

The many faces of God	Year Group: KS2	No. of lessons: 7
Learning objectives: To explore the idea of God in Hinduism.		
Themes to discuss: How can we know God? Is God in the images? Can we ever know the whole truth about an event or a person? If people believe God is in everyone and everything, what difference should that make to the way they treat other people? Am I like a different person in different social contexts? Why is that?		
Activities and experiences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the smart board show photographs of: a wall; a spear; a snake; a tree trunk; a fan; a rope. Each time ask the question “which animal does this remind you of?” Then ask “which one animal do all six photographs remind you of?” Share the famous Indian story of the blind men and the elephant (you might like to use the modern poetic version below). Discuss the message of the story that nobody sees the whole picture, each concentrates on their own part – think of occasions, people or things in your own lives where this saying rings true. Introduce the question whether we can know everything about God. • Assuming you cannot visit a Hindu temple today, If possible, move the next RE lesson to the first session of the day (or first after lunch) and register the class elsewhere, so that when the pupils enter the classroom for the first time it is as if entering into a Hindu temple e.g. have a colourful display of posters and murtis; incense sticks burning; tea-lights; streamers and bright cloths; bowls of sweets; play a tape of worship / chanting / bhajans; flowers. Children should leave their shoes outside the door, and be expected to sit quietly in front of the murtis absorbing the atmosphere. Talk together about how you feel, and what you are experiencing. Collect a list of questions the children want to ask about what they see and sense. Make sure that these questions are considered in the lessons that follow. Link the different images of gods and goddesses to the message of the blind men and the elephant. Understand that there is one God, Brahman, and these are different forms of God. If this still seems a difficult concept for pupils to grasp you could ask the children to draw a picture of themselves which shows their many different roles and interests, for example wearing different hats or clothes, or holding different objects, showing the many sides and characteristics that one person can have, and then draw parallels with Brahman. In the next lesson, once again share with the class the different murtis and posters and identify the deities by name. In small groups, with each group working with a different artefact, identify the symbolic features of the deity i.e. distinctive physical features; the items they carry; their animal vehicle. <i>Surmise</i> what these may symbolise, and then <i>research</i> their meaning e.g. in the form of simple charts (“I think 		

****rides a ***** because this is a ***** animal. Hindus believe the ***** shows ***** “).

Each group needs to find a simple version of a popular Hindu story about their deity, and prepare a storyboard to retell the story to the class – why not use the digital camera and make a photo storyboard with the pupils as living tableau? Powerpoint optional!

- Enjoy the stories together and share what you have discovered about the different deities. Ask the questions “What do all our discoveries tell us God is like?” and “Do we know everything about God now?” As part of the storyboard display, make decorative linked paper chains with attributes of God written on them – do some of the links need to be blank? Would pupils like to add any ideas of their own to these links?
- What’s it like to have the power of God? You may like to try the Brahma worksheet below.
- Where is God? Is He in the images? In India many natural objects are considered to be particularly sacred, including cows and rivers, but people also “contain” God. Learn the common Namaste greeting (*see right*) and it’s meaning that God is in everything – including people (you may like to use the sensory lesson on the next page as a way of doing this). Use the greeting to begin lessons for the duration of your Hinduism topic. How should people behave towards one another if they accept the meaning of Namaste?



Have you discovered together answers to all the children’s questions from the second session?

Websites and resources:

See the website pages of this booklet for a list of websites with information about different deities. The site

http://www.sanatansociety.org/hindu_gods_and_goddesses.htm also has audio files of chanted mantras (click on the individual gods and goddesses – only some of them have mantras e.g. Ganesha).