

Collective Worship

for

Foundation

&

Key Stage One

A Teacher's Guide

By

Urmila devi dasi (Dr. Edith Best)

and

Taraka devi dasi (Helen Sticha)



Krishna Avanti School

Collective Worship

Foundation and Key Stage One

Basic program:

15 minutes a day, 4 days a week

- 5 minutes kirtana
- 2 minutes japa
- 7 minutes theme program
- 1-2 minutes announcements

Foundation: ages 4 & 5

Key Stage One: ages 5, 6, & 7

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Introduction



Notes on the order of the festivals in this book

The festivals in this book are listed in the order in which they appear in a calendar year—January through December.

Keep in mind that almost all the festival dates are calculated using a lunar calendar, and dates can sometimes vary by as much as an entire solar month. So, while almost all of the festivals will always occur in the order listed, the entire list may not start in January all the time. Makara Sankranti, the day the sun enters Capricorn according to Eastern astrology, may sometimes be in December and sometimes in January. Please check the Vaisnava calendar for the exact dates for your location and specific year.

The non-Vaisnava festivals may not occur at the same day each year in reference to the Vaisnava festivals. Therefore, although the order of festivals is correct for the year this book was compiled, there might be a slight shifting of the placement of the non-Vaisnava festivals in the list.

Two festivals were placed at the end because their time in the year is not set. Eid ul Fitr, a festival in Islam, moves completely around the solar year. The second, Ekadasi, occurs many times a year, twice in every lunar month. So, there is a lot of flexibility as to when to focus on Ekadasi.

Srila Prabhupada, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, and Bhaktivinoda have two days in the Vaisnava calendar dedicated to them—the day of their appearance and the day of their Disappearance. For these people, you can celebrate the festival in the order listed in this book, or choose the alternate date.

There is material here for more than one week's learning for some major festivals, in which case there will be two or more two-page spreads in this book.

There are some festivals we have listed separately although they are both observed on the same day, or often within the same week. You might choose to change the order of when you celebrate these festivals, or mix what you do in one week.





The Ten Aims of Collective Worship



1. To consolidate pupil's faith by providing positive spiritual experiences.



2. To enrich the distinctive character of the school



3. To help create a warm community spirit, within the school and beyond



4. To help generate a culturally and spiritually nurturing atmosphere



5. To nurture pupils' esteem in themselves and their religious traditions.



6. To help pupils become well-versed, self-reliant and skilled in worship



7. To develop pupils' critical and reflective thinking skills



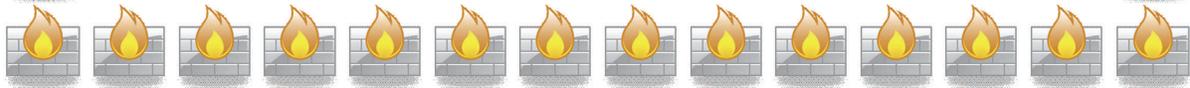
8. To help pupils develop morality and Vaisnava qualities



9. To enhance pupils' relationships with Lord Krishna and his representatives



10. To enable pupils to draw from faith as a means to positively interact with the world



Collective Worship: Ten Aims Unpacked & Explained

1. To consolidate pupils' faith by providing positive spiritual experiences

Pupils' appreciation of faith is largely determined by the quality of their experiences, especially during collective worship. Therefore, a deliberate attempt to only have positive emotional experiences connected with collective worship is essential.

Collective worship is therefore conducted in such a way that maximises pupil's genuine and natural taste for spiritual practices, particularly the chanting of the Holy Names (in *kirtana* and *japa*), and their faith in both the process and corresponding role models.

Collective worship facilitates pupils' emotional development and emotional literacy.

Collective worship gives a personal and collective experience of the happiness and freedom of chanting God's Holy Name.

2. To enrich the distinctive character of the school

Collective worship has a key role in contributing towards the school's special character and should be planned with reference to the School's 'Vision, Mission and Values' Statement.

Collective worship provides opportunity to share vision, mission and values, and sessions should regularly include explicit reference to the VMV Statement.

3. To help build a warm community spirit, within the school and beyond

Collective worship provides a key forum for developing community spirit within the school.

Inviting guests to speak and perform worship, and providing guest speakers, helps the school foster strong relationships with parents, other schools and faith communities.

4. To help generate a culturally and spiritually nurturing atmosphere

Collective worship provides pupils with direct experience of a sacred environment, in harmony with God and the natural world. Specifically it seeks to create an atmosphere of Vrindavana, Krishna's most sacred abode.

Collective worship respects the principles of sacred time and space; as far as possible, non-spiritual activities (such as disciplining pupils) will be avoided at these times, and in certain places, such as the temple room.

Collective worship helps pupils become regulated and disciplined, and inclines their minds towards peacefulness, reflection and receptivity to learning.

Collective worship is part of a spiritually transformative process that leads to essential knowledge and wisdom.

During break, pupils are encouraged to retire to the temple room and garden for moments of chanting God's Holy Name, stillness, prayer, reflection, meditation, and other ways of communing with God and nature.

Collective worship offers opportunity for responding to music and the arts, and for pupils to develop aesthetic appreciation, creative self-expression and appreciation of the divine as the source of all beauty, ability and opulence.

5. To foster pupils' esteem in themselves and their religious traditions

Collective worship provides opportunities for pupils to nurture a sense of belonging, with appropriate pride in their spiritual and religious heritages.

At the Krishna Avanti School, such identity is inclusive, underpinned by an appreciation of the equality of all living beings. The school shuns any attitudes that attempt to promote self-worth through condescension towards others.

Collective worship gives pupils the skills and opportunities to confidently articulate their tradition's teachings, their own thoughts and feeling, and develop further skills of constructive dialogue.



6. To help pupils become well-versed, self-reliant and skilled in worship

Collective worship familiarises pupils with a range of stories, songs, prayers, concepts, values, scriptural verses, hero characters, and so on, primarily from the faith tradition.

Collective worship helps pupils develop corresponding skills, as related to *puja*, playing musical instruments and meditation.

Collective worship actively involves pupils, allowing them to take responsibility for certain aspects.

Collective worship gives pupils familiarity with the language and concepts of spiritual traditions, especially their own.

7. To develop pupils' critical and reflective thinking skills

Collective worship offers time for reflection and discussion, valuing pupil voices in dialogue with those of religious authorities.

Collective worship allows pupils' faith to be a living, accessible experience.

Collective worship can promote sound thinking skills, particularly through modelling them.

Collective worship provides instances in which to reinforce challenges and refine pupils' ideas, and to confront unhealthy stereotypes.

Collective worship enhances pupil understanding of language and the power of words.



8. To help pupils develop morality and Vaisnava qualities

Collective worship includes the regular practice of respect towards God, all living beings, and the material creation.

Collective worship gives pupils regular opportunities to learn and practice traditional etiquette towards sacred persons, places and objects.

Collective worship offers opportunities for pupils to reflect on teachings concerning right and wrong, the many dilemmas humans face in life, and the notion of *dharma*.

Collective worship contributes towards pupils' moral development, helping promote virtues such as empathy, gratitude, and service to God and others.

Collective worship provides opportunity for pupils to learn from appropriate role models, both past and present.

The schools recognise that (in collective worship as elsewhere), example should be congruent with precept. School members are expected to strive to be exemplary in character and conduct.

9. To enhance pupils' relationships with Lord Krishna and his representatives

Collective worship enables pupils to develop their own personal relationship of devotional service with Lord Krishna and his representatives (elders, teachers, other deities, and so on).

Collective worship gives pupils a regular, visual impression of the transcendental form of the Supreme Lord that can enable inner meditation.

Collective worship is helpful in as much as it develops such meaningful relationships and corresponding sentiments and attitudes.



10. To enable pupils to draw from faith as a means to positively interact with the world

Collective worship helps pupils learn how to behave appropriately in specific social settings.

Collective worship, made relevant to pupils' lives and experiences, can help them ultimately choose a way of life that is dharmic, sustainable, personally fulfilling and exemplary to others.

Collective worship aids pupils in developing life goals.



Aims of Collective Worship Related to Themes and Festivals

- 1. To consolidate pupils' faith by providing positive spiritual experiences**
 - Feelings: Lord Nityananda's Appearance, Lent, Lord Narasimhadeva's Appearance, and Bhaktivinoda's Appearance/Disappearance
 - Awe and Wonder: Ganga Puja, Lord Vamana's Appearance, Damodara Lila, Gita Jayanti
- 2. To enrich the distinctive character of the school**
 - Society and Friends: Sarasvati Puja, Advaita's Appearance, Lord Rama's Appearance, Jhulana Yatra
 - Cooperating and Working Together: Lord Caitanya's Appearance, Jagannatha Rathayatra
- 3. To help create a warm community spirit, within the school and beyond**
 - Cooperating and Working Together: Lord Caitanya's Appearance, Jagannatha Rathayatra
 - Celebrating Difference and Similarities: Sukkot, Dussehra, Christmas, Eid ul Fitr
- 4. To help generate a culturally and spiritually nurturing atmosphere**
 - Change: Makara Sankranti, Vashanta Panchami, Holi, Diwali
 - Feelings: Lord Nityananda's Appearance, Lent, Lord Narasimhadeva's Appearance, and Bhaktivinoda's Appearance/Disappearance
- 5. To nurture pupils' esteem in themselves and their religious traditions**
 - Family: Raksha Bandhana, Krishna Janmastami
 - Who I Am: Mahvira, Bodhi Day, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Appearance/Disappearance, Ekadasi
- 6. To help pupils become well-versed, self-reliant and skilled in worship**
 - What We Can Do: Hanuman, Durga Puja, Govardhana Puja, Srila Prabhupada Appearance/Disappearance
 - Who I Am: Mahvira, Bodhi Day, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Appearance/Disappearance, Ekadasi
- 7. To develop pupils' critical and reflective thinking skills**
 - Change: Makara Sankranti, Vashanta Panchami, Holi, Diwali
- 8. To help pupils develop morality and Vaisnava qualities**
 - Serving and Caring: Siva Ratri, Ganesh Jayanti, Radhastami, Gopastami
 - Respecting Others: Sita's Appearance, Guru Purnima, Guru Nanak, Varaha's Appearance
- 9. To enhance pupils' relationships with Lord Krishna and his representatives**
 - Respecting Others: Sita's Appearance, Guru Purnima, Guru Nanak, Varaha's Appearance
 - Awe and Wonder: Ganga Puja, Lord Vamana's Appearance, Damodara Lila, Gita Jayanti
- 10. To enable pupils to draw from faith as a means to positively interact with the world**
 - Respecting Others: Sita's Appearance, Guru Purnima, Guru Nanak, Varaha's Appearance
 - What We Can Do: Hanuman, Durga Puja, Govardhana Puja, Srila Prabhupada Appearance/Disappearance

AREIAC Recommended Good Practice & This Program

The Association of Religious Education Inspectors, Advisors and Consultants recommend that good practice includes at least five key elements in any act of collective worship. The five that they consider particularly important, and how they relate to the program in this book are:

1) An appropriate atmosphere, preparing for an occasion that is different from other times of the day

This program provides for that atmosphere either in the school's temple room or in a specially designated part of other rooms and for a set time of day

2) A meditation or prayer involving mention of a Transcendent (God).

Kirtana and japa are meditation on the Supreme Lord.

3) Time for reflection on important issues of life, possibly based on a theme.

All the festival programs in this book are related to themes that affect pupils' lives.

4) Good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

Spiritual development is through kirtana, japa, and hearing of the Lord and His devotees. Moral development comes from spiritual transformation and through the activities related to festivals. Social development is built into the learning activities which are done in small and large groups, and culture is interwoven into all aspects.

5) An orderly atmosphere and procedures.

While kirtana can be exuberant, and some of the activities in relation to the festivals exciting and participatory, the traditional Vaisnava Hindu etiquette and respect regarding spiritual practices should be explicitly taught and expected.

Other AREIAC recommendations as related to this Collective Worship program:

Kirtana & learning of verses and songs related to the themes

Relevant AREIAC recommendations:

- Music or artifacts to lend atmosphere and enhance meaning
- A hymn or meaningful song, linked to the day's theme
- A prayer from one of the faiths represented in the school
- Pupil participation

Festival & Theme Learning Experiences

Relevant AREIAC recommendations:

- A reading or story from a holy book
- A reading of a spiritual, moral nature
- Explanation and follow-up from a reading, highlighting a particular value
- Drama on a spiritual theme
- Celebration of a religious festival

Overview of the Collective Worship Program

15 minutes a day, 4-5 days a week:

- 5 minutes kirtana
- 2 minutes japa
- 7 minutes theme program
- 1-2 minutes announcements

The school may organise collective worship with the whole school, by phase (that is, all of Foundation together and all of Key Stage 1 together), by class, or with small mixed-age groups. It may be a good idea to have some days of each type of organisation since there are associated strengths and challenges of each.

The collective worship program starts with kirtana. Specific guidelines are given in the Kirtana section. Teachers and pupils may either sit or stand—and dance—for the kirtana. Generally, the pupils will like to dance. Then, after a few seconds of preparation, all have a brief japa time of the Hare Krishna mantra, as explained in the Japa section.

The rest of collective worship time is spent on the festival and theme for the week. As far as possible, these programs should coincide with when the festivals are being observed. Please see the Note on the Order of the Festivals for specific information in this regard.

One day can be spent on reading the story, poem, verses, and so forth on the left hand page. The reading can be done with pausing at key places for giving explanations, asking questions, and soliciting predictions from pupils as to what will happen next. Teachers may also pause in the reading for acting out parts with gestures, songs, and so forth.

On the right hand page are lists of ideas for how to follow-up with activities, questions, and discussions. *It is assumed that teachers and pupils will take one of the ideas from the list each day for the remaining 7 minutes of collective worship.* There may be more ideas than can be accomplished in a school week—take whatever is most suitable for the class and the moment. And, the ideas are meant simply to be springboards and inspiration. Many teachers will take the suggestions as sparks for their own creative ideas. Similarly, pupils may often carry the learning activities in a far different direction according to their current situation. Be flexible and open.

The story on the left hand page is probably enough background information for teachers who are generally familiar with the festival and personalities. Those who want to prepare more can find sources of additional information on the list of supportive materials at the back of this book.

Spiritual Holidays

HOLIDAYS! A break from routine, a special mark on the calendar, a day that can absorb a child's mind for weeks or more beforehand. Holidays connected with Lord Krishna help children become absorbed in pleasing Him. The calendar of the Hare Krishna movement overflows with days to celebrate. Major festivals commemorate the divine birth, or appearance, of Krishna and His incarnations. Other festivals celebrate Krishna's pastimes and the anniversaries of the appearance and passing of pure devotees of the Lord.

Unfortunately, we might neglect to take full advantage of the intense spiritual effect Krishna conscious holidays can have on a child's life. On minor festival days, the occasion may pass by unnoticed, or there may be only a scriptural reading geared to an adult audience. Adults may even plan events mostly for adults. Children come to the adult gathering, but they simply learn that a holiday means being bored, or running and playing wildly.

How can our children find the spiritual highlights of their lives in festivals?

PLAYS: Putting on a play about the holiday is exciting for children. They love rehearsing, dressing up, and getting on stage. And they love pleasing the adults, who enjoy the plays in spite of (and to some extent because of) the imperfections. Older children can spend many weeks striving for professional results. They can also write or adapt a script, buy costumes and make-up, create the soundtrack, and so on. Children can also prepare a dramatic reading related to the holiday. Such readings require far less work for the adults directing the show, and absorb the children's minds almost as much as a full production.

PROJECTS: Every year at the Govardhana Puja festival, honoring Lord Krishna's lifting of Govardhana Hill, our students make a small hill of papier mache over wire and balloons. We paint it and decorate it with plants, streams, pools, plastic or clay animals, and so on. (We make the pools from mirrors and the streams from tinsel over tin foil). One year, to celebrate Rathayatra each student made his or her own cart from a shoe box and cardboard. We've also made dioramas inside boxes. A simple one- or two-day project: writing about the festival and then mounting and decorating the poem or essay.

GAMES: To celebrate the appearance of Lord Varaha, the Lord as a giant boar who lifted the earth with His tusks, the children play "stick the earth on Va-

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raha's tusks." Some years we have groups of students make a picture of Varaha and the earth and then play the game with the best picture. Last year our grown daughter drew Varaha, and the students competed for the best earth drawing. Then, blindfolded, each of us tried to tape the earth as close as possible to the tips of the Lord's tusks. A simple prize awaited the winner.

KIRTANAS: Children love singing "Sita-Rama" on Lord Rama's appearance day, or whatever songs and prayers relate to the incarnation or event we are celebrating. Sometimes we make copies of a song in Devanagari, the original Sanskrit alphabet, to have the children practice their Sanskrit while they learn the prayer.

STORIES: What is more fun for a child than a story? But so often we adults just read, without expression or explanation, from a book written for adults. If we dramatize a little, have lively questions and answers, and concentrate on the story line, children will be entranced. Today we also have many Krishna conscious stories on audio and video tape.

CHILDREN HELPING ADULTS: Children can decorate the temple, help with cooking a feast, and do extra cleaning at home or at the temple. If they worship a Deity of the Lord, they can make Him a special flower garland or a new outfit, or decorate His altar with flowers. Older children can help in many ways at the temple.

FASTING: Fasting may not sound like fun for a child, but most children delight in performing some austerity for Krishna. Many festival days call for fasting, either until noon or the evening. I generally ask children under age seven to eat, even if they want to fast. I encourage children over ten to try the fast, and I have prasadam available if they can't stick to it. Children remember with fondness the first Janmastami they fasted until midnight.

GENERAL MOOD: We can find many more ways to include children in holidays. The real key is the mood of the adults. We need to remember that celebrating the glory of the Lord is for children too.

This section originally appeared as an article in "Back to Godhead" magazine, 1988



The Most Important Point

The following letter from Srila Prabhupada is a good indication of the mood that is essential when training young children in collective worship:

“Yes, the proof of your teaching method shall be seen in the spiritual improvement and fresh enthusiasm exhibited by the children. If they are allowed to worship the Deity by practicing performing aratrika very seriously, plus always be engaged in different various activities centered around Krishna, then their education will be completely successful. The children should always be instructed by taking advantage of their playful mood.” (Srila Prabhupada letter: 72-6-15)

The Science of “Triggers” as Related to Collective Worship

All of us have some sensory input that triggers an emotional and physiological reaction—pleasant or unpleasant. For example, certain smells, foods, places, songs, and so forth exert such a powerful influence that we find ourselves almost reliving the original association. Something becomes a trigger for a physiological reaction either through one very strong incident or frequently repeated weaker ones. Each of us tends to avoid things which have become negative triggers and surround ourselves with things that are positive triggers.

When those who are our pupils now are adults, what will the various aspects of collective worship trigger in them? Will they associate kirtana, japa, and the other activities with fun, love, friendship, safety, and adventure? Will their association be blasé and neutral? Or will thoughts of kirtana or a festival trigger feelings of embarrassment, discomfort, or boredom?

Think of the various aspects of collective worship that can act as triggers for our pupils. They are: the time, the place, the music, chanting japa, the specific festivals, or some of the activities. We cannot possibly control all the factors that might cause some of these to become negative triggers, but we can surely make a deliberate attempt for them to be only positive ones!



Suggestions for How to Teach the Kirtana Portion of Collective Worship

What are the basic activities of kirtana?

- ॐ Responsive chanting of the two "Srila Prabhupada Pranam" mantras
- ॐ Responsive chanting of the "Panca-tattva maha-mantra" (Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityananda, Sri Advaita, Gaddhara, Srivasa, adigaura bhaktavrinda)
- ॐ Responsive chanting of the "Hare Krishna maha-mantra" (Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare; Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare) *Note: The "Hare Krishna mahamantra" is the main focus*
- ॐ Chanting can be accompanied by hand clapping, kartala (cymbal) playing, mrdanga drum, and harmonium
- ॐ Pupils can clap and play instruments (You might want to only have children play instruments if they can play them properly *and* also continue to chant.)
- ॐ Pupils of any age can be taught how to lead the responsive chanting

Where is a good place to have the kirtana?

- ॐ Use a room or section of a room that is specifically designated as a temple
- ॐ Have an attractive table, stand, or altar as the focal point
- ॐ On the altar have at least a picture of the Panca-tattva (Lord Caitanya and His associates), and a picture of Prabhupada
- ॐ There may also be deities on the altar

Optional: Including the offering of Aratik

- ॐ During the chanting, you may want to offer arati to the spiritual master and the Lord
- ॐ Ideal: incense, ghee lamp, water in a conch-shell, handkerchief, flower, and fan(s)
- ॐ Minimum: incense, flower, and fan(s) *or* incense, lamp, and flower
- ॐ Children can be taught to offer aratik (only when the program is not in a temple with formally installed deities)

Ensure that pupils know the mantras

- ॐ Children who can read can follow during the kirtana from words posted on the wall
- ॐ Non-readers need to be taught the mantras at another time

Teach traditional etiquette and respect for kirtana and the temple area

- ॐ Only standing or sitting in a temple area (no lying down)
- ॐ Hands and objects out of the mouth
- ॐ Toys put away
- ॐ Keeping feet away from sacred articles
- ॐ Keeping sacred articles off the floor (they can be put on a cloth)
- ॐ Avoiding stepping over people or sacred articles
- ॐ Talking limited to the collective worship program activities

Encourage participation in chanting during kirtana: some thoughts

- ॐ Never force chanting with threats or punishment, no matter how subtle
- ॐ Have high expectation and encouragement for pupils to participate
- ॐ When pupils spontaneously chant during the kirtana:
 - ॐ Do not ignore these children
 - ॐ Periodically acknowledge them by making eye contact and smiling when you see them chanting
 - ॐ Sometimes take them by the hand and dance with them
 - ॐ Make a point of praising them outside of kirtana time for their determined and blissful chanting (Statements such as, "When we chant we show how much we love Krishna," and "Surely you will go back to Godhead if you continue chanting with such enthusiasm," are very encouraging. You may wish to refer to Srila Prabhupada's letters or hear from disciples who had intimate contact with him to learn)

When children are disrespectful during kirtana

Note: Whether or not a child is participating in the chanting, etc., any pupil who is old enough to be in school can be expected to stand respectfully during kirtana (unless he or she is sick), and not disturb others.

If children create a problem...

- ॐ Quietly and gently remind them of the proper etiquette and respect
- ॐ If they persist, they should be removed from the temple room
- ॐ It is best to instruct them outside of the temple room, so as not to disturb the deities and other children
- ॐ It is also important to avoid any emotional connection in the child between correction and the temple room, which should only have pleasant associations

- ॐ If the child continues to be rebellious and disrespectful, he or she should remain outside the temple room or area for several minutes, until able to enter in a proper mood

When children are respectful but not participating

Note: Children should not be removed from the worship area if their general behavior is respectful, but they are not chanting or otherwise participating.

Teachers can help and encourage children to participate in various ways....

- ॐ A teacher can stand directly next to or behind the child
- ॐ If several children are like this, you may work with different children on different days, never completely ignoring anyone, or else you may try to help them one after another
- ॐ Every time there is a response in the chanting, try chanting "with" these children This should be done in a loving and somewhat playful mood
- ॐ Try to communicate your enthusiasm for chanting to the child
- ॐ The child may require this help daily for several weeks until he or she begins to acquire a personal taste for the name
- ॐ Be patient. Patience is especially needed for young children who are not accustomed to daily kirtana, or any age pupil who had some previous negative experience with it
- ॐ If you find your pupil(s) having a persistent lack of enthusiasm for chanting after giving them much personal attention in the kirtana, over several weeks, it is wise to also work with them at another time
- ॐ Have a kirtana with just them and you. They chant, and you respond. You chant and they respond. You can try this once a week or so, for ten or fifteen minutes, until the pupils carry over their chanting to the regular kirtana
- ॐ When you do see your pupil happily chanting, please continue with guidance and praise

Summary

The adult who supervises pupils during kirtana has the duty of training them both in proper respectful behavior and love for chanting. This training must stem from the love of the adult for the child as spirit soul, wanting that child to serve the Lord, Sri Krishna.

