

# Hindu Childs Religious Artefact Collection (HICHILD)

The main purpose behind the faith child collection is to introduce a child from the faith to your pupils. This idea stems from sessions which the Suffolk County RE team have put into practice and found successful.

Each faith child has been given their own identity and bag full of artefacts that are important to their daily worship and religious way of life. The idea of having a bag is that these artefacts belong to a child who has brought them in to show the class. This provides an awareness that these are someone's possessions and are worthy of care and respect.

As the teacher delivers the artefacts from the bag in a show and tell session, they can describe them and their associated customs and beliefs. Children will have a greater understanding of what it is like to be a child from a different faith.

Say hello to Indira and examine all the different artefacts that she has brought to show you.



## Questions you could ask children about the artefacts

### **Initial Discussion**

- What is this object?
- Does it resemble anything the children have seen?
- What do you think the item is used for and by whom?
- Which religious belief is it used by?
- Does anyone know what it is called? Learn how to pronounce the name.
- What does it represent?
- How might it be used?

Collect any other questions the children might have about the artefacts and display them as you try to find the answers through your learning sessions.

- **What do the objects tell us about the faith?** *This last question can be returned to at the end of the investigation.*

## All About the Hindu Artefacts

### **Hindu greeting Cards**

Diwali is the most popular occasion for card giving. Diwali Cards often depict scenes from the story of Rama and Sita and are sent to family and friends as greetings cards during the festival of Diwali. Diwali is known as the festival of lights. It is celebrated each year between mid-October and mid-November. It lasts for five days.

*Design and make own greeting cards and think about why people send cards and what they mean.*

### **Diva Lamps**

Diva lamps are small oil lamps which are normally associated with the Hindu festival of Diwali. This is normally celebrated in October/November and lasts for five days. Diwali is also known as the festival of lights, and homes and public buildings are decorated with oil lamps and brightly coloured lights. The lights are lit to welcome Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth into people's homes with the hope that she will bless them. According to another ancient tale, the lights were lit by thousands of people as they welcomed Rama and Sita back from their years in exile. For Hindus, this story shows how good will always triumph over evil in the same way as a little oil lamp will destroy total darkness.

*Explore further what happens on each of the 5 days of the festival of Diwali.  
Design and make own diva lamps out of clay.*

## Henna Paste and Silhouettes and Mehndi Patterns

This is traditionally used to decorate the hands and feet during Hindu celebrations and special occasions including weddings. Designs can vary from being intricate and taking a couple hours to something very simple which can be done quickly. It is applied as a wet paste, and the reddish-brown dye comes from the leaves of the henna plant. The booklet consists of examples of henna patterns and designs that can be copied.

*Explore further – Use online resources to show videos of henna being applied.*

*Design own mehndi patterns. (NB use the Henna Paste in the collection for display purposes only)*

## Model of Lakshmi

Lakshmi is the Goddess of wealth and prosperity. In images of her, she is depicted in a female form with four arms and four hands. She wears red clothes with a golden lining and is standing on a lotus often with golden coins in her hands. The idea is that the Goddess is always busy distributing wealth and prosperity. She is regularly worshipped in home shrines and temples by her devotees.

## Dancing Sticks

Many Hindu festivals are celebrated with flourishes of dancing and dancing sticks are colourfully decorated sticks with bells on the end.

Occasions where they may be used include Navaratri. During the nine nights of Navaratri, festive dancing takes place. The sticks are normally struck in rhythm.

## Aarti Lamp

Arti is the ceremonial offering of love to a deity during puja (worship). According to the Hindu tradition, there are five elements from which everything is made, and a number of symbols are used to represent these elements of air, earth, space, water and fire. The Arti lamp is associated with the fifth element of fire. During the service, the Arti lamp is moved in a circular, clockwise motion in front of the statues of the gods. It is also taken round the worshippers who hold their hands over the flames and then pass them over their forehead and their hair, symbolically receiving God's blessing and power. In the temple, Puja is drawn to a close with an offering of light before the deity from the Aarti lamp.

## Sari

The traditional costume of Hindu women in India. It consists of a piece of material which is 5.5 metres long. As with western clothes the patterns and colours will vary according to the fashion of the day or the season. There are certain colours relating to certain events. The wedding sari is usually red and gold and is a symbol of maturity. A petticoat may be worn underneath reaching down to the ankles and also a blouse. The most common way to wear a Sari uses the following steps:

1. The Sari is unfolded and the width is adjusted so that the material does not drag on the floor. Hold one end in your right hand. Extra width is tucked inside the petticoat so that it doesn't drag on the floor.
2. The top border is taken in the left hand and wrapped around the waist once. The border is then tucked flatly inside the petticoat all the way around.
3. Then hold c25 metres of the remaining material in the left hand and make pleats about 5 inches wide with your right hand.
4. When you have pleated it uniformly, adjust the length and tuck the pleats inside your petticoat so that they fall straight in front of you.
5. Take the rest of the material and pass it round your waistline and under your right arm.
6. Take the top border of the fabric across the chest and over the left shoulder.
7. Finally drape the lower portion of the Sari over the left arm.

## Rama and Sita Statue

This statue consists of a depiction from the story of Rama and Sita. They were both gods in human form who were married. Sita is kidnapped by the demon king who wishes to make her his wife. She leaves a trail for Rama to follow her and to rescue her, which he does with the help of Hanuman the monkey king. It is their return from exile which is celebrated in the festival of Divali.

### Useful Tips

- *Be sensitive using religious and cultural artefacts and understand any special requirements in handling them.*
- *Avoid creating stereotypes and understand that not all people from the same culture may use the artefact in the same way.*
- *Use the appropriate language to talk about the artefacts.*
- *Teach the children to handle and store the artefacts with respect and sensitivity.*