



## TEACHER'S NOTES

### Religious Education – How and why do Hindus celebrate Divali? (based on QCA Unit 3b)

#### Learning Intentions

This unit introduces pupils to some of the practices and beliefs of Hindus by teaching them about Divali. The religious significance of the festival is emphasised.

Pupils will be asked:

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

#### Resources for further work

Versions of the story of Rama and Sita, images of Hindus celebrating Divali, examples of Divali greeting cards, images or statues of Lakshmi and other Hindu deities, examples of rangoli patterns and materials for making them, sticky notes to annotate the whiteboard.

#### Glossary / Vocabulary

<b>acrostic</b>	A poem in which the first letters of each line, when read in order, spell out a word.
<b>Brahma</b>	The deity that Hindus believe created the world.
<b>deities</b>	Forms of the one Hindu God.
<b>dipavali</b>	An Indian word meaning 'row of lights'.
<b>diva lamps</b>	Small oil lamps that Hindus use to decorate their homes during Divali.
<b>Divali</b>	The Hindu festival of light, which celebrates the power of good over evil.
<b>Durga</b>	A Hindu deity known for his bravery and creativity.
<b>Ganesha</b>	The elephant-headed deity, known for his wisdom.
<b>Hanuman</b>	The monkey king who helped Rama defeat Ravana.
<b>Lakshmi</b>	The deity most associated with Divali, and a goddess of wealth and happiness.
<b>lotus flower</b>	A flower that is a Hindu symbol of purity.
<b>Rama</b>	A deity in human form who shows the best qualities that Hindus believe men should have.



<b>rangolis</b>	Patterns made by Hindus to decorate the floor during Divali.
<b>Ravana</b>	The ten-headed demon king who captured Sita in the Divali story.
<b>Sita</b>	Wife of Rama and an example of the qualities that Hindus believe a woman should have.
<b>symbol</b>	A thing that stands for or represents something else.



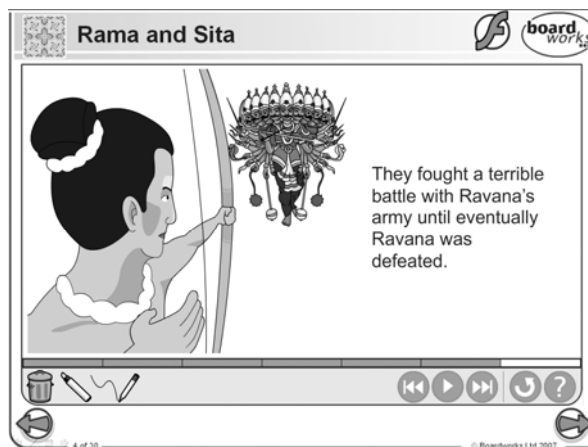
Lesson notes (sections 1 – 5)

1. Rama and Sita

Learning Objectives

Pupils will learn:

- 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.
- When they have seen the story of Rama and Sita, invite pupils to act out some of the scenes to allow them to empathise with the characters.
  - The spider diagram activity allows pupils to link qualities and personality traits with the characters from the story. When they have made the diagram, ask them which characters they liked, and why. Which did they dislike? Highlight the themes of good and evil.
  - Ask pupils if they know of any other stories where good defeats evil.
  - As a further activity, pupils could collaborate to draw a comic strip of the story of Rama and Sita. Ask pupils to emphasise the light guiding Rama and Sita out of the darkness in their drawings.



Notes



## 2. Why do Hindus have divas?

### Learning Objectives

Pupils will learn:

- to identify some practices associated with Divali;
- about the symbolic significance of a diva and how it relates to the Divali story.
- Invite pupils to close their eyes so that they are in the dark. Ask them to think about how the dark makes them feel, and the problems darkness can cause. In contrast, let them open their eyes and ask how light makes them feel. Explain that for Hindus, lights symbolise good defeating evil and represent hope and happiness.
- Talk about other religions that use light as a symbol, such as Christianity – ‘Jesus is the light of the world’ (John, 18), or Judaism – the importance of light during Hanukkah.
- A fun activity for pupils is making and decorating their own diva lamps:

You will need: a lump of clay that will fit into your palm; a small candle or tea light; paint and brushes; PVA glue; a small amount of sand.

- 1) Roll the clay into a ball.
- 2) Using your thumb, press a hole into the centre of the ball of clay.
- 3) Gently make the hole bigger with your fingers and thumbs, until it is large enough to hold the tea light. Then mould the clay into a boat shape.
- 4) Leave the clay overnight so that it hardens, then you can paint your lamp. When the paint is dry you can add a glossy finish to the lamp by painting it with a mixture of water and PVA glue.
- 5) When the gloss is dry, put a layer of sand in the bottom of the lamp to help keep the candle upright and reduce the risk of fire. Make sure that an adult helps you light your lamp!

