

## Unit 3B How and why do Hindus celebrate Divali?

### ABOUT THE UNIT

This unit introduces children to some of the beliefs and practices of Hindus through the celebration of Divali. There is a focus upon how these beliefs are exemplified in this festival. The religious significance of what Divali means to believers is highlighted, using pictures, drama, storytelling and model making.

### WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit builds upon the work completed on signs and symbols in year 3 (unit 3A) and on work on harvest, Christmas and Easter covered in years 1 and 2. Children will explore Hindu beliefs and practices through studying the festival of Divali.

### PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if children have:

- had opportunities to explore the significance of symbols in other religious traditions
- had opportunities to understand the links between religious stories and modern day beliefs and practices

### VOCABULARY

In this unit children will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:

- Hinduism, eg *Divali*, *Lakshmi*
- Hindu practices, eg *diva*, *rangoli*
- describing feelings and emotions, eg *warm*, *calm*, *secure*

### RESOURCES

- books relating to the story of Rama and Sita
- examples of rangoli patterns
- examples of a variety of greeting cards, photos and posters showing Lakshmi
- ICT packages and access to the internet
- examples of Indian comic books telling stories from the Ramayana
- shrine figure model of Lakshmi

### EXPECTATIONS

#### At the end of this unit

*most children will:*

know why Divali is important to Hindus; know that some features of Hindu beliefs and practices are shown in this festival; give an account of the story of Rama and Sita; explain the meaning of symbols associated with Divali

*some children will not have made so much progress and will:*

know that Divali originated from the story of Rama and Sita; give an account of some of the practices and religious beliefs associated with Divali

*some children will have progressed further and will:*

understand that religious beliefs can be expressed in a variety of ways; know why Divali has a religious meaning for Hindus; give a detailed account of practices associated with Divali; give a detailed account of the story of Rama and Sita; ask questions and suggest answers relating to Rama and Sita's experiences; make links between religious symbols, language and stories, and the Hindu beliefs that underlie them

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

## POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

## POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

### WHO WERE RAMA AND SITA?

- about the key events and have an overview of the story of Rama and Sita
- about the meaning behind the story
- to consider the feelings and motivations of the characters in the story

- Introduce the characters in the story, describing their personalities. Ask the children to write a character analysis, highlighting the themes of good and evil.
- Retell the story using a book, video or slides.
- Show examples of Indian comic books telling stories about Rama, Sita and other important characters.
- Give children a prepared sheet with the story of Rama and Sita in comic strip. Ask them to sequence the pictures and write on the dialogue.
- Discuss other stories where good conquers evil.
- Discuss the experiences and viewpoints of key figures in the story, *eg was Rama's stepmother right to demand that her son was king instead of Rama?*
- Ask the children to write about characters they like and dislike, and explain why.

- identify key events associated with the story
- identify the moral of the story, ie 'Good conquers evil'
- explain their responses to the behaviour of the characters in the story

- There are opportunities for the story to be dramatised. The story may be rewritten as a playscript and acted out.
- There are many opportunities to make cross-curricular links in this unit – with English, PE and art and design. In RE lessons always ensure that there is a clear focus on RE.

### WHY DO HINDUS HAVE DIVAS?

- to identify some practices associated with Divali
- about the symbolic significance of a Diva and how it relates to the Divali story

- Light a diva and ask the children to look at the flame: encourage them to write down their initial feelings and thoughts.
- Discuss the symbolic significance of light and mention other religions that use light as a symbol.
- Explain how the diva originated from the story, and why it is lit to celebrate Divali.
- Help the children to make divas using clay, plasticine or paper. Ask them to write an explanation of how and why divas are used. Display their work.
- Ask the children to write acrostic poems using the words 'diva' or 'light'.

- explain why light is symbolic in some religions
- explain why a diva is lit during the festival of Divali

- There are opportunities to discuss which materials would be suitable for creating a diva.
- A diva dance can be created using the divas made by the children.
- As this unit is timed for the second half of the autumn term, links could be made with the importance of light for Jews at Hanukkah and for Christians at Christmas, *eg Christingle, St Lucia*.
- It is important to remember that light, as a symbol, is interpreted and used in different ways in different religious traditions.

### HOW DO HINDUS PREPARE FOR DIVALI?

- about the purpose of sending Divali cards
- about the purpose of creating rangoli patterns
- about the importance of preparation for Divali

- Show the children a selection of greeting cards and discuss messages, illustrations and the reasons why cards are sent.
- Discuss what captions, illustrations and messages are appropriate for new year and Divali cards.
- Ask the children to make a Divali card for a Hindu friend.
- Show children designs of colourful geometric rangoli patterns (use both simple and detailed designs) and discuss how they make them feel. Brainstorm 'feeling' words and display responses on a display board. Ask the children to find out why these patterns are used.
- Tell the children to imagine that they have been invited to celebrate Divali with a Hindu family. Ask them to write a letter to a friend describing how the family prepares for and celebrates Divali, and why it is a special time. Alternatively, they could write a magazine article on 'celebrating Divali in a Hindu family'; emphasizing the preparation as well as the celebration.

- explain why Divali cards are sent
- suggest reasons why some illustrations are appropriate for Divali cards
- explain what rangoli patterns are and their purpose and use within the festival
- explain, in writing, the importance of preparations for Divali for Hindus

- There are opportunities to use an ICT package to create a Divali card.
- Make links with art and create rangoli patterns using various media, *eg coloured paper, lentils, paint*.

### HOW DO HINDUS SEE GOD?

- that some Hindus worship Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth
- that Hindus believe that the many qualities of God are represented in various ways
- to identify some of the customs and practices related to celebrating Divali
- that Divali is the start of the new year for Hindus

- *What do you think God looks like?* Discuss the qualities of God and what God means to children.
- Introduce large pictures or a shrine figure of Lakshmi and explain that she is the goddess of wealth. Name the objects she holds and explain their significance and symbolism.
- Explain why Lakshmi features in the festival and how she is worshipped.
- Ask the children to complete sentences on Hindu worship at Divali.
- Look at how a Hindu family celebrates Divali (using videos, slides, stories, visitors). Explain that it is the start of the new year for Hindus. *How do other people celebrate new year?*
- Plan and celebrate a Divali day, with various activities throughout the day, *eg making divas, stick dancing, cooking, dressing in saris*. Invite another class to participate and encourage the class to explain what they have learnt to their visitors.

- explain why Lakshmi is worshipped
- give an account of some of the qualities which Hindus believe God possesses
- reflect on and share their own ideas about God
- give an overview of the key elements associated with celebrating Divali
- show understanding, through discussion, that religious beliefs and ideas can be expressed in a variety of ways

- Display responses given by children of their interpretation of God.
- Be sensitive to the fact that children from secular backgrounds may not be familiar with the idea of God.
- Use the internet and CD-ROMs to find out more about Divali.
- Use reference books to do research on the festival.
- There are opportunities for dancing to take place (stick and diva dance).

## **FUTURE LEARNING**

Children could go on to:

- read some of the many stories about Hindu gods and goddesses
- learn about other Hindu festivals and celebrations, such as Holi