Suggestions for How to Teach the Japa Portion of Collective Worship

Preparation for the teacher

Reflecting on how japa is:

- ☞ The essential practice of Gaudiya Vaisnavism
- ☞ The lifeline back to Godhead
- ☞ The most important instruction of the spiritual master
- ☞ The underlying melody in the symphony of all devotional activities
- ☞ The potential highlight of the school day
- ☞ The life and soul of devotional service

Examining one's own japa

- ☞ How steady and regulated
- ☞ How fast or slow is each round
- ☞ Am I fingering the beads correctly
- ☞ Is pronunciation consistently clear
- ☞ Do I always say the entire mantra
- ☞ Am I easily distracted and prone to engage in conversation
- ☞ Is sleep a problem
- ☞ Do I have a prayerful attitude, crying out in humility for unconditional service

Chanting japa with the children

Starting japa time

- ☞ Start chanting and then everyone joins until it's time to stop
- OR
- ☞ Spend a few seconds getting the children to sit very still and get in a relaxed, focused mood in various ways, such as:
 - ☞ Read a few lines about the holy name
 - ☞ Explain something about the holy name
 - ☞ Give some practical instruction such as sitting still or hearing the sounds carefully
- ☞ Keep things light and happy

Sitting arrangements: ideas

- ☞ It's best to have a special place for japa that is only used for worship and meditation type activities

- ☞ When chanting japa with one or two children: they can sit by you, at least until they are fixed enough in their own desire that you have complete confidence in their steady chanting
- ☞ When chanting japa with a larger group of pupils: try a circle so that you can see and help each of them, and can easily allow you to maintain order

Position in the circle: thoughts

- ☞ Children's position in the circle can be crucial to their ability to concentrate
- ☞ Some children only fix their minds when they sit next to the adult
- ☞ Others may sit next to the adult for a few minutes on a particular day, and then stay on the track for weeks at any position
- ☞ When pupils are new to school or to japa chanting, you might want to have them sit close to you to be able to give extra help
- ☞ If a child has trouble focusing on japa for a long time, you can ask one of the more enthused pupils to sit next to that child and help
- ☞ Remember that some young pupils who have extreme difficulty even remembering the maha-mantra for months may eventually become lovers of the holy name

During japa time

- ☞ Teach the children how to pronounce clearly "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare" (one time on each bead if beads are used)
 - Note: While some people say the Panca Tattva mantra before each round, that practice was never taught or instructed by Srila Prabhupada and is not part of the Gaudiya Vaisanava tradition. It should not be taught to the children as a "required" japa practice.*
- ☞ Show how to finger their beads if they use them (with thumb and middle finger of right hand, rolling the beads for the first half of the mantra, and keeping them still for the second half of the mantra; never "crossing over" the head bead)
- ☞ Show how to chant at a comfortable speed and "loudly enough so that they and the person next to them can hear."
- ☞ Teach how to breathe between words or mantras so they don't "swallow" a word (It is also possible to chant on both incoming and outgoing breath, but that might be too difficult for young children.)
- ☞ Remove all distractions
- ☞ Avoid interrupting the chanting except for emergencies; best to give instruction before or after
- ☞ Never use any force or pressure, verbally or physically, no matter how subtle, to get children to chant

Japa etiquette and respect

- ☞ Sitting, not lying down or wandering around (walking during japa is fine for longer japa periods)
- ☞ Hands and objects out of the mouth
- ☞ No toys
- ☞ Keeping to oneself; no distracting others
- ☞ No eating
- ☞ Silence other than japa chanting
- ☞ Joyful but serious mood—no silliness

Whether or not a child should chant on beads

- ☞ The use or non-use of beads is a very individual thing
- ☞ A particularly restless and distracted child may immediately become excellent at japa upon receiving beads
- ☞ Another child, when given beads, may play with them, or skip beads, yet chant nicely without the beads
- ☞ It is common for pupils, on their own, to chant on beads for a while or until finishing one round, hand you the beads, and then continue orally
- ☞ Until about age 9-10, is it probably best to have a very casual attitude about whether or not beads are used

Ideas for chanting on beads if beads are used

- ☞ Teach the proper way to finger the beads and to end and start a "round"
- ☞ Watch each child closely to ensure that good habits are being formed
- ☞ You may keep all pupils' beads in one bag, distributing and collecting them daily, so they don't get lost.

When children are disrespectful during japa

- ☞ If at all possible, avoid correcting pupils during the japa time or in the japa area, so as to circumvent any possibility of creating a negative emotional connection with japa, the japa time, or japa place
- ☞ You may make a note of difficult behaviour and, after japa class, have the errant pupil follow general school procedure for dealing with behaviour problems
- ☞ A pupil who is extremely disruptive in spite of such a system needs to be removed from the japa class
- ☞ The pupil who is removed should not be allowed to play during japa time, and you may want to have japa time later with that child

Note: These standards, again, are for behaviour violations—playing, fighting, talking—not lack of chanting

When children are respectful but not participating

- ☪ Give encouragement, love, and help
- ☪ You may want to use a large sheet with the maha-mantra in words and pictures. Some pupils will chant if inspired by incentives and games in the beginning
- ☪ Be creative, lighthearted, and loving in your approach

Example of a japa game: the japa race

The children sit in a line, and, when you point to one for nice chanting, the child leaps forward. Whoever gets to the picture of Lord Caitanya (or whatever goal is available) first, "wins" that game.

How can we decide on the length of japa time?

- ☪ By number of "rounds" or other counting system for number of mantras
- ☪ For children who have not yet fully demonstrated a strong personal desire for japa, determining time by the number of rounds can encourage the children to chant sloppily on their beads, cheat, and develop bad habits
- ☪ Chanting a set amount of rounds can be reserved for older children, about twelve years or more, who have chanted steadily every day for at least six months
- ☪ By amount of time
- ☪ In this program, we are suggesting a very short japa time of about two minutes
- ☪ Pupils of age four through seven can be expected to chant for at about five-ten minutes

Summary

The most important things are that the children always associate a happy atmosphere with their japa time, and that they have the best opportunity to gain a real spiritual taste for japa through the teacher's instructions about mood and concentration.



Integrating Child-led Activities

All of us learn best that which interests us, or that which we need in order to live or fulfill our desires. While it is part of the teacher's job to have pupils know and feel the relevance of learning experiences to their own needs and lives, when the idea for learning comes from pupils, they are more likely to be motivated to learn.

By definition, however, specific child-led learning activities cannot be explicitly designed into a teacher's manual. Some basics of how to encourage children to initiate learning activities should allow teachers to build opportunities into collective worship on a regular basis. Some ideas are:

- Put on a table or desk materials related to the festival or to the theme and plan learning activities around the children's questions, comments, or spontaneous use of those materials
- After very briefly introducing the weekly festival and theme, ask the children to talk about what they know about it or want to know
- When children spontaneously talk about a related area or question during collective worship time, plan a learning activity for the next day around what the children suggested
- Periodically ask the children what they would like to do to celebrate the festival or explore the theme
- Sometimes involve between one and three children in planning for upcoming learning activities—not just as assistants for the teacher's plan, but as co-teachers
- Sometimes ask children to prepare whatever they like on the festival or theme and present what they have prepared later in the week to the rest of the pupils
- At least once a term or half-term, send home a letter listing the upcoming festivals and themes of collective worship and asking for ideas about learning experiences based on what the children do at home.

Extending the learning beyond worship time

Topics and activities started in collective worship time can sometimes be extended into the rest of the school day. A natural place to extend what is started in collective worship is in Religious Education classes. Other times, what begins during collective worship can logically and naturally be related to literacy, history, geography, maths—really any and all other study!

There are two main ways embedded in this book to easily extend the learning to other areas. One is to spend more time on the same activities started during collective worship time. Another is to use what is in the “other ideas” oval as a springboard for cross-curricular, integrated lessons. Many teachers will find that the “other ideas” section sparks their own creativity for cross-curricular planning.

For major festivals, the head-teacher or individual teachers may plan entire days, or even most of the classes for a week or more, to have connections with the topics of collective worship. Such a thematic approach helps unify learning. Thematic learning also naturally relates skills and content to children’s lives—as well as being part of the fun of celebration.



Why Multi-Faith Festivals are Included

The collective worship program outlined here draws largely from the heritage of the Krishna Avanti School's faith partner, ISKCON, offering opportunity for sadhana (spiritual practice), including worship, meditation and scriptural study. Most of the festivals in this program, therefore, are part of the general Hindu tradition that ISKCON shares, with some of those specific to those of Gaudiya Vaisnavas .

However, about a fifth of the festival portion of the program draws from a range of traditions. Three festivals are from branches of Hinduism apart from the faith partner. There are also two Christian festivals, one each from Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, and the Jain tradition. Why have these festivals from various faiths been included?

Firstly, we recognize that pupils from different religious backgrounds will be attending Krishna-Avanti School, including those having diverse understandings and practices within Hinduism. Therefore, the school caters to all pupils' spiritual needs, helping them gain esteem in the tradition they personally follow.

Secondly, all our pupils will benefit by learning from and about various religious and spiritual traditions that are in the surrounding society. Pupils' lives will be enhanced by developing respectful yet discerning attitudes towards various sources of religious authority, as part of practicing critical thinking skills.

At the same time, the principle of getting knowledge from a guru, or dhira, is central to the school. As ISKCON is the faith partner, the dominant content and total mood of collective worship is in keeping with the teachings of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Pupils can then discern between various religious claims and avoid non-reflective attitudes, especially those that are adversarial and based on a materialistic concept of religion.

In summary, it is hoped that having a few multi-faith festivals in the collective worship program will enhance pupil's esteem in their own tradition, and their ability to confidently apply and articulate its teachings, while encouraging them to value other spiritual traditions and to enter into respectful dialogue with people of other worldviews, both religious and secular. Children can thereby get regular opportunities to develop into adults who listen to others' perspectives and discuss important issues with considerate thoughtfulness, whether or not they personally agree with the views that others express.

Theme: Change Festival: Makara Sankranti (sun into Capricorn)

Objectives:

- List three facts about the festival
- Explain the meaning of "makara" and "sankranti"
- Give 3 reasons why bathing in a river is considered sacred

You will need:

- Picture of Ganga devi on Makara
- A cup of water and Ganga mantras
- Picture of Bhishma on bed of arrows

Story:

Makara Sankranti is the day that marks when the sun goes into its northern journey. That means the season is starting to change slowly from winter to spring when the days start to get longer, and the weather warmer.

If you live south of the equator, this time is when summer starts turning to autumn, the days get shorter, and the weather colder!

Makara means crocodile, and is the Indian sign of Capricorn which in the Western Zodiac is a ram. Who was born under a Capricorn sign? Or Libra? Or Virgo? These are called zodiac signs. In Western astrology, a person's "sign" refers to where the sun is when they are born. In Eastern, a person's sign is what stars are rising on the horizon.

Every time the sun enters a new zodiac sign is called a sankranti on the calendar in India. It happens at the beginning of each solar month. Makara sankranti marks the day when the sun goes into Capricorn or Makara.

On this day there are extra benefits for bathing in holy rivers. It is traditional for people to go to a holy river like the Ganges or Yamuna to bathe and purify themselves, making themselves clean inside and outside.

Did you know that Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu also bathed in the Ganga during Makara Sankranti? He went to Prayaga and stayed with His friends, where the Ganga and Yamuna Rivers meet together. .

This is thought of as the most auspicious place to bathe

Mantra to make holy water:

*ganga ca yamuna caiva
godavari sarasvati
narmada sindhu kaveri
jal 'smin sannidhim kuru.*

This mantra can be recited to call the holy rivers in ordinary water, so if one cannot be at a holy place for the holy day, one can sprinkle some drops of this water on one's head and get the same benefit. When we do this, we can remember Caitanya Mahaprabhu bathing at Ganga-Yamuna, five hundred years ago.

This is the day that Bhishma chose to leave his body when he was on the bed of arrows. It is considered such a special day, so he requested Krishna to come and be by his side so he could leave his body with the Lord in front of his eyes.

Makara Sankranti in Gujarat is celebrated by flying kites. For many days the cities are very colourful as the kite makers display their kites for people to come and buy.

In most households sweets are made for the Lord and then families share the prasadam as they spend much of the day appreciating the sun's rays as they fly their kites. One folk-lore explanation of flying kites on this day is that by going in the the sun, you will have good health all year around.

Theme: Change Festival: Makara Sankranti (sun into Capricorn)

Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Zodiacs—different animals. Discuss Western animals in the zodiac, especially Ram, because that is the Capricorn animal.

Discuss Eastern zodiac animals, especially the crocodile

Discuss bathing in holy places, the purity of holy water and its effects. Make Ganga Jal and sprinkle children with the water.

Tell (ask) short story of Bhismadeva

Discuss kite flying of people in Gujarat perhaps some of them have been there for this festival.

Ask children to recount various features of Makara Sankranti at end of week.

Ideas for Learning activities

Key Stage One:

Discuss zodiac animals. Show picture of Ganga devi on the crocodile.

Discuss the importance of bathing in holy rivers at special times

Teach children Ganga mantras and sprinkle them with Ganga jal

Ask children to recount the story of Bhishma on the bed of arrows. Discuss their feelings on having Krishna by their side when death comes.

Discuss kite flying in Gujarat and how the wind and the sun are features of Krishna, in Bhagavad-gita .

Ask children to recount the various aspects of Makara Sankranti at the end of the week.

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Kite making, wind, velocity, speed etc.

Looking at Sun from Vedic and scientific perspectives

Look at seasonal changes caused by northern sun

Research holy rivers and power of holy water

Notes:



Objectives:

- Compare and contrast seasons
- Explain concept of favourites
- Describe culture tied to the natural world

You will need:

- Photos - Deities dressed in yellow
- Yellow flowers and decorations such as crepe paper streamers
- Yellow paper to make decorations

Story:

In India, there is a grand festival on the fifth day of the lunar month of Magh, to celebrate the beginning of the spring season. On this day the Deities stop wearing their winter clothes and start wearing spring clothes. The Deities and most people wear yellow coloured clothing. They offer Krishna yellow flowers. They make yellow-coloured food. Sometimes they make food that is naturally yellow. Sometimes they put spices such as saffron or turmeric into food to make it a yellow colour.

All this yellow coloured food is offered to Krishna, along with the yellow flowers. The temple looks very pretty! Usually in the scripture, in books such as Srimad Bhagavatam, it says that Krishna and His incarnations wear yellow coloured cloth that looks like melting gold. Krishna's cloth in the spiritual world is a devotee. The cloth loves Krishna and wants to serve Him by decorating His spiritual form. Some devotees say that the reason Krishna likes to wear yellow is that it reminds Him of His most wonderful devotee, Srimati Radharani.

Radharani's spiritual body is said to have a colour something like melting gold. Radharani likes to wear blue clothes because they remind her of Krishna. Krishna always thinks about His devotees, and His devotees always think about Him. What we think about shows what we really love.

Of course, Krishna can wear many different colours and kinds of clothes, but yellow is His favourite. So, at the beginning of spring when everyone dresses Him in yellow, He becomes very happy. Because He is a person—although He is a different sort of person from you or I—He also has favourites. It is amazing that Krishna has favourites because He doesn't need anything and He is not attached to anything.

Krishna's devotees in the spiritual world also have favourites. They have kinds of prasadam that they especially like. They each have colours and clothes that they like more than others. When Krishna eats with His friends, He makes sure that each of them gets the food they like best. And the devotees also give Krishna what He likes best. That is love. Everyone is just thinking of how to make the other person happy.

People welcome spring because it gets warm and planting can start. Some people in India decorate their ploughs and sometimes they plough the field for the first time in the year. Krishna's brother and first incarnation, Balarama, carries a plough. Krishna and Balarama play as if they are simple village boys who take care of cows and plant food crops in the earth. We need to take care of the earth and plant crops in order to keep our bodies healthy and strong. But, Krishna and Balarama are simply having fun. They have great fun starting spring with their plough and yellow flowers.

Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Explore the idea of favourite things such as foods, colours, clothes, toys

- What does "favourite" mean
- How do we decide our favourites
- How is "favourite" different or the same as "good"
- What are our favourites

Decorate the Deities and the temple or classroom with yellow

Eat yellow food &/or wear yellow clothes

Find yellow spring flowers and bring them to school to offer to Krishna

Discuss why fields are ploughed before planting seeds

Talk about how different colours make us feel and how they are used

Bring a classmate something that is his/her favourite thing this week

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Contrast and compare the idea of things we like, dislike, and have as favourites with the concepts of "good" and "bad"

Explore the differences and similarities between fact and opinion and how we can tell which is which

Decorate the Deities and the temple or classroom with yellow

Eat yellow food &/or wear yellow clothes

Discuss planting seeds and the difference between planting in ploughed or un-ploughed earth

Write or discuss the qualities of each season and rate each as positive, negative, or interesting

Discuss if children feel the same about seasons as people who live by planting crops?

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Staple food crops in different regions

How and when various seasons are experienced in different parts of the world

Vastu descriptions of the effects & uses of various colours

Notes:



Objectives:

- Ask grace of God & devotees
- Describe dependency & blessings
- Explain that the universe is run by supernatural persons

You will need:

- Bhagavatam 1.2.4 OHT
- Picture or deity of Sarasvati

Story:

Kalidas was in the beginning a great fool. He was cutting a tree, sitting on the branch. So some intelligent men said, "What you are doing? You shall fall down." He didn't care, but by cutting, he actually fell down.

Then Kalidas said, "Oh, you are very intelligent! How did you know I would fall?"

The other men could understand that he was a fool. They decided to present that boy to the king's daughter to become her husband just to be mean to the princess. The girl was so intelligent that she challenged, "Any man who will defeat me in argument, I shall marry." But she was so intelligent that nobody could defeat her.

So the king asked all the learned scholars, "Bring me an intelligent boy to marry her." But they could not find any intelligent boy. Whoever came was defeated.

Out of anger they decided "Now, because she is so determined to have a very nice husband, we shall make this fool boy her husband." They took him there and told him, "When the princess shows one finger, you show two."

Because he was a fool, he said he would do what they said. It happened that when he was brought to the princess, the girl held up one finger and he showed two fingers. Then all the wise men said, "This boy is smarter than the princess. She says that 'Brahman is one.' But he says that there is Brahman

and maya, two."

The girl thought, "Yes, this boy is a genius." The foolish man was then made her husband. But that night, when she understood that he was a fool, she kicked him and said, "Get out of my room!"

So he felt very sad. "My wife has kicked me. I am such a fool. He was crying and remembering the goddess of learning, praying, "I am so foolish, my dear mother Sarasvati. You did not favor me, so my life is useless."

At that time, Sarasvati became very kind and appeared, "Kalidasa, why are you crying?"

"My mother, this is my position. I have been insulted by my wife because I am a fool."

"All right, from now on you shall be very learned. Whatever you say, it will be very smart."

He came back and knocked on his wife's door.

She said, "Who are you?"

He replied, "Somebody who can speak very learnedly." Then he became a scholar and wrote four very famous books. He became a famous poet by the grace of Sarasvati. If there are blessings of higher authority, everything can be achieved. There is no doubt.

(Sri Prabhupada told this story to Shyamsundara dasa when discussing the philosopher John Dewey)

Note: this festival occurs on the same day as vashanta panchami



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Learn part of a verse to Sarasvati, or the English to a prayer or verse

Think of ways to ask Sarasvati to help us learn so we can please Krishna

Discuss how parents, teachers, friends, the devas, and Krishna Himself helps us learn

Practice treating school objects, such as books, with traditional etiquette because Sarasvati gives them to us to use in Krishna's service

Talk about the different devas who work in the universe to serve Krishna and how they are like the different people who work in a family or a school

Offer flowers and lamps to Sarasvati

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Discuss the different between intelligence and knowledge

Explore the different things we can do to get knowledge and increase our intelligence

Discuss the role of superiors (parents, teachers, devas, God)

Discuss the relationship between Krishna, His devotees, and demigods

Learn a prayer to Sarasvati

Discuss how to respect all learning paraphernalia as representing Sarasvati

Compare the materialistic vision of the universe as a dead machine to the Bhagavata philosophy of persons who are in charge of all aspects.

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

The story of Keshava Kashmiri and Nimai Pandita

Importance of prayer in four-part process of learning

Giving oral presentations

How we speak and learn language

Notes:



Objectives:

- Explain the relationship of service & love between Advaita and Sri Caitanya
- Discuss Krishna conscious society

You will need:

- Picture of Advaita calling for Lord Caitanya to appear
- Picture of Navadvipa kirtans with Advaita Acarya

Story:

Advaita Acarya is an incarnation of Krishna. There is one God. He has many forms. One form is Advaita Acarya, who is also called Mahavishnu. In this form Krishna creates the material world. This form is also called Sadasiva, or the eternal form of Lord Siva.

The different incarnations of Krishna feel that they serve Krishna. So Advaita Acarya also thought, "I am a servant of Krishna." Advaita Acarya saw that the people where he lived did not care about spiritual life. They would spend their money on big weddings, but they would not give money to serve the Deity. They would read Bhagavad-gita, but just to argue, not to learn how to love Krishna.

In Advaita Acarya's house there was kirtana every day, where devotees of Krishna would sing Hare Krishna and dance. They were so happy to sing about Krishna that sometimes they would dance all night. Many people in the village would make fun of the devotee who were singing and dancing. They said that it was foolish to worship God.

Advaita Acarya was sad. He knew that without loving Krishna, people cannot be happy. Because he is an incarnation of Krishna, he could help the people himself. But he felt very humble. He thought that only Krishna could teach love of God. He wondered how he would get Krishna to come. Then he remembered that Krishna is very happy to get Tulasi leaves and Ganges water.

Advaita Acarya offered the Lord Tulasi leaves and Ganges water. He made that offering every day for a long time. He loudly begged the Lord to appear. His prayers were loud and strong, like a lion roaring. They were also humble and loving. The sound of his prayers travelled through the whole material world. They travelled through the material coverings of earth, water, fire, and air. They travelled all the way to Vaikunthaloka. Krishna heard Advaita Acarya's sweet prayers and came to earth as Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Advaita Acarya was so happy when he understood that Lord Caitanya had appeared. He danced and danced. Then he went to bathe in the Ganges River. He gave a lot of charity. His heart was filled with love for the Lord.

Advaita Acarya's wife was named Sita. He is often called "Sita-natha" or the husband of Sita. Advaita Acarya's wife, Sita, went to see baby Lord Caitanya. She brought the baby and mother gold jewellery and even tigers' nails set in gold! When she saw the baby, Sita knew that Krishna was now on Earth, but with a golden colour instead of bluish-black. Sita's heart melted with love for the Lord. She thought about how her husband had called for Krishna to come. Now He was actually right in front of her!

Lord Caitanya really did bring a great gift of peace and love to the world. Advaita Acarya's prayers and desire helped millions of people for many years. His prayers are still helping us now!

Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Discuss how parents & children serve and love each other

- Compare to how Advaita, even though older than Lord Caitanya, thought of himself as a servant

Ask the children to discuss how they feel when they serve and help others

Ask children to share experiences of a baby being born and gifts given

Have the children pretend to be the different people in the Navadvipa kirtanas while they chant and dance

Discuss why Advaita Acarya felt sad and wanted Lord Caitanya to appear

Offer the Deities Tulasi leaves and Ganga water while thinking of a prayer for world benefit

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Discuss why Advaita Acarya felt sad and wanted Lord Caitanya to appear

- What is happiness
- Why should we care about others' happiness
- What can we do to help people be happy

Discuss the different ways people try to help or save the world
What is special about what Advaita Acarya wanted to do

Offer the Deities Tulasi leaves and Ganga water while thinking of a prayer for world benefit

Ask children to describe what a family or society would be like if everyone was thinking about how to love and serve God

Discuss how Advaita, although older than Lord Caitanya, felt as a servant

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Husband and wives being addressed in terms of each other—gender roles in society and in marriage

The etiquette between older and younger people

Role of Tulasi in worship of Krishna

Notes:



Objectives:

- Define "bullying"
- Discuss how to deal with a bully
- Describe how to be a good friend to others

You will need:

- Picture of fight between Varaha and Hiranyaksa
- OHT of typical bullying behavior
- Picture of Varaha to colour

Story:

The demon Hiranyaksa was big, strong, and proud. He had gold hair and huge teeth like tusks! He would get angry very easily and then would stay angry for a long time. Hiranyaksa carried a club and travelled looking for people to fight with. He could go beyond the Earth to all parts of the universe.

Hiranyaksa went to heaven to fight with Indra, but the devas were scared and hid. Then he went deep into the universal ocean. He beat the waves with his club. Sharks saw him. Sharks are big and mean. All the other animals in the ocean are afraid of sharks. But the sharks and whales—all the creatures in the ocean—swam away quickly from Hiranyaksa because they were so scared.

Varuna, the lord of water, stood in front of Hiranyaksa. "Fight with me!" the demon roared. Hiranyaksa tried to tease Varuna to get him to fight. But Varuna is very smart and self-controlled. He felt anger inside him. He used good sense to keep his anger down. Varuna said he was too old to fight and that the demon should find Lord Vishnu, who was in the water in a great boar form.

And there Lord Varaha was, carrying His wife Mother Earth on the ends of His tusks. The Earth had fallen in the universal water and Vishnu, in a boar form, came to save her. Varaha was so big that His form could cover the whole sky. He is the Supreme Lord, so He is beautiful and kind. His form is the same

as the Vedas.

The demon laughed at Lord Varaha and called Him a beast. Hiranyaksa said that the Earth belongs to him and other demons. He said that he would kill Varaha, and then kill all the devotees and brahmanas. Hiranyaksa kept teasing and bullying Varaha. The Lord doesn't like it when someone is mean. But Varaha wanted to take care of the Earth first. Varaha very carefully put Mother Earth on the water and helped her to float. Then he looked at the demon.

"Only people scared of death talk like you," the Lord said. "Now stop talking and fight!" First the demon and the Supreme Lord started to fight with their clubs. Next Hiranyaksa threw a trident at Varaha. Then he punched Varaha in the chest. The demon then used magic. The wind blew. Bones fell from the sky. Naked demons ran with tridents.

