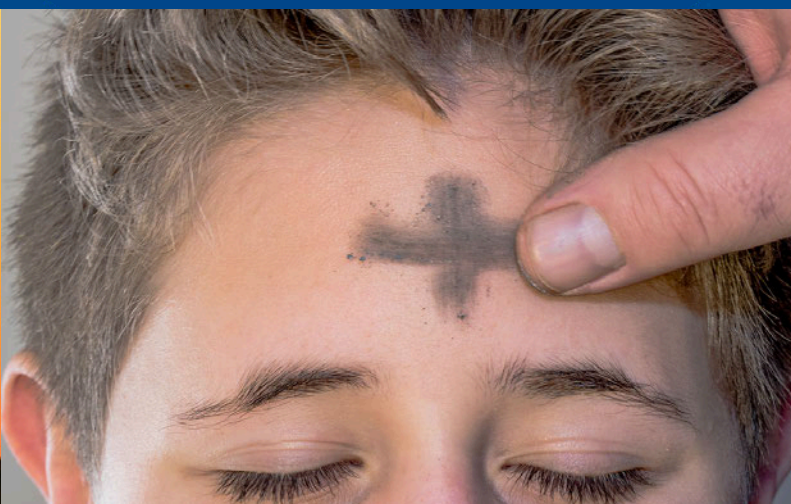
This marks the start of the holy month of fasting for Muslims. Muslims spend this month fasting, engaging in extra prayer, donating to charities and trying to be better versions of themselves.

February 25- March 1 – **Bahá'í: Intercalary / Ayyam-i-ha**

This celebration and period of fasting celebrates giving back to the community and giving gifts to loved ones to honour the Divine Essence of God. This celebration marks the start of the fasting month, where Bahá'ís 15 years and older abstain from food and drink between sunrise and sunset.



*The Parinirvana of the Buddha  
Cleveland Museum of Art*



*\*Please note: holiday begins at sundown of the previous day.*



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# March 2026



## March 3 – Jewish: **Purim** \*

Purim commemorates the saving of the Jewish people from annihilation at the hands of an official of the Achaemenid Empire named Haman. It is celebrated with food, charity and gatherings that feature making noise and having fun.

## March 3 – Hindu: **Holi**

One of the most famous Hindu holy days, Holi celebrates the arrival of spring and new life. This lasts for a night and a day, starting on the evening of the Full Moon Day. Celebrations include throwing coloured powder and water on the people around you.



## March 15 – Muslim: **Laylat al-Qadr**

Laylat al-Qadr is the holiest night of the year for Muslims as it's believed on this night that the first revelation of the Quran was sent down from Heaven. The exact date is uncertain and so the last ten nights of Ramadan are especially dedicated to praying and scripture reading as the night of decree is believed to have taken place on one of those nights.

## March 20 – Muslim: **Eid al-Fitr**

One of the most important Islamic holy days which includes feasting to mark the end of Ramadan. Celebrations last from 1-3 days depending on the country.

## March 20 – Bahá'í and Persian: **Nowruz** \*

Occurring on the vernal equinox, this day celebrates the Persian and the Bahá'í New Year. Bahá'ís also end their 19-day fast, which is a period of reflection and profound spiritual reinvigoration. It is the first day of the Bahá'í calendar year.

## March 26-27 – Hindu: **Rama Navami** \*

A festival celebrating the birth of Lord Rama, a major Hindu deity.

## March 31 – Jain: **Mahavir Jayanti**

Celebrates the birth of Lord Mahavira, the founder of Jainism.



*\*Please note: holiday begins at sundown of the previous day.*



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# April 2026

*April is Sikh Heritage Month in Canada designed to recognize the contributions of Sikhs to our communities.*



## April 1-9 – **Jewish: Passover \***

This 7-day holiday week, which begins at sundown on April 12, honours the freeing of Israeli slaves from Egypt. It is one of three pilgrimage festivals and is a major Jewish holiday that begins with a ritual meal called Seder.

## April 3 – **Christian: Good Friday**

This Christian holiday honours Jesus' crucifixion and death. Most Christian denominations observe this holy day.

## April 5 – **Christian: Easter**

One of the most important Christian holidays, it memorializes the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is believed that this occurred on the third day after his burial.

