

**Teacher's Guide
to**

**Das Avatar:
The Ten
Incarnations of
Krishna**

(Madhava Class)

Introduction

In this session the students will become familiar with the 10 main incarnations of the Lord. They will learn the stories of each incarnation's appearance and the reason for each appearance.

There are 10 incarnations which will be covered over the two month session. We suggest that instead of the usual 6 lessons, you take 7 lessons to cover the material. You will then have more time to devote to each story. The quiz can be given as a take-home test.

You'll be telling a lot of stories in this session, so the more exciting and dramatic you can make the stories, the more the children will enjoy them. Consider the options of using a flannelboard, having adults act them out, using available videos of the stories, or having children act the stories out or participate in some way.

The verses that will be taught during this session are B.G. 4.7 & 8. These are also in the student workbooks.

*yada yada hi dharmasya
glanir bhavati bharata
abhutthanam adharmasya
tadatmanam srijamy aham*

Translation: Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion -- at that time I descend Myself.

*paritranaya sadhunam
vinasaya ca duskrtam
dharma-samsthapanarthaya
sambhavami yuge yuge*

Translation: To deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I Myself appear, millennium after millennium.

Additional materials you may want for this course:

- * Children's cassette tape -- "Krishna's Children" available from Krishna Culture (for use in Lesson 6)
- * Children's Krishna Book (Lesson 6)
- * Children's book Prahlad: A Story for Children from the Ancient Vedas of India also available from Krishna Culture (Lesson 3)
- * Hindi movie "Hari Darshan" (optional for use in Lesson 3)
- * Ramayan video (optional for use in Lesson 5)

Session Project: If you wish to have a session project, the students can make a Das Avatar Wall Hanging. Using the lotus outline on Worksheet 10, students color and decorate this for the top of their hanging. Write "DAS AVATAR" inside the lotus. Use card stock for greater durability. Attach a 42-inch length of 2-inch wide ribbon to the bottom of this piece.

After each lesson, the students will color and decorate the corresponding avatar (Worksheets 10-12). They will be glued to the ribbon in the proper order, finally completing the hanging with the 10 avatars on the ribbon. (See drawing below.) Students can cut crowns out of construction paper and put them on Matsya, Kurma and different avatars. Use sequins, glitter, silk flowers, yarn, etc. to add variety to the pictures. Once again, you should have a completed wall hanging for them to see as they start this project.



Lesson One

Matsya Avatar

1. Introduce the children to the subject to be studied this session. Explain the meaning of “avatar” as “one who descends”. Explore with them the questions of why Krishna would want to leave the spiritual world and come to the material world, and why He takes different forms. Show how He gives the answers in the Bhagavad Gita verses 4.7 and 8.
2. Chant the two verses for the session.
3. Tell the story of Matsya Avatar. For added dramatics, you could be King Satyavrata and have different size pots to put Matsya in. When you describe the part about the flood, one student could be Matsya and you can tie a rope around him while you invite seven other students (the seven sages) into the boat with you. Ask questions about the story to elicit their understanding.
4. Have an ongoing list of the avatars you are learning. Use big strips of construction paper, or large index cards and, as you finish studying each avatar, list the name of the avatar on the card and display it on the wall. If you like, you can put a small picture next to it to help them remember. When you review lessons later on, you can ask a question and have the student go up and point to the correct answer, saying the name and the form the Lord assumed. This gets them up and out of their seat and holds their interest more than just asking questions.
5. Allow time for students to complete the “Check for Understanding” page in their booklets. Or let them do it as homework.
6. Pass out Worksheet 1 and allow time for completion. They may also color the paper.
7. If you are doing the Session Project, allow time at the end of each lesson to work on the wall hangings.

Lesson Two **Kurma Avatar**

1. Chant the verses for the session.
2. Tell the story of Lord Kurma. Add His name to the list on the wall.
3. Divide the class into two teams -- the demigods and the demons. Demonstrate the action of churning by using a rope wrapped around an object representing Mandara Mountain (an overturned plastic trash can will work well). Having the demons pulling on one side of the rope and the demigods on the other, let them gently “churn” the ocean by rocking the mountain back and forth. (You’ll have to hold down the bottom of the mountain.)
4. They can now play tug-of-war using a strong, thick rope. Let them do it a few times but make sure you have a good rope so their hands won’t get burnt.
5. You may allow time for them to complete the “Check for Understanding” page or have it done as homework.

