

**TEACHER'S GUIDE**

**TO**

**A PILGRIMAGE**

**TO**

**VRAJA MANDALA**

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## **Introduction**

Vraja Mandala Parikrama is certainly a special event. Many of the children in Sunday School have been to India. Many have visited Vrindavan. In this session, our Sunday School class will tour the area of Vraja.

Because we only have six weeks of actual lessons, six of the more well-known places have been chosen. Hopefully, this will increase the students' desire to visit the holy land or enrich a visit they may take in the future.

If you are able to get the class into a parikrama mood, it will be much more enjoyable and memorable. Try not to have this class be a "read the stories and answer the questions" session. Let them have fun with it. You will, too!

You will find many instructions in the Madhava teacher's guide for making the session a real parikrama. Even if you are teaching the older age groups, you may find it helpful to read the lesson plans for the Madhava age level and see if any of the ideas suit your older students.

Again, tap your local temple for resources. You may have devotees who have done the parikrama and would like to relate a story or pastime. Other devotees who have visited Vrindavan may have nice photos that can enrich your class. A Vrindavan slide show complete with popcorn and drinks can be a memorable event for the kids. And the kids like to hear from different people, so enlist volunteers to tell the different pastimes that are related for each holy place.

### **Items Needed for the Session**

The Damodar and Madan Mohan age groups (9 - 14) will need a poster of Vraja Mandala (there is a common one shaped like a lotus). This is available from Krishna Culture, PO Box 926337, Houston, TX, 77292 (1-800-829-2579).

Some suggested books for the teachers are:

- Krishna's Holy Land -- Sri Vraja-Mandala Parikram with Narayana Maharaj (good for additional stories)

- Madhurya Dhama (A Guide to Govardhan) by Padmalochan das (good for additional stories about Govardhan)
- Vrindavana Dham ki Jaya! by Dhruva Maharaj das (good for pictures of temples and Deities)
- Radha Kunda Mahima Madhuri: The Sweet Glories of Radha Kunda by Mahanidhi Swami (good for additional stories of Radha Kunda and the significance of the site)
- Touring the Land of Krishna (Vraja Mandala Darshan) by Patita Pavana das
- Vraja Mandala: The Holy Land of Sri Krishna (wonderful pictures to enhance each lesson)

Some of these books you will want for the pictures. In the older classes you may want to relate more pastimes than are in the curriculum. Students may want to take a look at these books to see where else the Vraja Mandala Parikram stops. If you haven't been to Vraja, you can read about the various places in one or more of these books to get a better understanding.

When telling the pastimes, vary your style and techniques of storytelling. Involve the children in the stories as much as you can, either with acting out portions, with questions or with flannelboard figures. Enhance the tales with as many appropriate pictures as you can find.

“Vrindavan: The Land of Krishna” is an ITV video you may wish to show the children during this session. It can be shown after the session has been completed and the quiz taken, or portions relating to the specific holy sites visited can be shown each week.

**Session Project:** If you wish to have a project for the session, there is a puppet show/drama included in the teacher's guide. If performed as a puppet show, the children could be engaged for a few weeks in making the puppets and then in practicing the performance.

## Our First Stop Mathura

### For the Madhava Class (6 - 8 years old)

#### ***Advance classroom preparation:***

1. Using six pieces of posterboard, prepare a poster for each of the six stops (Mathura, Govardhan, Varshana, Nandagram, Javat and Vrindavan). Ideally, each poster should say which stop and what place will be visited. For example the first poster should say, "First stop: Mathura" and have illustrations or pictures of what you would see in Mathura. If coming up with illustrations is too difficult, perhaps the posterboard could just be cut into a lotus shape and have the stop and the name of the place listed.

Place the six posters up around the classroom in order (so that the children go from the first stop to the second, etc.) Leave several feet of space between each poster. Construction paper footprints or a path can connect the posters if you like.

2. You will need copies of Worksheets 1 and 2 for the children.

3. Copy Worksheet 3 on colored paper (one per student) and cut apart the rupees. Place one set of at least 14 (more would be better) rupees in one envelope. One envelope will be given to each child for spending money in the dham.

4. Make a temple donation box or jar. Label it so each week the children can leave a donation (of paper rupees) in the box.

5. If possible, obtain dust or water from Mathura or Vishram Ghat to distribute to the children. If you can't get the real thing, you can make some Ganges water and dust and pretend it's from Mathura. It will let them experience the importance of taking the dust and water of the dham upon their heads.

6. Have "souvenirs" ready for the children to purchase. Some suggestions are for the first week are:

- Coloring pages of Krishna's birth (copies of Worksheets 4 - 6 stapled together)

- Sweets (have different sweets each week, not the same)
- Pictures of baby Krishna or the demon Kamsa (from old calendars, etc.) glued on pretty construction paper
- Baby Krishna medallions
- Anything else you can think of that fits in with the pastimes they will learn in Lesson One.

**Note:** Since there is quite a bit of preparation on the students' part for this lesson also, you may want to spend two Sundays on this lesson, rather than one. If so, stop after No. 5 in the teacher's guide. Begin the next Sunday by chanting the verse as usual and continuing with No. 6.

### Lesson Plan for the Madhava Class: (Ages 6 -8)

1. Introduce the session's topic by telling the children they will be taking a trip to the land of Lord Krishna. Explain that Vraja Mandala is the area of India where Krishna appeared and performed many of His pastimes. We will visit some of the main places in Vraja and learn what happened at each holy place. Have them take a look at the map of Vraja Mandala on Page 1.
2. Introduce the verse for the session. This is a verse offering respect to Radharani, which is in the student booklet on Page 2.

*tapta-kancana gaurangi  
radhe vrndavanesvari  
vrsabhanu-sute devi  
pranamami hari-priye*

**Translation:** I offer my respects to Radharani, whose bodily complexion is like molten gold and who is the Queen of Vrindavan. You are the daughter of King Vrishabhanu, and You are very dear to Lord Krishna.

This should be written in advance on a large chart paper or a chalkboard that can be seen by all the children. Teach it the same way we learn a Bhagavatam verse -- first having students repeat each word, then each line, as you lead. With younger children, it helps to point to each word as you chant, so they can gradually recognize the word and eventually read it on their own. Chant three or four times with them responding, then ask for volunteers to lead the chanting. As students lead, the rest of class still chants responsively. Students then repeat the English translation after you.

