Songkran is the Thai festival that celebrates the Buddhist New Year. “Songkran” means “move” or “change place” as it is the day when the sun changes its position in the zodiac. The date of the festival was originally set by astrological calculation, but it is now fixed and lasts for three days beginning on April 13th. It is also known as the “Water Festival” as people believe that water will wash away bad luck. Originally it was about pouring water on statues of the Buddha as a sign of washing away the sins and misfortunes of the past year. Paying homage to one’s ancestors is an important part of the festival. People will pay their respects to their elders by pouring scented water over the palms of their hands. The elders, in turn, wish the younger generation good luck and prosperity. Today, people of all ages gather in the streets and soak each other with any and every kind of tool that contains water.

You can celebrate this festival at your school with the help of our Thai visiting scholars. The celebration can be catered to your needs. Students will learn about the traditions and meaning of the festival and focus on the concept of “respect.”

As a sign of respect, water is poured over the hands of an elder

Water throwing along the western moat of Chiang Mai, Thailand

Monks receiving a blessing at a temple

Woman cleanses Buddha image