Lord Varaha took His Sudarshana disk weapon and stopped all the demon magic. Hiranyaksa put his arms around Varaha to try and crush him. But, Varaha was outside his arms! Varaha then touched the demon at the bottom of his ear and the demon died.

The demigods like Brahma were watching the fight. Some of them were scared. But Lord Vishnu can never die, and He always wins. The demons He kills get liberated from karma, and they will not bully anyone anymore.

Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Ask the children how Hiranyaksa acted in "mean" ways

Discuss some of the typical bullying behavior (see the OHT) and ask the children if anyone ever treats them like that

Role play ways to deal with a bully

Act out Varaha rescuing the Earth from Hiranyaksa

Colour and decorate pictures of Varaha

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Ask children to describe the demon Hiranyaksa's behavior (This should include his asking Varuna for a fight, looking for the Lord to fight with Him, and name-calling)

Discuss if they have ever seen anyone try to "pick a fight" with someone else for no good reason

List typical behaviors of bullies (OHT)

Discuss how to deal with people who bully us; Role-play the good ideas

Discuss how we can deal with people respectfully; Role-play good ideas

Learn the dasavatara verse about Varaha

Discuss how Varaha saved the Earth from the bullying demon

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Protection of the Earth, ecology

Dramas and songs

Similes and Metaphors

Solar system

Notes:



Theme: Feelings Festival: Lord Nityananda's Appearance

Objectives:

- Express feelings for Lord Nityananda
- Discuss feelings about Lord Nityananda's village or life

You will need:

- Photos of Ekacakra and Deities
- Bhajan of Prabhupada singing Nitai-pada-kamala
- Flowers for offering

Story:

Lord Nityananda was born in a small village called Ekacakra in West Bengal. His parents were brahmanas and their names were Hadai Ojha and Padmavati Devi. Lord Nityananda was loved by everyone in his village. Nityananda and His friends used to imitate the pastimes of Krishna. Some of these 'plays' were so dramatic that the whole village became part of the drama.

He is the eternal brother of Krishna and every time Krishna appears, Lord Balarama appears along side Him. So when Krishna comes as Lord Rama, Balarama comes as Laksmana and when Lord Caitanya comes, Balarama comes as Nityananda.

We can hear a little about Ekacakra, the place Lord Nityananda lived for his first twelve years. This place is about 100 miles from Mayapur, in the region of Radhadesh. When you go there you can see a temple of Lord Nityananda, holy kundas or ponds where Nitai bathed, and trees under which Nitai and his Friends played.

Simple villagers live by keeping cows and buffalo. There are no roads for cars through the village and altogether it is a very simple place. It is far away from big cities and towns, and this makes it a very appealing

place to visit for those who want to get close to Lord Nityananda.

When Nitai was twelve years old, a saintly brahmana came to visit His father. The brahmana asked Hadai Pandit if he would give him a gift. Hadai Pandit assured the brahmana that he would give anything the brahmana wanted. The saint asked that Nitai be given to him as a traveling companion. Hadai Pandit and his wife, as well as all the villagers, were so attached to Nityananda that it was almost unthinkable to be separated from Nitai.

However, because the power of Hadai Ojha's promise was so strong, he could not refuse this request of the great saint. Padmavati was upset that Nitai was going, so the sadhu gave her Muralidara, a deity Who is still worshiped today.

Nityananda traveled with the sannyasi for many years all over India. When he was thirty-two years old, and Caitanya Mahaprabhu was twenty, they met in Navadwipa. The eternal brothers were so happy to meet each other that they danced and chanted for a very long time.



Theme: Feelings Festival: Lord Nityananda's Appearance

Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Play Prabhupada singing Nitai-pada-kamala while children meditate

Ask children to close their eyes and imagine a very small village. There is no tar road. It is made of dirt and dust. There are no cars in the village, no garages or much electricity. In people's gardens are cows and buffalo and the houses are made from clay and cow dung, and the roofs are made from hay.

Show photos from Ekacakra and discuss with children how they pictured it and how it was in the photos.

Discuss how Balarama expands as Laksmana, and Nityananda and how they feel about each incarnation.

Pupils can offer flowers to Lord Balarama or Lord Nityananda and make a prayer to the Lord.

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Play Prabhupada singing Nitai-pada-kamala while looking at slides or photos

Show pictures of Ekacakra and tell or read about Nityananda's life.

Discuss the feelings children have about Nityananda's relationship with His friends.

Talk about Nityananda leaving home and how His parents, family and friends felt when he left the village.

Ask children to imagine they are one of Lord Caitanya's friends when Nityananda comes to Navadvipa. What would they think and feel seeing the Lord meeting with someone they had never seen before.

Offer flowers to Nityananda and make a prayer to the Lord.

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Research West Bengal including Ekacakragram

Discuss the tradition of children leaving home to assist a mendicant, in other faith traditions as well

Make a model of Ekacakra village

Notes:



Objectives:

- Describe Siva & his kindness
- List times & ways of helping
- Describe & define serving & caring

You will need:

- DVD of Lord Siva dance performance
- Cream, blender
- Milk and yogurt culture
- Yogurt, sugar/juice & nectar recipe

Story:

Lord Siva is not an ordinary person like you and I. He lives forever, beyond the material world. When Lord Vishnu wants to be with the material energy, He is Lord Siva. Siva does not have all the qualities of Vishnu. He acts as the best devotee of Vishnu. In the material world, Siva is the son of Brahma. Siva popped out of Brahma's forehead when Brahma got mad.

Siva is a very kind devotee who always wants to help others. He is in charge of ghosts and evil spirits. Nobody likes to be around ghosts and spirits. But Siva helps them to get human bodies so they can have a chance to love Krishna. Siva is very kind even to demons who pray to him. It is very easy to make Lord Siva happy. But it's also very easy to make him mad!

One time the demigods and demons were working together to churn the ocean of milk. On earth there is an ocean of salty water. In another part of the universe there is an ocean of milk. People churn milk, or at least the cream part of milk, to get butter. But the demigods and demons were trying to get nectar, not butter. If someone drank that nectar, he or she would be very strong and healthy, and never get old.

They did get nectar from the milk ocean after a long time. First, other things came out. The first thing to come from their churning was poison. It was a lot of poison and very danger-

ous! Everyone was scared. They all went to Lord Siva and asked him to help. Siva, out of kindness, drank all the poison so no one would get hurt. He used his power to fit the ocean of poison in his hand. Then he drank it. But he didn't get hurt or sick like we would if drank poison. It just made a blue line on his neck which is still there. When we see that blue line, we think of how kind he is. Some of the poison dropped from his hand. Animals like snakes and scorpions drank those drops and they are now poisonous.

Lord Siva was happy to take some trouble so that the demigods and demons could be happy. He wants everyone to be completely happy by loving and serving Krishna, who he thinks of as his master. He is always ready to help us in our spiritual life.

Brahma-samhita 5.45:

kṣīram yathā dadhi vikāra-viśeṣa-yogāt
sañjāyate na hi tataḥ pṛthag asti hetoḥ
yaḥ śambhutām api tathā samupaiti kāryād
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi

kṣīram—milk; yathā—as; dadhi—yogurt; vikāra-viśeṣa—of a special transformation; yogāt—by the application; sañjāyate—is transformed into; na—not; hi—indeed; tataḥ—from the milk; pṛthag—separated; asti—is; hetoḥ—which is the cause; yaḥ—who; śambhutām—the nature of Lord Śiva; api—also; tathā—thus; samupaiti—accepts; kāryāt—for the matter of some particular business; govindam—Govinda; ādi-puruṣam—the original person; tam—Him; aham—I; bhajāmi—worship

Milk becomes yogurt when we add acid. Yogurt is milk but not milk. I worship Govinda who accepts the transformation to the form of Siva for universal destruction.

Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Acting out churning the ocean with two teams each holding the end of a rope that is wound around a pole

Discuss about people who help us when we are in trouble

- When do we ask for help?
- What people help others?
- How do we feel about getting help?

Discuss how we help others in our family, temple or school

Prepare a "nectar" drink

Prepare yogurt from milk

Learn the Sanskrit of "yogurt" and "milk" from Brahma-samhita verse and discuss the meaning related to Siva and Vishnu/Krishna

Dance like Lord Siva and playing drums

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Discuss the position of Lord Siva in relation to ordinary living beings (jivas) and to Lord Krishna

Discuss how and when we risk our own safety to help others

- Was Siva in danger?
- Is it ok to put ourselves in danger?
- What do we do to help others who are in danger? (specific examples)

Make butter with a blender or hand churn

Discuss how we take care of each other in school. Make a personal plan to help someone this week

Learn the Brahma-samhita verse and discuss the meaning

Watch a video of Siva dancing

Discuss how and when to ask for help

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Cooking & chemistry (milk and yogurt)

Safety with common poisons (household, plants)

Health, and foods that give us strength (nectar)

Trip to old age home or similar place to serve others

Studying poisonous creatures

Notes:



Objectives:

- Share how it feels to sacrifice something for God
- Compare this festival with vows in Kartik or Purosottam months

You will need:

- Pictures of Prabhupada's rooms in Vrindavana
- Photos of the Judean desert

Story:

This is an important time of year for Christians. It reminds Christians about Jesus' time in the desert for forty days and nights fasting. We will hear about why Jesus went to the desert, what Lent meant for people in the past and today. We will also think about how it relates to the Vaisnava and other Hindu traditions.

Jesus was preparing (or getting himself ready) for something very important so he went to the desert to spend time by himself, thinking and praying to God. He used this period of forty days and forty nights to concentrate on what he was going to teach and how he was going to heal people. When people are on their own, there are fewer distractions and it can be easier to be prayerful and focus. Jesus knew his time ahead would be filled with helping people and teaching. Christians today use Lent as a time to focus more upon God.

When Jesus was in the desert he was tested to see if he could follow his vows during this time of forty days and nights. He was tempted to eat, to give up his service to God, and to become a popular person instead of a humble servant. Jesus stuck by God in all the difficulties in the desert. This reminds Christians today that when things are difficult, or there is a chance to forget God, they can trust in God who never leaves them.

Like Jesus in the desert, sometimes people give things up for Lent - it is following his example of living simply and keeping the focus on God instead of oneself. Christians may make a vow to give up meat, or sugar, or nice food. They may give up watching TV or gambling.

Another way Christians celebrate Lent is by doing something positive. It is a chance to improve in some area. Some children use Lent to make a positive effort to do something good. This might be to keep their room tidy, to be a better friend, to pray, to try their best, or to give something of theirs to poor children, like clothes or toys.

The main idea is to please God by their actions and get mercy from God. It is a time to remember Jesus and get ready for the celebration of Easter, which happens at the end of Lent.



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Discuss how Srila Prabhupada spent time alone in Vrindavan preparing himself to go to the West

Explore idea of giving up something to please God.

- Ask students what types of things they would give up.

Discuss with children what types of things would they do positively to please God, like doing good and spending time in prayer. Lead them into the understanding that it helps if what they want to do is scripturally recommended

Show photos of the region where Jesus performed his penance

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Discuss Kartik vows and how people try to get extra blessings during special times, like Kartik, Ekadasi, Fasting days etc.

Ask children if they have fasted and how does it feel? Does any of their family members fast. Why do they do that?

Discuss how Jesus was tested in the desert. Explore their own difficulties when they try to be good and how they sometimes fail or are tested.

Tell story about Lord Caitanya traveling by himself in order to think about Krishna without being disturbed by others.

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Visit a Christian Church

Prabhupada in Vrindavan—topic for writing or art

Food For Life—feeding poor with prasadam

Sandipani Muni School—educating children

Notes:



Objectives:

- Create a plan for an ecological celebration
- Discuss many ways to think of Krishna
- Discover ways of making & mixing colours

You will need:

- Natural mineral and plant pigments
- Photos of spring
- Paintings of Krishna playing Holi

Story:

It is spring and everywhere there are flowers with many colours. Krishna and His gopis, the cowherd girls, meet in the middle of the day to play with coloured water and powders. They throw balls made of flowers at each other. They spray coloured water from big syringes that squirt each other. Krishna and the gopis get all wet! And their clothes become all different colours! They also throw coloured powder all over each other's clothes, faces and hair. It is a lot of fun! Sometimes Krishna's cowherd boyfriends, the gopas, also play Holi. There can be a team of cowherd boys on Krishna's side and cowherd girls on Radha's side. Many times Krishna's friends sing special ragas about springtime while they are playing. It's like they are using each other's bodies like big pieces of paper or canvas to paint on with so many colours. Afterwards, they swim and play in beautiful ponds, lakes, and rivers, and put on clean clothes.

Krishna doesn't have to play Holi only once in a year. We have the start of spring once every year. But in the spiritual world all the seasons are there at one time! There is a forest where it is always summer. There is a forest where it is always winter—a pretty winter that is just a little bit cool. There is a forest where it is always spring. And, when Krishna and His friends visit

the springtime forest every day, they play Holi.

Krishna loves all the forests for each season. Spring is especially nice. In the Bhagavad-gita Krishna says that of all seasons, He is spring which is full of flowers. The smells, the fragrance of the flowers also comes from the earth. Krishna says He is the sweet smell of earth. Isn't it amazing that all flowers come from the same earth but have so many different colours and smells? Krishna likes to be decorated with flowers more than He likes to be decorated with gold and jewels! Krishna and His friends sometimes make jewellery out of flowers by cutting and folding them. Sometimes in Holi they throw so many flowers and flower petals at each other that it looks like fireworks.

All the colours that Krishna and His friends use come from nature. They are very healthy for the body and good for the water and the land. They used turmeric and indigo and made turmeric into kumkum. They took minerals from rocks and colours from roots. They got colours from nuts like walnuts. These colours felt wonderful on their bodies. When they went swimming, the water looked very pretty from all the different colours floating in different designs. And the water stayed pure and clean. When the colours fell on the ground, they were good for the earth, because they came from the earth.



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Offer Krishna various kinds of flowers and discuss the variety of colours and fragrances

Break flowers into petals, shower the Deities with the petals, and then collect the petals and have a "petal fight" among the pupils

Discuss how we can think about Krishna being the spring season and the smell of the earth

Mix colors of crayons or of clear plastic strips and talk about change

Decorate the temple room or temple area of the classroom with coloured paper and designs

Explore the trees and plants on the school grounds and discuss how spring is manifesting in colours

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Offer Krishna various kinds of flowers and discuss the variety of colours, fragrances, shapes, and uses

Break flowers of many colours into petals, shower the Deities with the petals, then collect the petals and have a "petal fight" among the pupils

Mix colours of crayons or of clear plastic strips and talk about change

Discuss how colours change when they are added to each other

Discuss the change of seasons and the different ways we can appreciate Krishna in the springtime

Plan an ecological springtime festival that focuses on colours

Decorate the temple room or temple area of the classroom with coloured paper and designs

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Compare seasons in various parts of the world

Mix mineral and plant pigments for colour mixing

Research where paint pigments come from and how they are made

Notes:



Objectives:

- Tell a story about Lord Caitanya
- Explain that Lord Caitanya is Krishna
- Discuss being humble

You will need:

- List of humble behaviour OHT
- Pictures of Lord Caitanya

Story:

It was the year 1534. In Bengal, India, Krishna appeared as the son of Jagannatha Misra and Sacidevi. He was beautiful. Instead of being bluish black, He was a golden colour. Krishna was golden because He had the feelings of Radharani, who is His best devotee. Radharani's colour is golden. When Krishna feels like His own devotee the way Radharani does, He looks like her colour.

When Lord Caitanya was a young boy, His name was Nimai. One time, Jagannatha Misra and Sacidevi saw footprints around their house that had all the marks of Lord Krishna. They also heard Krishna's ankle bells. But their son, Nimai, was not wearing ankle bells. They loved Nimai so much that they couldn't understand that He is Krishna. They thought that their salagram sila was walking around their house!

One time Nimai was eating dirt. Sacidevi told Him to stop and eat sweets instead. Nimai said that sweets and dirt are the same. Why did He say this? Plants grow in dirt. Their food is dirt and sunshine. Then we make sweets from the plants. Sometimes cows eat the plants and turn the plants into milk. Then we make sweets from the milk. But, really, milk and plants are just dirt and sunshine. So, Nimai was right.

Then Sacidevi said that dirt and sweets are the same but they are not the same, too! She said that we make pots out of clay. So, pots and clay are

the same. But, we can carry water in a pot. We cannot carry water by pouring it on a lump of clay. Then, Nimai put down the dirt, and came in the house to eat sweets.

Nimai used to wear very pretty jewels. The jewels cost a lot of money. One day two thieves saw those jewels and wanted to steal them. First they asked Nimai to come with them. They gave Him good things to eat. Nimai rode on the shoulders of one of the thieves. They wanted to carry Him far away from His house so they could steal the jewels without His parents seeing them. But Nimai is Krishna. He knows everything. So, the thieves really walked in a big circle! They walked and walked and walked, but they came right back to Nimai's house. They got scared and ran away. They never touched Nimai's jewels.

When Nimai grew up He became a teacher. Everyone called Him Nimai Pandita. One day, Keshava Kasmiri came to Nimai Pandita's village. He was very smart and knew how to make up poems in one minute. Keshava Kasmiri wanted to show that he was smarter than Nimai, so he made up a very long poem about the River Ganga. It was a beautiful poem. Nimai Pandita told him about some mistakes in the poem. Keshava was very embarrassed that Nimai found those mistakes. Then, Sarasvati came in Keshava's dream to tell him that Nimai is Krishna. Keshava offered obeisances to Nimai Pandita and became a humble devotee. He never tried to make other people feel stupid again.

Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Ask pupils to tell a story they know about Lord Caitanya or to re-tell one of the stories just read to them

Discuss how Krishna has different incarnations that have different colours and different moods and pastimes

Ask the children to name some incarnations, with their colours and pastimes

Decorate the temple

Discuss the story of the thieves and personal protection

- What do we do if a stranger gives us nice food
- What do we do if a stranger asks us to go with him or her?

Discuss what it means to be humble
Ask children for examples

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Ask pupils to tell a story they know about Lord Caitanya or to re-tell one of the stories just read to them

Discuss the meaning of "mood" and how a devotee can feel toward Krishna

Discuss what it means that Lord Caitanya is Krishna in Radharani's mood, having her colour

Ask the children what we can learn from the dirt and sweet story

Discuss personalism and impersonalism

Create special decorations for the temple room or area

Produce a skit or drama about Lord Caitanya

Discuss what is wrong with pride & how we can be humble

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Songs about Lord Caitanya (Sanskrit, Bengali & English)

Decorating pictures of Lord Caitanya

Gems & rocks

Geometric shapes

Notes:



Objectives:

- Explain how anyone can practice bhakti
- List ways we can work together in Lord Caitanya's service

You will need:

- Pictures of Lord Caitanya
- Panca-tatva maha-mantra OHT
- Pictures of Lord Caitanya to colour

Story:

When Lord Caitanya grew up, He married Laksmidevi. After she died, Sacidevi asked Him to marry Vishnu-priya, so He did. He took initiation from Isvara Puri. After He took initiation, He was always chanting Krishna's names. Every night Lord Caitanya would gather with Lord Nityananda, Advaita Acarya, Gaddhara Pandita, Srivasa Thakura, and many, many other devotees. They would have kirtana almost all night. They would hardly sleep.

Lord Caitanya would feel so much ecstasy when He was in kirtana. He would jump really high, and spin around. He would cry in love for Krishna. All the devotees were so happy chanting Hare Krishna. That kind of happiness is not like anything in the material world.

In the day, Lord Caitanya would teach in His school. He would worship Lord Vishnu, and take a bath in the River Ganga. He is Krishna but He would act like a devotee of Krishna. Being a devotee is so much fun that even Krishna wants to do it! Also, Krishna wanted to show all of us how to be a devotee. The best way to teach someone how to do something might be to show them how you do it.

Some people at that time thought that only people born in certain countries or families could be devotees of Krishna. But Lord Caitanya taught that Krishna is God, the father of everyone. So, anyone can be His devotee.

When He was 24 years old, He became a sannyasi and lived in Jagannatha Puri. He traveled around India and taught so many people to chant Hare Krishna and dance.

The devotees of Krishna, who follow Lord Caitanya, take Krishna's holy names everywhere in the world. There are devotees of Krishna now from America, England, Russia, Brazil, and China. Do you know where all those places are? All those people visit the place where Lord Caitanya appeared in this world. They sing the names of Lord Caitanya and His main associates. They teach as many people as they can about Krishna.

Lord Caitanya gave everyone the chance to love Krishna like the pure devotees do in Vrindavana. In Vrindavana, devotees think Krishna is their good friend, or their son. They love Krishna so much that they do not really care that He is God. They just love Him. Lord Caitanya came to teach that kind of Vrindavana love. That love is so special that it is hard to understand. But when Krishna comes as Lord Caitanya He makes it very easy. The way to the love of Vrindavana is to chant Hare Krishna in kirtana and japa, to dance for Krishna, to eat the food that Krishna has eaten—prasadam, and to tell others about Krishna.

Some of Lord Caitanya's followers wrote important books about Krishna from what Lord Caitanya taught them. When we read Rupa Goswami's book of Nectar of Devotion, we learn what makes Krishna happy and how we can practice bhakti yoga to come to love for God.

Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Discuss how serving and loving Krishna is for everyone

- God is everyone's father & friend
- Bhakti is easy for anyone to do

List the ways Lord Caitanya taught us to worship Krishna, and have the children repeat and memorise

Discuss ways we can work together to help Lord Caitanya give love of Krishna to others

Learn the Panca-tattva maha mantra

Colour and decorate pictures of Lord Caitanya

Watch DVDs about Lord Caitanya

Distribute prasadam

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Ask children what it means that anyone can serve and love Krishna

- Soul is different from body, so body isn't an important qualification
- God is one, for everyone
- The process is one that anyone can do

Ask children to explain the way Lord Caitanya taught us to worship Krishna

Plan a program to bring the chanting to others

Learn the Panca-tattva maha mantra and discuss each of the personalities

Watch DVDs about Lord Caitanya

Make and distribute prasadam

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Locating ISKCON centers on a map or globe

More stories about Lord Caitanya

Tracing Lord Caitanya's route through India

Notes:



Objectives:

- Explain how soul is different from body
- Explain karma and reincarnation
- Compare personal & impersonal

You will need:

- Picture—Mahavira & photos of Jains
- Pictures - soul different from body
- Pictures - karma/reincarnation

Story:

Mahavira was a guru in the Jain tradition. He lived thousands of years ago. Mahavira was born a prince. Some people say he did not marry. Some people say he married a princess and had a daughter. When he was thirty he gave up the world to find nirvana, liberation. His followers believe that after thirteen years he was Brahmana realised.

Mahavira was very careful to give up everything in the world. He taught that there is no God. He said there are souls and there is matter, but not God. So, he didn't want to love God. He wanted to be free of the world. To be free, he did not wear any clothes. He pulled out his hair. He did not stay in any house. People would give him food. But he would not let anyone cook for him. There were many times that he did not eat anything for a very long time.

Some people were very mean to Mahavira. He decided that he would tolerate any problem from the demigods, from people, or from his own body. People hurt him but he did not complain. Most of the time he did not talk at all to anyone. He took a vow of silence. After a while, people asked him to be their guru. He had eleven main disciples. Thousands of people followed his teaching. Mahavira did not start the Jain tradition. He made it popular and helped people to understand it better and to follow it better.

Some of his followers were men and women who gave up the world like he did. Many of his followers were householders. All his followers had to live without hurting any living creature. They had to always tell the truth. They had to live without stealing and to own little or nothing. They should also be chaste and pure.

Jains who follow the teachings live a life that is very ethical. That means they are careful to say and do things that are honest and kind to others. They very strongly believe in karma and reincarnation. So, they try to be careful to do things that only bring good karma. They really want to do nothing so they will get no new karma. And they want to take on austerity to burn up old karma. Mahavira and other Jain teachers taught that the soul and the body are different—a soul is spiritual and the body is material. The real 'I' or 'me' is the soul, not a body. The Jains teach and practice that people really need to understand and see themselves as soul.

We devotees of Krishna also want to understand that we are the soul and not the body. We also want to get out of the cycle of karma. We also do austerities. But we are mostly interested in having fun serving Lord Krishna in love.



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Ask children the differences and similarities between life and non-life

Discuss the qualities of a soul from Bhagavad-gita, chapter 2. 16-25

Discuss karma and reincarnation, giving simple examples

Explain the three features of God

- Brahman, Paramatma, and Bhagavan
- Example of sun and sunshine
- Example of mountain from a distance

Discuss austerities and why people who are interested in spiritual life often do difficult things purposely
What difficult things do we do for Krishna

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Ask children the differences and similarities between life and non-life

Discuss the different categories of living things and how they are all souls

Ask how we should treat living beings

Discuss karma and reincarnation

Ask children what they already know

Discuss vikarma, karma, and akarma (sinful action, pious action, and free action—devotional service)

Ask children for examples of each

Role play examples of each

Discuss the three features of Krishna—Brahman, Paramatma, Bhagavan and learn terms and basic definitions

Discuss how various transcendentalists have different goals

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Function of clothing, types of clothing, how clothes are made

Cow protection and kindness to animals

When violence is necessary for protection of innocent

Notes:



Objectives:

- Explain how Lord Rama cares for the people
- List some of the people who care for us

You will need:

- Pictures of Lord Rama
- Copy of dasavatara verse on Rama

Story:

When Lord Ramacandra, the Supreme Lord, was King of this world, the pains of the body, all sickness, getting old, losing what you love, crying, problems, fear and sleepiness were completely gone. You didn't even have to die if you didn't want to. Kings in those days sometimes married many women, but Ramacandra promised to have only one wife, Sita. He had no material anger. He taught good behavior for everyone, especially for families.

