

## 8 Krishna swallows the Forest Fire



When Krishna and Balarama grew up a little They started taking Their cows to the forests of Vrindavana. They were accompanied by many other cowherd boys who had their own herds of cows.

The forests of Vrindavana look very beautiful. There are shady trees and lush green grasses. Water sprayed by the waterfalls keeps the place cool and fresh. Breezes blowing over the lakes and rivers carry the pollen of lotuses and water lilies and other fragrant flowers. Flowers decorate the forests of Vrindavana and many varieties of birds and animals fill it with sound. There are deer, peacocks and honey bees.

Krishna ,Balarama and the cowherd boys used to decorate themselves with peacock feathers, flower buds and coloured minerals or anything that they could find. In the forest they all enjoyed themselves very much by dancing, singing and wrestling. They played flutes, hand

cymbals and buffalo horns. They played with bilva, kumbha and amlaki fruits. They played blindman's buff, hide and seek and many other games. They had great fun whirling about, leaping about, hurling, and mock fighting. Sometimes they would jump like frogs, swing from the branches like monkeys and imitate the animals of the forest. In this way Krishna, Balarama and the cowherd boys, along with their cows, wandered among the rivers, hills, valleys bushes, trees and lakes of Vrindavana.

One day the boys were busy having fun. They did not notice that the cows had wandered into the deeper part of the forest looking for more grass. Suddenly the cowherd boys realised that the cows were missing. Feeling anxious they quickly set off in search of the cows. At first they were confused and did not know in which direction to go. At last they found a trail of hoof-prints and broken grass which had been trampled by the cows.

Finally the boys reached the Munja forest and found their lost cows. Forgetting their own hunger and thirst they herded the cows onto the path back home Krishna called out to the cows in a loving voice. The cows were overjoyed to hear Krishna call out their names and mooed to the Lord in reply.

Suddenly a great forest fire appeared on all sides A strong wind was fanning the flames which were spreading in all directions It seemed as if the huge tongues of flame were about to destroy all the creatures of the forest. Seeing this terrible sight the cowherd boys and cows became fearful.

They called out to Krishna and Balarama to help them. 'O Krishna, O Balarama Please save Your devotees. We have come to take Your

shelter. The Supreme Lord Krishna said, "Just close your eyes and do not be afraid". With full faith the cowherd boys closed their eyes.

Krishna, the master of all mystic power, opened His mouth and swallowed the great fire and saved His friends from danger. The cowherd boys opened their eyes and were amazed to find that they and the cows had been saved. Besides this they had all been brought to the part of the forest where they had been playing earlier.





## Activity Time

### Discussion:

We all have friends

In your group discuss what qualities you would like to have in a friend.  
Fill in the qualities here.



Do we have the qualities we would like our friends to have ?  
It is nice to have a friend and to be a friend.



## A Friend ?

We all have friends and we love to be with them. Madhava also has many friends. He enjoys being with his friends. His Mother often complains, 'Madhava, all you want to do is play all day long.'



Madhava's best friend is Shyam. Both of them spend a lot of time together. They love playing outdoors.

One Saturday morning Madhava waited for Shyam to come. He



waited for a long time but there was no sign of Shyam. Madhava could hear the shouting and laughter of the boys playing outside and was becoming impatient. Finally Madhava telephoned Shyam's house. Shyam's mother answered the call. She said, 'Madhava, I'm so happy you called. Shyam is not feeling well. Maybe you could come and spend some time with him. I'm sure he will cheer up when he sees you'

'I'll surely come to see Shyam this afternoon', replied Madhava.

Madhava left for Shyam's house. Madhava's mother had packed some



soup for Shyam. Madhava carried the bag carefully.

On the way Madhava met Shrinivas, Shesh and Sunny. They seemed to be having a great time. Madhava decided to spend some time playing with them before going to Shyam's house. He was so engrossed in playing that he didn't notice the time fly by. It was just too late to go to Shyam's house now.

He trudged home feeling very guilty as he thought of Shyam alone in bed. When he reached home his mother greeted him. "Oh. You're back! How is Shyam? Did he like the soup?" The soup! Madhava had forgotten all about it, it was probably still lying on the park bench.

Tears welled up in his eyes. His mother said sympathetically, "It's all right. Shyam will be well soon."

What did Madhava say?

Have you ever felt like that? When?

- ◇ It's very easy to be with our friends when it is fun.
- ◇ We have to ask ourselves, am I a fair weather friend?
- ◇ Am I there when my friends need me?

Meanwhile at Shyam's house...

Shyam's mother was sitting by his bedside and reading to him. She read the story 'Krishna Swallows the Forest Fire'.

Shyam said, "The cowherd boys were so fortunate to have Krishna as

their friend. He always helped them when they were in trouble. They had such fun together in the forest."



His mother said, "Yes the cowherd boys are very special devotees. Krishna spent so much time with them. But do you know Krishna is with us too?"

"Really!?"

"Yes He is living in our heart, near us all the time. In good times as well as bad times He is always with us. He witnesses all our thoughts and actions and guides us from within. When we are about to do something wrong, we hear a little voice that stops us. Krishna is waiting for us to call out to Him just as the cowherd boys did."

"How do we do that mother?" asked Shyam.

What did his mother reply?

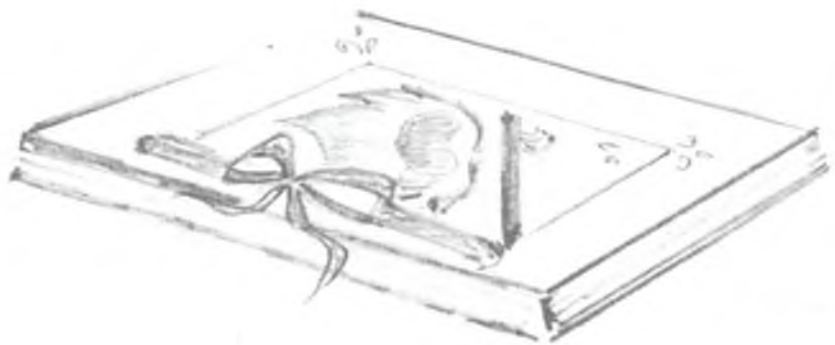
Did you know...

- Krishna is with everyone humans, animals and even plants.
- We must be nice not only to our friends and family but to all living beings.



Here's a fine little notepad you could make for your friend.

- ◇ Take about ten rectangular sheets of paper 5" by 7".
- ◇ Punch holes on the left hand side as shown in the figure.
- ◇ Lace all the pages together with a ribbon or colourful thread. It now looks like a little book.
- ◇ You could stick a picture of Krishna on the cover and decorate around it.
- ◇ You could write something about Krishna at the top of every page.
- ◇ Give this gift as a token of appreciation to your friend.







## Play : Krishna Says



In this Pastime we saw that Krishna told the boys to close their eyes and they immediately did so.

Now let us play a game where we learn how to listen to instructions.

One person is chosen to act as Krishna's representative.

He calls out different instructions to the rest of the children.

He may ask them to jump like forest monkeys, dance like peacocks, close their eyes and so on.

But the children will follow the instructions only if he says "Krishna says" before the instruction, for example he will say "Krishna says stamp your feet". The children start stamping their feet and he may suddenly say "Stop". Anyone who stops will be out of the game. The children can stop only when the instruction is 'Krishna says stop'.

The last one who is not out is the winner and he can be the leader in the next game.

This game is fun to play, it helps to make us alert and increases our concentration.