Chanting of the sloka should be done at the beginning of each weekly lesson. It is an excellent way of getting the children settled in and their attention focused. By the end of the session, they should easily have mastered the verse having practiced this way.

3. Get ready for the parikrama now. Tell the children that a parikrama around Vraja Mandala involves a lot of walking. It takes a full month to complete and is usually performed in the month of Kartik.

Make enough copies of Worksheet 1 and cut apart, so that all the girls in the class can be given a girl figure and all the boys can have a boy figure. Give the children time to color their figures and write their names on them.

4. Explain that when going to India, a passport is required. Each student will make a passport for themselves. Pass out a copy of Worksheet 2 to each child. Have them fold it in half and in half again to make a booklet with “Passport” appearing on the cover and “Destination” on the inside right.

Give them time to fill out the cover. They should write their names on the line and draw a picture of themselves in the box. They can bring in a photograph next week to glue on the cover if they prefer.

5. When the passports are completed and folded, have the children place their figures on the wall around the “First Stop: Mathura” poster. Their passports can be placed right underneath their figures on the wall.

6. They will also need money for their trip. It’s nice to leave donations at the different temples that are visited. They might also want to purchase some souvenirs so they can remember each place.

Give each child one of the envelopes with the paper rupees. Tell them that this will be all the money they have for their pilgrimage. They can spend it on souvenirs and maha-prasadam.

Remind them that they should leave a donation at each holy place that is visited. They must set aside some of the money for that and not spend it all on themselves. The envelopes can be kept in the classroom and handed out at the beginning of each class. For now, they can just keep their money in their booklets.

7. Tell the children that when beginning a parikrama of Vraja, we begin in the place that Lord Krishna appeared -- Mathura.

Read or tell the story of Krishna’s birth. A short introduction to His birth is found in the student booklet. The actual story of His birth is not related in their booklets because of its lengthiness. This can be found in the children’s Krishna Book, Chapter One. If you choose to tell the story rather than read it, use the children’s book to show the illustrations as you read.

There is also a children’s book called Krishna’s Birth and the Killing of Putana which can be used. It is a bit shorter and the illustrations are nice. Krishna’s birth is covered in Pages 1 - 7.

8. Remind them that one of the reasons that Krishna appears is to kill the demons. Do they remember the verse they learned in the Das Avatar session that says that? (B.G. 4.8)

Kamsa was a great demon. After all, his aim was to kill Krishna Himself. Relate the story in their booklets about Kans Tila, the place where the Lord killed Kamsa.

9. Each week as you visit different locations, be sure to ask the children if any of them have been there before. If they have, encourage them to relate their memories and impressions.

10. Have the children remove their passports from the wall. Instruct them to write in Destination #1, "Mathura." You can put a sticker on the page to represent a government stamp if you like. The more things you do to make it "official" the more the children will love it.

11. Explain that the dust and water from the holy places is non-different than Krishna Himself. He has walked upon the dust and bathed in the same waters. Tell that a very important activity when on parikrama is to sip the water from the holy places and take a little of the dust (in the mouth or on the head). Allow the children to take holy water from Vishrama Ghat upon their heads. A dot of dust can be placed upon their foreheads or sprinkled over their heads.

12. Choose two children to be the shopkeepers. They may dress up for the role (turbans for the boys and a chadar or skirt for the girls). They will collect the money from the things that are sold.

Set out the souvenirs that are for sale. You can price them each at 5 rupees so that the children may buy more than one thing each week.

Remind them to make a donation in the temple box which should be kept in the front of the room. Then allow the children to purchase some souvenirs to take home. Collect the envelopes after the children are through.

13. If you choose to show portions of the video "Vrindavan: Land of Krishna" after each class, do so now.

14. Before you leave, ask the children a few questions for review. Where did we go today? What happened here? Who was Kamsa? Who killed Kamsa's brothers, etc.?

## **For the Damodar and Madan Mohan Classes (Ages 9 - 14)**

### ***Advance classroom preparation:***

1. *Students will make travelogues of the places visited in Vraja. They will record their impressions and a brief description or summary of each place.*

*Get the travelogues ready prior to the first class. Copy Worksheet 24 on colored card stock for the cover. Worksheet 25 is for the inside pages.*

*To assemble travelogues, make 1 double-sided copy of Worksheet 25 and 1 single-sided copy for each student. This will give you 6 travelogue pages. Lay the cover face down. Place the single-sided copy on top of the cover (blank side down) and then place the double-sided copy on the very top. (See diagram below.) Fold the booklet in half. Open it back up and staple in the middle on the fold line with two staples. (Office stores should have special staplers that you can borrow to do this. Office Depot does.)*

2. *Make one yourself, too. Have the cover filled out and colored. Complete Page 1 for Mathura before class begins. (A completed sample of Page 1 is on Worksheet 26.) Do a good job! You are modeling the way you expect the children to do their travelogues; your good example will set the standard.*

3. *If possible, obtain dust or water from Mathura or Vishram Ghat to distribute to the children. If you can't get the real thing, you can make some Ganges water and dust and pretend its from Mathura. It will let them experience the importance of taking the dust and water of the dham upon their heads.*

4. *Place the poster of Vraja Mandala on the classroom wall. Use a small peg or flag with blue tack as a marker.*

5. *The worksheets contain many special items like bookmarks, bumper stickers, etc. that the Madhava class will use as souvenirs. These items can also be given out to the older children as souvenirs or incentives each week. Check in the Madhava class instructions and see what items might work for your older students.*

### **Lesson Plan for the Damodar and Madan Mohan Classes:**

1. Introduce the session's topic by telling the children they will be taking a trip to the land of Lord Krishna. Explain that Vraja Mandala is the area of India where Krishna appeared and performed many of His pastimes. We will visit some of the main places in Vraja and learn what happened at each holy place.
2. Introduce the verse for the session. This is a verse offering respect to Radharani, which is in the student booklet on Page 2.

*tapta-kancana gaurangi  
radhe vrndavanesvari  
vrsabhanu-sute devi  
pranamami hari-priye*

**Translation:** I offer my respects to Radharani, whose bodily complexion is like molten gold and who is the Queen of Vrindavan. You are the daughter of King Vrishbhanu, and You are very dear to Lord Krishna.

