

What is Hinduism?

Hinduism is over 4,000 years old, making it one of the world's oldest religions. It is made up of a variety of different religious beliefs and practices. It originated near the Indus River in India. The name 'Hindu' comes from the word Indus. Hindus believe that life is a cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.

They also believe that the next life depends on how the previous life was lived. Hindus worship in a temple called a **Mandir**. Hindus also worship at home and often have a special room with a shrine to particular gods. We are going to be looking at worshiping in the home.



Thinking...

At home,

- Where do you go when you want to be on your own?
- When you want to talk to God what helps you?

The Hindu home shrine

Hindu families have shrines, (prayer spaces) in their homes dedicated to a god or gods. A lot of worship takes place at home; children learn prayers and understand about their religion from their parents. Look at the picture of a home shrine; what do you notice?



Most Hindus worship more at home rather than in the Temple. When choosing a place for a shrine some well off families might have a spare room they can use, for many it will be a corner of their living room, it has to be somewhere very clean, out of respect.

They make a small altar, which is usually close to the floor as Hindus sit on the floor when they pray, they will decorate it with colourful drapes.

The family decides which god or goddess they want to dedicate their shrine to.





Hindu Gods



Ganesha is a favourite god. He is represented by an elephant and symbolises strength and protection

Krishna is also a favoured God. She symbolises love and kindness.

The family will choose the Gods that they want to worship. They might have more than one god. The families will put a pictures or a statue of the god at the centre of their shrine.

They pray at their shrine at least once a day especially in the morning and sometimes more often. The shrine is the centre of the house, for the Hindus there is a feeling that god is present in the home.



Key Questions

- Why do Hindus have a home shrine?
- Why would they want a place that is clean?
- How do you think they choose which god to have?
- From looking at the pictures of the different shrines, what do they have in common? What artefacts do they all include?

Task 1

Draw a picture or use items from around the house and create your own home shrine.

You could recreate a Hindu one or make one for your own beliefs. Label the items that are on the shrine and give a reason for each item.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/clips/zh2hyrd>

**Watch the clip to find out more
about Hindu's praying at home.**

Vocabulary check

Puja – Hindu worship

Puja tray – a special tray is put in front the shrine for puja (worship). It has on it bell, pot of water and spoon, a diva lamp, incense, a pot of kum kum, food and flowers (offerings).

Divya lamp – a small lamp with 5 flames.

Kum kum – Red paste used to make a mark on the heads of the Gods and family. Called tika mark.

Aum – The sound of God.

Puja Tray - The Hindu worship uses the 5 senses

Incense

Brings a pleasing smell into the room

Flowers

To remember and be thankful for the creation of the world

Fruits

Sharing food and offering it to the Gods.

Divya lamp

This light is a symbol of God's presence.

Water and spoon

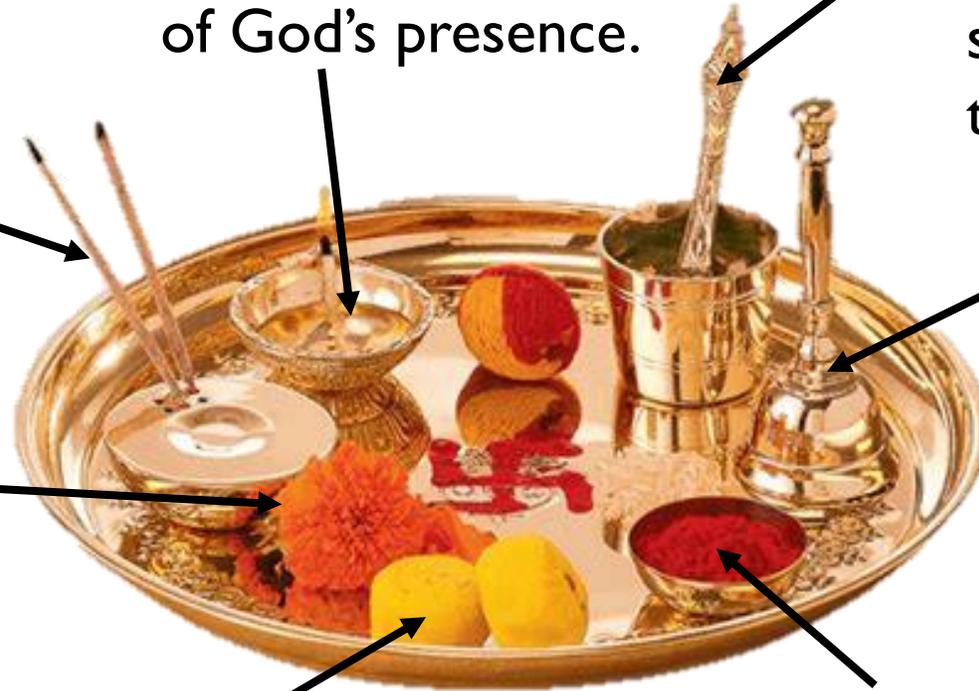
Water is offered to the gods on a spoon. This is to show respect to the gods.

Bell

The worshipper will ring the bell to let God know that he has come to worship and to invite him into the home.

Kum kum powder

Put on the heads of the Gods and all the family to show respect and devotion to the Gods and to show the Gods have blessed them.



A Puja Worship

The bell will be rung to bring a protective shield around those praying. The mother of the family will ask for a blessing on the family and their day. She will sprinkle some water on the pictures or statues and ask a child to light the lamp with its five little wicks, another child may light the incense stick. The mother will touch the pictures with red powder (kum kum) and put a dot on the forehead of each person. The family will say some prayers from the Hindu holy books. Some families say or chant the word Aum to help them meditate. Next the bell is rung again and the lamp is moved around the Gods to ask them for their blessings. All the family received God's blessings. Finally the food and water is shared and offered to the Gods.

Key Questions

- How does the Hindu family bring the presence of God to their homes?
- Hindus use all 5 senses when they worship, could you name the way in which each sense is used?
- How do you think the chanting of the holy word aum helps the family to pray?
- The kum kum powder is made into a paste and used on the images and the people, what do you think this means to the Hindus?
- How do you know that their religion is very important to them?

Task 2

Use the template of the Puja tray and label the items and say why they are used. What sense do they use?

Or

Use the numbers and name each item in your book and add an explanation of each item.

Or

You could draw the items on a Puja tray and label them. Explain why they are used during Puja.



The family home is very important for Hindus. It is where they learn about their religion and customs, where children learn to respect each other and the created world.

Most Hindus do not eat meat, they are vegetarian, they do not like to harm animals. In India cows wander around the streets nobody will hurt or kill them, because they are considered sacred because they provide milk a precious source of nourishment. Hindu people eat quite a lot of rice, dried beans, lentils cooked with tasty spices.



Children are brought up to follow five daily duties:

- To pray.
- To show respect and offer worship to the family God.
- To show respect for the family elders.
- To be hospitable and welcoming to those in need.
- To respect all living creatures.

Key Questions

- Why is family important for Hindus?
- Why are Hindus usually vegetarians?
- Why are cows sacred for Hindus?
- Talk about the applications of the 5 daily duties.

Task 3

Look at the 5 daily duties that Hindu's have to live by. For each duty, write a guide of how each one can be lived out everyday.