

# Unit 4A How and why do Hindus worship at home and in the mandir?

## ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit, children are introduced to Hinduism by exploring ways in which Hindus worship and finding out why worship is important to members of the Hindu community.

## WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit builds on other units which have introduced children to faith communities and to places and styles of worship. It builds upon work completed on Hindu belief and practice in year 3, which focused on the celebration of Divali. This unit will help children to develop their understanding of what worship means to a believer.

## PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if children have:

- learnt the names of some different religions and are familiar with the words Hindu and Hinduism
- visited or seen pictures of places of worship
- looked at or handled artefacts used in worship by members of another faith community
- encountered and talked about words such as prayer, worship and God

## VOCABULARY

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

- the practice of religion, *eg worship, pray, prayer, God, devotion, offering, shrine, sacred, holy*
- Hinduism, *eg murti, arti, puja, aum, prasad*
- the names of Hindu gods, *eg Ganesha, Krishna*

## RESOURCES

- artefacts, *eg puja set, images and pictures of gods and goddesses*
- videos
- posters and photos of a mandir
- books
- CD-ROMs

## EXPECTATIONS

### At the end of this unit

*most children will:*

explain what worship is, using some technical terms accurately; know the names of some Hindu gods and goddesses, and some of the terms associated with Hindu worship; describe ways in which Hindus worship and suggest why worship is important to them; identify some of the artefacts used in Hindu worship

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

recognise that the term 'worship' is connected with ideas about 'prayer' and 'God'; answer some questions about how Hindus worship and be aware that worship is an important activity for Hindus

*some children will have progressed further and will:*

handle technical terms to do with worship and the Hindu religion confidently in discussion and writing; begin to make comparisons with how people worship in other religions; devise questions for a member of the Hindu faith community to extend their own knowledge or begin to interrogate a variety of sources to acquire further information

LEARNING OBJECTIVES CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN	POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES	LEARNING OUTCOMES CHILDREN	POINTS TO NOTE
<b>WHAT DO HINDUS TEACH THEIR CHILDREN ABOUT GOD?</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the meaning of the aum symbol and its significance for Hindus</li> <li>about some aspects of Hindu beliefs in God</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk about some of the things that parents think are important to teach their children. Show children an aum symbol and discuss what it means. Explain that in many Hindu families, children are taught about one supreme God who is in everything.</li> <li>Show children a glass of water and tell the following story. <i>Svetaketu always came proudly home after school each day. One day his father asked him about God, but Svetaketu didn't know anything. His father sent for a glass of water and asked Svetaketu to put some salt in it. The next day, he asked where the salt was. Svetaketu could not see the salt, but he could taste it in the water in the glass. 'That's a bit like God in the world,' said his father. 'God is invisible, but is there in everything.'</i> After the story, allow a short time for the children to reflect in small groups, expressing their responses to this Hindu belief. Bring children back together to share their thoughts.</li> <li>Work in small groups to produce a story to explain to a Hindu child what God is like. Share the stories and collate to make a class book.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explain the beliefs which underlie the Hindu concept of God</li> <li>reflect on different ways of expressing beliefs about God</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An 'aum' symbol is a special sign for God, often seen in Hindu homes or places of worship.</li> <li>Hindu families are not all identical. They may favour many different representations of God and practise their religion in a variety of ways. It is sensible to talk in this unit about 'some Hindus', rather than all Hindus, or to look at the practice of an individual family and acknowledge that others may be different.</li> </ul>
<b>ONE GOD WHO TAKES MANY FORMS</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>about the Hindu idea of God in many forms</li> <li>to reflect on the different aspects of their own character</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watch a video extract which looks at the Hindu idea of God in many forms.</li> <li>Show and discuss some shrine figures.</li> <li>Discuss pictures. Many families choose a particular deity or form of the one supreme God to worship, eg <i>Ganesha, the elephant-headed god</i>. Ask the children to choose a shrine figure and investigate what they are holding or wearing, and explain why. As a class, share findings and collate results.</li> <li>Ask the children to draw a picture of themselves which shows their many different roles and interests, eg <i>wearing different hats or clothes, or holding different objects</i>; showing the many sides and characteristics that one person can have.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify the different characteristics of Hindu gods and goddesses</li> <li>make links between shrine figures and the beliefs which underlie them</li> <li>show understanding of the idea that one person has many characteristics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Hinduism, God is worshipped in diverse forms and is believed to be formless. Some forms are Krishna, Lakshmi and Ganesha. For many children, the imagery of the Hindu deities may be unfamiliar and even strange. Some understanding of the symbolism behind them is needed.</li> </ul>
<b>WHAT IS A SHRINE AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT IN A HINDU HOME?</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that shrines are special places in Hindu homes</li> <li>about some of the ways that Hindus show devotion to God</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk about special places at home. Discuss where the children go if they want to be quiet or to think.</li> <li>Show them the word 'shrine'. Explain that in Hindu homes a collection of pictures or images is kept in the shrine and this is where a Hindu family comes to pray.</li> <li>Look at pictures and videos of a shrine. Ask the children to describe what they can see.</li> <li>Discuss how one might prepare for the visit of a special guest. <i>How do we try to make people feel welcome?</i> Explain that Hindus treat the images of the gods and goddesses like extra-special guests: they're respected, cared for, talked to, offered food and kept clean. <i>Why do you think this might be?</i></li> <li>Hindus believe they can serve God through loving devotion to their chosen deity. Ask the children what they think loving devotion means. Use a selection of resources to find out how Hindus may treat and care for their images of the gods and goddesses. Record findings on a prepared sheet.</li> <li>Use CD-ROMs or talk to a Hindu visitor about why a shrine is important to them and how it is used.</li> <li>Possible activities: (a) draw or describe their own special places and explain what makes them special, and what they like to do there (b) draw a Hindu shrine and explain why that might be a special or important place for a Hindu family.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>describe how a shrine is cared for in a Hindu home</li> <li>understand how God is thought about in Hinduism</li> <li>reflect on their own experiences of special places, and relate them to the importance of a shrine in a Hindu home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The word 'shrine' is used here to denote a place of worship in the home. The term 'mandir' may also be used, but in textbooks it is more often used to describe a Hindu temple or place of worship outside the home.</li> <li>A shrine must be in a clean area of the house. It is often found in the kitchen or in a bedroom.</li> </ul>
<b>WHAT ARE THE MAIN ACTIVITIES IN AN ACT OF WORSHIP IN THE HOME?</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what 'puja' means</li> <li>that actions in worship often have symbolic meanings</li> <li>that some of the activities in worship have parallels in their own lives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask the children to work in pairs to practise miming the following: being pleased to see someone, saying thank you for something, being sorry, giving a present, receiving a present, meeting someone important. Explain they will see some of these ideas and actions in Hindu worship.</li> <li>Look at pictures and videos of a Hindu family doing puja at home. Describe what can be seen, brainstorming ideas as a class. Ask the children to write questions about things they need or want to find out.</li> <li>Look at artefacts on a puja tray. Talk about how the different artefacts are used.</li> <li>Think about elements of puja, eg <i>ringing the bell, making offerings, touching/bowing to the image, using incense, receiving prasad, caring for the image</i>.</li> <li>Think about the idea of 'offering'. <i>Who do we give things to? When? Why? How can we show love if we can't buy presents?</i></li> <li>Ask the children to draw objects involved in puja and write about how each is used. Create a set of labels for the artefacts on the puja tray. Make a zigzag book for younger children showing some of the main activities in Hindu puja.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explain the meaning and practice of puja for Hindus</li> <li>reflect on their own experiences of giving as an act of showing love</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don't involve the children in an act of worship. Make it clear you are 'finding out about' Hindu worship, not worshipping.</li> <li>Puja is worship, a way of showing devotion and love for God.</li> </ul>