This should be written in advance on a large chart paper or a chalkboard that can be seen by all the children. Teach it the same way we learn a Bhagavatam verse -- first having students repeat each word, then each line, as you lead. With younger children, it helps to point to each word as you chant, so they can gradually recognize the word and eventually read it on their own. Chant three or four times with them responding, then ask for volunteers to lead the chanting. As students lead, the rest of class still chants responsively. Students then repeat the English translation after you.

Chanting of the sloka should be done at the beginning of each weekly lesson. It is an excellent way of getting the children settled in and their attention focused. By the end of the session, they should easily have mastered the verse having practiced this way.

3. Put a poster of Vraja Mandala (there is a poster showing Vraja in the shape of a lotus flower) on the wall. Point this out to the children, explaining that a full parikrama of Vraja takes one month. Point out the places on the poster where our shortened Sunday School parikrama will stop.

Use the poster as a travel map, placing a marker on the holy place of the week and moving it on to the next. Put the marker on Mathura.

4. Have students open their booklets to Page 1, a map of Vraja Mandala. Allow them a few minutes to observe the map. Point out the places we will visit and let them locate each one. They may highlight the visits we'll make if they like.

5. The children will be keeping a travelogue throughout their journey. Pass out the travelogue booklets and have the children fill out the front. Give them time to color and design the front if they like.

Explain what will be expected of them. After we learn about each holy place, they should record the location. They can add any special places of interest that we have mentioned, also. For example, Govardhan is the second location. Shyama Kunda and Radha Kunda are special places of interest in Govardhan.

Under "History" the students can write one or two factual sentences about the place. "Notes" can be anything they found particularly interesting or unusual about the place. "Impressions" will be where they record their feelings about the place. Obviously, they will have to use their imagination since they won't be physically present to form an opinion. Or if they prefer, under "Impressions" they may write a prayer to a particular Deity or personality instead of recording their feelings.

If you need added incentive for the students, a prize can be offered at the end of the session for the three best travelogues. Judge on creativity, accuracy of facts and effort. Or display the completed travelogues and let the students vote on their favorite.

6. Explain that the parikrama begins in the place that the Lord appeared -- Mathura. There you can visit a beautiful temple and see the birthplace of Lord Krishna.

Tell the story of Krishna's birth. If the children are *very* familiar with the story, perhaps they would like to break into groups and act out portions of the story. If so, give each group a copy of the children's Krishna Book (Chapter One) for them to refer to.

Throughout this session, as you speak give time here and there for the students to fill in any interesting notes they may want to add to the travelogues.

7. Mathura is also the place of Kamsa. Tell the pastime of Krishna killing the demon Kamsa at Kans Tila. You may want to tell more of Kamsa's activities and schemes to kill Krishna with the older kids.

8. Distribute dust from the dham and water for the children to sip or take upon their heads.

9. Allow time now for the children to fill in their travelogues. Read your Mathura travelogue entry and post it so they can see how to do it. Encourage them to visualize each place and use their imaginations.

When students are finished, collect the travelogues and save for next week. Do not allow the children to take them home until the travelogues are completed.

## **Our Second Stop** **Govardhan Hill**

### **For the Madhava Class**

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Review last week's lesson briefly, asking a few questions about Mathura.
3. Have the children move their figures on the wall over to the poster of Govardhan. Their passports can be filled in under "Destination #2" and stamped now, also.

4. After the children are seated, relate the story of Govardhan and Pulastya Muni as it is found in their booklets. Explain that Govardhan Hill is in the shape of a peacock. There are many holy places surrounding the area of Govardhan.

Pictures of the different places on Govardhan can be found in some of the parikrama books. If you have any pictures of this area show them to the children.

5. Most of the children may be familiar with the story of Krishna lifting the hill. You can mention it or tell the story very briefly if some children do not know the pastime.

Stress how much the citizens of Vraja depended on the hill for its grazing grass, clear waters, fresh fruits and flowers, etc. Govardhan was a very dear place to them.

6. The story of the gopis' getting revenge on the cowherd boys can be told. In the books Madhurya Dhama and Sri Vraja Mandala Parikrama there are more detailed stories regarding this pastime. You'll find it under "Dan Nivartan Kunda."

7. Radha Kunda and Shyama Kunda are the two eyes of the peacock-shaped hill. They are the most supreme places in all the three worlds. Tell the story of the way the kundas appeared.

8. The children can now take water from Radha Kunda or Shyama Kunda. Dust from Govardhan Hill can be placed upon their foreheads.

9. Choose two volunteers to be the shopkeepers today. Allow them to dress the part if they like.

Pass out the envelopes of money to the children. They may now make their purchases from the souvenirs that you have chosen for Govardhan. Don't let them forget to make their temple donations. Some souvenir suggestions:

- Pictures of Krishna lifting Govardhan Hill
- Pictures or photos of Radha Kunda
- Pictures of Radharani
- Coloring pages (Worksheets 7-9) stapled together
- Prasadam
- Vials of Radha Kunda or Shyama Kunda water
- Cow pictures

10. Collect the envelopes of money.

11. If you have class time left, students can complete the Govardhan Word Search puzzle in their booklets.

**For the Damodar and Madan Mohan Classes:**

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Tell the children that the next stop on our parikrama will be Govardhan Hill. Move the marker on the Vraja Mandala poster to Govardhan.
3. The story of how Govardhan came to be in Vrindavan is narrated in their booklets. You may also want to tell of other interesting points about Govardhan:
  - There is a parikrama around Govardhan that is about 14 miles and one that is 24 miles.
  - Many people do parikrama around Govardhan. Some types of parikrama are dandavat parikrama (with 1 stone or with 108 stones) and milk parikrama (milk is let out in a trail around the hill as the person walks).
  - Sanatan Goswami did Govardhan parikrama (the long one) daily even though he was quite old and weak.
  - Govardhan Hill is in the shape of a peacock.
4. You may also want to remind them of the pastime of Krishna lifting Govardhan Hill. If there are any students who don't know the pastime, the basic story can be told.
5. Govardhan Hill's narrow passes through the rocks gave the cowherd boys many opportunities to harass Radharani and the gopis. But the gopis also had their sweet revenge. Tell the story of "The Gopis Get Even with Krishna." In the books Madhurya Dhama and Sri Vraja Mandala Parikrama there are more detailed stories regarding this pastime. You'll find it under "Dan Nivartan Kunda."
6. Relate the stories of the appearance of Radha Kunda and Shyama Kunda. There is some additional information that is quite interesting that you can also tell to the students:
  - When Lord Chaitanya came to Radha Kunda about 500 years ago, no one really knew where Radha Kunda and Shyama Kunda were. The Lord discovered them Himself; they were two small ponds in rice paddy fields.

