



Syllabus

Year I, Quarter III

Age Group : 5 to 8

Gokulam is the place where Lord Krishna's magical days of childhood were spent. It was here that his divine powers came to light.

Every child has that spark of divinity within. Bala-Gokulam is a forum for children to discover and manifest that divinity. It will enable Hindu children in US to appreciate their cultural roots and learn Hindu values in an enjoyable manner. This is done through weekly gatherings and planned activities which include games, yoga, stories, shlokas, bhajan, arts and crafts and much more.....

Balagokulam is a program of Hindu Swyamsevak Sangh (HSS)

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Shloka

गुरु वन्दना (Salutations to Guru)

गुरुब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः	gururbrahmā gururviṣṇuḥ
गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।	gururdevo maheśvaraḥ
गुरुः साक्षात् परब्रह्म	guruḥ sākṣāt parabrahma
तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥	tasmai śrīgurave namaḥ

My salutations to Guru, who is Brahma, who is also Vishnu, and who is also Maheshvara. Guru is none other than the all-pervading supreme Self.

ध्यानमूलं गुरोर्मूर्तिः	Dhyaana-mulam guormurtih
पूजामूलं गुरोः पदम् ।	pujaamulam guroh padam
मन्त्रमूलं गुरोर्वाक्यं	mantramulam gurorvaakyam
मोक्षमूलं गुरोः कृपा ॥	mokshamulam guroh krpaa

The basis of meditation is guru's murti; the support of worship is guru's feet; the origin of mantra is guru's word; the cause of liberation is guru's blessings.

Geet

BAAL HAI GOPAL HAI

Baal Hai Gopal Hai, Hum Dharma Ke Bhaal Hai
Hum Dharma Ke Bhaal Hai

Poorshottam Maryaadaa Dhaaree, Dwaapar-men Hum Krushana Muraaree
Har Yuga Men Kar Dharma Dhvajaa Le, Vaijayntee Gal Maal Hai...
Bal Hai Gopal Hai...(1)

Veer Shivaa Ranaa Abhimaanee, Guru Govind Sinha Theh Balidaanee
Banda Vairaagee Jaisn Ke, Tejasvee Hum Laal Hai...
Bal Hai Gopal Hai...(2)

Naana Taatyaa Raanee Jansi, Pralayankar Ban Chumee Phaansae
Pandey Mangal Kukaa Phadake, Dhadhak Uthay Ve Jwaal Hai...
Bal Hai Gopal Hai...(3)

Dayanand Aravind Vivekaa, Eka Tatvake Roop Aneko
Divya Jyoti Keshava Maadhava Ki, Sampaadita Har Praana Hai...
Bal Hai Gopal Hai...(4)

Meaning

Our baal are the Gopal and the armoury of Dharma (Duty to uphold righteousness).

In Treta-yuga the magnificent complete being was baal Raam and in Dwaapar-yuga was baal Krishna. In every yuga, the establishing of the victory flag of dharma is the precious wealth we give.

The brave Shivaji and Rana are our pride and Guru Govind singh was a great martyr. Like Banda Vairagee, our bravery shines magnificently.

Naana, Taatyaa and Queen of Jansi met death in the flames of fire. Our rage cannot be controlled as the flames rise high.

Dayaanand, Aravindo and Vivekanand all had the same vision but with variation only in approach. The bright light given by Keshav (PP Doctorji) and Madhav (PP Guruji) is present in everyone of us.



Ten Incarnations (Avatara) of Lord Vishnu

"Whenever Dharma, the situation of law and order, is endangered on this world and whenever there is a grave danger to the human being, god comes to the rescue of world. He incarnates onto this world to re-establish Dharma, law and order, and to protect the good people from the evil elements of the society." Thus, Lord Vishnu is the protector and sustainer of the world.

Lord Vishnu, has incarnated in various live forms. There are ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu. These incarnations are termed as the 'avatars' of Lord Vishnu. In the following chapters, we are going to understand each avatar of Lord Vishnu and appropriate details of the situation under which the Lord Vishnu was compelled to appear on the earth (world). Let us begin with first avatara.

Avatara 1 - Matsya Avatara

A long long time ago, there lived a king named Manu. He was very great, noble and wise King. One day, he was riding his horse near a river. He stopped by a river to quench his thirst. He cupped his hands with water and when he was going to have his last handful; he saw a fish in his palm. When he was about to return it to the water, the little fish begged, 'Hey Manu! take me home and save me from the larger fish". Kind Manu was surprised. He said, "Ok little fish, I will take you my palace". He took it to his palace and placed it in an earthen bowl filled with water.

