

Esala Perahera (Buddhism)

Esala Perahera is a Buddhist festival held every year in Sri Lanka in August. It is their main midsummer festival and lasts for ten nights. The highlight comes on the night of the full moon when there is a magnificent torchlight procession of over 100 elephants. At the centre of the procession is a grand elephant, the Maligawa Tusker. His tusks are covered in jewels and he is clothed in a richly decorated costume for the occasion. Buddhists honour holy relics and the Maligawa Tusker carries a replica of Buddha's sacred tooth in a golden cachet. Many different groups of dancers, acrobats, flame-throwers and drummers take part in the festival, which is thought to date back to the third century BC and honours the Buddha.



Silk Elephant Hanging

Resources

- Silk – one large and one smaller piece (per child)
- Silk paints
- Silk gutta
- Pictures of decorated elephants
- Brushes
- Card
- Sequins
- Sellotape®



Approach

- 1 Talk about the festival and research some traditional elephant costumes. Ask the children to sketch some ideas and discuss possible colours for a silk elephant hanging.
- 2 On a piece of card draw a picture of the Maligawa Tusker. Press hard with the pencil so that the design will show through the silk fabric.
- 3 Place the silk on top of the design and tape around the edges.
- 4 Trace around the lines of the drawing in silk gutta, making sure that the silk gutta completely encloses areas of the silk.
- 5 Give children a smaller individual piece of silk to design a decorative border in the same way.
- 6 Paint the designs with silk paints and leave to dry.
- 7 Gently peel off the silk from the cardboard and mount it on a new piece of card, embellish with sequins.