Lesson Three

Varaha and Narasimha Avatars

1. Chant the verses for the session.
2. Review Matsya and Kurma Avatars by asking some basic questions.
3. Tell the story of Lord Varaha and add His name to the list on the wall.
4. Pass out Worksheet 2 for either classwork or homework.
5. Because of Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu being brothers, Hiranyakasipu wanted to avenge the death of his brother. This will lead on to the story of Narasimhadeva. Most of the children will be familiar with this story so they can help you tell it. There is a good Hindi movie of Prahlad called “Hari Darshan” that you could show. It is a full length movie (about 1 1/2 hours long) so you would have to have an extra long class.

There is a children’s book available from Krishna Culture called Prahlad: A Story for Children from the Ancient Vedas of India. The story could be read to the students while they view the pictures.
6. Add Narasimhadeva’s name to the list.
7. Worksheets 3 and 4 can be given to the children.

Lesson Four **Vamana Avatar**

- 1 Chant the verses for the session.
- 2 Review the previous lessons briefly. See if they can name the first four avatars in order.
- 3 Tell the story of Lord Vamanadeva. This is a good one to have the children act out. Choose children to play the parts of Vamanadeva, Sukracharya and Bali Maharaj. As you tell the story they can do the actions and perhaps ad lib the dialogue. Use a globe for Vamana to step over with his first step and a picture of the planetary system for His second step.
- 4 Add Vamana's name to the list on the wall. Check their understanding of the story by asking a few questions.
- 5 Game: "Krishna May I?" (Played like the children's game Mother May I.
One child is chosen to be Krishna. He stands away from the other children (at least 25 - 30 feet) who line up shoulder-to-shoulder at the Start. The children take turns asking Krishna's permission to take a certain number and type of steps. Krishna either says Yes or No and the children proceed accordingly.
Demonstrate the different steps for them so they will fully understand. In our Krishna version, here are the types of steps they may ask for:

- * Vamana Step -- as big of a step as you can take.
- * Narasimha Step -- one big jump forward with both feet with a fierce face and hands up, clawing the air, and roaring.
- * Krishna -- medium size step with hands holding a flute to mouth.
- * Sita Step -- *small step made by placing one heel against the toe of the other foot.*
- * Kalki Step -- face sideways and take a big step sideways, slashing arm across chest as if you had a sword in hand.
- * Hanuman step -- big leap forward

The children lined up to play would ask Krishna one-by one, “Krishna may I take 3 Kalki steps?” Krishna will either say Yes or No or give them another instruction, such as, “No, but you may take 4 Sita steps.” The child who first reaches Krishna becomes the new Krishna for the next game.

Lesson Five

Parasuram and Rama Avatars

1. Chant the verses for the session.
2. Briefly review the previous lessons. Try saying a word like “boar”, or “turtle”, or “Hiranyaksa” and let them call out the name of the avatar that the word is associated with.
3. Tell the story of Parasuram and check their understanding with a few questions. Add His name to the list.
4. Tell the story of Rama or, better yet, show a video. There is the full length Rama cartoon video which would require you to have a much longer class. There is also the ISKCON Ramayana video. Most of the children will be so familiar with this story, a video will keep their attention better.
5. Pass out Worksheet 5.

Lesson Six

Krishna/Balaram Avatar

1. Chant the verses for the session.
2. Review by pointing to one of the avatars' names on the wall and asking someone to tell you something they know about that personality.
3. Tell the story of Krishna's birth. Tell of Balaram being transferred to Mother Rohini's womb. Either read from the children's version of Krishna Book or tell it in your own words.
4. Choose 1 or 2 stories from the Krishna Book to tell about Krishna and Balaram's childhood pastimes. Try to find some stories that may be new to the children. If you tell the story of Denakasura, you can teach them the song about Krishna and Balaram on the "Krishna's Children" cassette. Words to the song are found on Worksheet 6 which can be passed out to the children.
5. Add the names to the list on the wall.
6. Game: Cowherd Boys' Snatch

One child is chosen to lead the game. Two teams are formed with an equal number of players. Each player is given a cowherd boy's name. One person on EACH team is given the same name. (Each team will have a Krishna, Balaram, Sridam, etc.) The children having the same name should be of equal running capacity.

The two teams line up about 15 yards away from each other. In the middle of the teams, a lunch bag is placed. The children will play stealing the lunch bag.