- Help pupils to write acrostic poems using the words diva, Divali, light, Hindu, etc. Encourage pupils to decorate them with images associated with Divali.

Why do Hindus have divas?

People don't like the dark for different reasons...

There might even be a monster lurking in the dark...

...but probably not.

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Notes



### 3. Preparing for Divali

#### Learning Objectives

Pupils will learn:

- about the purpose of sending Divali cards;
  - about the purpose of creating rangoli patterns;
  - about the importance of preparation for Divali;
  - to identify some of the customs and practices related to celebrating Divali.
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- Show pupils some Divali cards and discuss the images on them. Compare and contrast them with other greetings cards such as Christmas cards. Ask pupils: why are cards sent? What messages and illustrations are used?
  - Ask pupils to make a Divali card for a Hindu friend. Invite them to talk about what they have drawn and written, and why. If possible an ICT package could be used to create the cards.
  - Ask pupils how their families prepare for a big festival or celebration, and then use the linking activity to show how Hindu families prepare for Divali. If there are Hindu pupils in the class, invite them to talk about Divali celebrations in their own homes. An alternative would be to invite a Hindu visitor into the school to talk about the customs relating to Divali.
  - This chapter links well with Art. Pupils could create a rangoli pattern using mixed media such as coloured paper, beads, lentils, grains, and paint.

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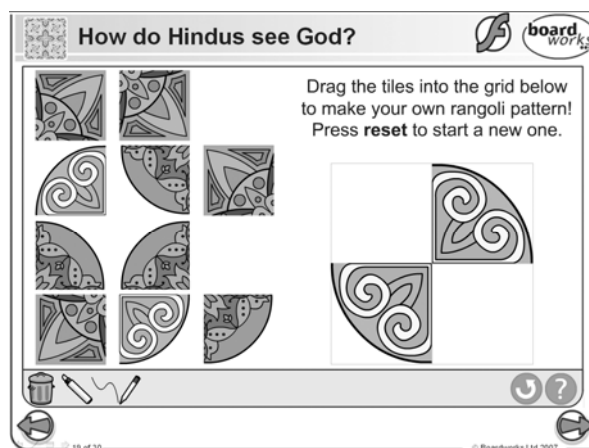


#### 4. How do Hindus see God?

##### Learning Objectives

Pupils will learn:

- that some Hindus worship Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth;
  - that Hindus believe that the many qualities of God are represented in various ways;
  - that Divali is the start of the new year for Hindus.
- Begin with a discussion about what pupils think God looks like, and why.
  - Pupils will have been introduced to the idea of Hindu deities in Unit 3a *What do signs and symbols mean in religion?* Explain that each deity is a form of God and that they represent different things about God. To extend this, pupils could research in books or on the Internet to find some more examples of Hindu deities. This subject is covered in more detail in Unit 4a *Hindu worship at home and in the mandir.*
  - Introduce Lakshmi, the deity associated with Divali, and what she represents. Building on what pupils learnt about symbols in Unit 3a, explain that lotus flowers and rangoli patterns are important symbols for Hindus at Divali.
  - There is an activity which allows pupils to put together rangoli patterns. All three patterns are included as black and white template slides at the end of the unit, so they can be printed out and coloured in.
  - Finally, tell pupils that Divali also marks the start of the New Year for Hindus. Draw out comparisons between Divali celebrations and the way that other cultures celebrate the New Year.




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### 5. Review

- There is a review activity to recap on the key terms from the unit.
- Books and the Internet could be used to find out more about Divali and to access pictures of the celebrations.
- As an extension activity, plan and celebrate a Divali day with activities such as making divas, making Divali cards, and presenting what they have learnt to another class.

The screenshot shows a whiteboard interface with a title bar 'Review' and the 'board works' logo. Below the title bar is a list of terms and their definitions:

Lakshmi	- Rama's loyal and devoted wife.	
Sita	- The ten-headed demon who captured Sita.	
Hanuman	- The monkey king who helped defeat Ravana.	
Rangolis	- The lights which lit Rama & Sita's way home.	
Deities	- Decorative floor patterns based on lotus flowers.	
Ravana	- Forms of God in the Hindu faith.	
Divas	- The deity that is most associated with Divali.	

At the bottom of the whiteboard, there are icons for a trash can, eraser, and pencil, along with navigation buttons (S, C, U, ?) and a copyright notice: © Boardworks Ltd 2007.

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