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

## POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

## POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

### WHAT HAPPENS IN A MANDIR?

- about worship through the elements, rituals and artefacts that are involved in Hindu worship
- Describe to children what the inside of a mandir looks like from a picture which the class cannot see. Ask the children to listen carefully and try to imagine themselves there. *From the description, what would you most like to see?*
- Use pictures of the inside of a mandir. In pairs, let the children take it in turns to say what they can see in their picture. Try to keep going for two minutes. Report back to the class on the main characteristics of a mandir.
- 'A mandir is a Hindu place of worship.' Explain that 'worship' is a word which contains many ideas. Brainstorm some other words/phrases which could be used in the sentence, 'Hindus worship God.'
- Watch a video of Hindus worshipping in a mandir. *What's it like to be a Hindu?* Ask the children to think back over what they saw and to suggest why worshippers may have done certain things. As a class, write your own simple commentary to accompany the video.
- Help the children to make a glossary to explain the following words: mandir, murti, arti, priest, prasad, puja. Make a pull-through strip with alternative words or phrases for 'worship' in the sentence, 'Hindus worship God'.

- describe what is involved in Hindu worship in a mandir
- reflect on the meaning of the word 'worship' and understand its significance for Hindus
- use correct technical terminology relating to Hindu worship

- Where possible, plan a visit to a mandir, where the children can be shown around and can talk to representatives of the Hindu community.

### WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT ABOUT WORSHIP IN A HINDU FAMILY?

- that religious beliefs, ideas and feelings can be expressed in a variety of forms
- Brainstorm what the children have found out about worship in a Hindu family, both at home and in the mandir. *What are the most important things you have found out? What do we still need to find out? What similarities have you noticed between Hindu worship and worship in any other religion you know about?*
- Write to the Hindu visitor with their unanswered questions or use CD-ROMs for further research on their questions.
- Use CD-ROMs for further research about Hinduism.
- Make a presentation to another class about their discoveries.

- evaluate what they have learnt about Hindu worship
- compare and contrast Hindu worship with worship in other religious traditions they have studied
- ask questions to further their knowledge of Hinduism

## **FUTURE LEARNING**

Children could go on to:

- investigate the characteristics of other popular Hindu representations of God
- read and retell stories of some Hindu gods
- devise a questionnaire or letter for a practising Hindu asking about aspects of Hindu worship they would like to know more about
- prepare a talk for younger children explaining how and why Hindus worship
- find out about the work of a Hindu priest

## **OUT-OF-SCHOOL LEARNING**

Children could:

- visit a mandir
- attend a Hindu celebration