The leader stands halfway between the two teams and calls out a cowherd boy's name: "Krishna snatch," or "Subala snatch." Immediately those two children having that name run from their team and try to get the lunch bag first. The one who gets it first must run once around the leader and then back to his team without being tagged by the other child. If he succeeds, his team gets a point. If he gets tagged, no one gets a point. The leader keeps track of the points.
7. Pass out Worksheets 7 and 8 for classwork or homework.

Lesson Seven

Buddha and Kalki Avatars

1. Chant the verses for the session.
2. Briefly review the previous lessons. Using the avatar cards on the wall, take them down and scramble them and see if a group of students can put them in the correct order. You can make extra sets on index cards if you want more children to do this activity.
3. Tell the story of Buddha. Ask a few questions to elicit understanding.
4. Add Buddha's name to the list.
5. Tell the story of Lord Kalki and add Him to the list. Have the children repeat all ten avatars from the list a couple of times.
6. Pass out Worksheet 9 and allow time for them to complete it.
7. Pass out the tests and explain that they will be allowed to complete it at home, using their books if necessary. The test must be returned the following week.

Name _____

Date _____

Das Avatar -- Final Quiz

Match the words in Column A with the activities in Column B.

- | | | |
|------------------|-------|--|
| 1. Balarama | _____ | Destroyed the demon Hiranyakasipu |
| 2. Krishna | _____ | Rescued the earth from the ocean |
| 3. Kalki | _____ | Krishna's older brother |
| 4. Varaha | _____ | Asked for three steps of Bali's land |
| 5. Kurma | _____ | Was a perfect king |
| 6. Buddha | _____ | Killed King Kamsa and spoke
Bhagavad Gita |
| 7. Narasimhadeva | _____ | Appeared in Satyavrata's water pot |
| 8. Matsya | _____ | Held up a mountain on His back |
| 9. Parasuram | _____ | Tried to stop meat-eating and animal-
killing |
| 10. Rama | _____ | Rides a white horse and destroys the
evil kings at the end of Kali Yuga |
| 11. Vamana | _____ | Went around the world 21 times
destroying the wicked ksatriyas |

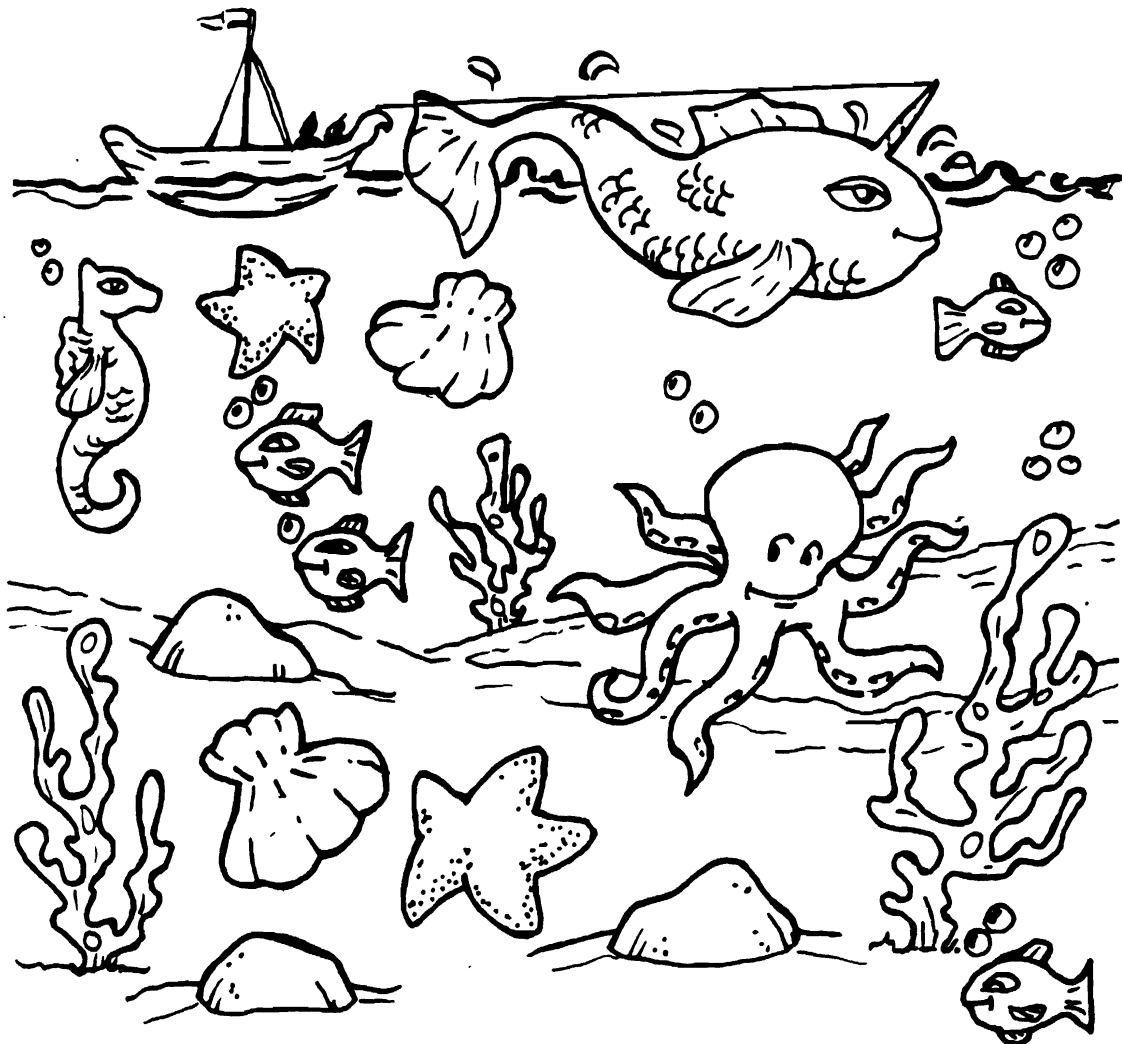
12. Which story did you like the best? Tell why you liked it.