- A rich merchant went to one of the six goswamis, Raghunatha das, and asked him if he may perform some service to him. Raghunatha das had him excavate the kunda to the size they are now.
- When the excavation of Radha Kunda was complete and the work on Shyama Kunda about to begin, Raghunatha das had a dream in which Yudhisthira Maharaj appeared to him. Yudhisthira asked him not to cut down the trees on the banks of Shyama Kunda because he and the other 4 Pandava brothers were living there at Shyama Kunda in the form of those trees. The very next day, Raghunatha changed the excavation plans so that the trees may remain. That is why the shape of Shyama Kunda is irregular. It is not square like most other kundas.
- Shyama Kunda is nondifferent than Sri Krishna and Radha Kunda is nondifferent from Radharani.
- There are reportedly no monkeys in the area of Radha Kunda. The explanation given -- Radha is not such a rascal as Krishna and is too nice to have monkeys in Her kunda.

7. Distribute dust and water from Govardhan or Radha Kunda for the children to sip or take upon their heads.

8. Pass out the travelogues and let the children complete them as they did last week. If they found any of the above points to be interesting, they can write them in the "Notes" section. When they are finished, collect the travelogues for next week.

9. If you have class time left, students can complete the Govardhan Word Search puzzle in their booklets.

## Our Third Stop Varshana

### For the Madhava Class:

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Review Mathura and Govardhan briefly.
3. Have the children move their figures on the wall to the poster of Varshana. Their passports may be stamped and “Destination #3” filled in.
4. Begin your discussion about Varshana. Tell the children what it is like to go there. It is on the top of a very high hill and you must walk up many steps. Along the way many people stop to make little piles of stones that represent houses. This is to ensure them a residence in Varshana in a future birth. Many monkeys are in the area. The land is hilly and rocky with narrow passages in some parts. These parts are where the pastimes of tax collecting by Krishna happened.  
You can have a small pile of rocks for the children to build their own stone houses with. Let each one make a simple rock building below the poster of Varshana.
5. Relate the story of The Tax Collection as told in the student booklets. If the students like, they can act out the story -- the boys against the girls.
6. Tell the story of Radha and Krishna dancing like the peacocks. On the top of a hill in Varshana is a little building that people on parikrama climb many steps to visit. Inside there is a picture of Radharani and Krishna dancing like the peacocks. The interesting thing about the painting is that it was painted by a blind saint. He received the vision of this pastime within his mind and was able to create a beautiful painting even though completely blind. Many saintly persons come to this place to remember the pastime.
7. If you have pictures of the temple at Varshana (either from the parikrama books or from a visitor’s collection) show them to the children. It is a very beautiful, impressive temple.

Point out to them that the hill that Varshana is on has four peaks. Each peak represents one of Lord Brahma's faces. Brahma had once asked Krishna to be allowed to serve Him during His earthly pastimes. Krishna instructed him to take the form of this mountain as it would be the home of Radharani in the future.

8. Ask a few questions now to make sure the students grasped the events that you have just taught. If they remember a couple of pastimes from each holy site visited, it will be enough. At this age, we don't want to overwhelm them with information. Rather, they should learn a few points or stories well.

9. The children can now take the dust of Varshana upon their heads.

10. Choose two volunteers to be the Varshana shopkeepers. Pass out the envelopes of money and allow time for the children to make their temple donations and purchases. Some suggested sale items for Varshana:

- peacock feathers
- any item or picture having to do with Radharani
- maha jewelry from your local Radharani Deity
- coloring pages of Radharani (Worksheets 10 and 11)
- sweets
- Jaya Radha! bookmarks (Copy Worksheet 12 on colored card stock and cut out)

11. Collect the envelopes of money. If you have class time left, the children can do the Where in the World Are You? (Page 18) in their booklets. Otherwise, let them complete it for homework.

The answers are 1. Radha Kunda; 2. Kans Tila; 3. Radha and Krishna danced like peacocks; 4. Shyama Kunda; 5. Mathura.

**For the Damodar and Madan Mohan Classes:**

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Pass out the travelogues. Briefly review the past two lessons by having the children tell you something about each place (using their travelogues for reference).
3. Have one of the students move the marker on the Vraja Mandala poster to Varshana.
4. Explain that Varshana is Radharani's land. Her father is Vrishabanu and Varshana is his capital. It is set upon a very high hill. An interesting point that is not mentioned in their booklets is that the hill has four peaks, each representing one of Lord Brahma's four faces. Brahma had once asked Lord Krishna to be able to serve Him in His earthly pastimes. Krishna instructed him to take the form of a mountain. This mountain, Krishna promised, would be the future home of Radharani.
5. If you have been to Varshana, describe as much as you remember about the surroundings. If you haven't, perhaps you can find someone in the temple who has who can describe the area.

The temple is on top of the hill, which is very tall. While walking, you go through some narrow, rocky passages. Some are quite steep and only one person at a time can pass. In some of these areas are where Krishna and the cowherd boys would tax the gopis.
6. Tell or read the story in the student booklets of "The Tax Collection." Point out that you really do see the white spots on the rocks where the milk was spilled. Another time, the gopis ganged up on the boys again and tipped over a big pot of milk on Krishna and His friends.
7. As you continue on the way to the top of Varshana's hill, you will see areas off to the side of the path with clusters of stones. Pilgrims along the way build little stone "houses" to get the blessing that they may one day be lucky enough to reside in Varshana.

If you like, you can provide some small rocks for the students to make their own stone houses. Place them around the room or in one area with a heading above it.

8. Tell the story of Radha and Krishna dancing like the peacocks. On the top of a hill in Varshana is a little temple that people on parikrama climb many steps to visit. Inside there is a picture of Radharani and Krishna dancing by imitating the peacocks. The interesting thing about the painting is that it was painted by a blind saint. He received the vision of this pastime within his mind and was able to create a beautiful painting even though completely blind. Many saintly persons come to this place to remember the pastime.

