



Krishna Janmashtami (Gokulashtami) Festival Details

Festival Aspects	Festival Details
Religion	Hinduism
Title	Krishna Janmashtami (Gokulashtami)
Description	<p>This festival celebrates the birth of Lord Krishna. It is a sacred day, when devotees dwell upon the majesty and splendour of the Lord, and taste the sweetness of His Name, which is so dear to them, because it holds within itself the entire <i>Bhagavatha</i> (holy text describing Lord Krishna's life).</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 7, #25 (1967)</p>
Spiritual Significance	<p>Krishna's advent signifies the dispelling of darkness, the removal of troubles, banishing of ignorance and teaching mankind the supreme wisdom.</p> <p>Krishna was born during the <i>Krishnapaksha</i>, the dark fortnight of the month. The effulgence of the Lord is seen with greater effect when it is dark. In a world of disorder, Krishna was born to establish order. He was born on <i>Ashtami</i> (eighth day) day. <i>Ashtami</i> is associated with trouble and difficulties. When do troubles arise? When Righteousness is forgotten.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 23, #26 (1990)</p> <p>Krishna was born in prison, a fact that teaches us that God has to incarnate or present himself in the dark and narrow prison-house of our hearts, so that we may derive light and earn freedom.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 13, #38 (1975-77)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">-</p> <p>The symbolic meaning in the relations between Krishna and the <i>Gopikas</i> (cowherd maids) is this: The heart is the Brindavan (in each person). One's thoughts are like the <i>Gopikas</i>. The <i>Atma</i> (Self) is Krishna. Bliss is the sport of Krishna. Everyone must convert his heart into a Brindavan and consider the indwelling Atma as Krishna. Every action should be regarded as a Leela of Krishna.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 21, # 25 (1988)</p>
Prayer	<p><i>Vasudēva sutaṃ dēvaṃ kaṃsa cāṇūra mardanam</i> <i>Dēvakī paramānandaṃ kṛṣṇaṃ vandē jagadgurum //</i></p> <p>The Lord, the Son of Vasudeva and the vanquisher of Kamsa and Chanura. The supreme bliss of Devaki, salutations to Krishna, the Universal Preceptor.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- SSSIO Sai Rhythms – Sri Krishnashtakam</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- https://sairhythms.sathyasai.org/song/sri-krishnashtakam</p>
Purpose of Rituals	<p>The festival Krishna Janmashtami is celebrated every year to commemorate the birth of Lord Krishna, the eighth avatar of Lord Vishnu as per the Hindu belief.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- SSSIO – Lord Krishna – He who gives bliss</p>



	<p>God incarnated as Krishna to charm humanity by His pranks, His play, His song and sweetness, and to show man the path of love and how-to live-in love.</p> <p>- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 23, #26 (1990)</p> <p><i>Gokulashtami</i> is celebrated by offering to Krishna <i>Paramannam</i> (rice cooked with jaggery). The real meaning of <i>Paramannam</i> is <i>Annam</i> (food) relating to <i>Param</i> (Supreme). <i>Paramannam</i> is sweet. Your love must be sweet. What you offer to God must be your sweet love. Your love must be all embracing. This is the foremost message of the <i>Avatar</i> (Divine incarnation).</p> <p>When you fill your hearts with love, you have no ill-will towards anyone. Cultivate the faith that the Divine is in everyone. Surrender to the Divine in a spirit of dedication.</p> <p>- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 21, # 25 (1988)</p> <p>Sanctify every word and deed by filling it with love of Krishna or whatever name and form you give to the Lord you love. The body becomes healthy by exercise and work; the mind becomes healthy by devout contemplation and remembrance of the Divine name (<i>namasmarana</i>), by regular, well-planned discipline, joyfully accepted and joyfully carried out.</p> <p>Nonviolence is the rice; dedication is the gram (chickpea flour); expiation the raisins; repentance the jaggery (unrefined cane sugar). Mix all these well with the ghee (clarified butter) —virtue. That is the offering you should make to your chosen deity, not the paltry stuff you make out of articles obtained for a paisa in the shops! The <i>gopis</i> (cowherd maids) knew this secret passage to the heart of the Lord, and they realised Him quickly and fast.</p> <p>- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 3, # 21 (1963)</p> <p>Krishna <i>Janmashtami</i> celebration at Prasanthi Nilayam included a parade led by Sai Geetha, Swami's pet elephant, followed by cows assisted by the students while singing Krishna Bhajans. Swami would personally feed fruits to Sai Geetha and the cows while Krishna bhajans were being sung.</p> <p>Deeper meaning: Cows are honored on this day as they are considered one of the five mothers (Biological mother, <i>Go-Matha</i> (cows), <i>Veda mata</i>, Mother Earth, and Mother land). Cows' milk sustains human bodies and is used to make butter.</p>
Chant / Song	<p>Song 1: Chitha Chora Yashoda Ke Bal</p> <p><i>Chitha Chora Yashoda Ke Bal Navaneetha Chora Gopal</i> <i>Gopal Gopal Gopal Govardhanadhara Gopal</i> <i>Gopal Gopal Gopal Gopal Govardhanadhara Gopal</i></p> <p>Meaning: O Lord Gopala (Krishna), the beloved Prince of Mother Yashoda, You are the captivator/stealer of the hearts of devotees, their Chitta, the spiritual Heart which is the seat of consciousness. You are the stealer of</p>