The week before Easter is known as Holy Week, which starts on Palm Sunday and includes special days like Maundy Thursday (when the Last Supper occurs) and Good Friday, before ending on Easter Sunday. Also known as Resurrection Sunday or Pascha.



## April 10 – **Orthodox Christian: Good Friday**

Because the Orthodox Christian Church follows the Julian calendar, Holy days including Good Friday, Easter and Christmas often fall a few days after non-Orthodox Christians celebrate. In 2025 the celebrations aligned on the same day. This year the Orthodox holidays are celebrated a week after non-Orthodox celebrations. This Christian holiday honours Jesus' crucifixion and death. Most Christian denominations observe this holy day.

*\*Please note: holiday begins at sundown of the previous day.*



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# April 2026 *continued*



## April 12 – **Orthodox Christian: Easter**

One of the most important Christian holidays, it memorializes the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is believed that this occurred on the third day after his burial.

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## April 14 – **Sikh and Hindu: Vaisakhi**

This New Year and spring harvest festival is one of the most important Sikh festivals. It marks the creation of the "Khalsa." Khalsa Sikhs undertake extra devotion, and always wear 5 items, one of which is uncut hair (hair is never cut again once they are initiated).

For some Hindus, Vaisakhi marks the beginning of the solar new year. In some regions Hindus believe that the Goddess Ganga came to Earth to help rid humanity of its sins. In celebration, many Hindus bathe in sacred rivers like the Ganges.



## April 20 – **Bahá'í: Ridván**

The holiest period for Bahá'ís, this 12-day festival commemorates Bahá'u'lláh's declaration that he was a manifestation of God. The name means Paradise and is named after a garden found outside of Baghdad, where he was exiled before traveling to Constantinople.

## April 21 – **Rasta: Grounation Day**

Grounation Day celebrates Haile Selassie's visit to Jamaica in 1966. It is considered one of the most important Rastafari holy days.





# May 2026

*May is Canadian Jewish Heritage Month, an opportunity to recognize, celebrate, and learn more about the many contributions Jewish Canadians have made.*



## May 1 – **Wiccan and Pagan: Beltane**

This Pagan and Wiccan festival honours and represents the peak time of Spring and the beginning of Summer.

## May 1 – **Buddhist: Vesak**

For Southeast Asian Buddhists, this is the most important festival, marking the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha. In East Asia, the day marks only the Buddha's birth. Devotees often pour water over an image of baby Buddha in a bathing ritual.

## May 2 – **Bahá'í: Ridván ends**

Commemorates the declaration of the founder, Bahá'u'lláh, to his followers in 1863 that he was the promised one. The first, ninth and twelfth days of Ridvan are major Bahá'í holy days.



## May 21 - 23 – **Jewish: Shavuot \***

This major festival, which begins at sundown, marks the harvest of wheat in Israel and also the giving of the Torah (Jews' major scripture including the Ten Commandments) to Moses and the Israelites. Also known as the Feast of Weeks.

*\*Please note: holiday begins at sundown of the previous day.*



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# May 2026 *continued*

*May is Canadian Jewish Heritage Month, an opportunity to recognize, celebrate, and learn more about the many contributions Jewish Canadians have made.*



## May 23\* – Bahá'í: **Declaration of the Bab** \*

This marks the inception of the Bahá'í Faith in 1844. The Bab declared that he was a messenger of God and was sent to prepare the way for the one foretold in all religions who would come to establish universal peace.