Worksheet 1

Matsya-avatāra

While crossing the ocean before the mahāpralaya, King Satyavrata passed many things under the water. Count the items in the picture and indicate how many there are of each.

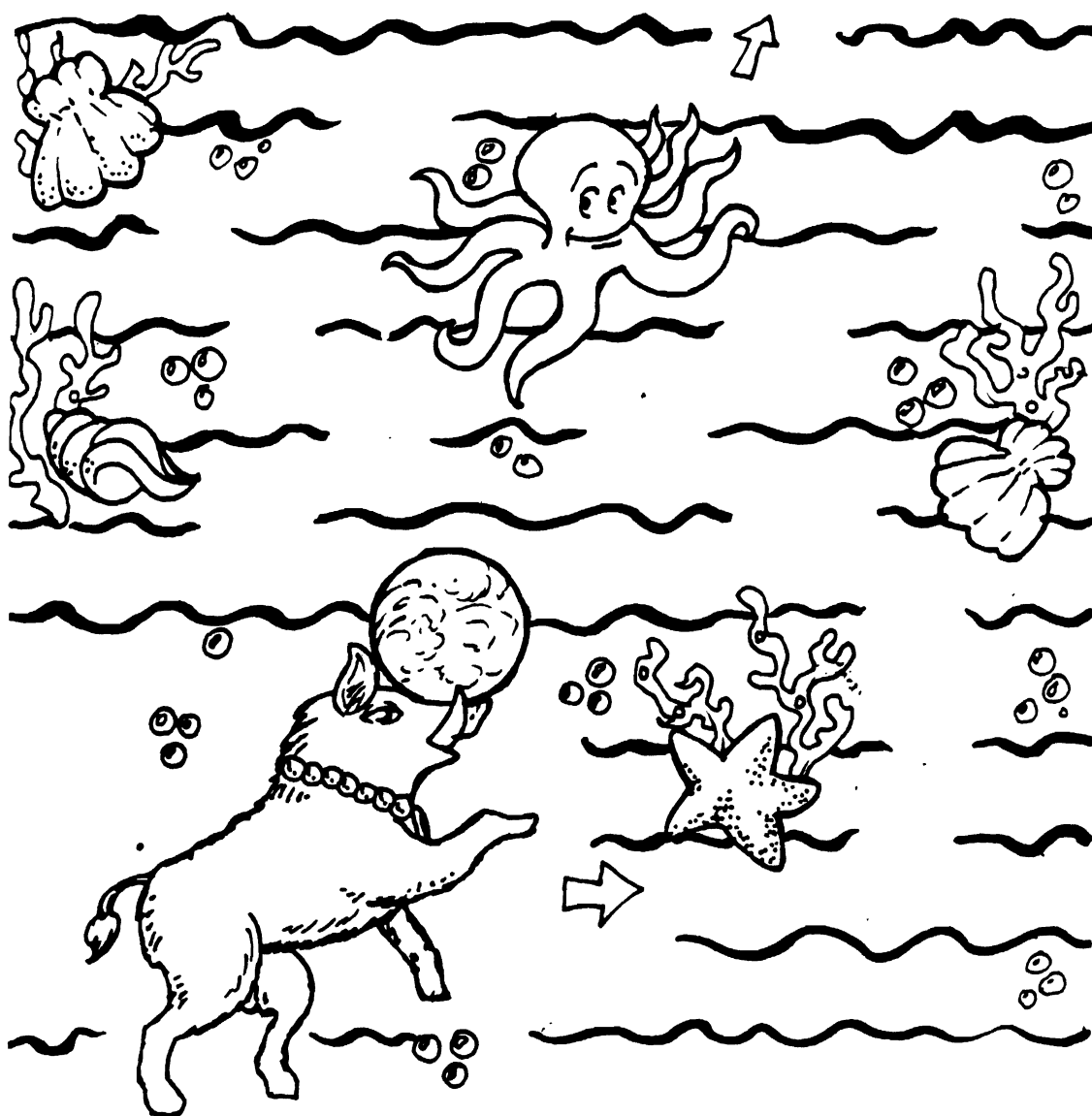
- ___ Octopuses ___ Seahorses ___ Shells ___ Rocks
___ Starfish ___ Small Fish ___ Seaweeds ___ Turtles



