

HINDUISM

Mark It on the Map

After you have completed the preliminary map work in the “Getting Started” section, direct students’ attention to the location of the symbol for Hinduism. As they read through the issue, let them locate the sites mentioned.

Introduction

Have students read “Message From the Editors” and discuss their thoughts about why people throughout history have held some type of religious beliefs. Ask whether students personally know a religious leader (for example, a minister, priest, rabbi, or an imam). Encourage them to share how or why this religious leader chose religious life as a profession.

Vocabulary

religion	sect
<i>rishis</i>	sages
Vedas	Brahmans
Kshatriyas	Vaishyas
Shudras	caste
<i>dharma</i>	reincarnation
<i>karma</i>	<i>moksha</i>
avatar	pantheon
<i>puja</i>	mantra
pilgrimage	<i>bhakti</i>
Sanskrit	

Questions for Discussion

- ➔ Who are the Seven Sages?
- ➔ Who composed the Vedas and when?
- ➔ What is the difference between the Upanishads and the Vedas?
- ➔ What are the four social classes in Hindu society? How did each come into being?
- ➔ What is the difference between class and caste in Hindu society?
- ➔ What is the Hindu view of the afterlife?
- ➔ What is the Trimurti?
- ➔ What is the significance of the festival of Holi?
- ➔ How do the ritual requirements of *puja* affect the everyday life of a Hindu?
- ➔ What is the significance of the Sacred Thread ceremony?
- ➔ What class of Hindus can never participate in the Sacred Thread ceremony?
- ➔ Why is water important to Hindus? Explain your answer and give examples.
- ➔ What are the two epic poems in Hindu literature? What is the theme of each poem?
- ➔ What is the *Bhagavad Gita*?
- ➔ How is a site prepared for a new Hindu place of worship?
- ➔ What is the ceremony known as Havan, and how is it celebrated?

Writing Workout

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- ➔ Read the words of Gandhi on page 2 and then write what they mean to you. How do they reflect Gandhi’s belief in Hinduism?
- ➔ Write a one-page essay about how Hindu beliefs and practices affect a Hindu’s diet.
- ➔ The Sacred Thread ceremony is a “rite of passage” for Hindu boys. There are many “rite of passage” ceremonies throughout the world, some religious, others not. Write about “a rite of passage” ceremony that you have witnessed, experienced, or one about which you have read.
- ➔ If you had the chance to interview a Hindu, what questions would you ask? List

each one and beside it write what you hope to learn from the answer.

- If you were to interview a Hindu who is considered a holy man, what questions would you ask him? What would you hope to learn from this interview?

Viewpoints

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- According to Hindu philosophy, the cycle of rebirth continues endlessly. Think about this statement and list reasons why Hindus believe this is so.
- Purusha sacrificed parts of his body to create the Hindu class system. Do you think each class was chosen appropriately? Give reasons for your answer.
- Review the practices of the festival of Holi. Then think about festivals celebrated in the United States. Compare a festival with Holi. Explain how the two festivals are similar and how they differ.
- Hindus consider Rama a role model, a Hindu who remains true to his *dharma* (duty). Review the story of Rama on pages 35–39. How do the events illustrate this characteristic of Rama?
- Devout Hindus believe that pilgrims who go as tourists or adventurers on organized group tours with a luxury bus will not be blessed. Think about why devout Hindus would feel this way, and then write your thoughts in essay form.

Get Into Art

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Make a decorative poster with the symbol for *OM* as the focal point.
- Use the school or local library to find books with pictures of Hindu deities. Choose and illustrate a deity as a color poster for the classroom.
- Look up the months of the Hindu year and design a Hindu calendar. Mark the dates of the festivals mentioned in this issue. Accompany each month with one or more of the following: an illustration of a deity, a saying from the Vedas, or a quotation from an important Hindu such as Tagore or Gandhi.
- Illustrate the story of Prahlada using your imagination and creativity.

“Play” Time

Divide the class into small groups. Have each group write a simple script for the episode described in “The Adventures of Rama,” on pages 35–39. Set aside time for groups to rehearse and perform the tale for the class.

Words With a Past

- Read with students the words defined and explained on pages 40 and 41. Then divide the class into five groups and give each group one of the words written on a folded piece of paper so the other groups can't see it. Have each group prepare a poster, a skit, a poem, or a collage that will describe the meaning and the derivation of its word. Then have each group present its work while the class tries to guess the word.
- After reading about the words on pages 40 and 41, have students use each word in a sentence.

Host a Guest

Invite a member or a leader of the Hindu community to speak to your class about Hinduism. Be sure to provide time for questions and answers.

Research Projects

Students may complete one or more of the following activities individually, in groups, or as a class.

- Research the life of Mahatma Gandhi and write a two-page essay on how his belief in Hinduism helped him as he fought for Indian self-rule.
- Research one of the other Hindu deities mentioned on page 17. Find out and list the deity's attributes, personality traits, the relationship to other deities, and how the deity is represented.
- Find out where Hindu temples in the United States are located. On a map of the United States, use a smaller version of the symbol for OM from your poster to mark the location of each temple you find.
- Use a world almanac to find out in which countries the Hindu religion is practiced. Make a bar graph to show the approximate number of Hindus in each country.
- Find other religions and civilizations that believe in reincarnation. Present the results of your research on a poster that includes a time line and a map.

Literature Enrichment

Ask the school or local librarian to get a copy of the *Ramayana* and the *Bhagavad Gita*. Read a few passages from each to the class. There is an Indian comic book on the *Bhagavad Gita*, which a local bookstore may be able to get for you.

Film Enrichment

Show one of the videos recommended on page 48. Have students share what new information they learned from the video and how the film helped them better understand what they have studied.

Just For Fun

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- After you read “The Seven Sages and Their Sacred Poems” on pages 6–9, complete the puzzle “A Wise Match” on page 10.
- With a family member, use the recipe on pages 22 and 23 to make *khajoor*, Indian doughnuts.
- After you read “The Hindu Home” and “The Sacred Thread” on pages 28–32, complete “A Hindu Scramble” on page 33.

Follow These Footsteps

Purusha

Sita

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

Prahlada

Rabindranath Tagore

Rama

Rammohan Ray