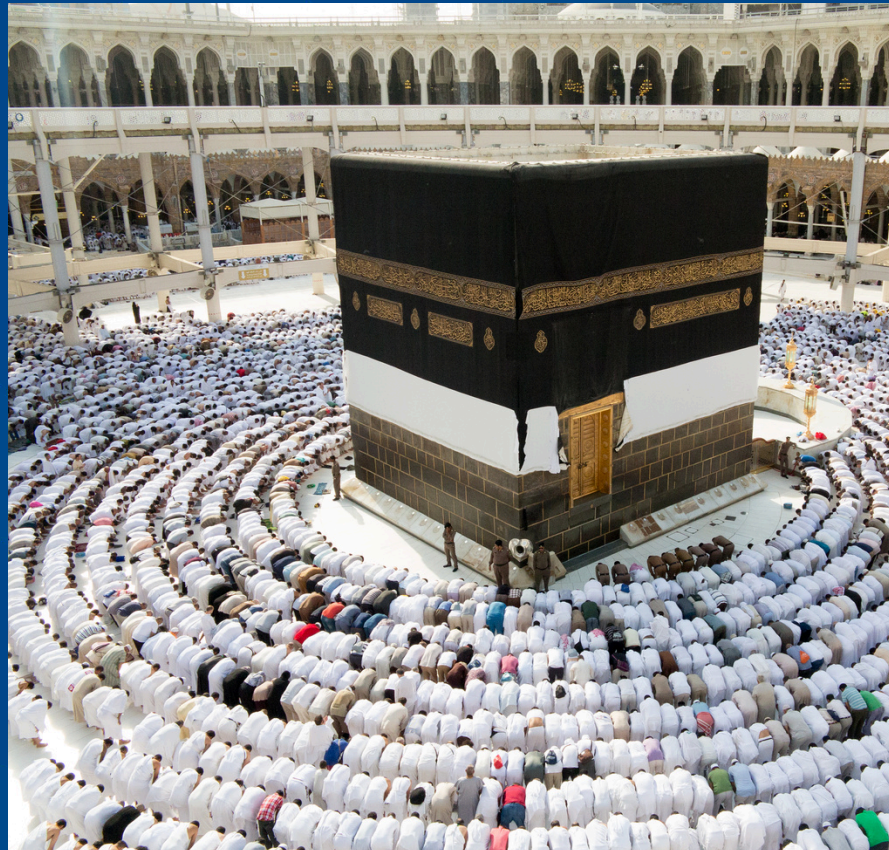
*The Shrine of the Báb with its spectacular garden terraces.*

## May 25\* - 29 – Muslim: **The Hajj**

All Muslims are required, at least once in their lives, to partake in this annual pilgrimage to Mecca as long as they are physically and financially able to do so.

## May 27\* - 30 – Muslim: **Eid-al-Adha**

This Islamic holiday ends the Hajj pilgrimage. It celebrates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Ishmael, his son, to obey God. In the story, a lamb is given to him to sacrifice in place of his son. On this day, animals, typically a sheep or a goat, are sacrificed and enjoyed by both the family and those in need. Also known as the Feast of the Sacrifice.



## May 28-29 – Bahá'í: **Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh**

This commemorates the day when the founder and prophet of the Baha'i Faith died in 1892.

*\*Please note: holiday begins on the evening of the previous day.*

*Muslim holidays are predicted based on the lunar calendar and dates may shift by a day depending on region.*

*Bahá'í holidays are celebrated from sunset to sunset.*



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# June 2026

June is National **Indigenous History Month** in Canada, a time to recognize the rich history, heritage, resilience and diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

## June 16 – Muslim: **Hijri New Year**

The Islamic New Year marks the beginning of the lunar year however this date can vary according to lunar calculations.



## June 21 – Indigenous: **National Indigenous Peoples Day or First Nations Day**

A day to recognize and celebrate the history, heritage, resilience and diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis across Canada.



## June 21 – Litha: **Pagan, Wiccan**

This Pagan and Wiccan festival is held on the summer solstice and celebrates the beginning of summer.



## June 26 – Muslim: **Ashura**

For Sunni Muslims, Ashura marks when God saved the Israelites from Egypt's pharaoh by allowing Prophet Musa (Moses) to part the Red Sea. Shi'is, however, on this day mourn the martyrdom of Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad.





# July and August 2026



July 10 - **Bahá'í: Martyrdom of the Bab \***

This commemorates the day when one of the main figures in founding the Baha'i Faith was executed in Iran in 1850.

July 23, 2026 - **Rasta: Haile Selassie's Birthday**

Haile Selassie I was Emperor of Ethiopia from 1930 to 1974. He was revered by Rastas and this is one of the holiest days of the Rastafarian year.

## August 2026

August 1 - **Pagan or Wiccan: Lughnasadh**

This Gaelic festival and Irish holiday honours the first day of the harvest season. It occurs on the halfway point between the summer solstice and the fall equinox. Also known as Lughnasa.



August 25 **Islam: Mawlid-al-Nabi \***

Celebrates the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. In some Muslim countries, this is a national holiday but some Muslims do not celebrate it as they feel it risks violating the rule that worship only belongs to God.