Worksheet 2

Varāha-avatāra

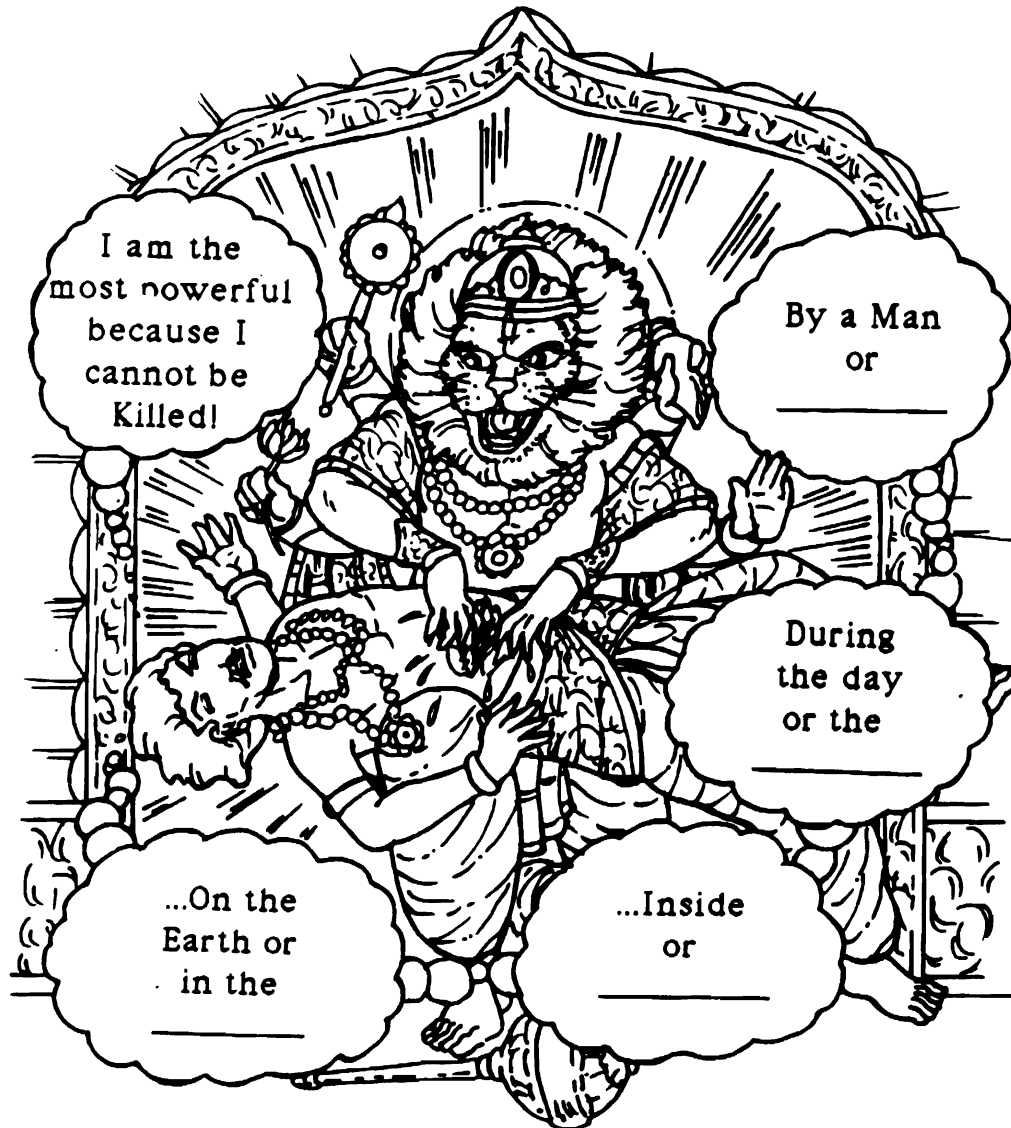
Help Lord Varāha find the surface of the sea to re-establish Mother Earth.