Lord Ramacandra, had sacrifices where He was worshipped. At the end of these sacrifices He gave all the land in the world to the brahmanas, the priests. After giving everything in charity to the brahmanas, Lord Ramacandra had only His own clothes and jewels, and the Queen, mother Sita, had only one piece of jewelry left, which was her nose ring.

Then the brahmanas prayed to Ramacandra and gave everything back to Him. They said that His gift was in their hearts, they did not need the kingdom. Then Lord Ramacandra dressed like an ordinary citizen and listened to find out if the people were happy. He found out that one person was not happy with Sita, so Sita went to live in the forest. Sita had two baby boys, and then went back to her mother, the Earth. Ramacandra then had a sacrifice for thirteen thousand years.

Ramacandra's brothers helped to

keep the whole world safe, while Ramacandra was in the city of Ayodhya. He took care of all the people's needs. The people in the kingdom offered obeisances, touched His feet, thought of Him as their father, and even sat down with Him as a good friend.

The streets were always clean with perfumed water that elephants would throw around with their trunks. Flags and gold pots decorated the city. Lord Ramacandra would visit the people. They would decorate their doors with banana trees and betel nut trees, full of flowers and fruits. The gates were decorated with flags made of colourful cloth, mirrors and garlands. When people saw Lord Ramacandra walking in the street, they got on the flat roofs of their homes and showered flowers on Him.

After seeing all the people, Lord Ramacandra went into his palace. The benches on the two sides of the door were made of coral, the floor was made of highly polished jewels, and the foundation was made of marble. The whole palace was decorated with flags and garlands and decorated with jewels that shone like the sun. The palace smelt beautiful from incense burning and shone because of so many pearls.

At the end of His ruling the kingdom, Lord Ramacandra went back to the spiritual world, Vaikuntha. All the people of his kingdom went too. If we think of Him we will be very happy and never envious.



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Ask the children how we know that the people and Lord Rama loved each other

Discuss the people who take care of us (include people in school and government, not just family)

- How do they show they care for us
- How can we love them also

Ask which children care for someone else (including animals)

Ask how they take good care of those people or animals

Children act out Lord Ramacandra walking through the city and the people receiving Him

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Ask the children what they know about what kings do

Discuss the people who take care of us in the family, school, and government

Ask the children to suggest how someone can be a good caretaker

Ask for children to volunteer examples of when someone took good care of them, or they took good care of someone else.

Children learn the dasavatara verse about Lord Ramacandra

Ask the children to repeat what they heard about the beauty and opulence of Rama's city. Discuss how we can make our areas more beautiful.

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Good citizenship & how government works

Rocks, minerals, and jewels

Benefits of hearing the Lord's pastimes

Dramas and songs

Notes:



Objectives:

- Use pictures to remember Sita devi's life
- Identify qualities and positions in society that require a respectful attitude.

You will need:

- Series of pictures of Sitadevi

Story:

King Janaka was a great wise king, who cared for his people with love and affection. He was not completely happy, however because he and his wife did not have any children.

One day Janakaraja was tilling the earth with a plough and found a golden casket in the earth. Inside this chest was a baby girl. Maharaja Janaka took the child home, and the family called her 'Sita', meaning; the earth ploughed by the yoke.

Janakaraja's life seemed to become more successful after Sita was part of his family. Sita had a younger sister called Urmila and they were educated, pure and beautiful. Sitadevi liked to worship the Lord and imitated the lord's pastimes. She did not appear to be an ordinary child.

Parashurama came to visit king Janaka. He carried a bow with him. He left it at the doorstep of the royal hall and went inside. It could only be lifted by bold and very strong people. Sita saw the bow, ran to it and began playing with it as if it was a rocking horse. When Parashurama came out, the bow was missing. He spotted Sita playing with the bow as if it was a toy. The sage and the king were astonished.

The sage Parashurama blessed Sita and said to her father, "My dear king, only a great, and strong person can marry this extraordinary girl. Arrange a Swayamvara for her and let the best person marry her." A swayamvara is where the bride chooses her husband for his skill and strength.

Janakaraj arranged for the Swayamvara. The challenge was sent out: "The Man Who Conquers the Shiva Bow weds Sitadevi !" Qualified princes came from all over the world. Many were awed by the mighty bow and, touching it with rever-

ence, just turned away and did not compete.

Sage Vishwamitra arrived, along with his disciples Rama and Lakshmana. The princes, sons of King Dasharatha, had conquered many demons. King Janaka felt glad at their arrival.

Rama easily lifted the bow, and actually broke it. This proved his strength, so Sita and Rama were married, and went to live in Ayodhya.

After some time, Rama was banished to the forest by his father, although it was his stepmother who actually asked for Rama to be banished. Sita and Laksmana went with Rama for fourteen years to the forest. During this time, they went from forest to forest, meeting sages, meditating, and also killing demons who were harassing the sages in the forests.

It was not easy for Sitadevi to live in the forest because she had been living in palaces with every comfort possible. She did this because she wanted to serve Lord Rama. That made her forget the troubles.

Ravan, the many headed demon, stole Sitadevi away and tried to make her his wife. Sitadevi and Lord Rama missed each other so much. Rama arranged a huge battle to win Sita back, and finally they were re-united.

After they returned to Ayodya, Sitadevi had two sons, named Kush and Lava. They were twins. Sitadevi again lived in the forest with her sons. The great sage Valmiki Muni took care of her sons and trained them to sing the Ramayana.



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Show the children pictures of Sitadevi's life. Help them recount her story by choosing the most appropriate pictures and putting them in sequence. Encourage them to discuss their choices.

Discuss with students the meaning of "respect".

Discuss how Sitadevi was respected and also disrespected in her life.

What kind of respect do we need for those we live with, learn with and play with?

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Before reading story: Show pictures of Sitadevi's life. Ask them to tell her story by choosing the most appropriate pictures and putting them in sequence. Encourage them to discuss their choices.

Discuss with students the meaning of respecting others that are brought up in the story of Sitadevi's life. Include the qualities Sitadevi had that were respectable, her position in society as the wife of the queen, and the daughter of a King. Include her status as the wife of the Supreme Lord, Rama.

What were the consequences when Ravan and Suparnaka did not respect Sitadevi?

How can we show respect to others in our class and school?

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Discussion about the limitations of information obtained by stories and pictures—thoughts about mass media.

Dressing up as Sita, Rama, Laksman, Hanuman etc.

Look at British monarchy

Link the story with learning about refugees—

Notes:



Objectives:

- Tell main facts from the story of Hanuman's birth and achievements
- List services we can do for Rama

You will need:

- Masks for use during narration of story

Story:

My name is Hanuman, and I am a monkey warrior in the army of King Sugriva. I am very strong and my king trusted me to find Sitadevi, who was kidnapped by the demon Ravana. Lord Rama showed he trusted me by giving me His ring to take to Sita. That made me feel like I could do anything. I bowed to Rama and prayed for His blessings. Then I left with many other monkeys to find Sitadevi.

We went far to the South of India. We were attacked by hunger and thirst, and then by a big demon. Thanks to his great ability, Angada killed a demon that looked like a hill, and he protected all of us. We also met a lady sage who gave us food and water and encouraged us to keep up our search for Sitadevi. That mystic sage had powers that she used in the service of Lord Rama.

Next a huge vulture walked out of a cave nearby. Angada said, "This bird reminds me of Jatayu, the vulture that tried to stop Ravan." It was Sampati, the older brother of Jatayu.

The monkeys stared at the bird because he had no wings, and he looked very old. Angada said, "Jatayu was very brave. He tried to stop Ravan from kidnapping Sita. Ravan sadly killed Jatayu. Rama and Laksmana did his funeral rites, because they loved him like part of the family".

"You will find Ravan and the beautiful Sitadevi in Lanka, not far from this sea shore", the bird said. Large wings began to sprout on his shoulders. "A sage told me new wings would grow when I told the monkeys where to find Ravana."

He said, as he flew off, "You will be successful. The servants of Lord Rama can cross the ocean of birth and death, so a

small sea like this will be no problem."

We tried to find out who was the strongest warrior. He had to jump all the way across the sea. Jambavan asked me, "Why don't you volunteer, Hanuman? You are so gifted."

I knew I was strong, and Sugriva and Lord Rama trusted me, but I didn't know my true powers. I didn't think I could jump 800 miles.

Jambavan said, "You were born the son of Vayu and Janani. In childhood you wanted to grab the sun, thinking that it was fruit. You just flew in the sky towards it. Indra stopped you by using his weapon, hitting you in the jaw. You fell down like you were dead. Your father was so upset, he stopped blowing wind and then the whole universe almost stopped because no one could breathe. Indra and the other demigods gave back your life, plus powers.

However, when you were small you tried to impress the sages and it worked against you. You went around the asramas throwing around the sages' belongings. Finally they decided to curse you to forget your powers. Because you had Lord Rama's service to do, they let you forget only until someone retold your childhood story."

"Thank you Jambavan. I had lots of power but I wasn't responsible. Now I am grown up and I can use those powers in the service of Sri Rama. I shall jump across this mighty ocean," I roared.

I began to use the superpowers. I expanded my body fifty times normal height, then loudly shouted, "I will make the jump to Lanka in one bound."

I stood on the huge Mount Mahendra, not far from the ocean. I roared again and called out, "Victory to Rama," and jumped into the sky as the demigods showered flowers on me. The monkey warriors watched from far below as I flew towards Lanka.

Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Ask the children to remember from the story:

- Who was Hanuman's father?
- How did Hanuman upset the sages?
- What powers did he have?
- Have you ever forgotten something important?
- What did Hanuman try hard to do for Lord Rama?
- Others in the story were serving Lord Rama, what were their names?

Name some of those abilities that you could serve Lord Rama with, like Hanuman did. What kind of abilities do you have?

Draw a picture of Hanuman

Discuss why Hanuman was trusted by Sugriva and Rama

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Read and discuss meaning/feeling:

Dear Hanuman,

You have given yourself to the Lord, and you have His highest mercy. You have given your life to thinking of His glories. You always make more bliss for the Lord's devotees. You are the best of saints, greater even than others like Garuda. (adapted from Srimad Brhadbhagavatamrta) Please help us gain some mercy from Lord Rama by offering Him our skills and abilities just like you have shown us.

Children identify skills and abilities that they could offer in service to Rama, like Hanuman did

Discuss memory and where it comes from

List the other devotees/servants and their services from the story

Write (get teacher to write) a prayer to Hanuman

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Measurement—how far can children jump

Memory games

Hanuman DVD

Notes:



Objectives:

- Retell the Appearance story of Lord Nrsimhadeva
- Discuss the way Prahlad was treated
- Discuss faith without seeing God

You will need:

- PowerPoint of Nrsimhadeva
- Pop-up card template

Story:

Once there lived a king of the demons called Hiranyakasipu. Hiranyakasipu was cruel to the sages and the demigods. He wanted to get back at Lord Visnu for killing his brother, Hiranyaksha, so he did some very difficult exercises to gain mystic power. While Hiranyakasipu was doing this difficult yoga, breathing and controlling his mind, a kind of fire began blazing from his head, upsetting the entire universe. It effected everyone, including the birds, beasts and demigods. The demigods prayed to Lord Brahma that the heat be stopped. They told Brahma that Hiranyakashipu wanted to become immortal.

While Hiranyakashipu was doing this austerity, his wife was in the asrama of Narada Muni hearing teachings about the Lord. There was a baby growing inside her womb, who was Prahlad, the great devotee. While in the womb Prahlad could understand what Narada was saying and he always remembered this knowledge.

When Hiranyakashipu finished his austerity, Lord Brahma told him that he could not give him the power he wanted. Hiranyakasipu tried to ask for blessings that would make him as good as immortal. Hiranyakashipu asked that he not meet death in any of the following ways: by any living entity created by Lord Brahma, inside or outside, during the daytime or at night, on the ground or in the sky, by any weapon, human being, or any animal, by anything living or nonliving.

Hiranyakashipu made the universe a horrible place to live for the demigods, the cows, the brahmanas and the saintly persons. Lord Vishnu was kind enough to tell Lord Brahma that soon this demon would be stopped, especially when he started to abuse the small but very saintly devotee, Prahlad.

Hiranyakashipu told his servants to torment Prahlad. They hit Prahlada with sharp weapons, threw him under the feet of elephants, threw him from the top of a mountain and tried to kill him in thousands of other ways, but they did not succeed. Prahlada stayed faithful to the Lord throughout the terror he experienced. Hiranyakashipu therefore became more and more afraid of his son Prahlada and arrested him. The teachers in charge of Prahlada tried teaching him

many materialistic things, but Prahlad did not accept their instructions. While the teachers were away from the classroom, Prahlada began to preach about Krishna in the school, and by his devotion all his class friends, the sons of the demons, became devotees too.

Prahlad's teachers became afraid that the students would become more and more devoted to the Lord so they informed Hiranyakashipu about Prahlada's preaching. Hiranyakashipu decided to kill his son himself. Prahlada tried to help his father.

Prahlada said, "My dear father, please give up your demoniac ways of thinking. Do not choose between enemies and friends; make your mind equal toward everyone. Except for the uncontrolled and misguided mind, there is no enemy within this world. When you can see everyone equally then you can worship the Lord perfectly."

Hiranyakashipu said, "You rascal, you are trying to make my value nothing, as if you were better than me. This is over-intelligent. I know now that you want to die at my hands, for this kind of nonsensical talk is only used by those about to die. WHERE IS YOUR GOD?" Prahlada said that the Lord is everywhere.

Hiranyakasipu yelled, "Is he in this pillar?"

Prahlada said, "Yes, he's everywhere." Hiranyakashipu struck the pillar with his fists not believing Prahlada; however Lord Nrsimhadeva, half-man and half-lion incarnation of the Supreme Lord, appeared with a roar!

A great fight took place and Lord Nrsimhadeva killed Hiranyakashipu with his nails. Lord Nrsimhadeva killed Hiranyakashipu by keeping the boons Hiranyakashipu had received from Lord Brahma. Hiranyakashipu was killed by Lord Nrsimhadeva who is not a created being, was killed in the doorway, at dusk, Hiranyakasipu on the lap of Lord Nrsimhadeva, by a half-man and half-lion, and by the nails of the Lord.



Ideas for Learning activities**Foundation:**

Ask students if they have ever been scared and asked for help. Discuss how they get help when they feel afraid.

Discuss how Prahlad got help when he was in danger.

Look at the PowerPoint and discuss the power of the Lord and Prahlad's faith when he was in difficulty.

Discuss children being hurt by adults and how they can get help practically and from the Lord.

* Make a card for Lord Nrsimhadeva (this will take longer than one CW class and can be done over several days)

Ideas for learning activities**Key Stage One:**

Show the PowerPoint and ask the children to tell you the story as you show the slides.

Discuss how Prahlad got help when he was scared. Ask children for practical steps to getting help if they meet someone who wants to hurt them, or take them away from a safe place or if they see a person hurting a child.

Discuss:

- How did Prahlad find out about God
- Did he see God
- How did he get close to Vishnu- How did Vishnu protect Prahlad
- How can we have faith in the Lord like Prahlad

Discuss in small groups how Krishna is with us always even though we cannot see Him

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

- Make Pop-up card
- Children make PowerPoints about child protection (KS1)
- Enact drama of Lord Nrsimhadeva's appearance
- Write poems about Nrsimhadeva's protection of Prahlad
- Faith in God and faith in other things like man-made objects

Notes:

Objectives:

- Retell simple story of Ganga devi
- List some benefits of holy rivers
- Share realisations about the wonder of nature and how we can preserve holy rivers

You will need:

- Gangadevi DVD
- Gangadevi pictures

Story:

There was once a wise king called Sagara. He had 60,000 brave and strong sons. King Sagara was the greatest king on earth and the emperor of the world. He began one-hundred great sacrifices. The Vedas said that anyone who performed one-hundred sacrifices would also become the king of heaven. King Sagara had completed ninety-nine sacrifices, leaving only one more.

At the beginning of this final sacrifice, he chose the finest horse in his kingdom. He set it free to wander over the world for a year. When the horse roamed into another kingdom, the king there had two choices. Either he could accept Sagara as his emperor, or he could capture the horse and, riding upon it, declare war against Sagara.

Something happened that spoiled the emperor's plans. Indra, the king of heaven, was jealous of Sagara. He was worried that the king might take over his position. Indra stole and hid the horse just as it was galloping away.

King Sagara heard that the horse had been stolen and asked his 60,000 sons for help. They were devoted to their father, and travelled all over the world, searching for the horse. Finally, they came to a holy man named Kapila. He was deep in meditation and the horse was nearby. The sons thought the sage was a thief, and they attacked him. Sagara's sons were burnt to ashes from fire within their own bodies! Later, one of Sagara's grandsons found the horse and took it back to his grandfather, who completed the one-hundredth sacrifice.

Many, many years later, Bhagiratha, one of the great grandchildren of King Sagara, became king. He heard the story of his ancestors, and became very unhappy. King Bhagiratha worried that after their violent deaths, his ancestors had not reached heaven. He went to see Sage Kapila, and asked his advice. The sage told him that the waters of the River Ganga could purify his ancestors so his ancestors could go to heaven.

He explained why the water of the Ganga were so special. A long time ago, Lord Vishnu crossed the whole universe by taking only three steps. When he took the last step, his toe touched the wall of the universe, and cracked it. Water leaked in, and it became the water of the River Ganga, which flowed in heaven. Because the water had touched Vishnu's foot, it was holy.

Bhagiratha followed Sage Kapila's advice, and prayed for the River Ganga to come down from heaven. Lord Vishnu heard the prayers and asked Ganga, the river goddess, to descend to earth. But it was clear that the river was so ferocious that she might damage or even destroy the earth.

Bhagiratha feared such a disaster and prayed again. Lord Siva heard his prayers and held out his matted hair to catch the river as she fell. In this way, he softened her descent to earth. Shiva is still shown with the holy river entering his hair.

Then King Bhagiratha led the river across India. Ganga divided herself into a hundred streams. One of these streams washed the ashes of the dead princes, and their souls went to heaven.



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Ask children to recount the story of Ganga's descent in their own words

Show pictures/DVD of Gangadevi and ask the children what feelings they have when looking at the pictures

Discuss the benefits of holy rivers like Gangadevi

Ask children how the holy rivers can be kept pure and unpolluted?

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Discuss the spiritual importance of holy rivers

Explore the everyday use of rivers in India

Contrast with use of rivers in industrialized countries

Show pictures/DVD of Ganga being used for various purposes and discuss what is happening and the possible feelings of the people in the photos

Discuss the ways rivers could be protected from pollution

Learn verse for calling the Ganga into any water:

gange ca yamuna caiva, godavari saraswati, narmade sindu kaveri, jale smin na kadim kuru.

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Linking Ganga with environmental preservation- glacial melting in Himalayas

Mapping of sacred lakes

Study of water, exceptional qualities of Gangajal

Notes:



Objectives:

- Tell something about Bhaktivinoda's life
- Sing one of the Thakura's songs
- Discuss the mood of his song

You will need:

Picture of Bhaktivinoda
Songs on OHT
Abhay Caran video segments about Bhaktivinoda

Story:

Bhaktivinoda Thakura was born in Bengal, India in 1838. He left the world in 1914. He was a very good writer in Bengali, English, Urdu, and Persian. His mother did not train him to worship Krishna. As he grew up, he studied all kinds of ways to worship God and all kinds of philosophies, or ways to understand life and the world. He decided that Lord Caitanya had taught the most pure way to worship and love God, Lord Krishna.

Bhaktivinoda had ten children who were all great devotees of Krishna. One of his children was Srila Prabhupada's guru, Bhaktisiddhanta. Bhaktivinoda was a schoolteacher for a while. Later he was a court judge. He lived in Jagannatha Puri for a long time. When he lived in Puri, he worked hard to get the big temple there to offer food 54 times a day to Lord Jagannatha.

Bhaktivinoda would wake up in the middle of the night. He would chant the Hare Krishna mantra on japa beads and write books. He wrote over 100 books. One of his books was sent to a college in Canada. He wrote a lot of beautiful poems. In his poems he shows the deep and sweet feelings of a devotee of Krishna. We can learn his poems and sing them for Krishna. Then we can understand a little about the feelings of a devotee of Krishna like Bhaktivinoda.

When Bhaktivinoda lived, there were people who pretended to be God. Or they pretended to be great devotees.

They would take people's money and make trouble. Bhaktivinoda stopped many of these cheaters. He had a lot of courage.

When Bhaktivinoda went to Navadvipa, people showed him Lord Caitanya's birthplace. But he thought it was not the right place. Bhaktivinoda studied old maps. He took his siksa guru, Jagannatha dasa Babaji, to see what he thought was the real place. Even though Jagannatha dasa Babaji was very old and couldn't walk, when he came to the real place, he started to dance! So Bhaktivinoda found Lord Caitanya's real birthplace. We can go there and visit the wonderful temple.

Bhaktivinoda loved to read about Krishna and His pastimes. He read Caitanya Caritamrita over and over again. He also loved to chant Hare Krishna on his beads and to worship the Deity of Krishna. At the very end of his life he lived alone and served Krishna. He showed people how to have a happy family life and an important job while being a devotee of Krishna.

jaya rādhā-mādhava kuñja-bihārī
gopī-jana-vallabha giri-vara-dhārī
jaśodā-nandana, braja-jana-rañjana,
jāmuna-tīra-vana-cārī

jaya—all glories to: rādhā-mādhava—Rādhā and the Lord of sweetness; kuñja-bihārī—He who enjoys loving pastimes in the groves of Vṛndāvana; gopī-jana-vallabha—the lover of the cowherd maidens of Vraja; giri-vara-dhārī—the holder of Govardhana hill; jaśodā-nandana—the son of mother Yaśodā; braja-jana-rañjana—the delighter of the inhabitants of Vraja; yāmuna-tīra-vana-cārī—who wanders in the forests along the banks of the river Yamunā

Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Discuss how Bhaktivinoda's life is the same and different from our lives

Learn a short song of Bhaktivinoda, such as Jaya Radha Madhava, or a line or two of a longer song

Learn some parts of his songs, such as Suddha Bhakata, or Bhaga Arotik, in English

Explore the definition of emotions or feelings and list some common emotions

Discuss what is the same and what is different about material and spiritual emotions

Explore what feelings are in Bhaktivinoda's songs

Discuss our feelings about Krishna

Offer flowers to a picture of Bhaktivinoda

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Children discuss in groups about Bhaktivinoda's life; some share their favorite parts with the class

Learn one of Bhaktivinoda's songs

- Jaya Radha Madhava
- Suddha Bhakata
- Bhoga Arotik

Learn the song's meaning (all or part)

Draw pictures to illustrate the song

Discuss how to enter the mood of the song

Discuss how devotees feel spiritual emotions when serving Krishna

Write a song or poem for Krishna in a similar mood (younger children dictate to teacher or older child)

Offer flowers to a picture of Bhaktivinoda

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Maps of Mayapur, Navadvipa, Bengal, & Orissa

Duties of a judge and function of judicial system

Writing poetry and songs

Bengali vocabulary

Notes:



Theme: Cooperation & Working Together Festival: Jagannath Rathayatra 1

Objectives:

- Plan service for Lord Jagannath
- Consider the idea of teamwork
- Reflect on experiences and knowledge of Rathayatra

You will need:

- Paper and crayons for drawing.

Story:

It was my turn to do some service. The cart was sitting in the park, ready with flags and dangling decorations. The devotees were at the temple making all sorts of food. My mother and I had the service to decorate the altar for Lord Jagannath.

The devotees had brought the cart to the park late the night before. There was not much traffic near the park. There were few people in the park. I thought the flowers were all showing their pretty faces waiting for Lord Jagannath to come. The birds were calling out, "Today Lord Jagannath will be here; please come too."

Mama and I took the long strings of garlands out of the black plastic bags. There seemed to be hundreds of them, but when I counted there were only fifty-five. We planned how to put them on the place where Jagannath, Baladeva and Lady Subhadra would sit. It was exciting because we only had two hours before the parade began. The Lord was going to come in a big car, and then He would see the beautiful garlands that smelled so sweet. He would also see the flowers in the park, and hear the birds telling everyone He was coming.