9. As you go on to the top of Varshana, the monkeys get thicker and bolder. There are the remains of an old temple on one of the peaks. It's a good place to stop for a break and see the wonderful view of Radha's palace on the other peak. If you stop to take prasadam, watch out! You may be ganged up on by some hungry monkeys!

When reaching the top of the hill where the main temple is, you see a gorgeous temple with a huge railed courtyard. From the courtyard you can look over the whole area of Varshana.

The temple itself is decorated with many paintings on the walls and ceiling. Here you will see Radha and Krishna dancing like peacocks, the gopis beating the cowherd boys, the rasa dance and many other pastimes.

10. The children can now take the dust of Varshana upon their heads.

11. Have the children fill in their travelogues now. Encourage them to put down some of the interesting information they learned that *wasn't* told in their books. Collect the travelogues when through.

12. Let children complete the Where in the World Are You? (Page 18) now or let them do it for homework. The answers are 1. Radha Kunda; 2. Kans Tila; 3. Radha and Krishna danced like peacocks; 4. Shyama Kunda; 5. Mathura.

## Our Fourth Stop Nandagram

### For the Madhava Class:

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Check the Where in the World Are You? page if it was done for homework.
3. Have the children move their figures on the wall to the poster of Nandagram. Their passports may be stamped and “Destination #4” filled in.
4. Tell the students that Nandagram is situated atop a very big hill just as Varshana is. Do they remember who the mountain of Varshana is?  
Lord Siva had prayed to Krishna and performed many austerities in order to be able to witness Krishna’s pastimes in this world. His desire was to become a mountain in Vraja so that the gopis would step on him and bless him with the dust from their feet. Krishna was pleased with Lord Siva’s request and granted him the wish to become the mountain on which Nandagram rests.
5. Relate the different pastimes that are told in the student booklets about Nandagram. Show any pictures that you can find from the parikrama books.
6. Children can take the dust from Nandagram and the water of Pavan Sarovara upon their heads.
7. Elect two children to be the Nandagram shopkeepers. Pass out the envelopes of money and allow the children time to make their purchases and temple donations. Some suggested items are:
  - pictures of Krishna with Nanda and Yasoda
  - I Love Nandagram Banners (Worksheet 13 copied on cardstock. You can cut and laminate them if you want.)
  - sweets
  - maha garlands

8. Collect the envelopes of money. If the children have time they can do the crossword puzzle on Page 23. Answers for the crossword are as follows:

**Across**

4. Nanda Maharaj
6. Varshana
8. Yasoda
9. dance
11. cows
13. gopis
14. brother

**Down**

1. Nandagram
2. Pavan Sarovara
3. Vrindavan
5. Sridam
7. sweets
10. cook
12. hill

**For the Damodar and Madan Mohan Classes:**

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Pass out the travelogues. Ask questions such as, “Where was the hill located that was Lord Brahma?” and “What is the name of the odd-shaped pond and why isn’t it shaped square like most kundas?” Students can use their travelogues for reference.
3. Have one of the students move the marker on the Vraja Mandala poster to Varshana.
4. Explain that just as Varshana was the capital of King Vrishabanu, Nandagram was the capital of Nanda Maharaj. Before Krishna was born, Nanda Maharaj and his friends and family lived here. They moved to Gokula, where Krishna was born. After a couple of other moves they returned to Nandagram.

Tell the students that Nandagram is situated atop a very big hill just as Varshana is. The story behind the hill is similar, also. Lord Siva had prayed to Krishna and performed many austerities in order to be able to witness Krishna’s pastimes in this world. His desire was to become a mountain in Vraja so that the gopis would step on him and bless him with the dust from their feet. Krishna was pleased with Lord Siva’s request and granted him the wish to become the mountain on which Nandagram rests.

5. Relate the different pastimes that are told in the student booklets about Nandagram. Show any pictures that you can find from the parikrama books.
6. Children can take the dust from Nandagram and the water of Pavan Sarovara upon their heads.
7. Allow the children to complete their travelogues and collect them when finished.
8. If there is class time left, let the children do the Nandagram Crossword Puzzle on Page 23 in their booklets. Answers for the crossword puzzle are on the following page.

**Across**

4. Nanda Maharaj
6. Varshana
8. Yasoda
9. dance
11. cows
13. gopis
14. brother

**Down**

1. Nandagram
2. Pavan Sarovara
3. Vrindavan
5. Sridam
7. sweets
10. cook
12. hill

## Our Fifth Stop Javat

### For the Madhava Class:

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Review briefly the past lessons so the children will remember the places. Even if they simply remember that Varshana is the place of Radharani and Nandagram is Nanda Maharaj's home, that is good. It might be a little hard for them to remember specific pastimes for each place.
3. Have the children move their figures to the poster of Javat. Their passports can be filled in for Destination #5 and stamped.
4. Ask if anyone knows about Radharani's family. Does anyone know Her husband's name? Her mother-in-law or sister-in-law? You may want to list Abhimanyu, Jotila and Kotila's name on the board and write their relationship to Radharani.

Tell the stories that are related in the student booklets, "Radha is Bitten by a Snake" and "A Very Valuable Gift." They are quite humorous and show a funny side of Krishna.

5. (Optional) If you want to take the time with your class, you can make a group poster depicting "A Very Valuable Gift." Assign children to do the following:
  - cut the figures apart from Worksheet 14 (the cowherd boys) and give them to children to color
  - cut apart the figures on Worksheet 15 (Krishna and Mother Yasoda) and give them to children to color
  - color the trunk on Worksheet 16 brown and cut along the dotted line, leaving an opening in the trunk
  - Place the finished trunk and figures on a posterboard and glue. Krishna can be inserted in the opening in the trunk so that His upper body is popping out of the top.
  - Squares of cloth and sequins can be glued on the side of the trunk to represent the saris and jewels that Krishna took out of the trunk.

- Mother Yasoda can be situated as if she is in another room or behind a door. The cowherd boys can be glued in various places around the trunk. Now you've got a poster that will ensure them remembering this pastime!