Worksheet 3

Narasimha-avatāra

Fill in the correct words to describe the boon that King Hiranyakaśipu asked of the Lord.



Narasimha-avatāra

Word search

Find the following words, which appear up, down, across, and diagonally in the word game.

Hiraṇyakaśipu lord snake fire prayer

poison asura Nārāyaṇa elephant pillar

H	R	S	H	N	P	S	T	R	M	O	N	Y
P	I	L	L	A	R	N	T	G	U	P	U	B
Q	S	R	N	X	R	A	D	A	N	R	M	I
W	E	R	A	D	I	K	R	U	M	A	I	M
R	T	E	V	Ṇ	E	E	O	A	P	Y	S	B
T	B	S	W	O	Y	S	L	E	M	E	I	C
M	N	Ā	R	Ā	Y	A	Ṇ	A	N	R	S	G
N	T	G	N	J	Y	R	K	S	E	O	V	V
S	O	S	W	A	S	U	R	A	M	B	L	T
H	O	S	M	W	A	B	P	E	S	M	F	Y
V	T	E	I	N	M	W	I	S	D	I	O	U
O	F	G	W	O	M	R	S	S	R	O	P	T
E	T	N	A	H	P	E	L	E	T	M	O	U

Worksheet 6

Lord Krishna and Balaram
Went to Talavan
And thereupon They came upon
Denakasura

He kicked Lord Balaram
Who grabbed him by the feet
And whirling him around
Threw him high up in a tree

Lord Krishna and Balaram
Went to Talavan
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Worksheet 7

Balarāma-avatāra and Kṛṣṇa-avatāra

Find and color Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as they play with their friends.



Balarāma-avatāra & Kṛṣṇa-avatāras

Word search

Find Kṛṣṇa's names across and down in the word search. His names are listed below.