*\*Please note: holiday begins at sundown of the previous day.*



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# September 2026



## September 4 – **Hindu: Krishna Janmashtami**

Hindu celebration of the birth of Krishna. This annual festival celebrates Krishna, a supreme God in the faith, and includes the reading of religious texts, reenactments of his life, and dance. Also known as Gokulashtami, Janmashtami, or Krishnashtami.

## September 8 - 14 – **Jain: Paryushan**

Holiest day for Jains. An eight day festival signifying human emergence into a new world of spiritual and moral refinement. Marked by fasting and study.

## September 12- 13 – **Jewish: Rosh Hashanah \***

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, which begins on the evening of September 12, recalls the creation of the world and starts the High Holy Days or 10 Days of Awe which focus on repentance and are the most important holy days for Jews.



## September 21 – **Jewish: Yom Kippur \***

The most important Jewish holiday, Yom Kippur ends the 10 Days of Awe by focusing on seeking forgiveness for your sins. Many Jews will fast for 25 hours. Also known as the Day of Atonement.

## September 22 – **Pagan Wiccan: Mabon**

Both Wiccans and Pagans use this day to celebrate the autumnal equinox, a day when the amount of sunlight and darkness is the same. This represents both balance and harmony.

## September 26- October 2 – **Jewish: Sukkot \***

This 7-day holiday, which begins on sundown September 26, commemorates when Jews journeyed through the desert to the promised land.



## September 30 – **Indigenous: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**

In Canada, this day honours the children who never returned home from, and survivors of, residential schools, as well as their families and communities. This day is also known as Orange Shirt Day.

*\*Please note: holiday begins at sundown of the previous day.*



Every Child Matters



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# October 2026

October is Canadian **Islamic History Month**, an opportunity to celebrate the contributions of Muslim Canadians and to stand together to combat Islamophobia.

October 3 – **Jewish: Simchat Torah** \*

This joyous festival marks when the reading cycle of the Torah is completed and its first book begun again.



October 11 -20 – **Hindu: Navratri**

Navratri is a 9 day festival dedicated to the Hindu deity Durga. It begins on the first day of the Lunar month of Ashwin. In Sanskrit Navratri means nine nights.

October 20 – **Hindu: Dussehra**

Marks the end of Navaratri, a nine-day festival honouring the goddess Durga and her victory over evil.

*\*Please note: holiday begins at sundown of the previous day.*



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# November 2026

November is **Hindu Heritage Month**, which recognizes the outstanding contributions that Hindu Canadians have made to Canada's social, economic, political and cultural fabric.



November 1 – **Pagan and Wiccan: Samhain**

A festival marking the new year and the end of the harvest season.

November 1 – **Christian: All Saints Day**

It commemorates saints who have attained heaven. Mexicans celebrate Dia de los Muertos when they remember lost loved ones, including making beautiful altars and visiting graves.

November 2 – **Rastafarian: Coronation Day**

Anniversary of the Crowning of Haile Selassie. On this day, Ras (Prince) Tafari Makonnen became Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia.

November 6 - 10 – **Hindu Sikh Jain: Diwali**

A five-day festival of lights celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains. For Hindus, the third day is the holiest day of the year. Celebrations vary, honouring different deities, but decorations with rangoli (coloured powders) and candles are common. Diwali celebrates enlightenment and liberations both spiritual and physical.



November 10 – **Bahá'í: Birth of the Bab**

Commemorates the birth of a founding figure in the Bahá'í Faith.

November 11 – **Bahá'í: Birth of Bahá'ú'llah**

Commemorates the birth of the founder of the Bahá'í Faith.

November 24 – **Sikh: Guru Nanak Ji's Birthday**

Commemorates the birth of the founder of Sikhism in 1469.

November 30, 2025 – December 24 – **Christian: Advent**

Christians prepare for the birth of Jesus in the 4 weeks before Christmas.





# December 2026



December 4 -12 – **Jewish: Hanukkah** \*

This eight-day celebration, which begins at sundown on the 4th, commemorates the victory of the Jews over foreign rule, ending a period of political oppression and religious persecution.

