

Hymn from India, YESUVE SARANAM –Jesus, I surrender

steadily

(Cantor:) Ye - su - ve sa - ra - nam, sa - ra - nam Ye - su - ve.

(All:) YE - SU - VE SA - RA - NAM, SA - RA - NAM YE - SU - VE.

(Cantor:) Ye - su - ve sa - ra - nam, sa - ra - nam Ye - su - ve.

(All:) YE - SU - VE SA - RA - NAM, SA - RA - NAM YE - SU - VE.

(Cantor:) Ye - su - ve sa - ra - nam, sa - ra - nam Ye - su - ve.

(All:) YE - SU - VE SA - RA - NAM, SA - RA - NAM YE - SU - VE.

(Cantor:) Ye - su - ve sa - ra - nam, sa - ra - nam Ye - su - ve.

(All:) YE - SU - VE SA - RA - NAM, SA - RA - NAM YE - SU - VE.

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Indian Prayer

O Lord let me rest the ladder of gratitude against your cross, and mounting, kiss your feet.



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ALTERNativity

Just God simply Christmas

FOCUS ON INDIA

2006



BADA DIN

In India, Christmas is often called Bada Din, meaning 'The Big Day' and it is the most important festival for Indian Christians.

Christians in India decorate banana or mango trees instead of a pine tree. They also light small oil-burning lamps as Christmas decorations and fill their churches with red flowers. As a part of their celebration they give presents to their family members and a token of money to poor people as charity.

In India, most Christians decorate their houses and churches with poinsettia flowers (*right*) for the midnight mass. Carolling processions in the streets and thoroughfares can also be seen.



In Southern India, Christians put small clay lamps on the rooftops and walls of their houses at Christmas, just as the Hindus do during their festival called Diwali.

The local Indian customs and tradition have a heavy impact on the Indian Christian. And this is visible in their decoration as many Indian Christians decorate their houses with mango leaves.

POVERTY

More than a third of Indians live in poverty. There are more than 55 million child workers in India. Some of these children are bonded labourers and work for low wages or no pay, in dangerous conditions.

HIV and AIDS

Officially more than 4 million people live with HIV and AIDS in India. However, this is believed to be a conservative estimate and the true figure may be nearer 10 million.

DISASTERS

You are probably familiar with the Indian ocean Tsunami in 2004. You may not be aware that floods, droughts and landslides occur in India every year and these could be worsened by climate change. Earthquakes currently damage 1 million houses annually.



FUTURE

However, there is much to be positive about. India is the world's largest democracy and plays an important role in Asian and world affairs. Personal income and life expectancy have doubled and infant mortality has halved in the last 50 years. But these figures still do not compare favourably with the developed world.

India still needs help. There are many things that you can do to help. One of them is to think about buying fair trade products from India as Christmas presents this year. Available from :

www.oneworldshop.co.uk
www.rainbowturtle.org.uk

Indian Churches often have an Evening Service on Christmas and are fabulously decorated with poinsettias and candles. You could have some Indian influence in your celebrations this Christmas time by decorating your home or church with poinsettias and candles and singing the Indian Hymn found on the back page.

Kulkuls

A great sweet to prepare with the family, Kulkuls are made all over India at Christmas time. They are fun to make and keep very well if stored in an airtight container.

INGREDIENTS:

1/2kg of plain flour
1/2 tsp baking powder
2 eggs
1 cup coconut cream
4 tbsps sugar powdered
1 tbsp butter
Oil for deep frying
1 cup sugar
3-4 tbsps water

PREPARATION:

*Mix the flour and baking powder well.
*Add the butter a little at a time, mixing gently.
*Beat the eggs in a separate bowl and add them to the flour-butter mix.
*Add the sugar and coconut milk to this and mix into a soft dough.
*Form the dough into small marble-sized balls.
*Grease the back of a fork with some oil and flatten and press a ball of dough onto it.
*Starting at one end, roll the dough off the fork and into a tight curl. The end result will be a tube-like curl with the design from the fork on it! Make the remaining dough similarly till it is all used up.
*Heat the oil in a deep, heavy-bottomed pan on a medium flame.
*When hot, fry the Kulkuls in it, making sure to turn often, till they are light golden brown in colour. Drain and cool on paper towels.
*Put the sugar and water in a separate pan and cook till the sugar melts fully.
*Put the cooled Kulkuls into this sugar syrup and coat well.
*Remove and allow to sit in a plate till the sugar encrusts on the Kulkuls.



A tradition from NE India.

Within the tribal peoples of NE India, the Christian community has a lovely tradition, which you might like to copy. Early on Christmas Eve, just after dark, the family furthest from the church, light a candle and set off from their house to visit the nearest neighbour. Together they sing a Christmas carol and have a little food and drink before setting off to the next neighbour. One by one houses are visited and the singing and light grows as they near the church. They move right through the village gathering all the worshippers until by midnight the gathered congregation arrives at the church door and enter the church singing and bringing their light into the building ready to receive Jesus Christ into their midst.