Navanītacora Mādhava Hṛṣīkeśa Gopāla Janārdana

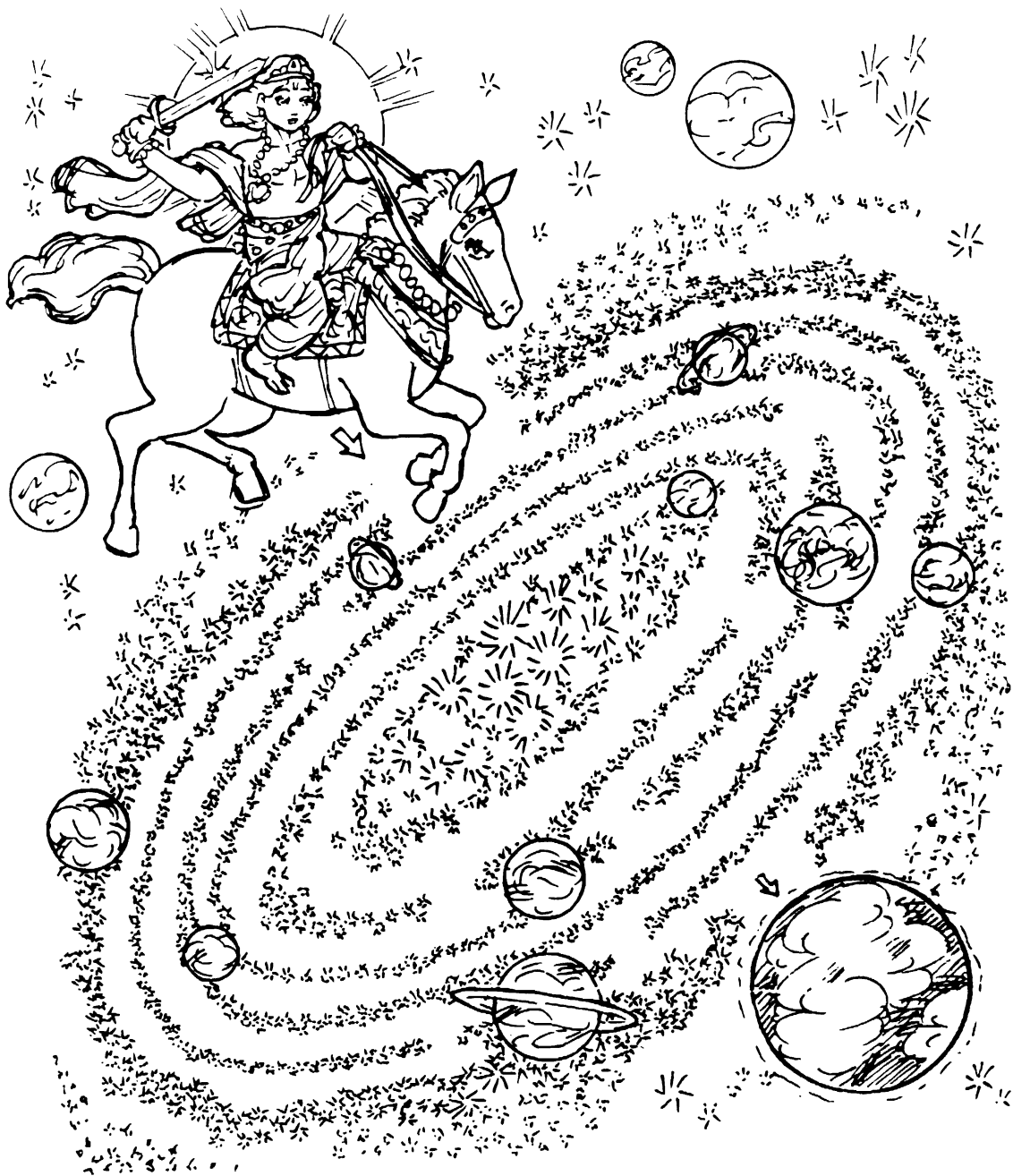
Nandakumāra Govinda Kṛṣṇa Keśava Gokulanandana

F	A	R	L	K	F	A	N	N	X	R	N	T	Y	
A	G	O	K	U	L	A	N	A	N	D	A	N	A	
B	M	B	D	H	A	V	A	N	P	O	V	K	Q	
G	C	D	E	R	F	G	R	D	L	A	A	U	R	
O	Q	K	R	Ṣ	Ṣ	N	A	L	A	R	P	N	L	P
V	K	E	O	I	H	A	V	K	N	D	I	A	W	
I	A	S	L	K	S	I	T	U	A	C	T	R	I	
N	R	A	M	E	L	A	N	M	M	K	A	I	N	
D	I	V	N	S	A	N	A	Ā	Ā	T	C	S	W	
A	I	A	F	A	L	A	M	R	D	R	O	I	B	
I	C	H	M	H	A	N	I	A	H	W	R	T	B	
L	G	O	P	Ā	L	A	L	B	A	O	A	A	E	
U	T	O	F	H	H	E	R	E	V	S	K	S	X	
L	O	J	J	A	N	Ā	R	D	A	N	A	X	I	