6. Children can take the dust from Javat upon their heads.

7. Choose two children to be the Javat shopkeepers. Let them dress the part if they like. Pass out the envelopes of money and let the children make their temple donations and purchases. Some suggested items for Javat:

- little rubber snakes to remind them of the pastime
- sweets
- Worksheet 17 (the verse they are learning) can be framed with colored construction paper
- medallions or buttons of Radha and Krishna
- "Greetings from Javat" card (Worksheet 18) -- students can color and fold and have a greeting card to keep or send.

8. Collect the envelopes.

**For the Damodar and Madan Mohan Classes:**

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Review briefly without the travelogues.
3. Have one of the students move the marker on the Vraja Mandala Poster to Javat.
4. Ask if anyone knows about Radharani's family. Does anyone know Her husband's name? Her mother-in-law or sister-in-law? You may want to list Abhimanyu, Jotila and Kotila's name on the board and write their relationship to Radharani.

The older students may have questions about Radharani being married to Abhimanyu or the morality of the relationship between Radha and Krishna. This can get a little technical but the following information can be related if the question comes up.

It is said that Abhimanyu is a mayic expansion of Krishna (or a manifestation of Krishna's shadow) and his purpose is to enhance Krishna's pastimes.

Krishna is actually the husband of all the gopis. When Brahma stole the cowherd boys and calves, Krishna expanded Himself into all the boys and calves to take their places. That lasted a full year. During that time, Krishna told Nanda Maharaj that that particular year was very favorable for marriage and all the cowherd boys and girls should get married during that time. Krishna, as the expanded cowherd boys, married all the gopis throughout Vraja including Srimati Radharani.

5. Clarify also that Jotila and Kotila seemed to treat Krishna cruelly sometimes. This is just a part of the pastimes of Krishna and He loved every minute of it.

Ask the students to imagine wanting something very badly. Now an obstacle comes in the way and it is not so easy to obtain what they wanted. How do they feel? (They want it even worse.) Have they ever had this experience?

Jotila and Kotila provide this obstacle for Radha and Krishna. Jotila and Kotila would try to prevent Radharani from seeing Krishna but this would just increase Their desire to be together. As we will see from the stories about Javat, it also enabled Krishna to come up with some pretty sly tricks to

play on Jotila. Their relationship as Radha's sister-in-law and mother-in-law only served to enhance Krishna's pastimes.

6. Read, tell, or act out "Radha is Bitten by a Snake" and "A Very Valuable Gift." Either of these stories are good for acting out because they are funny. Discuss the stories briefly afterwards.

7. Have the children take the dust of Javat upon their heads.

8. Pass out the travelogues and give the children time to complete the entry on Javat. Collect when finished.

## Our Sixth Stop Vrindavan

### For the Madhava Class:

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Review very briefly.
3. Have the children move their figures to the poster of Vrindavan. Their passports may be filled in under Destination #6 and stamped.
4. Vrindavan contains so many important places that it is hard to choose. We did not write about the main temples in Vrindavan since that is covered in another course. The story of Seva Kunja and the Keshi demon are told in the student booklets. The story of Keshi includes a section about Balaram's experience with the demon that is not such a well-known pastime. Hearing about the rasa dance being performed in Seva Kunja, even nowadays, is very fascinating to the children.

Tell of the places that are written about in the student booklets. Check in the parikrama books if you want to tell of more places. Keep it simple and don't try to have them remembering too many pastimes and places.
5. Game: Demon Time

Any number of children can play this game. One child is chosen to be the Keshi demon. The other children line up behind him. As they walk along, they ask, "What time is it, Demon Keshi?" Keshi turns around, making terrible faces, and says any time he wants. "Three o'clock," for example. Then they all go on walking. After a short while they ask the same question, and Keshi gives another hour of the day. After the players have asked the question a few times, Keshi turns around and finally answers, "It's demon time!" and chases them. The child he catches becomes the next demon.
6. After the game, when the children are settled back in their classroom, you may want to show pictures of the ISKCON temple in Vrindavan. You can explain about Prabhupada's samadhi and show photos of the Deities, also.

7. Let the children take Yamuna water and Vrindavan dust upon their heads.

8. Choose two children to be the Vrindavan shopkeepers. Let them dress the part if they like. Pass out the envelopes of money and let the children make their temple donations and purchases. Since this is the last week, they should spend the rest of their rupees (if they haven't already). Some suggested items for Vrindavan:

- sweets
- small vials of Vrindavan dust
- pictures of different Vrindavan temples
- pictures of Vrindavan Deities
- Krishna killing demons coloring sheets (Worksheets 19-21)
- Tulasi neck beads

9. Tell the children what to expect on the quiz next week. Read the instructions for Lesson Seven to be clear in exactly what they are doing so you can explain it to them better.

The “quiz” is actually another fun activity that goes along with their parikrama journey. They will be asked to design a postcard and write to someone telling them about the place they have chosen to draw. They must include some factual information about the place and their impressions of it. You may allow the children to use their books next week for this assignment, but they should decide which holy site they will write about this week.

10. If there is class time left, the Word Search puzzle in the student booklets can be done.

11. If you choose to show the video “Vrindavan: Land of Krishna” at the end of the session, allow a full class period. This would best be done the week after the children have completed the test.

**For the Damodar and Madan Mohan Classes:**

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Review briefly using the travelogues for reference.
3. Have one of the students move the marker on the Vraja Mandala poster to Vrindavan.
4. Vrindavan contains so many important places that it is hard to choose. We did not write about the main temples in Vrindavan since that is covered in another course. The children who have learned about the six goswamis can tell what they remember about some of the temples that were established in Vrindavan, particularly Radha Raman, Madan Mohan, Radha Govinda and Radha Damodar temples.

Seva Kunja, Banke Bihari and the Kesi demon are told about in the student booklets. The story of Kesi includes a section about Balaram's experience with the demon that is not such a well-known pastime. Hearing about the rasa dance being performed in Seva Kunja, even nowadays, is very fascinating to the children.

Tell of the places that are written about in the student booklets. Check in the parikrama books if you want to tell of more places. Keep it simple and don't try to have them remembering too many pastimes and places. Show as many pictures as possible.
5. You may want to show pictures of the ISKCON temple in Vrindavan. You can explain about Prabhupada's samadhi and show photos of the Deities, also.
6. Let the children take Yamuna water and Vrindavan dust upon their heads.
7. Give children time to complete their Vrindavan entry in the travelogues. Encourage them to do a nice job since this will complete their travelogues.
8. Tell the children what to expect for the quiz next week. They will have to know the main places that we have studied and some of the basic facts about them.