December 8 – **Roman Catholic: Feast of the Immaculate Conception** This Roman Catholic feast celebrates how Jesus' mother, Mary, was conceived without original sin. Mary is understood to have lived a life free of moral error.

December 8 – **Mahāyāna Buddhist: Bodhi Day**

Commemorates the day that the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama (Shakyamuni), experienced enlightenment, known as 'bodhi' in Sanskrit and Pali. Celebrated by East Asian Buddhists primarily.

December 12 – **Roman Catholic: Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe**

A religious holiday in Mexico commemorating the appearance of the Virgin Mary near Mexico City in 1531.



December 21 – **Pagan and Wiccan: Yule**

This holiday begins at sundown on the winter solstice as the great horned hunter god is reborn. This celebration on the shortest day of the year focuses on rebirth, renewal and new beginnings as the sun makes its way back to the Earth.



December 25 – **Christian: Christmas** The birthday of Jesus for Protestants and Roman Catholics, celebrated by countries across the world.

*\*Please note: holiday begins at sundown of the previous day.*





# December 2026



December 26 – January 1 – **Cultural: Kwanzaa**  
An African-American and pan-African holiday started by Maulana Karenga in 1966 to celebrate African heritage.



December 26 – **Zoroastrian: Zartosht No-Diso (Death of Prophet Zarathushtra)**

A day of remembrance for Zoroastrians, commemorating the death of the prophet Zoroaster or Zarathushtra.

*The fravashi, a guardian spirit which each person has, is a symbol of the Zoroastrian religion.*



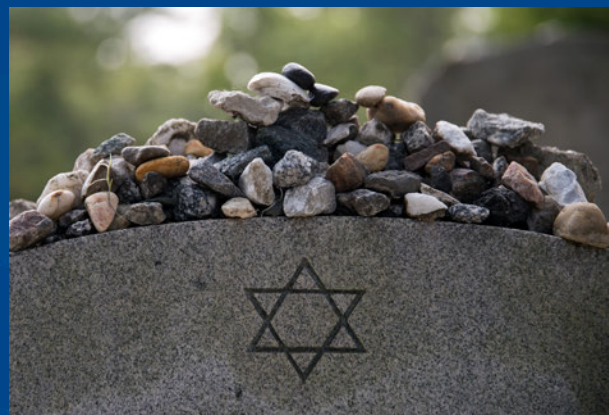
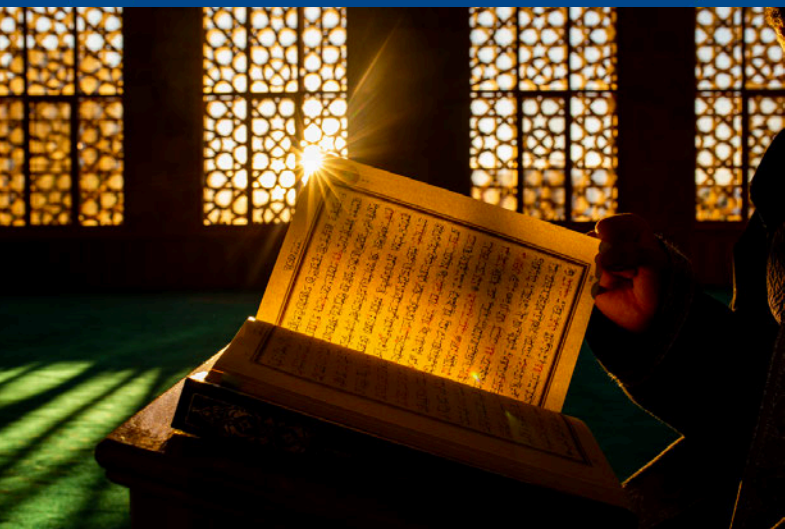
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# Special days and months of recognition

While not religious holidays, these commemoration dates hold special significance for religious communities.

**January 27** International Holocaust Remembrance Day



**January 29** National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Attack and Action Against Islamophobia



**February 1 - 7** World Interfaith Harmony Week

**March 15** International Day to Combat Islamophobia

**April 13 - 14** Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day)



**August 22** International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief

**For over 20 years, Encounter has helped people, organizations and communities explore what it means to become religiously literate and enhance their understanding of each other and their world.**

**Learn more about our engaging programs and resources at [worldreligions.ca](http://worldreligions.ca)**



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