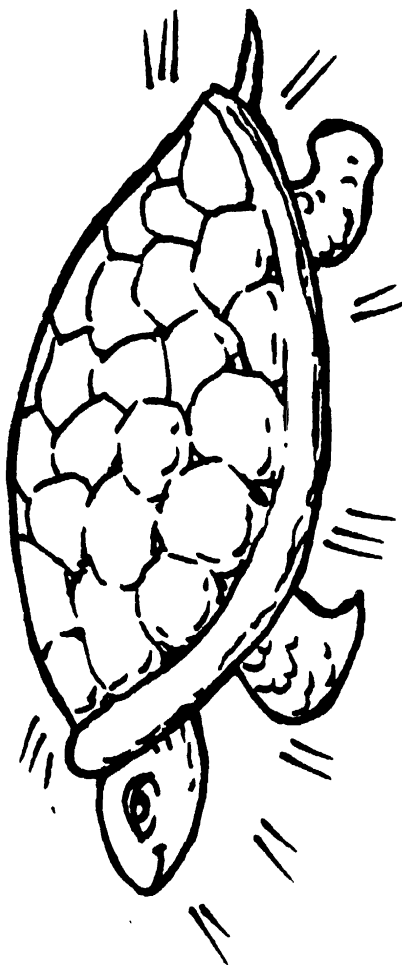
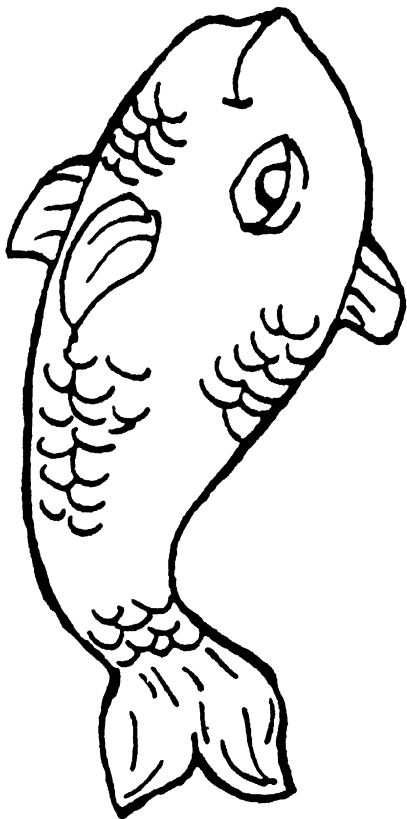
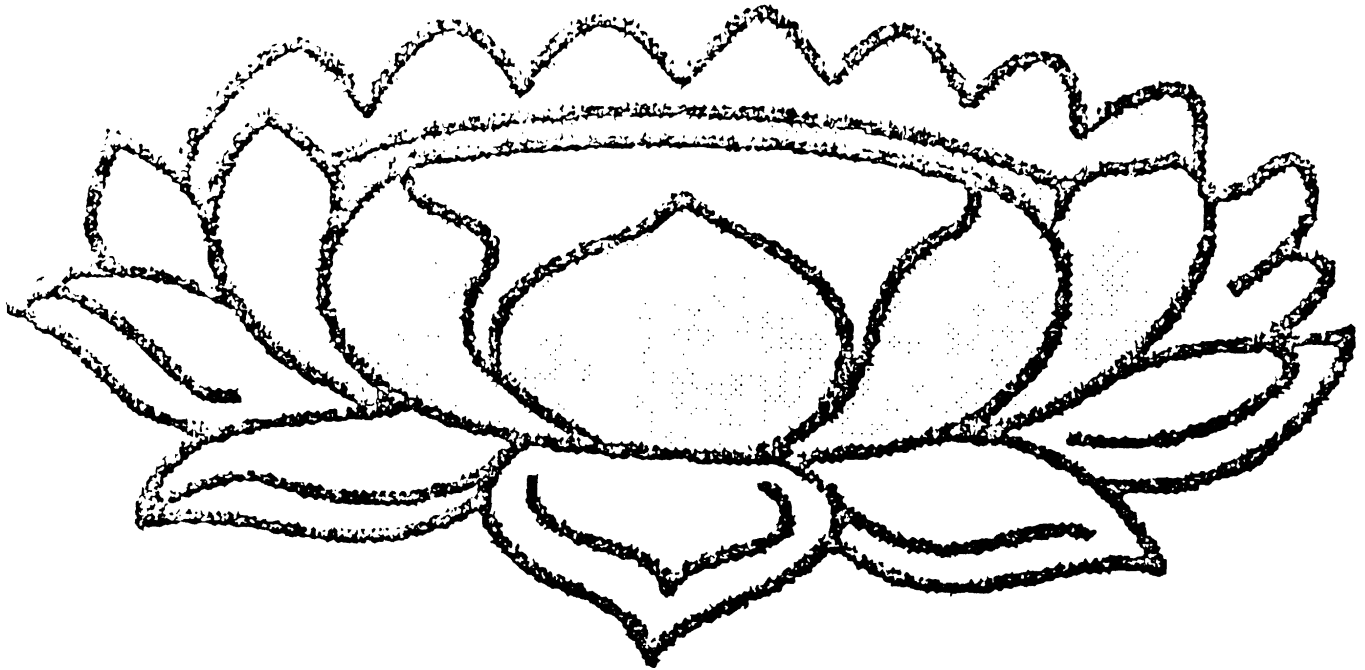
Worksheet 9

Kalki-avatāra

Help Lord Kalki journey through the solar system to reach Mother Earth



Worksheet 10



Worksheet 11



Worksheet 12