The garlands were heavy even though they were only made of flowers, and we used a ladder to climb up to the top of the cart. My mother went first and took a basket of flowers with her. It looked dangerous from where I was below. She made it up the ladder. Then it was my turn. I climbed up and up, and then finally I was standing on the cart and could see the whole park and the houses around. I could see a man walking his dog, and children playing far away on the swings. I waved to them and they waved back.

We took the garlands from the basket

and began putting the flower garlands around. Mama went down the ladder again to bring more flowers. I watched the children on the swings, and waved again. When my mother climbed back up, we put more garlands around the altar.

"Now we are finished here; let's decorate the place where Prabhupada will sit," Mama said.

My mother climbed down first, and then I got on the ladder. As I was on the last step I missed it. "Ouch!" I twisted my foot.

"What happened?" Mama rushed over to see.

"My foot hurts." I tried not to cry even though big tears were coming into my eyes.

When I looked up behind my mother, the girls who had been on the swings were standing right at the bottom of the cart. They stood looking at us and the big cart.

My mother said, "Hello girls, would you like to help us?" She explained that we were in a hurry, and now I had hurt my foot. She went to her bag and got out some medicine for my foot. "My name is Ananda, and this is my daughter, Sita. What are your names?"

"This is Heather, and I am Nat," said the taller girl.

I want to help, Nat," said Heather, and Nat gave the biggest smile I have ever seen.

My mother gave Nat and Heather some strings of garlands, and they helped her decorate the cart. I sat and handed them pins to make it easier, so everything was finished in time for the beginning of the Rathayatra parade.

The good thing about hurting my foot, besides Nat and Heather helping with our service, was that I got to ride on the cart. That meant I threw sweets to the people watching on the side of the streets.



Theme: Cooperation & Working Together Festival:Jagannatharathayatra 1

Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Discuss teamwork and how the devotees work together for a festival

Discuss what kind of services were mentioned in the story to serve Lord Jagannath(include the flowers and birds)

List ways the children would like to celebrate Rathayatra

Children can draw a flower to offer on the chariot of Lord Jagannatha

Discuss with children how to help each other to get things done in the classroom, especially when someone gets hurt or sick.

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Ask pupils to draw a picture to go along with the story

Discuss how their class work together to get things done. For example, sometimes one of the students gets sick or hurt and others help them finish their work.

What were the devotees doing back at the temple in the story? Discuss about all the preparations for a big festival and the teamwork necessary

Discuss about their experiences of Rathayatra and what happens.

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Make a Rathayatra cart

Make simple Jagannath, Baladeva and Subhadra dolls

Learn to make garlands from real or imitation flowers

Learn prayers to Lord Jagannath

Notes:



Theme: Cooperation and Working Together Festival: Jagannatharathayatra

Objectives:

- List main features of a Rathayatra
- Name the Deities on Rathayatra parade
- Explain where Jagannath resides in India

You will need:

- Map of India with Jagannath Puri.
- Pictures of Jagannath Puri's Rathayatra

Story:

For thousands of years Lord Jagannath has been worshipped in a very holy place called Jagannath Puri, on the east coast of India. The story of His appearance is a long story—we will hear just a summary.

Once three blocks of wood were found in the ocean at Jagannath Puri, as told to a devotee. A good devotee carried them with the help of his friends. They were carved by a person who came from heaven.

The king who ruled then was called Indradyumna. He was told not to interrupt the carving until the Deity maker was finished. The king was very anxious to see the Lord, and when for a long time he did not hear any work being done on the Lord's Deity form, he opened the door to see what was happening. The carver left the place forever. The king was very unhappy as he felt he had stopped the Lord from appearing perfectly carved. That night he had a dream and Lord Krishna told him that everything was going according to plan and that He wanted to appear in this unusual way.

An artist came and painted the Deities with large eyes and symbols on Their hands. When the Deities were finished They looked very unusual.

Their faces had wide open eyes, and huge smiling mouths. Lord Jagannatha and Baladeva had no hands or feet but arms that stiffly shot out of their bodies at the shoulder. Lady Subhadra had no arms and feet at all. This was a special form—a secret form of the Lord that is not known to many people.

Lord Jagannatha means Lord of the Universe and once a year He has a great outing where He is merciful to all who take part. It is called the Rathayatra Festival. He is called the most merciful Lord because He goes out from the temple to the people and helps them become attracted to Him.

Some people ask questions about Lord Jagannatha, and the chanting and dancing. Some people join in the parade by pulling the ropes of the Deities carts. Some people are happy to receive prasadam distributed by the devotees on the parade. There are many ways people can be attracted to Lord Jagannatha during this festival.

The festival of Rathayatra has been going on for a very long time in India, but only since Srila Prabhupada came to the West was there such a festival of Lord Jagannatha's mercy outside of India.



Theme: Cooperation and Working Together Festival: Jagannatharathayatra

Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Ask children to list the various aspects of a Rathayatra festival from the information, and discuss if they have seen a festival before

Name the Deities who were carved in the story. How do they travel during the Rathayatra parade?

Look at a map of India and show pupils where Jagannath Puri is

Discuss about traveling to Puri for the Rathayatra and how many people might travel to it

Show pupils photographs of Jagannath Puri and discuss thoughts and feelings

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Have pupils retell the way Lord Jagannatha became in His special form carved from wood

Show images of Deities from Jagannath Puri and ask children to recall the names of the Deities.

Children write (or draw or dictate to a writer) how they would organize a Rathayatra for school

Ask students if they have been to a Rathayatra Festival, and if so, what was their favourite part of the program

Discuss, if possible from children's experience, how people work together to make the event a success

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Conduct a Rathayatra festival in the school

Use geometry to understand how to draw Lord Jagannatha's eyes and mouth.

Make a simple sweet and offer to Lord Jagannatha

Notes:



Objectives:

- Discuss respecting spiritual authorities
- List words connected to Vyasadeva
- Sing verses from Sri Guru Vandana

You will need:

- Recording of Sri Guru Vandana
- Image of Vyasasana

Story:

An ancient sage called Vyasadeva was born on this day of the full moon. He is known as the guru or teacher of all ancient Vedic culture and is traditionally worshipped on this full moon day. He was the one who gathered all the knowledge of the Vedas together and is also called Mahamuni. Maha means great, and muni means a poetic thinker.

Whoever is repeating the words of the great Vyasadeva is his follower. That means they can be respected in the same way as he is. A *vyasasana* is named after Vyasadeva. A *vyasasana* is the seat a speaker sits on that is raised from the ground, and is also known as a *dais*. The word *Vyasapuja* which means "worship of Vyasa" and is used for the spiritual master's birthday celebration, is also coming from this saint Vyasadeva. Therefore people who have a guru will worship him on this day.

To worship the guru we offer different items. A disciple can offer the guru *arati*, bathing of the master's feet, a garland, some delicious food and drinks, and a pleasing sitting place. On this day disciples usually fast at least for half the day. The disciples will say some sweet

words to glorify or praise the guru and say how much the guru has helped in their life. Mantras and kirtans are used to celebrate and respect the guru.

We need a guru to understand about spiritual life. It is hard to understand anything without someone to help us. Usually we have teachers to help us learn about so many things. Spiritual things are very hard to learn without a guru, because we can just hear and see material things. So, when a guru helps us, we feel very thankful and respectful.

*sri-guru-carana-padma, kevala-bhakati-sadma,
bando mui savadhana mate
jahara prasade bhaji, e bhava toriya jai,
krsna-prapti hoy jaha ha'te*
(2)

*guru-mukha-padma-vakya, cittete koriya aikya,
ar na koriho mane asa
sri-guru-carane-rati, ei se uttama-gati,
je prasade pure sarva asa*
(3)

*cakhu-dan dilo jei, janme janme prabhu sei
divya-jnan hrde prokasito
prema-bhakti jaha hoite, avidya vinasa jate,
vede gay jahara carito*
(4)

*sri-guru karuna-sindhu, adhama janara bandhu
lokanath lokera jivana
(srila prabhupada lokera jivana!)*
*ha ha prabhu kora doya, deho more pada chaya
ebe jasa ghusuk tribhuvana*

Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Discuss how Vyasadeva was being a spiritual teacher

What were the items mentioned that used Vyasa's name in them to explain something to do with the spiritual master? Discuss

Teach pupils a verse from the bhajan, Sir Guru Vandana using a recorded version or instruments

Draw a picture of a Vyasasana

Children offer pushpanjali to a photo or murti of Srila Prabhupada

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Why was Vyasadeva considered so special? What did he do?
How was he helpful to others?

Discuss how and why one shows respect for a guru or teacher on Vyasapuja?

Write down some reasons you would thank your spiritual teacher on the Guru Purnima

Teach pupils a verse from the bhajan using a recorded version or instruments as is available

Recall and discuss some of the words connected to Vyasadeva's name in the story

Children offer pushpanjali to a photo or murti of Srila Prabhupada

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Discuss the names of the different parts of the Vedas

Write poetry about the spiritual teacher

The moon and its phases

Learning to offer arati and pushpanjali

Notes:



Objectives:

- Demonstrate the proper etiquette to swing Krishna
- Bond with other pupils to swing Krishna
- Share how we feel to be part of Krishna's family

You will need:

- A swing/materials to make one
- Deities/images of Radha & Krishna
- Flowers/decorating material
- Plans for swing

Story:

It is the monsoon season in Vrindavana. The air is very hot and full of water. The humid air makes everything feel hotter. Sometimes rain comes so fast and so hard that the streets quickly fill with water up to everyone's knees. The waters of Radha Kunda and Shyama Kunda may get so high that they are like one big pond. Water might even completely cover the walkway between them. Yamuna flows high and fast. Everything is green and growing all around.

What everyone in Vrindavana likes in the monsoon is a cooling breeze. When we swing we make our own breeze and feel very happy. Devotees want Krishna and Radharani to feel happy in the monsoon. So they build them many beautiful swings. There are swings where Krishna can look at Radha, and Radha can look at Krishna. There are swings where Radha and Krishna can sit next to each other. And there are swings with many other swings around them. Krishna sits on each of the swings at the same time. Each of the different gopis sits next to Him. Each gopi thinks Krishna is only swinging with her! Krishna is so happy when He makes His devotees feel special.

While Krishna is swinging, other devotees fan Him so there is even more breeze. There are also devotees who are offering flowers and flower petals.

All the time Krishna is swinging back and forth, so many devotees are offering flowers. And, on the swings are very soft cushions. The cushions are made of soft, fuzzy cloth. Inside the cloth cushions are the softest flowers, without any stems. When Krishna sits on the cushions, they smell wonderful.

We serve the Deities so that we can have our mind in Vrindavana. Serving the Deities is how we practice so we can serve in the spiritual world. If we have pure love for Krishna, then when we swing the Deities we will see that it is exactly the same as already being in the spiritual world!

First we make a beautiful swing for Krishna. In Vrindavana the swing is often made of silver or even gold. Then the swing is decorated with lots of flowers. Strings of flowers are wound around the poles and are all around the seat. Then the Deities come to stand on the swing. Krishna is always having fun. He doesn't have to work. He and His friends are always playing.

All the devotees come together and sing for Krishna. Each person washes his or her hands and takes some flowers. Each devotee puts some flowers at Krishna's feet and then takes the rope to swing Him for while. Some devotees are fanning Him, too. We think about how to make Krishna happy. And then we find out that we have become very happy, too!



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Make paper swings, drawing or painting a picture of Radha & Krishna, and putting the picture on the swing

Make flowers out of paper and clay to decorate the swing—either a simple classroom one or the one in the temple

Learn and practice the procedure and etiquette for swinging the Lord

Discuss how we feel when we serve Krishna together in cooperation and how we feel when we do some service by ourselves

Discuss how we like to play on swings and how Krishna is always playing

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Build a swing

Create decorations (paper, clay)

Decorate the swing

Learn songs about Radha and Krishna in Vrindavana (such as Jaya Radha Madhava)

Discuss the pleasure of working together to serve Krishna

Discuss how Krishna's activities are all playful pastimes and that God doesn't need to work like we do in the world

- Compare and contrast play and work
- Explore when work feels like play
- Discuss how to take pleasure in work
- Discuss when work is devotional service

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Physics of how swings work

Monsoon season

Rain and floods

Measurement

Notes:



Theme: Family Festival: Raksha Bandhana (Hindu, not Gaudiya)

Objectives:

- Describe how Lakshmi tied the first Raksha
- Compare family customs from different cultures

You will need:

- Red string or Rakhis to tie
- Card stock

Story:

Raksha means 'protection' and Bandhan means 'a bond'. In North India, on this day, an amulet, made of silk threads, known as a Raksha or Rakhi, is tied round the wrist of brothers by the sisters as a protection from evil during the coming year. A mantra is recited when the Rakhi or the thread is tied. The silken thread is empowered with the mantra, as follows:

Yena baddho balee raajaa
daanavendro mahaabalah;
Tena twaam anubadhnaami
rakshey maa chala maa chala

"I am tying on your hand this Raksha, with which the most powerful and generous King Bali himself was bound; O Raksha, don't go away; don't go away."

In the Mahabharata, Yudhisthira, the eldest of the five Pandava brothers, asked Krishna how it would be possible to guard himself against the bad things that might happen in the year ahead. Krishna said to perform the Raksha Bandhan ceremony. He also narrated an old story to show how potent the rakhi can be.

Bali Maharaja won Vishnu's heart when he surrendered fully to Lord Vamanadeva. Instead of trying to keep his kingdom, he offered everything to Vamana. The Lord promised to become His devotee's doorman. Lord Vishnu then had to leave Vaikuntha, and stay in Bali's kingdom in a place called Satal.

Lord Vishnu didn't return to

Vaikuntha, and we can imagine that His wife, Lakshmidivi, was not very happy about that. She went to find the Lord in Satal. She arrived on the full-moon day called Shraavan Purnima.

When Lakshmidivi got there, she accepted Bali as her brother by tying a rakhi on him. In return, Bali asked her to request a boon or a blessing. She asked, "Please allow my husband to return to Vaikuntha."

The Lord said, "My dear Lakshmidivi, how can I fulfil My promise to eternally protect Bali by guarding his door?"

Lord Brahma and Shiva came forward and agreed to guard Bali for four months each year, while Vishnu would guard him for the auspicious four months of the rainy season, called Chaturmas (four months).

Thus while the rakhi wards negative influences away from the wearer, the wearer also promises to be there for his sister in times of need. The brother gives the sister his blessings and promises to protect her. He also gives her a gift as a gesture of affection. All the family members share sweets and festive food in a spirit of affection and joy. The festival of Raksha Bandhan brings together young and old, in a common celebration of shared feeling.



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Ask children to retell the story of Lakshmi going to Satal

Children can make a card for their brother, sister, cousin who they will also tie rakhi or receive rakhi from

Use mantra/translation inside the card from Bhavishyapurana

Draw a picture of Lakshmi and Bali Maharaja and paste a red string on the wrist of Bali Maharaja.

Discuss the gift/boon Bali gave to Lakshmi. Discuss what kinds of gifts are appropriate for this celebration.

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Discuss with children about family customs and their importance

Ask children to retell the story of Lakshmi going to Satal in their own words, or in pictures

Children can use the Bhavishyapurana mantra to make a card for a sibling

Discuss importance of looking after family members and taking care of our duties in relation to them, like Vishnu returning to Vaikuntha to be with his wife.

Part of the exchange between the brothers and sisters is a promise that the brothers will protect their sisters. Discuss this.

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Planetary systems

Learn the Sanskrit mantra from Bhavishyapurana

Social & family customs

Families

Notes:



Objectives:

- Explain that Krishna is the Supreme Lord
- Describe the Lord's family
- Discuss "foster parents" and family

You will need:

- Pictures of baby Krishna with Nanda and/or Yasoda
- Pictures of Vasudeva carrying Krishna to Gokul

Story:

The kings ruling the Earth were cruel and mean. They wanted people to worship them instead of God. The demigods asked Lord Brahma to help. Lord Brahma prayed to Vishnu who said He would come and help the Earth.

King Kamsa was taking his sister, Devaki, and her new husband, Vasudeva, to their house. Then, a voice from the sky said Devaki's child would kill Kamsa! Kamsa was mad.

When Vasudeva brought Kamsa the first child, Kamsa killed the child. Kamsa was really a demon! Then Kamsa put Vasudeva and Devaki into prison. He killed all their children.

But Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. No one can kill Him. He was coming to the Earth to save His devotees and to kill demons like Kamsa.

When Krishna was in Devaki's womb, she looked very, very beautiful. Then Krishna was born. He was in His Vishnu form, with four hands. He had shining yellow clothes and jewels. His helmet was glowing and His hair was long and curly. Babies are usually born without any clothes and not much hair!

Vasudeva and Devaki knew that God had become their son. They

offered prayers and were scared that Kamsa would kill this child, too. They loved Krishna as their son so they forgot that He can't be killed.

Krishna told them to take Him across the Yamuna River. They should give Him to Nanda and Yasoda in Gokul and take Yasoda's daughter back to the jail. Vasudeva did what Krishna told him.

When Kamsa came, he found a baby girl. He tried to kill the girl, but she flew in the sky and showed that she was Durga.

Krishna grew up in Gokul with Nanda as His father and Yasoda as His mother. They are called foster parents. Foster parents take care of a child that is not theirs. But Nanda and Yasoda felt that Krishna really was their son. They loved Him so very much.

We should learn to love Krishna as much as His devotees like Vasudeva, Devaki, Nanda, and Yasoda. And, Krishna loves His devotees, too! After He grew up He went back to Vasudeva and Devaki. He killed the wicked Kamsa and got His parents out of jail. Krishna always loves His foster parents, Nanda and Yasoda and serves them for ever.



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Ask children to re-tell the story of Krishna's appearance

Ask children to name the most important people in the story

Ask children what is the same and what is different about Krishna's two sets of parents

Discuss how some people have foster or adoptive parents

Discuss different ways of being a family

Children act out Vasudeva bringing Krishna to Gokul

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Ask the children how we know that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and not an ordinary person

Discuss the meaning of "foster parents"

Discuss different kinds of family arrangements and family love

- What makes a family
- Can we be a family in different ways

Children act out the story of Krishna's appearance

Discuss that Krishna's family is our real, eternal family and that the families in this world are temporary, changing from life to life

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Dramas and songs

Decorating the temple

Doing some service for Janmastami at the temple

Coloring or painting pictures of Krishna and decorating them

Notes:



Objectives:

- Explain the nature of Krishna's appearance
- Plan ways to celebrate Janmastami

You will need:

- DVD of Krishna's appearance
- Pictures of karma & reincarnation

Story:

Many families celebrate Krishna's birthday of Janmastami. In India, even people who are not Hindus join the festivals. The word Janmastami means "birth on the eighth day," because Krishna appeared on the eighth day of the lunar, or moon, month.

But Krishna is not born like we are. We are born into the material world because of our karma. We are a soul who wants to try and enjoy the world separate from Krishna. When we want to enjoy the material world, we do things for ourselves. Work for our own happiness that is not for Krishna is called karma. If we do good karma, we get a nice body. If we do bad karma, we get a body that is not so nice. If the karma is good or bad, we have to take a material body in the world. Even a good body has so many problems.

Krishna does not take a body because of karma. He is not a soul inside of a body like we are in the world. His body is all spiritual. Krishna and His body are the same. We are different from our body. We change from one body to another. Krishna's body is always the same. Krishna also looks different when He is in different moods, but He is always the same person.

Krishna appears in the material world in His own body. The modes of nature—goodness, passion, and ignorance—cannot have anything to do with Him. He comes just because He wants to. So, even though Janmastami means

"birth," really Krishna is not born at all. And the wonderful things Krishna does in this world are all for His play. He does not have to work to get food or to learn things like we do. He already knows everything! When Krishna goes to school, He just has fun. He doesn't have to study.

So Krishna's birthday party is not like our birthday parties. When we have our birthday party, our body is getting older. We are in the world because of our karma. Our birthdays are special because it is very lucky to have a human body. Every day and year in a human body is like a present. The human body is the best body to come to love Krishna so we can join with His play instead of working hard in the world. So, we are very happy to have parties on our birthdays.

We can make Krishna's birthday party so much more special and fun. It is wonderful when we give Krishna birthday presents, and when we decorate His temple, when we cook special food for Him—we will feel more happy than with a thousand of our own birthday parties! That is because we are part of Krishna. When we work to make Him happy, we feel happy too! Just thinking about Krishna's appearance is wonderful, and celebrating it is even better.

In this world, Krishna's Janmastami happens once in a year. When we play with Krishna in the spiritual world, there will be a party every day.



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Ask the children to talk about their birthdays

Discuss how Krishna's birthday is the same and how it is different from ours

Discuss how Krishna's body and our body are alike and how they are different

Plan a Janmastami party for Krishna in the classroom or temple

Discuss karma and reaction, using simple everyday examples of how what we do has reactions

Watch DVD of Krishna's appearance

Prepare simple birthday decorations for Janmastami

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Discuss birthdays

- What is a birthday
- Why do we celebrate birthdays
- How do we celebrate birthdays
- How is Krishna's birthday different
- How do we celebrate Krishna's birthday

Plan some special service for Janmastami

Do some special service in small groups, for Janmastami

Discuss the difference between Krishna's body and our body

Discuss karma and reincarnation

Ask pupils to share what they have done on previous Janmastamis

Bring in someone from the temple who is helping organize the festival

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Calendar—months, years, anniversaries

Sanskrit vocabulary

Different ways birthdays are celebrated in various cultures

Notes:



Objectives:

- Show that sometimes two people can work together better than one
- Discuss that all our abilities come from Krishna
- Define or explain "obstacles"

You will need:

- Picture of *Ganesh*, (preferably writing) while *Vyasadeva* dictates
- Picture of *Ganesh* with *Krishna's* feet on his head

Story:

Ganesh is the son of Lord *Siva* and his wife, *Parvati*. He destroys all our problems in spiritual life. There is a wonderful story about how *Ganesh* wrote down the *Mahabharata*. The *Mahabharata* is the story of the *Pandavas*. The *Bhagavad-gita* is part of the *Mahabharata*.

Vyasadeva wanted *Ganesh* to write the great story he was about to tell, so *Ganesh* appeared immediately. But, *Ganesh* said he would only write the *Mahabharata* if *Vyasadeva* would speak it without stopping.

Then, *Vyasadeva* said that before *Ganesh* could write anything, he would have to understand everything *Vyasadeva* said. *Ganesh* had to understand every word, and every idea.

Ganesh used his broken tusk as a pen to write on leaves. While *Ganesh* was thinking about what *Vyasadeva* said, *Vyasadeva* thought about what he would say next. When *Ganesh* was ready to write again, *Vyasadeva* was ready to talk again.

From the *Brahma-samhita* (5.50):

yat-pāda-pallava-yugam vinidhāya kumbha-dvandve praṇāma-samaye sa gaṇādhirājaḥ vighnān vihartum alam asya jagat-trayasya govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi

I worship the Supreme Lord, *Govinda*. *Ganesha* holds *Govinda's* lotus feet on the little bumps on his head. That's how *Ganesha* gets his power for the job he has. His job is to destroy all the obstacles, or problems, for spiritual life.

yat—whose; pāda-pallava—lotus feet; yugam—two; vinidhāya—having held; kumbha-dvandve—upon the pair of tumuli; praṇāma-samaye—at the time of offering obeisances; saḥ—he; gaṇa-adhirājaḥ—*Gaṇeśa*; vighnān—obstacles; vihartum—to destroy; alam—capable; asya—of these; jagat-trayasya—three worlds; govindam—*Govinda*; ādi-puruṣam—the original person; tam—Him; aham—I; bhajāmi—worship



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Ask the children why Ganesh would keep Krishna's feet on his head
Discuss how Krishna gives us the ability to do everything we do

Set up a path with obstacles (such as putting chairs in an aisle)

- Have the children try to walk on the path without removing the obstacles
- Ask the children what an obstacle is
- Discuss how there can be obstacles to loving Krishna
- Discuss how great personalities help us get rid of our obstacles

Ask the children if they ever told someone else what they wanted to say and the other person wrote it down or drew it

Discuss the times when we ask people for help

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Children get into pairs and one at a time write down what the other says, then switch

Discuss:

- What was hard about that, and what was easy
- In what ways was that harder or easier than writing by yourself
- Why do you think some people might want someone else to write while they talk

Ask the children to explain what an obstacle is and discuss

Explain how there are obstacles on the spiritual path, and how great personalities and devotees help us overcome those obstacles.

Discuss our abilities and how everyone—even personalities such as Ganesh depend on Krishna

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Ways of writing and printing & History of printing

Dictating stories to each other

Science of how we understand

Learning the verse from Brahma samhita about Ganesh

Notes:



Objectives:

- Describe how Radharani cares for all devotees of Krishna
- Discuss the happiness in serving Krishna & caring for devotees

You will need:

- Pictures of Radharani to colour
- Songs and/or verses about Radharani

Story:

Radharani is the best devotee of Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Radharani has a very soft, tender heart. She is the perfect woman.

Sometimes it is hard to get mercy from Krishna. Krishna can be strict. But Radharani is always very kind to all devotees. So, if we ask Radharani to help us love Krishna, She will help us. She will go to Krishna and tell Him about us. Then Krishna will accept us.