When the fish grew too big for the bowl, Manu took it to a nearby stream so the fish could have more space to swim around. Soon the fish outgrew the stream and so Manu placed it in the Ganga, the biggest of rivers, but there was a day when the fish was too big even for the Ganga!

By now Manu was sure that this was no ordinary fish. Manu asked fish, "Who are you? You are not an



ordinary fish. You will need bigger placed to live. Let me drop you in to the ocean". Suddenly, the fish spoke, "Hey Manu! listen carefully and do exactly as I say!! A flood such as you have never seen will soon cover the earth. Build yourself a sturdy boat and take with you the seeds of every plant and each kind of animal and the saptha (seven) rishis. I shall protect you when the time comes." Manu obeyed the fish's order and then returned back home and immediately set out to work as instructed by the fish.

In the mean time, a demon (asura) Hayagriva stole the Vedas (the first holy scripture of the world) from Brahma, and hid at the bottom of the oceans. The Vedas are very important for the next cycle of creation. Then, the fish went to the bottom of ocean. He killed Hayagriva and saved the vedas.

By this time, Manu was ready with a big boat. The Fish then went back to Manu. The Great King Manu steered the boat. First, he tied it to the horn of the Fish by using Vasuki, the King of serpents, as the rope. As the Fish told, it rained day after day and night after night till there was nothing to be seen but water everywhere covering the whole earth. This was the great flood (Pralaya, big deluge or dissolution). The Fish surged forward into the water with the boat following it. Manu was really thankful to the fish who was helping him. The Fish was none other than Lord Vishnu. He came to protect mankind and the Earth.

After the flood (Pralaya) stopped, and earth was back as normal, the Lord Vishnu (the fish) instructed Manu, "Manu! let the animals freely roam the earth. Sow seeds so plants could grow again".

Soon, the whole world was back to normal. The lands were green and the plants and trees were growing. The animals started roaming the forests, the birds were flying. Life was starting new. During the flood (pralaya), the Lord Vishnu incarnated (arrived) in the form of fish. Hence, the name Matsya Avatara. Matsya means Fish and Avatar means incarnation.





Avatara 2 - Kurma Avatara

The gods (Devas) and the demons (Asuras) were often at war with each other, fighting to prove their dominance and superiority. Again as the law of nature, the gods would always win, for upliftment of the world.

But during one of the wars, in spite of their best efforts the gods were not able to defeat the demons. The gods got very worried and panicked. They went to the Supreme God, Lord Vishnu. As we learnt in the prior chapter, Lord Vishnu is the protector and sustainer of the Universe. He, the Almighty, the ever-giving Lord, readily agreed to help the them.

Lord Vishnu came up with a plan. He would sprinkle lots of medicinal herbs in the ocean. Then, the gods would churn the milky ocean for nectar (amrita). Drinking Amrita would give back their strength and make them immortal (never die). With their new strength, they would fight the demons and be sure of a grand victory. The gods were very much excited about this plan and at once agreed to this and thanked Lord Vishnu for helping them.

The gods gathered together to plan how to go about this task. Churning the ocean was precisely not a simple task. All gods, together, could not have accomplished this challenging task. They requested Mount Mandara (also know as Mount Meru) to serve as a churning stick. They requested the endless serpent, Vasuki, too to serve as the rope. But still, the gods in their weakened state could not perform this task without help. So they schemed (planned) and came up with the solution.

They invited the demons and falsely promised them a share of the nectar in return for their help in churning the Ocean. The demons readily agreed to this plan and were eager to win their share of nectar, be immortal and win over all the world. They were all excited and waited for the big day to happen.



When finally, the big day came, the gods and demons gathered near the ocean. Mount Mandara and Vasuki took their positions. The gods held the serpent's head while the gods took his tail and together they pulled, once this way and once that, with all their might. But, the harder they worked, they found the churn was sinking into the ocean and they were unable to hold it up. Again, Lord Vishnu came for their help. He appeared as the huge Tortoise (Kurma Avatara - Tortoise Form). He asked the gods and demons to hold the mountain on his back so that it will not sink. With the help of Lord Vishnu, gods and demons continued the churning of ocean.



After churning for a long time, the hidden treasures from the ocean rose, one by one, towards the surface. The gods and demons were surprised to see those treasures. At last, a bowl of nectar came up.

The gods swiftly grabbed the precious drink and started running away with the bowl. Suddenly, a beautiful girl appeared in their path. She was so enchanting and magical, they stopped and listened to her every word. She told them that she would distribute the nectar equally between all those who had worked for it. The demons readily agreed to her.