	<p>butter, i.e. hearts of the <i>Gopis</i> (devotees). Chant the name of Gopala, the one who protects the cows or tends the cows as a cowherd. Chant the name of the <i>Govardhanadhara</i> Gopal, who held aloft the mountain Govardhana to protect the villagers against the torrential rain.</p> <p>- SSSIO Sai Rhythms – Chitha Chora Yashoda Ke Bal - https://sairhythms.sathyasai.org/song/chitha-chora-yashoda-ke-bal</p> <p>Song 2: Govinda Krishna Jai Gopala Krishna <i>Govinda Krishna Jai Gopala Krishna Jai Gopala Pala Bala Radha Krishna Jai</i> <i>Krishna Jai Krishna Jai Krishna Jai Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Jai [Govinda ...]</i> <i>Gopika Mala Haari Pyaari Maayi Meera Mana Vihari Madana Mohana Muralidhari Krishna Jai</i> <i>Krishna Jai Rama Krishna Jai Radha Krishna Jai Bala Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Jai</i> <i>Krishna Jai Krishna Jai Krishna Jai Krishna Jai Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Jai</i></p> <p>Meaning: Victory be to Krishna, the Lord of Radha; Victory be to the beloved Lord who wears the garland of the Gopis; Victory be to the one who dwells in the heart of Meera; Victory be to the Lord of Love who enchants our hearts and who plays flute.</p> <p>- SSSIO Sai Rhythms – Govinda Krishna Jai Gopala Krishna - https://sairhythms.sathyasai.org/song/govinda-krishna-jai-gopala-krishna</p>
Story	<p>Birth of Krishna</p> <p>Sri Krishna was born as the eighth child of Dhevaki. The moment Krishna was born, the chains that bound his father fell off, the doors that had been bolted flew open and the prison guards were immersed in the ocean of bliss so that they could not recognise any event or thing in the material world. The fire of hatred that was burning in them was cooled and darkness gave place to the dawn of wisdom. The sky showered raindrops to soften the earth and lay low the dust. How can the elements operate against the Divine Will? Sound, touch, light, taste and smell - all became sublime to celebrate the new era of peace and plenty.</p> <p>Vasudheva, as instructed by 'the voice,' placed the child in a basket and carried him on his head across the Yamuna river (which parted to give him the right of way), to Gokul, where at the same time Yasodha, consort of Nandha, had given birth to a female child. Just when he emerged from the prison, a donkey brayed to indicate the good omen, but Vasudeva was afraid it would awaken the guards. So after placing the basket on the ground, he held the child's feet with both his hands and prayed to him that he keep the guards asleep. That was the depth of his devotion to the Lord.</p>



	<p>When he went to Nandha's house and entered the lying-In-room, she had just delivered a baby girl. There was no one there, except Radha, Nandha's sister, who was nine years old. Vasudheva lifted her baby and placed the baby Krishna by her side. The female child symbolised <i>maya shakthi</i> (deluding power), for she ushered the <i>Avathar</i> (divine incarnation) of the Lord. Maya shakthi played her ruse as soon as she was placed in the bed of Dhevaki. She cried aloud, awakening the guards, who reported the arrival of the child to Kamsa. He had expected that the eighth child would be a boy, but nevertheless, he took hold of the girl and smashed her upon a rock. <i>Maya shakthi</i> flew up into the air, declaring that the person who was to kill Kamsa was growing up safely in Gokul.</p> <p>- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 13, #38 (1975-77)</p>
Activity Suggestions	<p>Activity 1: Making butter and discussion - Groups 1, 2, 3, and 4 Make butter in the classroom and have a discussion on why Lord Krishna stole butter from the houses of <i>Gopikas</i>. - SSSIO-USA SSE SOuL Activities – God is in everything - https://sathyasai.us/education/activities/god-is-in-everything</p> <p>“Take the name, <i>Navaneethachora</i> (Butter-thief) that is used for Krishna. It does not mean a person who runs away with the butter that people have stored. It is not the stuff called butter, that is got by churning curdled milk, that He stole. It is the butter of Faith, won by the churning process called 'yearning,' from the curdled milk called, 'worldly experiences.' He covets only this 'butter.' When Yasodha chided the child Krishna for this 'theft,' He replied, "But Mother, they like me for stealing it; they are sorry if I do not; they churn it not; they churn it in the hope that I will steal it; when I steal, their hearts are illumined and they awake." - Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 7, #25 (1967)</p> <p>Activity 2: Making idols – Groups 1 and 2 The students make idols of baby Krishna in class using clay or playdoh; the idols can be decorated with beads and gems. - SSSIO-USA SSE SOuL Activities – All “This” is permeated by the Divine - https://sathyasai.us/education/activities/all-this-is-permeated-by-the-divine</p> <p>Activity 3: Research different names of Lord Krishna – Groups 3 and 4 Lord Krishna is known by many names such as Gopala, Giridhar, Madhava, Govinda, Madhusudan, Keshava and so on. The students can do research and find out what each of the different names of Lord Krishna mean and why He is called by that specific name.</p>