So, instead of giving a flower to Krishna, we can give the flower to Radharani and ask her to give it to Krishna. "Oh!" She will say. "You have brought a flower for Krishna!" She will be very happy and then Krishna will accept our flower from her hand.

Because Radharani is so kind, we say her name first in the Hare Krishna maha-mantra. When we say "Hare Krishna," the Hare means a way of talking to Hara, which is another name for Radharani. We are asking, "Mother Hara, please give me service to Krishna." She cares so much about us that when we pray like that, She gives us some nice service to do.

When Radharani sings songs about Krishna, the stones melt and her friends stop moving. Everything becomes opposite! That's also what happens when Krishna plays His flute.

Sometimes Radharani and Krishna joke together. One morning, when Krishna came to Radha, Radha asked Him, "My dear Kesava, where is Your vasa at present?" The Sanskrit word vasa has three meanings: one meaning is residence, one meaning is nice smell, and another meaning is dress.

Actually Radharani inquired from Krishna, "Where is Your dress?" But Krishna took the meaning as residence, and He replied to Radharani, "My dear captivated one, at the present moment My residence is in Your beautiful eyes."

To this Radharani replied, "My dear cunning boy, I did not ask You about Your residence. I inquired about Your dress."

Krishna then took the meaning of vasa as nice smell and said, "My dear fortunate one, I have just decided to smell like this, so I will smell as wonderful as you do."



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Colour pictures of Radharani and decorate those pictures

Learn all or part of a song or verse about Radharani

Share experiences of how we serve each other and care for each other—with friends, with family, or at school

Make a necklace or garland for Radharani out of beads

Make paper flowers to give to Radharani

Make up or listen to funny jokes that play on words

Discuss how your mother cares for you and compare to Radharani

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Discuss with the children people they know who are very kind and describe what those people do and say that shows kindness

Ask the children to recall a time when they served others and cared about others. Discuss how that made them feel and compare those feelings to times when they were doing things just for themselves.

Learn a song or a verse about Radharani

Children, individually or in groups, make a plan to increase serving and caring during the week

Share experiences where we get to know someone through a friend

Explore from the story, how Radharani cares for all devotees

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Writing poems that use puns and plays on words

Preaching trip to a place such as old age home

Writing stories using tenderheartedness as the theme

Making food preparations to offer to Krishna as Radha does

Notes:



Objectives:

- Appreciate the greatness of God
- List the areas of the universe
- Discuss what real power is

You will need:

- Painting of Vamana's universal form
- Optional: any photos of sun, moon, stars, Earth, etc.

Story:

Bali Maharaja was a great king. He won a war with the devas and now he was king of heaven instead of Indra. Bali's guru, Sukra, had made Bali alive again after Bali died in the war. So, Bali was very thankful. He served his guru very carefully. He followed what his guru taught. Sukra helped Bali to do many sacrifices to stay in heaven.

But Indra and his mother, Aditi, were not happy. Aditi wanted her son to get heaven back. She prayed to Vishnu and drank only milk for her food. Vishnu came to her room. Aditi was so happy and offered dandavat obeisances. Lord Vishnu told her that He would become her son and get heaven back for His older brother, Indra.

Vishnu decided to look like a little boy brahmana. He was called Vamana. Lord Vamana went to the place where Sukra was helping Bali to have a sacrifice. When Vamana walked, He was full of light and very beautiful. Everyone wanted to look at Him. All the people helping Sukra, the brahmanas, thought, "Who is this little boy that is full of light?" Bali went to greet his guest, Vamana.

Bali offered Vamana land, riches, or anything he wanted. Bali was in charge of the universe so he thought he could give Vamana anything at all. He said that Vamana should ask him for something so wonderful that he would never need anything again. But, Bali really could not give a present like that. Only God can give us

something so wonderful that we never need anything else.

Vamana smiled. He loved Bali and wanted to help him be happy spiritually. He asked for three steps of land by His own feet. Bali said yes right away. Sukra was mad! He could tell that the little boy was really Vishnu. Sukra thought that Vamana might take heaven away from Bali. Then, Sukra wouldn't live in heaven, either. And, he was right!

Vamana made His form very big so it covered the whole universe. Really, everything is already always inside of Lord Vishnu's body. With one step, Vamana covered half the universe, and stepped over the other half with a second step. He covered the lower planets, the middle planets, and the higher planets. His toe went right through the outside cover of the universe. The Ganges River came through the hole and washed over Vamana's toe. Then the Ganges flowed in heaven.

Vamana asked Bali, "Where should I put my third step? You promised me three steps but I have taken everything with two. You have to keep your promise." Bali felt happy to give everything to Lord Vishnu. He put his head under Vamana's feet as the Lord's third step. With one, two, and three steps Vamana had taken the universe back to give to Indra. He had also taken His dear devotee Bali as His own.



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Discuss how amazing God is:

- He can look like a small boy, but cover the whole universe
- He asked His devotee for land, instead of just taking it
- He has a body that contains the universe

List the parts of the universe and ask children to repeat in unison:

- Upper, middle, lower planets
- Sun, moon, earth

Ask the children:

- Who was more powerful, Bali or Vamana?
- Who looked more powerful?
- What did Vamanadeva teach us about being happy with what we have?

Discuss being satisfied with what we have

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Look at photos or paintings of Vamana's universal form. Ask children to identify aspects of the creation

Ask the children to describe the moon, the sun, and the stars. Have them imagine all the universe inside of Vamana's body

Discuss (possibly in groups) about the way Vamana tricked Bali into giving Him the universe.

- What do they admire about Bali?
- What mistakes had Bali made?
- Why did Vamana ask for charity instead of just taking the universe?
- Who seemed powerful?
- Who was really powerful?

Discuss how we can develop real power

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)
 Learn dasavatara verse about Vamanadeva
 Study of solar system and universe
 Discussions about greed, charity, and surrender

Notes:



Objectives:

- Thank Krishna for our food
- Explain where food comes from
- Describe how Jews celebrate the harvest

You will need:

- Gita verses about food OHT
- Photos of a sukkah
- Fruits & vegetables
- Ingredients & recipe for simple food

Story:

There are people who worship God in a way called Judaism. They are called Jews, or Jewish people. A very, very long time ago Jews lived in a country named Egypt where they had to do hard work for the Egyptians there. They were slaves. Finally they got free from being slaves, and travelled through a desert to find their own country in Israel. They walked through the desert for forty years!

When they were in the desert they ate in wonderful ways. Usually, we get our food by planting seeds in the earth. After some time the seeds grow into plants that give us food as fruits or leaves or roots or nuts and seeds. When the food is ready to pick and eat, the time is called harvest. To harvest food we need Lord Krishna's kindness. It has to rain enough, but not too much. There has to be enough sunshine. The plants need to be protected from insects. The ground has to be healthy, or fertile. So, when people harvest food, they often thank God. This thanking of God is called a harvest festival.

We devotees of Krishna have our harvest festival at Govardhana Puja. Jews have a harvest festival called Sukkot. The special part of Sukkot is that Jews build an unusual room outside their house for all their meals. There's a rule that they have to be able to see the stars through their roof at night. They build the house like that to

remind them of when long ago Jews ate when they were travelling and had no proper homes. So then they thank God not just for the food, but for their house, too!

In the room, which is called a Sukkah (that means "shelter"), the walls and roof have hanging fruits and vegetables for decoration. There are apples, pomegranates, grapes, and corn. Leaves are on the roof and maybe the walls. Jewish families eat all their meals in the Sukkah for eight or nine days. Some families even sleep there! They make sure to invite lots of guests to eat meals in the Sukkah with them, too.

During Sukkot, families have ceremonies with special plants and fruit. The fruit is an etrog or citron. It is a lot like a lemon. The plants are the palm, myrtle, and willow. Together they are called a lulav, though really that is just another name for the palm. People celebrating Sukkot shake the lulav and citron in each of the four directions. Devotees of Krishna have a different way of offering the Lord plants and fruit. We cook them, put them on a plate in front of the Deity, and ask Him to eat. Then we eat the prasadam as Krishna's mercy. It's good for us to thank God for our food, and to remember that it is only by His kindness that we eat so many delicious and healthy things.



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Discuss what it means to be thankful

- Different ways to be thankful
- How we feel when we are thanked

Visit a Sukkah &/or bring in a rabbi to speak

Decorate the altar or the temple with fruits and vegetables and discuss where it comes from

Discuss travelling for long trips

- How people live in tents
- Sleeping so you see the stars
- How we eat while travelling

Discuss giving and sharing food

- Discuss how our parents always make sure we have good, healthy food
- How Krishna is like a loving parent
- How we can give food to hungry people and guests
- Prasadam and ordinary food

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Discuss what we think about before and while we eat

- Do we think about where our food comes from
- Are we grateful to Krishna

Discuss how food is produced, referencing the Bhagavad-gita (rain, sunlight, moonlight, earth fragrance)

Visit a Sukkah &/or bring in a rabbi to speak

Decorate the altar or the temple with fruits and vegetables

Spend time helping in a garden

Prepare simple food and offer it to Krishna

Compare and contrast Sukkot and Govardhana Puja (and other harvest festivals with which pupils are familiar)

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Growing seeds and plants

History of slavery

Nomads and their homes/temporary homes

Using traditional language (like Hebrew or Sanskrit) for religious ritual

Notes:



Objectives:

- Retell how Durga was created
- Identify the weapons she uses
- Recall a story about Durga's powers

You will need:

- Cards with Durga's weapons

Story:

The father of Mahishasura was Ramba, and after performing severe penance he was given the boon that he would have a son who could not be killed by the demigods, demons or humans. Agnideva was the one who gave the boon. Mahishasura was born from a fire, as his parents died.

The baby boy was brought up by Ramba's relatives, who trained him to be their king. Mahishasura, hungry for more power, worshipped Lord Brahma and performed severe penance. Brahma was pleased with Mahishasura and, appearing before him, granted him a blessing that no man could kill him.

After receiving this boon, Mahishasura began expanding his kingdom. He eventually entered heaven and conquered Indra. Thrown out from heaven, the devas pleaded for help from Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The three predominating deities decided to consult their wives - Saraswati, Lakshmi and Parvati.

Together, all six deities created a female Goddess called Durga who had the powers of Vishnu, Brahma, and Shiva and the combined beauty of Lakshmi, Sarasvati and Parvati.

The various deities bestowed upon her their own weapons. Vishnu gave her His disc, Varuna a conch and Agni a missile. Vayu, the wind god, gave her arrows, Indra, king of the gods gave her a thunder-bolt and his white-skinned elephant, Airavata, gave a bell. From Yama, god of death, Durga received a rod, and from the God of Waters she received a noose. Heaven's architect, Vishvakarma, gave her a shining axe and magic armour. Durga received many other precious and magical gifts: jewels, new clothing, and a garland of never-decaying lotuses. Haimavat, god of the mountains, gave her jewellery and a lion for her to ride into battle.

Durga met Mahishasura and laughed at him. They charged at each other in battle, which went on for a long time. Sometimes Mahishasura was hurt by Durga and at other times he escaped her great power by changing his form into a man, a huge elephant, a lion and back into his original form of a buffalo. At last, Durga pushed Mahishasura to the ground with her leg and then she speared him. Finally she beheaded the demon and also killed many of his soldiers.



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Ask students to recall the story of how Durga was created in their own words

Distribute cards of Durga's weapons to children. Ask them to find the person who has a matching card

Ask students to list the weapons Durga carries in her ten hands, and the animal she rides upon

Quiz the children on the story of the buffalo demon, Mahishasura

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Discuss the creating of Durga and how it was by the combined power of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva

Children play memory matching game with Durga's weapon cards

Draw Durga's weapons from memory

Discuss how Durga was empowered to do her service of killing the demon. Introduce idea that to become powerful we need assistance. Both the asura and Durga were empowered for different success by whom?

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

History lesson on weapons throughout the ages

Citizenship lesson on using power properly

Research on using animals in wars

Study of government and how leaders are empowered

Notes:



Objectives:

- List objects Laksmi holds
- Discuss good qualities and virtues
- Compare Laksmi to ordinary women
- List qualities & duties of mothers

You will need:

- Poster of Laksmidevi and discs of paper
- Pictures of Ocean of milk and churning pastime.

Story:

Laksmi devi was not an ordinary child. She was not born from a mother as a baby. She did not have a life like you or I.

Goddess Laksmi was 'born' from the ocean of milk. She is seen as the most beautiful goddess and either stands or sits in a lotus flower. She can be seen with two or four hands and holding different things in her hands. Sometimes she holds a lotus flower, or a coconut, a pot, fruit, a conch shell, or golden coins. Sometimes she positions her hands in 'mudras' to bless her worshipers.

But how did she come from the Ocean of Milk? One time the demigods and demons agreed to work together to gain the nectar of immortality (which if they drank they would not die). The demons and demigods pulled a rope attached to a churning rod (the Mandara Mountain) and Kurmadeva acted as the pivot below the mountain. Just like churning cream makes lumps of butter, the churning of the milk ocean made different products. Some of those products were; poison, a surabhi cow, a beautiful horse, a crescent moon, a conch shell, the Kaustubha Jewel, Varuni devi and then Laksmidevi.

When Laksmidevi came from the ocean of milk, the great sages and demigods worshiped her. They worshiped her because of her wealth, her good qualities, beauty, chastity and ability to

serve the Lord.

She was not an ordinary woman, and because of being born from the ocean was thought of as the daughter of the ocean, therefore was allowed to select her own husband in a svayamvara (all the men who are of similar background come to see if they qualify as a husband) ceremony.

In the ceremony there was not one man that she could think of as the right one for her. Her natural and eternal husband, Lord Vishnu was not present. Laksmi then asked Lord Vishnu to be her husband. He accepted her and promised to always be with her.

When the Lord comes in His different incarnations, like Rama or Nrsimhadeva, Krishna, and Lord Caitanya, Laksmidevi is always at the Lord's side.

Laksmidevi is also called Mother Laksmi. She is considered the mother of Lord Brahma who is the creator of the universe. Devotees look towards her to follow as a perfect example of how to surrender to the Lord. She is so great because she accepts any task to please the Lord like massaging His lotus feet, fanning Him, and offering wonderful food and sweet words to Him.

On Laksmi Puja people worship Goddess Laksmi with lamps and sweets. Vaisnavas remember how Laksmidevi likes to be next to Lord Vishnu so they always worship Laksmi Narayana, or Radha Krishna, or Sita Rama.



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Children list the objects Laksmi holds in her hands after seeing pictures and hearing story. Discuss reasons what these may represent and if any other incarnations/devas hold any of these.

Discuss why Laksmi is the mother of the universe and how we learn from our mothers things like how to behave and what is right and wrong. How can we learn from our mothers and the mother of the whole universe from story?

Ask children to identify differences between ordinary women and Goddess Laksmi.

Discuss how/why people might worship Goddess Laksmi.

Pupils choose a disc with a virtue and discuss how they can try to develop that quality.

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Children draw pictures of the objects in Laksmi's hands.

Discuss what the objects she holds may represent, and who else from the devas holds similar objects.

How is Mother Laksmi caring for all beings in the universe? She is showing how to be virtuous. Discuss the way mothers help children know what is good and bad behaviour.

Pupils write on small discs a virtue of Mother Laksmi and glue it onto poster. Children remember the virtues for the day.

Compare Mother Laksmi to ordinary women; qualities and behaviours.

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Production of money

Study of oceans

Physics—churning rod, how does it work?

Notes:



Objectives:

- Compare & contrast good & evil
- Discuss consequences for activities

You will need:

- Images of Dussehra

Story:

Dussehra (Dassera) is one of the main festivals, celebrated with much joy in India. The day marks the time that Lord Rama, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Lakshman approached mother Durga to ask her for her blessings. This shows how respectful they were to the demigods before they went to battle. Then Lord Rama triumphed over the demon king, Ravana. This pastime of good over evil is celebrated on Dussehra.

Brilliantly decorated paintings (showing the pastimes of Lord Rama) are carried on processions through the cities. Very large images or effigies of Ravana are placed in vast open spaces. Devotees dressed as Rama, Sita and Lakshman, arrive and shoot arrows of fire at these effigies, which are stuffed with explosives. The result is a deafening blast, made even louder by the shouts of happiness and triumph from the devotees watching.

Ravan had a lot of power. He had soldiers, ministers, many wives and powerful family members. He lived on a huge island that was filled with beauty and wealth. Ravan was also a very great devotee of Lord

Shiva. Many of his powers had been given to him because of his devotion to Shiva.

Even though Ravan had so much power and so many soldiers and rakshasa helping him, he did not win the battle with Rama. Rama only had an army of animals and his brother Laksman to help him. It did not seem like an even battle. Why do you think Rama and Laksmana, Hanuman and the others could defeat or beat Ravana?

When the battle was over, Sita-devi and Lord Rama were reunited and all the animal warriors were very happy.

On Dussehra night, people continue celebrating by exploding fireworks and bombs and noisily cheering the pastime of Rama defeating Ravana.



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Discuss the power of Ravana and the power of Rama. How was Rama victorious over Ravana?

Discuss other stories the children know that are good versus evil stories.

Discuss consequences of wrong action in connection to Ravana.

Show children the images of Dussehra, Pupils draw a picture of fireworks.

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Discuss how Rama killed Ravan and make a small skit from the story

Ask the children about Ravan's power and how he could not be victorious over Rama. What helps us to be successful?

Discuss the consequences of wrong action in connection to Ravana.

Show images from Dussehra. Children draw a picture to go with the story.

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Science: How fireworks are made

Science: Flammable and Inflammable materials

Art: make an effigy

Rules in society

Notes:



Objectives:

- Describe the relationship between our endeavour and mercy
- Demonstrate how to worship the Lord in Kartika

You will need:

- Damodarastaka prayers
- Pictures of Yasoda chasing & binding Krishna to colour
- Lamps &/or materials to make them

Story:

Krishna is God and has no work to do. He simply likes to play. And, some of His play is as a young child. He is the father and mother of everybody. But He likes to have devotees play as His mother and father. The great devotee Yasoda is always Krishna's mother.

Mother Yasoda would take the milk from her best cows and make it into yogurt. Then she would churn the yogurt cream into butter to make wonderful food for her son, Krishna. One time when Mother Yasoda was churning, baby Krishna wanted to drink her breast milk. There was also a pot of milk cooking on her stove. The milk started to think, "Krishna's belly has no end. Yasoda's milk has no end. When will I get a chance to feed Krishna, too?" The milk got so excited that it boiled over the top of the pan.

That milk was for Krishna and her breast milk was also for Krishna. She decided to put Krishna down and stop the milk on the stove from making a mess. Krishna got angry which is another way of His love, and never hurts anyone. Krishna picked up a rock and broke the churning pot. He ate a lot of butter which was full of Yasoda's love. Monkeys came to Krishna to get butter, too. Then, Krishna started to think that Yasoda would be upset. So, He started to run away and hide.

Krishna had made such a mess with the butter that it stuck to the bottom of His lotus feet. It was very

easy for Yasoda to follow where Krishna had gone. She started to chase Him, faster and faster. No one is faster than Krishna. Yasoda ran so fast that the flowers fell from her hair. She was feeling tired, so Krishna let her catch Him. She didn't want her child to be scared, so she threw down a stick she had been carrying.

Then Yasoda thought about what to do with her naughty child. In those days, parents kept the child in one place by tying a rope around their waist and then tying the other end to something heavy. So, Yasoda got a rope and tried to tie up Krishna. But, the rope wouldn't reach around Krishna.

She got more and more rope, but it was always two fingers too short. She borrowed rope from the neighbours. It seemed like she had tied together every rope in the village, but it was always short by two fingers. Finally Yasoda gave up. She had been mad at little Krishna. Now she started laughing. Then Krishna allowed her to tie Him up, and the same rope suddenly worked!

To know Krishna we need His blessings and mercy. We also have to try our best to know and love Him by chanting His Holy Names and serving Him. When He sees our strong desire to serve Him, He will be kind to us, just like He was for Yasoda.

Note: This pastime occurred on the same day as Diwali & is celebrated for an entire lunar month



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Offer lamps to a picture or Deity of Krishna in His Damodara form

Help to make lamps from cotton

Learn part of the Damodaraskataka

Discuss the meaning of the word "Damodara"

Discuss in small groups how much we can do ourselves and how much we need help from people who are stronger than we are

Discuss how Krishna had a waist belt of bells around His waist but Yasoda couldn't fit a rope around the same waist

Ask children to share how this pastime makes them feel about Krishna

Color a picture of this pastime

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Offer lamps to a picture or Deity of Krishna in His Damodara form

Make lamps (all or part of the process)

Learn part of the Damodarastaka and the meaning

Tell the story of Krishna pulling down the twin trees

Tell the story of Yasoda seeing the universe inside Krishna's belly
Discuss how Krishna has an unlimited form but can be bound by love

Discuss the relationship between doing our work as best we can and depending on the mercy of Krishna and devotees

Draw a picture of part of this pastime

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Measurement

Making butter, care of cows, visit to goshalla

How our parents help us to learn to behave

Controlling anger

Notes:



Objectives:

- List ways in which people come and go in life
- Describe how Krishna is always with us, even when we don't see Him

You will need:

- Ingredients for making Diwali lights
- Decorations/electric lights
- Photos of various types of New Years celebrations

Story:

Lord Ramachandra, who is an incarnation of Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was King of the whole world. But He had not been in His king's palace. He had not been in the capital city. He had not been around hardly any people at all!

Rama's stepmother, Kaikeyi, had asked Rama's father to send Rama to the forest for fourteen years. Fourteen years is a very long time. There are 365 days in a year. There are 52 weeks in a year. And Rama was gone for fourteen years.

While Rama was living in the forest, his brother Bharata took care of the people and the kingdom. But Bharata missed Rama very much. Rama's wife, Sita, and his brother, Laksmana, went with Him to the forest.

Forest life was not easy. They made a house out of trees and leaves. They ate fruit that grew in the forest. And they had each other for company. When it was almost time for them to come back to their city of Ayodhya, an evil demon kidnapped Rama's wife Sita.

Rama and Laksmana looked for Sita for a long time. Hanuman helped them. They had to build a bridge across the ocean to find her.

When they did find her, Rama had to fight with the demon, Ravana, to get Sita back. There was a big war. Many demons died. Monkeys in Rama's army died, too, but Rama gave them life again.

Finally, the demon Ravana was dead. Sita was with Rama again. Ravana's brother, Bibhisana, became king of Lanka. And then, Rama, Laksmana, and Sita all went back to their home in Ayodhya because the fourteen years were over.

The people in Ayodhya, who are in love with Rama, the Supreme Lord, had missed Him with all their hearts. Every day He had been gone, they had watched the road, waiting for Him. Every day they made garlands of flowers, hoping He would wear them. But days came and days went and He had not come back.

Now He was really coming! The people got so excited. They felt like their year was starting—a New Year. Today many people think of this day as the beginning of a year. In those days people did not have electric lights. So, they welcomed Lord Rama with lights made of cotton wicks dipped in cow's ghee.

The lights shone as if saying, "Welcome home! Oh, Welcome home!"



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Children tell stories about how they come and go to school and how other people in their life come and go

Children suggest ways that Krishna is all around us, all the time

Decorate temple and/or classroom for Diwali

Children colour pictures of Diwali lights

Children assist to string electric lights

Discuss how the year ends and then begins again, related to children's birthdays

Draw pictures to show how the people of Ayodhya felt when they heard that Lord Rama was coming home

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Make Diwali lights (children can assemble these or make any or all of the parts themselves):

- Small clay pots
- Ghee Wicks

Discuss how Krishna is with us even when we don't see Him

Children tell stories about people in their life who come and go and how they feel when they leave and when they come home

Show children photos of ways New Year is celebrated in various cultures and discuss of similarities and differences

Decorating the temple and/or classroom with electric lights, flowers, etc.

Discussion of the relationship of light and darkness, and the analogy to spiritual and material life

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

History of light in human cities

Science of combustion

Welcoming ceremonies in various cultures

Learning a dance with lights

Notes:



Objectives:

- Recall Krishna's abilities
- Sing song about Govardhan
- Plan class participation in festivals

You will need:

- Pictures
- White board
- Song

Story:

King Indra ordered the dangerous clouds above Vrindavana to pour water, with all their strength and power. There was lightning and thunder, terrible wind and non-stop rain. The rainfall was like piercing sharp arrows. Can you imagine such heavy rainfall? The water poured down so heavily that it flooded all the lands in Vrindavana. It was very dangerous, especially for the animals. The rain fell and harsh winds blew, and all the animals began to tremble from the cold. They couldn't find safety anywhere, so they went to Govinda to ask Him to help. The cows were especially disturbed by the heavy rain, so they bowed down their heads, took their calves underneath their bodies, and went to Krishna for His shelter.

The people of Vrindavana began to pray to Krishna. "Dear Gopal, You are all-powerful, and You are very affectionate to Your devotees. Please protect us. We have been much harassed by angry Indra."

Krishna listened to the people and understood that Indra was treating the Vrindavan people and animals, trees and environment in a terrible way. Indra was showing how angry he was that he didn't get his sacrifice.