For this, she ordered the gods to form one row and the demons another. Then the maiden Mohini began serving. The gods received their portion first. As soon as she served them, Mohini disappeared, bowl and all! Mohini had tricked the demons!! The demons who got nothing for their efforts now realized that they had been tricked by gods and by a young, beautiful woman, who was none other than Lord Vishnu in Mohini's disguise!! At last, all gods became immortal and demons got nothing.

Lord Vishnu, in Kurma Avatara (in form of a tortoise) helped the gods to gain back all the precious things that were lost in the ocean. He supported a huge mountain on his back. This shows his power and compassion (care and kindness) for the welfare (happiness) of his devotees. He also helped the gods to churn out the nectar, which ensured them long life and strength to win wars against the evils. Again as ever, Good prevailed over evil.





Guru Poornima

The full moon day of the month of Ashadha (July-August) is traditionally celebrated as Guru Poornima. Guru means teacher and Poornima means the full moon day of the month.

This day is also known as Vyasa Poornima. The great Sage, Vyaasa was born on this full moon day. He completed the codification of the four Vedas on this day. He completed the writing of the eighteen puranas on this day. Owing to the passage of time Vyasa Purnima came to be called Guru Purnima.

How does this Sanskrit word Guru come from? The "Gu" means darkness and "Ru" denotes the remover of that darkness. What is darkness? Darkness is our ignorance, deficiency and lacking. Thus the one who removes our ignorance and deficiency is a Guru. In other words, Guru is the one who gives us a knowledge and lights up a wisdom in us.

The mother (parents) is considered as our first Guru. Mother gives everything to her child. Remember ! what your mother taught you? She taught you love and devotion. She taught you language. She taught you how to walk and how to talk! She taught you all kinds of immotions and manners. The very first lesson that you received is from your mother. Following verse glorifies the Mother as Guru

Gurumadhye sthita Maata Matrimadhye sthito Guru

"In the Guru lives the Divine Mother, in the Mother resides the Guru"

Is the mother only a Guru? No!! Mother is not the only Guru. We acquire knowledge from others too such as School Teacher, College Lecturer or our Coach or even the Shikshak at our Balagokulam. They are also referred as Guru. One should always be thankful to whom he or she gains knowledge and wisdom. One should always give respect to Guru.

A Guru also inspires and guides us on to the path of God-realization. In Hindu tradition, the Guru is looked upon as an embodiment of God himself. It is through his grace and guidance that one reaches the highest state of wisdom and bliss. The Guru or

teacher also guides us into the right path when we lose track and also boosts our energy when we run out of steam.

On this auspicious day of *Guru Poornima*, many disciples perform a puja of their respective spiritual preceptor (*Guru*). One may even celebrate in silence, reading the religious scriptures. The best form of worshiping *Guru* is to follow his teachings, remember/implement them and propagate them.

In our *Balagokulams* we do not consider an individual as a *Guru*. Why is that? Why don't we consider an individual as a *Guru*? It is because an individual, such as mother or a school teacher or even a shikshak at *Balagokulam*, can not be a permanent guide for all time to come. All of them are mortal, and however great, have their own limitations. Then who is it we worship as *Guru* in our *Balagokulams*? It is sacred *Bhagava Dhvaj*!!

The sacred *Bhagava Dhvaj* that represents all the *Gurus*, is worshipped as the *Guru* of the entire Hindu society. *Bhagava Dhvaj* is as ancient as the Hindu people themselves. It has flown over the hermitages of the seers and sanyaasins and also over the celestial palaces of emperors. It has flown triumphantly over the battlefields of freedom struggle and has symbolized the immortal spirit of freedom in the Hindu mind.



Bhagava Dhvaj is the one supreme symbol held in universal reverence by all sects and castes, and all creeds and faiths of the Hindu people. It is in fact the greatest unifying symbol of the entire Hindu world. The color of the *Bhagava Dhvaj* - the saffron, depicts sacrifice and service. The flames rising from the *yajna* are saffron in color and indeed reflect this spirit.

The annual function of *Sri Guru Pooja* in our *Balagokulams* presents a moment of introspection for us to check up how far we have progressed in this path of renunciation and selfless service to the society over the last one year, and take lessons from it and resolve to march faster in the current year.



