

## Key Question

How do Hindus show their commitment to God?



## Key Understanding

- Hinduism is one of the oldest religions in the world. It began about 5000 years ago and was linked to the people who lived near to the Indus River in about 2500 BC.
- Hinduism has grown to be the world's third largest religion, after Christianity and Islam. All Hindus believe that life, death and rebirth are a continuous process that we are all part of.
- Many gods are worshipped in Hinduism.
- In Hinduism there is only one God but many ways to describe God. God is called Brahman.
- Many gods and goddesses show Brahman's many qualities.
- Reincarnation: Hindus believe a soul cannot be destroyed, so when a Hindu dies, their soul enters a new living being.
- Moksha: For Hindus, Moksha is the ultimate goal. It happens when a soul stops being reincarnated and is reunited with Brahman.

## Key Vocabulary

Deities



Gods and goddesses that show the different qualities that God has.

Murtis

special statues or images of Hindu gods and goddesses.

Mandir



A special place ( temple) for Hindus to worship.

Shrine

A holy place to pray.



Puja

An act of worship performed by Hindus.

Gayatri Mantra

A sung prayer that is chanted.

Vedas



Ancient holy texts used for guidance by Hindus

Trimurti



The three parts of the universal one God.

Aum



The most widely used symbol in Hinduism that represents god

## Key Learning: How do Hindus show commitment to god?

- 1 **What is Hinduism?**  
Hinduism is the world's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest religion. Founded 5000 years ago in Indus valley around 2500 BC (beyond living memory). One supreme god Brahman who has many qualities which are shown through many gods. Life, death and rebirth are a continuous process.
- 2 **What do Hindus believe about Brahman?**  
He has many qualities, represented as many other murtis (gods or goddesses) and the 'Aum' symbol. This is spoken at the beginning of prayers and worship and represents the Trimurti of Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu. God is in everything and everywhere- how does this affect Hindu's appreciation of the world? Hindus believe they should eventually be reconciled with god through birth, life, death and rebirth - Karma.
- 3 **How are the qualities of Brahman represented through the other gods and goddess?**  
The murtis communicate the different features and characteristics of Brahman. Hindus will pray to different murtis for different purposes. Most households will have a favourite god or goddess and will have a shrine in their houses to offer worship. Mandirs (temples) will also have shrines for the various representations.
- 4 **How do Hindus express their faith?- What is a Mandir and why is it important to Hindus?**  
Every Hindu community will have a Mandir (temple) and within it they will meet to worship and pray. Specialist ceremonies are performed (Arti) and sacred scriptures are read. Mandirs are intricately designed and vertically tall to reduce the distance between themselves and god.
- 5 **How do Hindus express their faith? What is a shrine and Puja and how are they important to Hindus?**  
Shrines are small tables filled with special pictures of the murtis, flowers, food offerings and prayers. They are significant to a Hindu. Puja is the act of worshipping the murtis through performing a ritual where the Hindu worshipper lights incense and a lamp, offers flowers and fruit, washes impurities away and blesses the god through marking their head and the murtis with red kumkum powder.
- 6 **How do Hindus express their faith? Why is praying and reading Holy scriptures important to Hindus?**  
Hindus will repeat the prayer the 'Gayatri Mantra' to the murtis to seek blessings in hope that god will look favourably upon them. They will read the 'Vedas' prayers and ancient texts to guide their lives. They will repeat these daily prayers and see these as important in their worship of God.
- 7 **How do Hindus express their faith? How are pilgrimage and festivals important to Hindus? Reflection**  
A pilgrimage is a journey to a religious place. Journeys are made for different reasons: to give thanks to God, ask for help or to ask for forgiveness. Sites are special places. Festivals are a chance to celebrate a particular aspect of the faith. Holi, the festival of colours, celebrates spring, love and new life. Diwali, the festival of light, marks the start of the Hindu New Year. Kumbh Mela involves bathing in sacred rivers to rid future of sin and evil.