Krishna said, "This demigod thinks he is supreme and has shown his great power, but I shall teach him that his power is not supreme. I am the Supreme Lord over all, and I shall take away his pride. His pride came from being given so much power. The demigods are My devotees, and so it is not possible for them to forget Me as Supreme. Somehow or other Indra has become puffed up with material power and has become mad. I will help him to be a peaceful devotee again. I will also protect My devotees in Vrindavana by My mystic power."

Lord Krishna picked up Govardhana Hill with one hand, just like a child picks up a mushroom from the ground.

Krishna said "My dear brothers, my dear father, my dear people of Vrindavana, come under the umbrella of Govardhana Hill. Do not be afraid of the hill and think that it will fall down, even though my hand is small. The rain and wind has frightened you so much, but now the hill will protect you."

Lord Krishna made all the people of Vrindavana feel safe and they entered under the great hill with their animals. Krishna was holding up the whole mountain with the little finger of His left hand. Everyone from Vrindavan stayed there for one week without being hungry, thirsty or having any other problems. They were simply astonished to see Krishna lifting the huge mountain.

Seeing the extraordinary power of Krishna, Indra was so amazed he could not understand what was going on. He called for all the clouds to stop. Then the sky became completely cleared of all clouds and the sun shone again, and the wind stopped. Krishna, now known as the lifter of Govardhana Hill, said, "My dear cowherd men, now you can leave and take your wives, children, cows and valuables home, because the trouble is over. The flooding is finished so your animals will be safe."

After everyone left with their cows, Krishna very slowly replaced Govardhana Hill. The people of Vrindavana waited until Krishna had finished putting back the Hill and went towards Him and showed their feelings of love by hugging Him. Surrounded by His dear friends and family, he went home.



Ideas for Learning activities**Foundation:**

Pupils retell in their own words how Krishna lifted Govardhana Hill

Ask students how they could plan a festival for Govardhan Puja

- Who would come?
- What would they eat?
- How would they decorate?
- Would there be entertainment?
- How would they tell people about the festival?
- What talents do they have?
- How would they use those for the festival?

Learn a song about Govardhana.

Children choose someone from the story and draw a picture of them under Govardhan Hill

Ideas for learning activities**Key Stage One:**

Discuss with children about their general talents and abilities. Make a list of their skills. Ask students to say how they could use those skills to serve Krishna.

Make a list on whiteboard of devotional skills that pupils have. Discuss with students about organizing a festival for Govardhan puja. Ask them all the necessary tasks that they would need to do for a festival. Ask students to list these.

Learn song for the Govardhan festival and perform for other classes and or parents.

Discuss the power of Indra and how his power was given to him by Krishna . What happens if we forget where our good things come from?

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Weights and measures (rocks, water, ice, wind, rainfall)

Music—Govardhan Puja song

Writing genres; list writing, planning etc.

Students to organize a festival for others.

Notes:



Objectives:

- Talk about Krishna to others
- Practice skills of sadhana
- Describe some of Prabhupada's accomplishments

You will need:

- Paraphernalia for worship/sadhana
- Photos or multimedia or videos or recordings of Prabhupada
- Pictures of Prabhupada to colour

Story:

Srila Prabhupada was born in 1896 in Calcutta and left this world in 1977. His name then was Abhay caran De. His mother and father worshipped Krishna and he did, also. He had a Rathyatra festival for all his children friends.

Prabhupada got married and had five children. In 1922, he met his guru, Bhaktisiddhanta. His guru told him to teach about Krishna in English. Prabhupada didn't see how he had much time to teach others. He was very busy with his family and medicine business. Then, in 1944, he started a magazine called "Back to Godhead." Prabhupada did everything for this magazine by himself—writing, printing, and selling it. He helped other disciples of his guru to build temples.

When Prabhupada got older, he left family life to be a vanaprastha. He lived in Krishna's village of Vrindavana. He had hardly any money, but he kept printing his magazine and giving it to people to tell them about Krishna. He started a center for worship of Krishna in Jhansi, but it didn't last very long. He decided to start translating the Srimad Bhagavatam. Different people agreed to give him the money to print the first three parts. It seemed that Prabhupada was very poor and working alone for a very long time. He felt that his guru and Krishna were always there to help him.

Then, he got a free trip on a boat to come to America. He stayed with a

friend's son for one month. After that, he had no home and no money in America. Prabhupada stayed with people he met. He chanted Hare Krishna and talked about Bhagavad-gita. After a long time, people wanted to be his disciples. They wanted to worship Krishna, also.

Prabhupada taught his new disciples how to chant Hare Krishna on beads and in kirtana. He taught them how to worship the Deities. He taught them about Bhagavad-gita and Srimad Bhagavatam. Then his disciples helped him by starting many temples around the world. Six disciples came to London and started a temple there. Others went to Canada, and even Hong Kong. By the end of Prabhupada's life there were more than 100 temples. Thousands of people were worshipping Krishna.

Prabhupada knew how to teach about Krishna to many different kinds of people. He didn't try to get people to change their religion. He wanted people to know and love God. Prabhupada knew the sastra very well. He could speak in a very sweet way. He would teach things with logic. The most important reason that people would want to know and love God after being with Prabhupada is that 'Prabhupada loves Krishna'. His love for Krishna was so pure that he only wants Krishna to be happy. So he is also very happy, and people want to be happy like he is.



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Train children then practice on some aspect of sadhana bhakti such as

- Offer articles to the Deities
- Respect sastra
- Play instruments in kirtana
- Respect the Deities & temple room

Discuss more details of Prabhupada's life accomplishments with focus on some aspect that can be applied to the children's lives

Draw an offering of what we would like to do for Prabhupada if we could do anything we wanted

Learn Prabhupada's first pranam mantra

Make paper flowers to offer to Prabhupada

Colour pictures of Prabhupada

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Train children then practice giving a simple oral presentation

Each pupil gives a 3 minute speech

Train children and practice on some aspect of sadhana bhakti such as

- Offering articles to the Deities
- Chanting on beads
- Respecting sastra
- Playing instruments in kirtanas
- Respecting the Deities & temple room

Discuss details of Prabhupada's life accomplishments with focus on some aspect that can be applied to the children's lives

Draw &/or write an offering of what we would like to do for Prabhupada if we could do anything we wanted

Learn Prabhupada pranam mantras

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Locating temples on maps & globes

Tracing Prabhupada's travels on maps & globes

Going on harinama sankirtana &/or book distribution

Studying Prabhupada's poetry and writing poems

Notes:



Objectives:

- Discuss the relationships in the story
- Retell the pastime
- Identify a way to care and serve in the classroom

You will need:

- Photos/paintings of Krishna and the cows
- Puppets

Story:

Mother Yashoda had to face the fact that Krishna was old enough to go out and herd cows with Balarama.

"My dear husband, why do we have to let Krishna go out in to the forests so far away from home? He may get hurt. Especially His feet may have pain as He absolutely refuses to wear sandals. He may get hungry and he may miss us here," said Krishna's loving mother.

Nanda Maharaja said, stroking his beard, "Yashoda, he has been secretly arranging with His uncles how to go out to do His duty. He knew it was going to be hard for us to accept that. Krishna and Balarama feel it is no longer proper for me to herd the cows. They are growing up."

"He is showing all the signs of the pauganda age (beginning of fifth year), and I know that is the time for him to go, but I don't think I can bear not seeing him for a whole day," said Mother Yashoda sadly.

"Yes, my dear, it is not easy. But there is another problem, Yashoda. The cows refuse to go out to pasture without Krishna. Something has to be done immediately. Since He has trained with me, learning to herd the cows and calves, they now won't move even for milking without Him."

The priests suggested an auspicious date for Krishna's initiation into cow herding. On Gopastami, during Kartika, Yashoda was so happy to see the arrangements for Krishna. There were so many guests who arrived and the music and singing was very pleasing. It was a perfect backdrop to Krishna coming before the priests and cows. "My dear Krishna is growing so big now," she thought. "He is performing his duty like such a big boy, by washing the feet of the priests.

And he is praising them with great words. I just didn't think He would ever grow up."

The cows eagerly ate the sweet grass Krishna offered them from His hand, and Mother Yashoda felt so happy as He bowed before all the priests and cows in great respect.

"Thank you, Krishna, for these generous gifts," the priests said, as Krishna handed them new cloth, ghee, and other items for their satisfaction.

Yashoda started to get very excited as Krishna and Balarama went before her husband with their palms pressed together in respect. They received jewelled staffs from Nanda Maharaja. Yashoda got ready and tried not to be nervous as it was her turn to be part of the ceremony. She was to anoint her son with tilak and offer blessings.

"Rama, you stay in front of Krishna, and Subala, you stay behind Him; Sridam and Sudama stay at Krishna's sides; and all of you, the rest of Krishna's friends, please gather around Him." Tears of love flowed from her eyes as she put tilak on them and spoke the sweet blessings.

Ram and Krishna called out to the cows, 'hyah, hyah, jiji', expecting them to move. Mother Yashoda knew, just like her, the cows were not prepared to lose sight of Krishna. When Krishna went to the front of the herd, He easily led them into the forest.

Mother Yashoda did feel strongly that it was too much of a hardship for Krishna to go walking with bare feet, as she sadly watched Him leave home. She did not know however, that the cows trampled the ground to make it soft for Krishna's tender feet, and the sharp rocks melted to make it comfortable for Krishna to walk.



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Children look at photos and paintings of Krishna and the cows, or cows.

List the ways Mother Yashoda showed care for Krishna's well being. How does your mother show this?

Discuss who was in the story and the different relationships. What ways can we understand service and care from this.

Watch Puppet show performed by older class.

Children retell the story in their own words.

Visit to the goshalla

Those who work in the goshalla visit the school

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Children learn to perform the puppet show of this lila for foundation stage.

Discuss the ways caring was mentioned in the story.

Pupils list ways they can show care and service in the classroom for each other.

Children draw a picture of Krishna and the cows. Paintings and photos can serve as inspiration.

Visit to the goshalla

Those who work in the goshalla visit the school

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Puppet Making

Agriculture- especially cow protection

Caring/serving professions; nursing, firefighters etc

Samskaras, the different phases of varnasrama life.

Notes:



Objectives:

- Discuss respect between religions
- Practice explaining Krishna consciousness
- Discuss importance of guru

You will need:

- Photos or pictures of five Kakkars
- Picture of Guru Nanak

Story:

Guru Nanak was born in April 1469 but his birthday is usually celebrated in November. Sikhs are the name of the people who follow Guru Nanak. On his birthday they often have parades and fireworks. They read their holy book, *Guru Granth Sahib*, all the way through. Children get new clothes and have no school. People light candles.

Guru Nanak was born to Hindu parents who worked for Muslims. He studied from both Hindu and Muslim teachers. He had a wife and two sons. In the morning and evening he would meditate by bhajanas and japa. When he was thirty, he disappeared into the Bain River for three days. When he came out, he said he had talked to God who told him there is one truth, not a Hindu truth or a Muslim truth.

Guru Nanak travelled throughout India. One time he also went to Mecca, the holy city of Muslims. He dressed in clothes that were half like that of Hindu holy men and half like Muslim holy men. He would call God by names used by Hindus and names used by Muslims. Guru Nanak's teachings were written in the book that Sikhs today read and worship. Sikhs do not worship any Deities. They think about God as formless. They want to have a divine union with God. Some Sikhs use names of God like devotees of Krishna do, such as Govinda. They even sing many of the same bhajanas.

Sikhs celebrate holidays like Diwali, and accept karma and reincarnation. Some are vegetarians, but other Sikhs eat animals if the animal is killed in a special way. They do not use intoxicants like tobacco or alcohol. Guru Nanak taught his followers to wake up before sunrise, chant nama japa (wahe guru), live a good family life, and give

in charity. He also taught that men and women are equal, and all people are equal. There are no Sikh priests.

One of Guru Nanak's followers had a way for people to take special vows, or promises. The people who take vows are called Khalsa. The men wear five things: uncut hair covered with a turban, a wooden comb, a steel bangle, cotton shorts, and a covered small sword. They do not eat meat or have illicit sex or take intoxicants. Devotees of Krishna also make these promises.

This is the main Sikh mantra that Guru Nanak taught: There is only one Creator whose name is eternally true. He is the sole Creator, without fear, inimical to none. He never dies, is beyond births and deaths, he is self illuminated. He is realized by the grace of the true Guru. Repeat his name. He was true in the beginning. He was true when the ages started and has ever been true. He is also true now, and he will always be true in the future.

Sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ
tat-paratvena nirmalam
hṛṣīkeṇa hṛṣīkeśa-
sevanam bhaktir ucyate
Nārada-pañcarātra

Meaning:

When the mind and senses are purified, one's total existence is purified, and one's designations are also purified. One no longer considers himself a human being, a demigod, cat, dog, Hindu, Muslim and so forth. When the senses and mind are purified and one is fully engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service, one can be liberated and return home, back to Godhead.



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Discuss why we need a teacher or guru to know Krishna

Compare to

- Teachers in school
- Parents at home

Practice speaking about Krishna to the rest of the class

Discuss how there are many teachers and religions and one God

Compare to many schools

Ask children why we worship Krishna

What is our goal

Who is Krishna

How will we get to know Him

Discuss how we feel about people who worship God in a different way

Practice how to act with people from different religions

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Bring in a knowledgeable Sikh to speak to the pupils

Look at a Sikh holy book

Visit a Sikh temple

Practice oral presentations about aspects of Krishna consciousness like:

- Krishna is a person
- We are not this body
- Why we chant Hare Krishna

Discuss and practice the etiquette of relating to a guru

Discuss how we decide who is a bona fide guru

Explore how God is both formless (Brahman) and a person (Bhagavan)

Discuss how we feel about japa and bhajanas

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

History of Sikhism

Muslim-Hindu conflicts

Sastric statements about giving up false designations

Prabhupada's statements about freedom from designations like Muslim, Hindu, & Christian

Notes:



Objectives:

- Discuss the mystery of life Buddha searched for
- Reword Buddha's teachings
- Recite verse from das avatara stotra about Lord Buddha

You will need:

- OHT Dasavatara verse about Buddha

Story:

2,600 years ago there lived in India King Suddhodana who ruled Gaya. His wife, Queen Maya, dreamt that angels took her to a golden house in the Himalayas. They bathed her and laid her on a silken bed. Then a white elephant carrying a lotus flower in its trunk touched her right side with the lotus, and a baby entered her womb.

Upon waking, the queen told her husband everything. The King's adviser said that the queen would give birth to a son who would be either a saintly king or a famous religious teacher. The baby had long ear lobes and the soles of His feet bore the marks of chariot wheels. His name was Siddhartha Gautama.

As the child grew, King Suddhodana was hopeful that Siddhartha might become a powerful king, but he was afraid also. "Perhaps my son," he thought, "will give up the kingdom and become a wandering saint." He ordered his servants that the Prince should never leave the palace grounds. He gave Siddhartha everything. The Prince wore costly silks and jewels, and ate the finest foods. The country's finest musicians, dancers and actors entertained Him. He married a girl more beautiful than the heavenly goddesses. Still, Prince Siddhartha was not entirely happy. He wanted to know what was beyond the palace walls.

When He was twenty-nine years old, Siddhartha escaped the guards and left the palace grounds. He passed a wrinkled, grey-haired man hobbling by with a walking stick. He then saw a man lying beside the road, wheezing and coughing blood. Then there passed a procession of people, crying and carrying a lifeless body. Siddhartha didn't know what to make of it. He stopped a passing monk and enquired, "Who are these peo-

ple and what are they doing?"

The sage replied, "Young man, no one who takes birth in this world can avoid the three types of suffering: Old age, disease and death."

Shocked at his news, Siddhartha returned undetected to the palace. "Why must there be suffering?" He asked Himself. He vowed to solve these problems. One night, whilst everyone was asleep, He entered the forest, never to return. He lived the life of an ascetic. He did not care for the clothes He wore, nor the food He ate. Sometimes He fasted for weeks and bathed in freezing mountain streams. Still, Siddhartha was not happy. The nice things in the palace hadn't made him happy, but neither had His present life of austerity. Finally, He broke His fast and took to what His followers call today "The Middle Path". He neither ate too much, nor too little; neither slept too long, nor too short.

One day sitting in meditation under a giant Bo tree, He fixed His gaze on the northern star. His attention became steady and He attained peace of mind. He gave up material desire and lust, greed and anger. From that day on people called him Buddha.

Lord Buddha became famous as a religious teacher and gathered thousands of disciples. He taught compassion and non-violence. The people of the time didn't believe in God and misused the Vedas. In the name of the scriptures they were opening huge slaughterhouses and killing thousands of innocent animals. Therefore, Lord Buddha outwardly rejected the Vedas and stressed a strictly vegetarian diet. In this way He saved the poor animals and, at the same time, tricked the atheists into following Him, an incarnation of God.

Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

What was the mystery of life that Buddha searched to answer? Discuss how that motivated him to leave his home and family.

Pupils sit in half or full lotus position and try to fix their gaze on one point. Ask them to think about who they are.

- Discuss how difficult it is to meditate
- Discuss about their identity and how they will find the answer to it

List the teachings of Buddha from the story. Ask children which of these teachings are practiced by devotees of Krishna.

Sing dasavatara verse

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Ask children if they have ever

- Fasted
- Taken a cold shower
- Given up nice clothes and house
- Meditated for a long time

Discuss experiences

Discuss how Buddha got the answer to the mystery of life.

Discuss the teachings of Buddha especially vegetarianism.

Talk about Buddha being one of the incarnations of Krishna.

Learn dasavatara verse about Buddha

Discuss why there is suffering and how to get free of it

Ask pupils to describe the difference between the body and the self

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Yoga postures and pranayama in PE

Nutrition and animal protection

Geography- maps of India, Gaya, the route of Buddha's journey

Notes:



Objectives:

- Describe what Gita-jayanti is
- Perform puja of Bhagavad-gita
- Recite a verse from the Gita

You will need:

- A verse from Bhagavad-gita
- Bhagavad-gitas for children to see
- Video episode of Mahabharata with universal form

Story:

Five thousand years ago, Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and His devotee, Arjuna, stood together on a chariot in the middle of a battlefield. The time was at the beginning of a war. The place was Kurukshetra. And the reason there was a war was to decide who would be king. The fight was between the Pandavas (Arjuna and his brothers) and the Kauravas (Arjuna's cousins).

You might ask why a devotee should be fighting for something. Devotees are supposed to be humble. Devotees are supposed to be desireless. Devotees are supposed to be non-violent.

At this time, and place Arjuna, as a good devotee, was trying to work out why he was fighting this war. He became very unhappy that he was faced with killing his grandfather, uncles, and cousins.

When he was looking at all of his opponents and the soldiers from his army, he decided that it wasn't worth it to fight this battle. He just wanted to be a peaceful person and live in the forest. So he told Krishna that he would not fight.

This is the beginning of the Bhagavad-gita, The "Song of God". It is a talk between Krishna and Arjuna as Krishna gives many teachings about the soul, mind, senses and how to become happy by serving God. Eventually Arjuna realises that it is his duty to fight in

this battle, and that is what he was trained to do. He was not trained as a sweeper or a teacher, or a farmer, he was trained as a warrior. So he needed to use his skills and natural abilities for serving Krishna.

From the Bhagavad-gita we learn about all different kinds of yoga. We learn that we are a soul, not the body. We learn that Krishna is the Supreme Lord. And we learn how the material world works. When we learn all these things, then we can do our duty, just like Arjuna did his duty.

This is the day Bhagavad-gita was spoken by Krishna to Arjuna, Gita Jayanti, and then the battle went for eighteen days. The end was very amazing because Arjuna and his brothers won. Their army had fewer soldiers than the Kauravas. Their army also lost almost every day's battle. But in the end they won, because Krishna was on their side.

In India at the place the battle was held two thousand years ago, Kurukshetra, a big celebration happens on Gita-jayanti. The Bhagavad-gita is worshiped in different ways. One way is that the Bhagavad-gita is sung over and over again for a whole day and a fire sacrifice is held. The Bhagavad-gita is offered arati and so are the deities of Krishna and Arjuna at Kurukshetra. There is a holy lake there and devotees bathe for the day to be completely holy.



Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Choose a verse from Bhagavad-gita for children to learn this week

Go through the meaning of the words "Bhagavad" and "Gita" and explain

Look at a Bhagavad-gita and show children the Sanskrit texts and discuss the ancient nature of the book.

Perform arati to Bhagavad-gita. Discuss this activity

Watch video of universal form

Look at the paintings in the Gita and discuss the meaning of some of them

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Choose a verse from Bhagavad-gita for children to learn this week

Ask students what they know already about Bhagavad-gita and if they can recite any verses

Discuss how many religions in the world have their own sacred book Children may be able to tell you the names of some of these books

Perform arati to Bhagavad-gita in the classroom and ask children to meditate on the gift of knowledge Krishna has given.

Watch video of universal form or look at a painting from the Gita of the universal form; discuss

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Mahabharata stories

History of wars in country of residence

Discussion of any Gita philosophical topic

Science from tenth chapter of Gita topics

Notes:



Objectives:

- Explain the difference between body, mind, and soul
- Describe how we use everything to serve Krishna

You will need:

- Photos of Bhaktisiddhanta
- BSST's pranam prayer OHT
- Recording of "You're Not That Body" song

Story:

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura was born in 1874. He left this world in 1937. He is the guru of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who we usually call "Prabhupada." Bhaktisiddhanta was also often called "Prabhupada"! He had many names. When he was born he was named Bilmala Prasad Datta. His father was Bhaktivinoda Thakura. When he took initiation from his guru, Gaurakisora, his name was Varsabhanavi-dayita dasa. That means he is the servant of Krishna, who loves Radharani. Then, when he became a sannyasi, his name was Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura.

When Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati lived, many sannyasis would not ride in cars or use any kind of machine or technology. But Bhaktisiddhanta said that everything belongs to Krishna. So, he used everything to serve Krishna. He wanted us to be pure and in love with Krishna. He also wanted us to be very expert to use everything for Krishna.

Bhaktisiddhanta told people the truth in a very strong way. Some people said he was like a lion guru! He said, "God is a person, Krishna, not just a white light. Anyone can become pure and love Krishna, the kind of body a person has is not important. It doesn't matter in what family we are born. We are all equal souls. There is a chance for us to love Krishna if we want to." Some people got angry at Bhaktisiddhanta. They said only people born in brahmana families could be pure and love Krishna. Or they said only people with Indian bodies could love Krishna. But Bhaktisiddhanta was not afraid. He had disciples from all kinds of families. And, his disciple Srila Prabhupada followed his guru and brought love of Krishna to people all over the world. We are not the body and we are not the mind.

We are a soul who is driving the body, like someone drives a car. Our body is like a costume we wear for a play, and our mind is like the character we pretend to be. We are really spiritual! We have a spiritual body and mind that is the same as we are. That spiritual body is how we want to love and serve Krishna. Our real, spiritual body is very beautiful and very powerful. It is full of light and made of love. The spiritual body is never like a very old person, and it never dies.

Bhaktisiddhanta taught us the science of how to wake up our real spiritual body and find out who we really are. It is very easy. It is natural for us to love Krishna. If we chant Krishna's name and think of Krishna, if we offer obeisances to the Deity of Krishna, if we give all our body and mind and love to Krishna and talk about Him, then we will remember who we really are! Krishna will see how much we want to know and love Him and He will help us remember our real self. Then we will feel so much happiness we will want to sing and dance all day long!

śrī-vārṣabhānavī-devī-dayitāya kṛpābdhaye
kṛṣṇa-sambandha-vijñāna-dāyine prabhaye
namaḥ

śrī-vārṣabhānavī-devī-dayitāya—unto Śrī Vārṣabhānavī-devī-dayita dāsa, the servant of the lover of Śrīmatī Rādhārānī; kṛpā-abdhaye—who is an ocean of mercy; kṛṣṇa-sambandha—(of) the relationship with Kṛṣṇa; vijñāna—(of) the science; dāyine—who is the deliverer; prabhaye—unto the master; namaḥ—obeisances.

I offer obeisances to Bhaktisiddhanta, who serves Krishna who loves Radha. He is an ocean of mercy, and gives us understanding of who we are and our relationship with Krishna.

Ideas for Learning activities**Foundation:**

Learn "You're Not That Body" song

Play the game of touching different parts of one's body with the question, "Am I my finger? Am I my foot? Etc. Then, Where am I?"

Draw the real self inside the body like driver in car or actor in costume

Discuss playing and pretending and our "real" self as compared to acting like the body and mind and really knowing ourselves

Practice bowing down to the Deity and offering flowers, fan, etc.

Discuss how everything really belongs to Krishna

Discuss the different names people have and what they mean

Ideas for learning activities**Key Stage One:**

Learn "You're Not That Body" song &/or Bhaktisiddhanta pranam mantra

Discuss of analogy of self to body as driver to car, or actor to character and costume

- Ask pupils for more suggestions
- Draw some of the analogies

Discuss of the difference between life and matter and how all living beings are equal as souls

- How do we treat all life?
- Are there ways we treat others in different ways because they have different bodies?
- In what ways are the differences in bodies important and in what ways do they not matter?