There will also be a short essay section asking them to choose the place they would most like to visit and why. They can use their travelogues for this section of the test if they would like to.

An optional activity (or extra credit) for children finishing the quiz early is making a postcard as outlined in the Madhava Class instructions (Lesson 6 and 7).

9. If there is class time left, the Word Search puzzle in the student booklets can be done.

10. If you choose to show the video “Vrindavan: Land of Krishna” at the end of the session, allow a full class period. This would best be done the week after the children have completed the test.

## Lesson Seven

### Quiz

#### *For the Madhava Class:*

1. Chant the verse for the session.
  
2. Copy Worksheet 23 (postcard) on white card stock and pass out to the children. Explain that they are to choose one of the holy sites we have visited. It can be one of the specific places such as Syama Kunda or Kans Tila. On the blank side of the card stock, they are to illustrate the place or one of the pastimes that occurred there.

Provide them with everything they will need to create a colorful postcard -- crayons, colored pencils, markers, rulers, pictures to get ideas from, etc.

You can grade the postcards on accuracy of the information, creativity and the picture. Tell the children this so they will be sure to put forth their best effort. If you like, you may allow the children to use their booklets but the information on their cards must be in their own words, not copied from the book.
  
3. On the other side of the postcard they should write their “message” about the place. The message should read as if they were writing to someone about their experiences. For example, “Yesterday we visited a place in Varshana where Krishna and Radharani learned to dance like the peacocks. We walked to the top of a big hill to see the little temple on top. There were peacocks walking around the area, so I see why Radha and Krishna imitated them here, etc.....

They should also fill in the top line “Picture on front” with what they have depicted. If they wish, they can also fill in the name and address of whom they wish to send the postcard to. Have on hand some stickers or stamps they can use to put in the place of the postage stamp.

  
4. Allow the children to spend as much time as they need to complete the cards. Be on hand to help with spelling and encouragement. Be sure to display the cards for a couple of weeks after you have had a chance to review and grade them.

5. Worksheet 22 is an award that can be presented to the children at the end of the session. If you are having a children\parent party to celebrate the completion of the session, present it then. If not, perhaps you can arrange a time that the awards can be presented during the Sunday Feast. At the very least, assemble all the classes together and present the awards. The children need to have some recognition for their participation. It is best if parents and other adults are there to appreciate their work. It will also bring attention to the education that is going on in the Sunday School.

**For the Damodar and Madan Mohan Classes:**

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Pass out the first page of the quiz (Page 34 in teacher's guide). Allow children time to complete the quiz. When they are finished, collect all the papers.

Answers for the matching section of the test: 1. d; 2. c; 3. e; 4. h; 5. f; 6. i; 7. g; 8. a; 9. b.

3. Pass out the second page of the quiz (Page 35 in the teacher's guide). Children may use their travelogues if they like.

4. If some children finish early they can also make a postcard. They probably won't have time to complete it in class, so give them the option of taking home to finish. They can receive extra credit when the completed postcard is returned next week.

Copy Worksheet 23 (postcard) on white card stock and pass out to the children. Explain that they are to choose one of the holy sites we have visited. It can be one of the specific places such as Syama Kunda or Kans Tila. On the blank side of the card stock, they are to illustrate the place or one of the pastimes that occurred there.

Provide them with everything they will need to create a colorful postcard -- crayons, colored pencils, markers, rulers, pictures to get ideas from, etc.

You can grade the postcards on accuracy of the information, creativity and the illustration. Tell the children this so they will be sure to put forth their best effort. If you like, you may allow the children to use their booklets but the information on their cards must be in their own words, not copied from the book.

5. On the other side of the postcard they should write their "message" about the place. The message should read as if they were writing to someone about their experiences. For example, "Yesterday we visited a place in Varshana where Krishna and Radharani learned to dance like the peacocks. We walked to the top of a big hill to see the little temple on top. There were peacocks walking around the area, so I see why Radha and Krishna imitated them here, etc....."

They should also fill in the top line "Picture on front" with what they have depicted. If they wish, they can also fill in the name and address of whom they wish to send the postcard to. Have on hand some stickers or stamps they can use to put in the place of the postage stamp.

6. Worksheet 22 is an award that can be presented to the children at the end of the session. If you are having a children\parent party to celebrate the completion of the session, present it then. If not, perhaps you can arrange a time that the awards can be presented during the Sunday Feast. At the very least, assemble all the classes together and present the awards. The children need to have some recognition for their participation. It is best if parents and other adults are there to appreciate their work. It will also bring attention to the education that is going on in the Sunday School.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Vraja Mandala Parikrama**  
**Final Quiz**  
*(Damodar and Madan Mohan Classes)*

**A: Match the following holy place to its description.**

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. ___ Govardhan Hill | a. the home of Jotila and Kotila   |
| 2. ___ Mathura        | b. this Deity left the temple to follow His devotee                          |
| 3. ___ Varshana       | c. the birth place of Lord Krishna   |
| 4. ___ Radha Kunda    | d. becomes a little smaller each day   |
| 5. ___ Syama Kunda    | e. the home of Radharani and King Vrishabanu                                 |
| 6. ___ Nandagram      | f. a pond at Govardhan Hill where the Pandavas stand as trees                |
| 7. ___ Vrindavan      | g. Krishna killed Kesi and many other demons here                            |
| 8. ___ Javat          | h. the most sacred place in all the universes                                |
| 9. ___ Banke Bihari   | i. Radharani traveled from Javat to this place every day to cook for Krishna |



## Puppet Show or Drama “*The Rasa Dance*” (A Musical)

### Characters:

Narrator

Krishna

Radharani

5 Gopis

### Scene One

*(Flute music is playing in the background.)*

**Narrator:** On a bright, full moon night in the fall, Krishna decorated Himself with beautiful, sweet-smelling flowers. Krishna called the gopis by playing on His flute and they rushed there to find Him.

*(The gopis enter)*

**Gopi 1:** Oh, I’m so happy to be going to see Krishna! My father forbade me to go, but I just *had* to come.

**Gopi 2:** My husband and little children are at home. When I heard Krishna’s flute, I couldn’t help it! I ran from my house and came here as fast as I could.

