

RE Knowledge Organiser—Hinduism

Hinduism is the oldest of the world's religions. It is now practised all over the world but originated in South East Asia.

Hindus recognise one supreme God, **Brahman**. Brahman is present everywhere. The gods and goddesses of Hinduism are different aspects of Brahman.

The main three aspects (**Trimurti**) are:

Vishnu, **Brahma** and **Shiva**

Hindus can pray to different gods and goddesses for help with different needs.

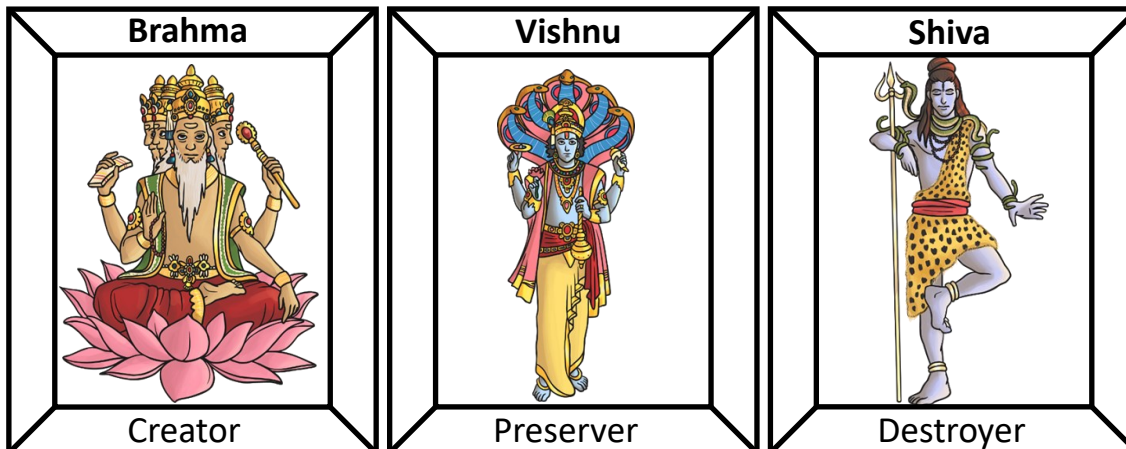
Worship—Puja

Hindus can worship at home or in a **mandir**.

Puja involves prayers (**mantras**) to an image of a deity (**murti**) and giving offerings to deities.

In a Hindu home there may be a shrine which contains a **puja tray** that holds seven items. The items help to use all the senses when worshipping, as a symbol that the whole person is taken up with the worship.

Brahman



Mandir



Puja Tray



Diwali

It is known as the '**festival of lights**' and celebrates the new year. Diwali is a festival of new beginnings and the triumph of good over evil celebrated in late autumn.

Rama + Sita

Prince Rama and his wife Sita were banished from their home. After many years, Sita was kidnapped by **Ravana** (ten-headed demon). With the help of **Hanuman**, Rama rescued his wife. They returned to their home guided by rows of **divas** (lighted lamps). On their return Rama was crowned king.

Lakshmi

The festival also honours Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. Diva lamps help her to find a way into people's homes so she can bring them prosperity.

How is it celebrated?

During Diwali Hindus will:

- Decorate their homes and mandirs with lights, diva lamps and Rangoli patterns
- Spring clean their homes for the new year
- Wear new clothes
- Enjoy firework displays
- Exchange presents such as candles and mithai (sweets)

Pilgrimage to River Ganges



The most famous Hindu **pilgrimage** takes place at the **River Ganges** in India. Hindus believe Brahman is in everything and is in this special river.

What do they do there?

Up to 40 million people come to purify themselves in the water, the biggest gathering of people on Earth. They bathe in the waters of the Ganges on the banks of the city of Varanasi. They believe the water washes away the wrong things they have done and they will be pure.

People are baptised in the river.

The ashes of people who have died are poured into the river. They believe they are taking their relatives to be as close to Brahman as possible. They are returning them to the river like the circle of life carrying on while the river flows.

Divas



River Ganges