Pupils talk in groups and then share how they understand that everything belongs to Krishna and should be used in His service

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

History and names of main acharyas in paramapara

History of India and England in Bhaktisiddhanta's time

Discussion of varnasrama and caste systems

Geography of India and places of Bhaktisiddhanta's Maths

Learning the procedures for worshipping the Deity, etc.

Notes:



Theme: Celebrating Differences & Similarities Festival: Christmas (Christian)

Objectives:

- Retell the story of the birth of Jesus
- Discuss the idea that giving and receiving are important in Christianity
- Compare this idea to own tradition

You will need:

- A perfume bottle
- A package of frankincense
- Copy of the Sermon on the Mount

Story:

Two thousand years ago the Roman governors wanted to count everyone living under their rule. Joseph was from Israel so he took his wife Mary, from Nazareth to his town, Bethlehem, to register and pay taxes.

Long ago there were no cars or trains or planes, so it took Mary and Joseph a long time to get to Bethlehem. It became quite difficult for Mary because she was just about to have her first child. Many people had come to register their names so the town's hotels and inns were all full. It seemed like there was no place to stay for Mary and Joseph. Finally, a kind person offered them a place to stay.

It seems that the family stayed in a humble barn with the animals. Mary and Joseph were grateful that they found a place to lie down and sleep. That night, even though she was very tired from all the travelling, Mary had a baby boy. He wasn't just any baby, he was baby Jesus. The little baby fell asleep in his mother's arms and she wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger on some clean straw.

That night some shepherds living near Bethlehem, were out at night in their fields watching over their sheep. Suddenly there was a light so bright that they felt like they were blinded. When they opened their eyes, a beautiful angel was above them. It was hard for the shepherds to believe what they saw. They were very afraid,

but couldn't move because they were so surprised and fearful.

"Do not be afraid," said the angel. "I'm here to bring you good news for the people. Today in Bethlehem a baby has been born, He is one that will save the world. You will know the baby because he will be wrapped in cloths lying in a manger."

"Let's go and see the baby," said one of the shepherds. The others nodded and they went as fast as they could. Soon they found Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus, just as the Angel had told them.

Around the time Jesus was born, wise men were travelling on their camels. One night they noticed a very strange star in the sky. They told the King called Herod about the star, and that it meant a special King was born. Herod did not want another King alive, as he thought he would lose his kingdom. Herod told the wise men, "Go and find this child. As soon as you find him, tell me, so that I can go and worship him".

The wise men left to find the baby. At night they followed the star in the east. They followed the star until it hung right over the very place where Jesus was. When they finally arrived they were very excited and happy. They found Jesus lying in Mary's arms, and they bowed down and worshipped him. The wise men gave gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. These were very expensive gifts, gifts that you would give to a King.



Theme: Celebrating Differences & Similarities Festival: Christmas (Christian)

Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Show the children some frankincense and talk about its properties and why it is useful.

Discuss with the children if they received gifts when they were born, or perhaps they remember siblings receiving gifts. Their parents or grandparents may have celebrated their birth by giving gifts to others. Discuss this.

Children retell the story in their own words

Draw a picture of something they would like to give to Krishna for His birthday.

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Discuss the birth of Jesus and how the wise men came to give gifts. Discuss how this is similar to when Krishna was born. Recall main points of story.

Discuss with children what types of gifts they received when they were born, or what kinds of gifts they give when new babies in the family come

Ask a Christian to come to talk about the significance of Christmas and the gift giving.

Children list presents they would like to give to Krishna for Janmasthan. Discuss how this is different or the same as Christmas.

Read some parts of the Sermon on the Mount and discuss (Mathew)

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Research fragrances like Myrr and Frankincense

Incense manufacture

Gift giving in other cultures

Notes:



Theme: Celebrating Differences & Similarities Festival: Eid ul Fitr (Islam)

Objectives:

- Explain the value of fasting
- Discuss thankfulness
- List ways to share joy in serving Krishna

You will need:

- Photos of Muslims at prayer

Story:

For one lunar month (twenty-eight days), people who call God Allah have been fasting during the day. They are called Muslims and their fast time is called Ramadan, when they do not eat or drink anything from the time the sun rises until the sun sets. During Ramadan, Muslims try to read the entire Qur'an, which is their holy book. They give charity. They especially try to live a holy life. Muslims' spiritual leader is called a prophet instead of a guru. His name is Muhammad and during the month Ramadan he got the Qur'an.

Ramadan is the ninth month in the Muslim calendar. But their lunar months do not match solar months. And they do not add extra days or weeks to their calendar. So, Ramadan happens at different times of the year each year, in different seasons.

When Ramadan is over, people are very happy. They are thankful that they can eat and drink again during the day. They are thankful that God gave them the strength to fast and do holy things. They are thankful for any nice things they have in their life. All the men, women, and children wake up early. They take a bath and brush their

teeth. The men put on perfume. Everyone dresses in their nicest and most fancy clothes. If they can, they wear new clothes. Then they eat a small, simple meal that breaks the fast.

Next everyone goes to the prayer ground. They say some short special prayers. Then there is a little talk asking people to do good things and not evil things. People say hello to all their friends and neighbours. They greet everyone who has come to prayer. If they can, adults give presents to the children. When they leave the prayer ground, they go a different way than the way they came.

Then Muslims visit each other's homes for fancy meals and parties. Many Muslims invite people who are not Muslim to these parties, to show them how happy they are to worship God.

One way people can please God is to fast on special days and celebrate on others. Devotees of Krishna have many fasting days in the year. On most of those days, after the fast there is a celebration and, often, a feast. Fasting helps us to remember that we are different from our body and that we should control our senses so we can live a holy life that makes Krishna happy.

Theme: Celebrating Differences & Similarities Festival: Eid ul Fitr (Islam)

Ideas for Learning activities

Foundation:

Invite an imam to speak to the pupils about Eid ul Fitr

Visit a mosque

- Ask children to list the things they are happy about in their lives
- Discuss what we think about more—the things in our lives that are good or the things that are difficult
- Discuss how we can thank Krishna for everything in our lives

Children discuss in groups: A time when they finished something that was really hard and took a long time

- How did they feel
- How did they share what they felt with others

Have a sankirtana party on school grounds and discuss how sankirtana is spreading joy to others

Ideas for learning activities

Key Stage One:

Invite an imam to speak to the pupils about Eid ul Fitr

Visit a mosque

Discuss fasting

- When do devotees of Krishna fast
- Why do people fast
- From what can people fast

Discuss thankfulness

- Why should we thank Krishna
- Why & when should we thank other people
- How do we show thankfulness

Discuss the different ways we celebrate after we finish something difficult

Ask children for ideas about how to share the happiness of spiritual life with other devotees and with other who are not devotees of Krishna

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Lunar and solar calendars

Length of day according to season

History of Islam

Going on program to bring Krishna consciousness to others

Notes:



Objectives:

- List important features of Ekadasi
- Discuss how observing Ekadasi is part of our identity

You will need:

- Vaisnava Calendar with Ekadasis
- Images of traffic jam and a road with few cars

Story:

"It is Ekadasi today," said my teacher, and she pointed to the sign near our classroom door. Every time there is a festival or Ekadasi my teacher helps us remember by putting up the signs.

"Why is Ekadasi a special day, children?" my teacher asked the class.

"It is the day of Lord Hari, and it is for pleasing Krishna."

"Thank you, very clear answer, Gopinatha". Gopinath smiled. He liked getting answers right.

"Yes Chandra, what do you want to add?" said Hamsa devi, my teacher.

"Well it is a day for very nice worship of Krishna," said Chandra, as she pushed her glasses back on her nose.

"What kind of worship, Chandra, can you tell us?" asked Hamsa devi.

"My dad has a Saligrama called, Gopal, and he gives Him a special bath, and massages oil on Him on Ekadasi. He also offers bhoga that he cooks especially on Ekadasi. We don't eat that maha prasadam until the next day, but Gopal really seems to like it." Chandra was smiling as she remembered her father's Saligram.

"What else happens with your dad's Saligram on Ekadasi?"

Chandra looked even happier when she said, "In the morning he chants mantras to Gopal and when I go home today, I will get to prepare the arati tray for Gopal's puja. I collect some flowers from the garden, and make some ghee wicks, and set up the tray.

"That sounds wonderful, is there anything else you do?" asked Gopinath. He was used to answering all the questions, but he was listening to Chandra today.

"Sometimes my dad tells us stories from Sri-mad Bhagavatam, or we chant all together verses from Bhagavad-gita", Chandra said.

"Wow, sounds like Chandra and her family have a really nice time on Ekadasi", said Hamsa devi.

Another child put up their hand. It was Indranila.

"Yes, Indri, what do you want to tell us?" Hamsa devi asked him.

"My mother is the best cook for Ekadasi. She makes these special chips from potato that she leaves in the sun to dry. They are amazing," and Indri was smiling as much as Chandra.

"What deities do you have at home Indri, to Whom you offer the chips?" Hamsa devi asked.

"Oh we have Radha Madhava, and we do two offerings. One is for Them, with rice and Their puris, and one offering is for us, with all the Ekadasi bhoga", Indri said quickly.

The whole class were listening to Indri and I was thinking about my lunch in my bag. My mother had made some tapioca patties with tomato chutney, which are my favourite. I got the maha prasadam, so I had tulasi leaves too.

"So from what everyone has told me so far, today is a special day for pleasing Lord Krishna, we can offer Him special dishes of bhoga, we can offer Him what we eat too, without grains, and we can do extra puja and chant mantras" Hamsa devi listed all the things the children had said.

"Anything else, finally, before we go out for lunch?" Hamsa devi asked the class.

"I can share my prasadam", I said.

"Very nice idea, Madhava, If you have enough!" said Hamsa Devi. She let us out for break.



Ideas for Learning activities**Foundation:**

Show at least one image of a traffic jam. Then show an image of a street with little traffic. Ask students which they would prefer to travel on—the busy street or empty street? Lead discussion about how it can be easy to please the Lord on days like Ekadasi .

Use the Vaisnava Calendar to allow students to mark Ekadasi days for the year or term. Use a special sticker to make it easy to recognize.

Ask a parent to come and show different types of food available on Ekadasi.

Talk about the children's identities as Vaisnavas/or not and how they are different from other people because they follow Ekadasi.

Ideas for learning activities**Key Stage One:**

Children look at an image of a traffic jam. Ask half the class to draw a street with little traffic and the other half to draw an empty street.

- Lead discussion about pleasing the Lord easily on days like Ekadasi comparing to empty or streets with little traffic rather than traffic jams.

Explain how the lunar calendar works and how students can know when there is an Ekadasi coming.

Use Vaisnava Calendar to mark Ekadasi days. Children can help mark them for the term or year. Use a special sticker easy to recognize.

Ask a parent to make a presentation on Ekadasi including the food and fasting.

Discuss identity as a Vaisnava and how the community follows certain rules, and how other communities also follow their own rules.

Other ideas (curricula links, extensions...)

Prepare Ekadasi foodstuffs

Look at lunar calendars of other nations and faiths

Link to other fasts and festivals

Nutrition and Health links

Notes:



List of supportive material for the festivals

Makara Sankranti: Change

Bheema and Hanuman

Vashanta Panchami: Change

Sarasvati Puja: Society and Friends

Advaita Acarya: Society and Friends

The Advent of Lord Caitanya - CC Adi-Lila 13. 63-124

Lord Varaha: Respecting Others

Dasa Avatara Coloring Book - Vijaya Govinda d

The Appearance of Lord Varaha - SB 3.13. 15-33

Varaha's Pastimes go until The Killing of Hiranyaksa - SB 3.19.1 -33

Lord Nityananda: Feelings

Srila Prabhupada's Purport to Nitai-Pada-Kamala; Vaisnava Songbook.

Definition of Lord Nityananda as expansion of Balarama; Sri Caitanya Bhagavat Adikanda 1.43

Lord Siva: Serving and Caring

Churning the Milk Ocean - Guruseva dasi, Bhavani

The Twelve Mahajanas - colouring book

Siva Comic

Lord Siva Saves the Universe - SB 8.7.1-46

Lent: Feelings

Holi: Change

Ananda Vrindavana Campu of Kavi Karnapura

Recording of Holi festival by Dhurva Maharaja dasa

Lord Caitanya: Cooperation and Working Together

Childhood Pastimes of Lord Caitanya - Veda Vision Gauracandra - Colouring Book

The Advent of Lord Caitanya - CC Adi-Lila 13. 63-124

Mahavira: Who I Am

Lord Ramacandra: Society and Friends

Ramayana - Sukadeva, Vijaya Krishna

Ramayana for Children

Dasa Avatara Coloring Book - Vijaya Govinda d

Ayodhya - Parvati dd, Dinesh Sharma,

The Pastimes of Lord Rama SB 9.10.1-55

Lord Ramachandra Rules the World SB 9.11.1-36

Mrgakshi recording of Ramacandra story

Amalabhakta recording of the Ramayana

Multi-tape video of Ramayana

Sitadevi: Respecting Others

The Pastimes of Lord Rama SB 9.10.1-55

Mrgakshi recording of Ramacandra story

Amalabhakta recording of the Ramayana

Multi-tape video of Ramayana



Hanuman: What We Can Do

Hanuman - Joshua M Greene, Tricycle Press
Jai Hanuman - Dreamland
Hanuman Movie
Hanuman Comic

Lord Narasimhadeva: Feelings

Prahlad - Madhavi dd, Veda
Dasa Avatara Coloring Book - Vijaya Govinda d
Nrisimha Kavaca - Vedic Arts
Prahlad-Comic
The Saint Boy Prahlad Maharaja - colouring book
Hiranyakashipu, King of the Demons - SB 7.2.1-37
The Death of Hiranyakashipu - SB 7.8.1-39

Gangadevi: Awe and Wonder

Ganga
Ganga DVD
The Ganges Comes to the Material World - SB 9.9.1-15

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura: Feelings

Vaisnava Songbook, BBT
The Seventh Gosvami

Jagannatha Rathayatra: Cooperation and Working Together

Jagannatha - colouring/activity book
Jagannath Ratha Yatra - Vedic Arts
The Lord's Activities Before Rathayatra - CC Madhya-Lila 12.153-222
The Lord's Dancing at Rathayatra - CC M-L 13. 1-333 & 162-209

Guru Purnima: Respecting Others

Honor Thy Mother and Thy Father - Parvati dd, My Little Lore Books
Vyasa Puja books

Jhulana Yatra: Society and Friends

Raksha Bandhana**: Family

Lord Sri Krishna: Family Dasa Avatara Coloring Book - Vijaya Govinda d

Advent of Krishna/Balarama DVD
Advent of Lord Krishna - Vrajasundari dasi:
The Advent of Lord Krishna SB 10.1.1-38 Pastime continues until
The Birth of Lord Krishna SB 10.3.1-13, 32-53
Jamini songs of Krishna's appearance

Sri Ganesh Serving and Caring

Ganesh Comic

Srimati Radharani: Serving and Caring

Srimati Radharani's Transcendental Qualities - Desire Tree Books
Ecstatic Descriptions of Srimati Radharani; Talks Between Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu
and Ramananda Raya - CC Madhya-Lila 8.161-186
25 Qualities of Srimati Radharani - Life's Ultimate Goal - CC Madhya-Lila 23.87-91

** In a letter in March, 1968, Srila Prabhupada wrote to Mukunda that Rakhi Bandhan is not an approved Vaisnava Ritual, but a socio-religious festival.

Lord Vamanadeva: Awe and Wonder

Dasa Avatara Coloring Book - Vijaya Govinda d

Bali Maharaja Meets Lord Vamanadeva, the Dwarf Incarnation - SB 8.18.1-32
Pastime

Then Surrenders His Life SB 8.22.1-46

Sukkot: Celebrating Differences and Similarities

Durgadevi Puja: What We Can Do

Laksmidevi Puja: Family

Churning the Milk Ocean - Guruseva dasi, Bhavani

The Churning of the Milk Ocean - SB 8.1-46

Dussehra/Rama Vijaya: Celebrating Difference and Similarities

The Pastimes of Lord Rama SB 9.10.1-55

Ramayana by Krishna Dharma

Amalabhakta recording the Ramayana

Mrgaksi songs of Ramacandra

Damodara lila/Kartika: Awe and Wonder

The Butter Thief - Kim and Murray Waters, Mandala

Sweet Pastimes of Damodara - Touchstone

Mother Yashoda Binds Krishna - SB 10.9.1-23

Diwali: Change

The Pastimes of Lord Rama SB 9.10.1-55

Govardhana Puja: What We Can Do

The Lifting of Govardhana Hill - Vedic Heritage Foundation

Worshiping Govardhana Hill - The Krishna Book; Chapter 24

Devastating Rainfall in Vrindavana - The Krishna Book; Chapter 25

Jamini songs of Govardhana Puja

Govardhana puppet show, ITV

Srila Prabhupada: What We Can Do

He Lives Forever - Parvati dd, Torchlight

Srila Prabhupada - Sthita-dhi-muni, Chota Books

Srila Prabhupada-Know the Great Soul Who Walked Among Us

Srila Prabhupada Comic - Vijaya Govinda, Vijaya Mekha

Lilamrita, BBT

Gopastami: Serving and Caring

Care For Cows Booklet - Kurmarupa d.

Bhakti - Alarka dd, Sri Vishnupada Press

Go Mata - Sesa d, Torchlight

Kanaya's Bull - Vraja Sundari dasi

Guru Nanak: Respecting Others

Bodhi Day: Who I Am

Gita Jayanti: Awe and Wonder

Illuminations from Bhagavad-gita - Kim & Chris Murray, Mandala

Illustrated Bhagavad-gita As It Is - Vedic Arts

Our Dear Most Friend - Vishaka dasi, Torchlight



Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati: Who I Am

Ray of Vishnu

Christmas: Celebrating Differences and Similarities

Eid ul Fitr: Celebrating Differences and Similarities

Ekadasi: Who I Am

The Prince and the Pole Star - Kosa Ely, Chandra (austerities)

Ekadasi, the Day of Lord Hari



Master List of Needed Resources for Learning Experiences

Makara Sankranti: Change

- Picture of Ganga devi on Makara
- A cup of water and Ganga mantras
- Picture of Bhisma on bed of arrows

Vashanta Panchami: Change

- Photos - Deities dressed in yellow
- Yellow flowers and decorations such as crepe paper streamers
- Yellow paper to make decorations

Sarasvati Puja: Society and Friends

- Bhgavatam 1.2.4 OHT
- Picture or deity of Sarasvati

Advaita Acarya: Society and Friends

- Picture of Advaita calling for Lord Caitanya to appear
- Picture of Navadvipa kirtans with Advaita Acarya

Lord Varaha: Respecting Others

- Picture of fight between Varaha and Hiranyaksa
- OHT of typical bullying behavior
- Picture of Varaha to colour

Lord Nityananda: Feelings

- Photos of Ekacakra and Deities
- Bhajan of Prabhupada singing Nitai-pada-kamala
- Flowers for offering

Lord Siva: Serving and Caring

- DVD of Lord Siva dance performance
- Cream, blender
- Milk and yogurt culture
- Yogurt, sugar/juice & nectar recipe

Lent: Feelings

- Pictures of Prabhupada's rooms in Vrindavana
- Photos of the Judean desert

Holi: Change

- Natural mineral and plant pigments
- Photos of spring
- Paintings of Krishna playing Holi

Lord Caitanya: Cooperation and Working Together

- List of humble behaviour OHT
- Pictures of Lord Caitanya
- Pictures of Lord Caitanya
- Panca-tatva maha-mantra OHT
- Pictures of Lord Caitanya to colour



Mahavira: Who I Am

Picture—Mahavira & photos of Jains
Pictures - soul different from body
Pictures - karma/reincarnation

Lord Ramacandra: Society and Friends

Pictures of Lord Rama
Copy of dasavatara verse on Rama

Sitadevi: Respecting Others

Series of pictures of Sitadevi

Hanuman: What We Can Do

Masks for use during narration of story

Lord Narasimhadeva: Feelings

PowerPoint of Nrsimhadeva
Pop-up card template

Gangadevi: Awe and Wonder

Gangadevi DVD
Gangadevi pictures

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura: Feelings

Picture of Bhaktivinoda
Songs on OHT
Abhay Caran video segments about Bhaktivinoda

Jagannatha Rathayatra: Cooperation and Working Together

Paper and crayons for drawing
Map of India with Jagannath Puri.
Pictures of Jagannath Puri's Rathayatra

Guru Purnima: Respecting Others

Audio Recording of Sri Guru Vandana
Image of Vyasasana

Jhulana Yatra: Society and Friends

A swing/materials to make one
Deities/images of Radha & Krishna
Flowers/decorating material
Plans for swing

Raksha Bandhana: Family

Red string or Rakhis to tie
Card stock

Lord Sri Krishna: Family

Pictures of baby Krishna with Nanda and/or Yasoda
Pictures of Vasudeva carrying Krishna to Gokul
DVD of Krishna's appearance
Pictures of karma & reincarnation



Sri Ganesh: Serving and Caring

Picture of Ganesh, (preferably writing) while Vyasadeva dictates
Picture of Ganesh with Krishna's feet on his head

Srimati Radharani: Serving and Caring

Pictures of Radharani to colour
Songs and/or verses about Radharani

Lord Vamanadeva: Awe and Wonder

Painting of Vamana's universal form
Optional: any photos of sun, moon, stars, Earth, etc.

Sukkot: Celebrating Differences and Similarities

Gita verses about food OHT
Photos of a sukkah
Fruits & vegetables
Ingredients & recipe for simple food

Durgadevi Puja: What We Can Do

Cards with Durga's weapons

Laksmidevi Puja: Family

Poster of Laksmidevi and discs of paper
Pictures of Ocean of milk and churning pastime

Dussehra/Rama Vijaya: Celebrating Difference and Similarities

Images of Dussehra

Damodara lila/Kartika: Awe and Wonder

Damodarastaka prayers
Pictures of Yasoda chasing & binding Krishna to colour
Lamps &/or materials to make them

Diwali: Change

Ingredients for making Diwali lights
Decorations/electric lights
Photos of various types of New Years celebrations

Govardhana Puja: What We Can Do

Pictures of Govardhana Hill
White board for listing
Song about Govardhana Puja

Srila Prabhupada: What We Can Do

Paraphernalia for worship/sadhana
Photos or multimedia or videos or recordings of Prabhupada
Pictures of Prabhupada to colour

Gopastami: Serving and Caring

Photos/paintings of Krishna and the cows
Puppets



Guru Nanak: Respecting Others

Photos or pictures of five Kakkars

Picture of Guru Nanak

Bodhi Day: Who I Am

OHT Dasavatara verse about Buddha

Gita Jayanti: Awe and Wonder

A verse from Bhagavad-gita

Bhagavad-gitas for children to see

Video episode of Mahabharata with universal form

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati: Who I Am

Photos of Bhaktisiddhanta

BSST's pranam prayer OHT

Audio Recording of "You're Not That Body" song

Christmas: Celebrating Differences and Similarities

A perfume bottle

A package of frankincense

Copy of the Sermon on the Mount

Eid ul Fitr: Celebrating Differences and Similarities

Photos of Muslims at prayer

Ekadasi: Who I Am

Vaisnava Calendar with Ekadasis

Images of traffic jam and a road with few cars



About the Authors

Urmila devi dasi (Dr. Edith E. Best)

Born in 1955 in New York City, in 1973 Urmila became a disciple of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Urmila has served in ISKCON (The Hare Krishna Movement) continuously since 1973. Urmila's husband, three children, and seven grandchildren are all active in Krishna consciousness. Urmila has her Bachelor's of Science in Religion and Education from Excelsior College of the University of the State of New York. She has a Masters of School Administration and a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She has done ground-breaking research on job satisfaction of teachers in Krishna primary and secondary schools worldwide.

Urmila Devi Dasi has been head-teacher (principal) of elementary and secondary schools in ISKCON for 18 years, and has managed and taught in a pre-school for 5 years. For one year she was an assistant principal in a state primary school of 450 pupils. For 10 years she was a member of ISKCON's international board of education, and for 7 years was vice-chairman of the North American board. Urmila has developed and taught local, national, and international seminars for trainers, educators, and managers since 1985. She has also developed and taught numerous courses for elementary, high school, college, and adult learners in a wide variety of subjects using interactive and experiential learning in addition to lecture. She's the author of a book on management and teaching, and is a writer and editor for *Back to Godhead*, an international magazine. Urmila is a member of the Grhastha Vision Team which is coordinating courses and materials to strengthen marriage and the family in ISKCON North America. She is also a member of the Sastric Advisory Council to the ISKCON's international Governing Body Commission.

Taraka Devi Dasi (Helen Sticha)

Taraka is a an initiated disciple of HH Prabhavishnu Swami and joined the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in 1985, in Australia. Involved in children's education since 1996, she has taught Sunday school, and written and illustrated children's books. Awarded an Education Degree in 2003, Taraka has since then been teaching and writing educational materials, and traveling seeing what Krishna kids are up to.