**All gopis:** Krishna! Krishna! We’re here! We heard you calling us!

**Gopi 3:** *(looking around)* It’s so beautiful here in the forest at night.

**Song:** “Vrindavan Moon”

Vrindavan moon is high and wide  
It shines all over the countryside  
Giving light to the grass and trees  
They sparkle in the evening breeze

The sky is full of silver threads  
Spun from the moon to the forest beds  
The Vrindavan moon is giving light  
The forest shines in the dark of night

*(Krishna enters)*

**Krishna:** Oh, ladies of Vrindavan. You are all so dear to me. I'm so happy that you have come. *(Pause)* What can I do for you? Why have you come here so late at night? You know, the forest is a very dangerous place at night. There are tigers, wolves and bears lurking about. You would be much safer at home. Hurry! Go back home at once!

**Gopi 3:** No, Krishna! We came here to see *You*. We can't go back now.

**Gopi 4:** We risked everything! We disobeyed our fathers and husbands just to be with you. *(Pouting)* Now You tell us to go away.

**All gopis:** It's not fair. We want to stay here with You.

**Krishna:** I think you really came here just to see the beautiful Vrindavan forest tonight. But... you must have seen enough by now. Go home now. Some of you left your babies crying. Go back and feed them.

*(Krishna watches as the gopis begin to look more morose and hang their heads.)*

I know you love Me very much. But please be good girls and go back home to your husbands, your mothers and fathers and take care of the children!

**Gopi 1:** Krishna, don't be so mean to ask us again and again to go home.

**Gopi 2:** You are the one we really love. You promised us that *You* would be our husband.

*(Krishna nods, takes two gopis by the hand and begins to stroll around with all the gopis. They exit as the narrator speaks.)*

**Narrator:** The Lord smiled and they walked slowly through the forest of Vrindavan together singing. The gopis felt very proud that they had so much love and attention from their wonderful Krishna. After all, He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But all of a sudden *(pause)* Krishna disappeared.

## Scene Two

*(The gopis are heard offstage chanting and calling Krishna's name. They walk on as if searching for Him.)*

**Gopi 4:** Krishna, where are You?

**Gopi 3:** Where did He go? Krishna, come back!

**Narrator:** They moved through the forest, looking for Him. They began to ask the trees and flowers about Krishna's whereabouts.

*(The gopis move about as if talking to trees and flowers.)*

**Song:** "Boy of Blue"

Dear boy of blue  
We're calling you  
It's time to come and play.  
Your gopis wait  
Don't be too late  
Come and be with us today.

All day you play  
You stay away  
With other boys and cows.  
Now here's our chance  
You called us here  
Wanting us to dance.

Your flute is sweet  
Your lotus feet  
Are all we want to see.  
Now please come here  
So we won't fear  
Your servants we will be.

**Gopi 2:** Dear banyan tree, have you seen the son of Maharaj Nanda passing this way? He was laughing and playing on His flute. He stole our hearts and then went away. If you have seen Him, please tell us which way He went.

**Gopi 3:** Oh, champak flower. Have you seen the younger brother of Balaram pass this way. He went away because of our pride.

**Gopi 4:** Dear Tulasi tree, Lord Krishna loves you very much. Your leaves and flowers are always at His lotus feet. O mango, jackfruit and pear trees! Oh blackberry and bael trees! You are all so lucky to live near the Yamuna River since Krishna must have come this way. Please tell us where He went.

**Narrator:** Then they began to play like Krishna. *(The gopis act out the following narration.)* One gopi became the Bakasura demon and another made her fall down just as Krishna subdued the real demon. Another gopi played on a flute. One gopi beat the Vatsasura demon. In this way, they imitated Krishna and their minds were filled with His pastimes as they continued to search for Him.

**All gopis:** Look! Here are Krishna's footprints!

**Gopi 5:** Yes, all the marks such as the flag, lotus flower, trident and thunderbolt are here.

**Narrator:** They followed these footprints and finally saw another set of footprints beside Krishna's.

**Gopi 3:** Just see, my friends. These are Radharani's footprints. She is a special gopi who served Krishna with more love than we did. So Krishna has left us to be with Her. Look! Over here we do not see Radharani's footprints. Krishna must have picked Her up and carried Her on His shoulders.

**Gopi 2:** *(Picking up some flower petals.)* And now we can see how Krishna must have sat over here with Radharani to put flowers in Her hair.

**Narrator:** Then they saw that Krishna had left Radha and was hiding from Her also. When they saw that Radharani was left all alone, they became sorry.

### ***Scene 3***

*(Radharani is sitting with the gopis. The gopis are around Her, reassuring Her.)*

**Gopi 1:** Radharani, come with us. We are looking for Krishna, too.

**Radharani:** Oh, I am so sorry He is gone. Where shall we ever be able to find Him?

**Gopi 2:** Let's walk down by the Yamuna River and look for Him there.

*(The gopis walk together singing Krishna's name.)*

**Narrator:** The gopis walked with Radharani looking for their beloved Lord. Every moment they were apart from Him seemed to be an eternity. But suddenly Krishna appeared and was standing right in front of them. He looked very beautiful.

**Gopis:** *(in great astonishment)* Krishna! Where were you?

**Krishna:** Sometimes I hide from you, but do not think I was away from you. I was very near and was watching you all the time. Don't be disturbed. Just be happy with your service to Me.

**Narrator:** And so, Krishna began to dance hand-in-hand with the gopis of Vrindavan. He danced with every one of them, but each one thought only she was dancing with Krishna. The demigods started singing and showering flowers upon the dancers. *(Music is in the background and the gopis sing and dance with Krishna for a bit.)*

**Krishna:** My dear gopis, the sun will soon be rising. It is time to leave now.

**Gopi 4:** Oh, Krishna, we don't ever want to leave You. We want to stay with You forever.

**Gopi 2:** Yes, we do. But we will obey you and go back home now.

**Gopi 1:** Krishna by becoming our husband, you have made us the happiest girls in the universe.

**Song:** "Vrindavan" (*Gopis sing as they exit.*)

Vrindavan is such a nice place  
With Krishna there, there's never a trace

Of doubt or fear  
It's spring time I hear

The peacocks crow  
And the cool winds blow

The water fall  
And cuckoos call

The lotus blooms  
Beneath the moon

But everything is mute  
When Krishna plays His flute.