

Dear Colleagues,

Below is the December Religious/Ethnic Holiday calendar.

As a reminder, CUNY's policy on religious accommodation allows students to request and be granted academic and attendance accommodations based on religious belief. A link to the policy is posted here: [VI. Religious Accommodations – The City University of New York \(cuny.edu\)](#)

VI. Religious Accommodations

A. Requests for Accommodations

- 1. Students requesting a religious accommodation should contact the Office for Student Affairs at the College or unit in which they are enrolled. The Chief Student Affairs Officer, or a designee, and the student will engage in an interactive process with the goal of finding an acceptable accommodation.*
- 2. Consistent with New York State Education Law § 224-a, students who are absent from school because of a religious belief will be given the equivalent opportunity, without any additional fee charged, to register for classes or make up any examination, study or work requirements missed because of such absence on any particular day or days.*

As a frame of reference for anticipating student requests for religious accommodations, CUNY's Interfaith Council has developed the following "Religious & Ethnic Holidays Calendar," which serves as a helpful resource

[\(https://www.cuny.edu/current-students/student-affairs/religious-ethnic-holiday-calendar/\)](https://www.cuny.edu/current-students/student-affairs/religious-ethnic-holiday-calendar/).

For questions about CUNY's policy on religious accommodations or to add additional observances, don't hesitate to get in touch with Sophia McGee, Director of Intercultural Student Engagement and Dialogue, at sophia.mcgee@cuny.edu.

Thank you for your support and enduring commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion at CUNY.

Religious Group	Holiday	Description	Obligations/restrictions affiliated with the holidays	Dates	Traditions or Practices
Christian	Advent	The period of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas and also of preparation for the Second Coming of Christ.	N/A	12/3 - 12/24	Practices associated with Advent include Advent calendars, lighting an Advent wreath, praying an Advent daily devotional, erecting a Christmas tree or a Chrismon tree, lighting a

					Christingle, as well as other ways of preparing for Christmas.
Judaism	Hanukkah	Also known as the festival of lights, Hanukkah reaffirms the ideals of Judaism and commemorates in particular the rededication of the Second Temple of Jerusalem by the lighting of candles on each day of the festival.	N/A	12/7 sunset - 12/15 sunset	Hanukkah is celebrated by playing dreidel, singing celebratory songs, exchanging gifts, making delicious Hanukkah recipes that remind us of the oil that burned for eight days at the temple in Jerusalem and lighting candles while chanting specified blessings.
Roman Catholic	Feast of the Immaculate Conception	The day that Roman Catholics celebrate Mary's conception without original sin.	N/A	12/8	As a holy day of obligation in the Church, Catholics worldwide celebrate the Immaculate Conception by attending Mass.
Buddhist	Bodhi Day	Bodhi Day is the Buddhist holiday that commemorates the day that Gautama Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment.	N/A	12/8	Bodhi Day is often celebrated in a calm and quiet way by meditating and praying.
Christian	Our Lady of Guadalupe (Feast)	This celebration commemorates the appearance of Mary to the Mexican peasant Juan Diego in 1531.	N/A	12/12	The night before the Feast Day, the Mexican community gathers at St. Michael's for a vigil. Outside of the church, they gather in a circle and recite prayers and recount the story of the appearance of Mary to Juan Diego. After completing the prayers, they move into the

					church and sing songs in celebration of Our Lady.
Christian	Las Posadas	Las Posadas celebrate Joseph and Mary's journey from Bethlehem to Nazareth in search of a place for Baby Jesus to be born.	N/A	12/16-12/24	Each evening during the festival, a small child dressed as an angel leads a procession through the streets of the town.
Pagan/Wiccan	Yule	Yule celebrates the rebirth of the sun through gift exchanges, merriment, and deep spiritual reflection.	N/A	12/21-1/1	When people celebrate Yule, they reflect on the year that has passed while looking forward to the year ahead.
Sikh	Guru Gobind Singh's Birthday	Guru Gobind Singh is the tenth Sikh Guru and spiritual master. This date commemorates the day he was born.	N/A	12/22	N/A
Judaism	Asara B'Tevet	Asarah B'Tevet is observed as a day of fasting, mourning and repentance.	Please be mindful that those observing are refraining from food and drink during this observation.	12/22 Sunset	Those observing will spend the day in prayer and repentance.
Christian	Christmas Eve	Christmas Eve is the evening or entire day before Christmas Day, the festival commemorating the birth of Jesus.	N/A	12/24	Christian churches have celebrated Christmas Eve in part because it is believed that Jesus was born at midnight. Many churches today hold Christmas Eve services or Midnight Masses.
Christian	Christmas	A Christian holiday commemorating the birth of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.	N/A	12/25	Christmas is celebrated with the exchange of gifts and cards with beloved ones,

					Christmas dinner, Christmas carols and other celebrations alongside local traditions, bringing together each place's custom to this time of the year.
Christian	St. Stevens Day	December 26 commemorates the life of St. Stephen, a Christian deacon in Jerusalem who was known for his service to the poor and his status as the first Christian martyr.	N/A	12/26	People dress up in old clothes, wear straw hats and travel from door to door with fake wrens and they dance, sing and play music.