-: Exercise :-

Fill up the blanks

- 1) The festival, Guru Purnima falls in the month of _____.
a) February b) March c) April d) July
- 2) There are _____ avatara (incarnations) of the Lord Vishnu
a) two b) three c) six d) ten
- 3) _____ is the first avatara (incarnation) of the Lord Vishnu
a) Kurma b) Matsya c) Krishna d) Vamana
- 4) _____ is the second avatara (incarnation) of the Lord Vishnu
a) Kurma b) Matsya c) Vamana d) None of these
- 5) Lord Vishnu incarnated as a fish (matsya) to save the _____.
a) Earth b) Heaven c) None of these d) Earth and Heaven
- 6) Demon _____ stole vedas.
a) Hiranyaksha b) Hayagriva c) Ravana d) None of these
- 7) The Gods and demons churned the _____.
a) River b) Ocean c) Lake d) None of these
- 8) Gods gained _____ which made them immortal.
a) Nectar b) Water c) Fruits d) None of these
- 9) Lord _____ supported a huge mountain on his back.
a) Rama b) Shankara c) Vishnu d) Brahma
- 10) In Balagokulam, _____ is considered as Guru.
a) Shikshak b) Doctorji c) Guruji d) Bhagava Dhvaj

Questions:

1) What is *Guru Poornima*? What is its importance?

2) What is the best and appropriate way of worshipping *Guru*?

3) Why does the Lord *Vishnu* incarnate and come to this world?

4) How did gods trick demons while churning the ocean?

5) How did *Mount Mandara* and endless serpent help gods in churning the ocean?

Color this Picture



Color this Picture



Shloka

कृष्ण (krishna)

वसुदेव सुतं देवम्	vasudeva sutam devam
कंसचाणूर मर्दनम् ।	kansa-chaanura mardanam
देवकी परमानन्दम्	devaki paramaa-nandam
कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ॥	krishnam vande jagad-gurum

I bow to Sri Krishna, son of Vasudeva, the divine being, guru of the entire world, the killer of wicked Kamsa and Chanoora, and the source of happiness to mother Devaki.

गोविन्द गोविन्द हरे मुरारे	Govinda Govinda hare muraare
गोविन्द गोविन्द मुकुन्द कृष्ण ।	Govinda Govinda mukunda Krishna
गोविन्द गोविन्द रथाङ्गपाणे	Govinda Govinda rathang-paane
गोविन्द दामोदर माधवेति ॥	Govinda daamodar maadh-veti

O my mind, keep chanting Govinda, Govinda. Daamodar, Maadhava and that's all.

Geet

Hindu Mission is Prerana

Hindu Mission is Prerana
 Mai Sadhna Neo Sandhna,
 Sadhna true Sandhna

Ganga is for purity
 Himalaya for eternity
 Song and Dance of Dharma
 is the Shakha spirit of quality

||Hindu Mission||

Shakha is through Krishna thought
 Bhagawa is the master sought
 in our struggles of life and work
 follow what the Gita taught
 follow what the Gita taught

||Hindu Mission||

Shine of wealth is charity
 need of hour is unity
 peace and tranquil process is the
 Keshava vision of clarity
 Keshava vision of clarity

||Hindu Mission||



Avatara 3 - Varaha Avatara

Now is the time to learn about the third incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

Long long ago, there lived a demon named Hiranyaksha. He was such a giant that the earth trembled when he walked and the sky cracked when he shouted. He wanted to take control of the heaven. So he started to harass (hassle) the gods. The Gods fearing Hiranyaksha's attack; took shelter in the caves of the mountain ranges on the earth. When cruel Hiranyaksha came to know that the Gods were hiding on the earth, he invaded the earth too.

Neither gods nor human could kill Hiranyaksha. It is because he had got awarded a boon that neither beast nor man nor god could kill him. Hiranyaksha wanted to destroy the earth. So he snatched away the earth and drowned it into the ocean. Mother Earth sank to the bottom of the ocean.

Frightened gods and humans started praising the supreme god, Lord Vishnu. He appeared before them as a tiny Boar. He knew that Hiranyaksha can not be killed by either human or gods. That is why he took the form of Boar.

The Boar (Lord Vishnu in form a boar) grew and grew till it became the size of a large mountain. Emitting a terrifying roar, it took one mighty leap into the air and tore the clouds with its hoofs and dived to the ocean bed in search of Mother earth. It dug his tusk into the ocean bed and lifted Mother Earth onto it, and began rising towards the surface.

Meanwhile Hiranyaksha rushed to the seashore after hearing the terrifying roar. He saw the lord Vishnu carrying the earth. He rushed towards him with a mace in his hand. He shouted, "You fake! Where are you carrying away the earth I conquered? Stop or I'll crush your head with this mace!"

Hiranyaksha challenged Lord Vishnu in the Boar form to fight with him but Vishnu ignored all his warnings



and continued rising to the surface. Seeing this Hiranyaksha gave a chase (ran after), but the boar didn't even look back.

Hiranyaksha said, "Wait! You imposter (cheat)! I know you can defeat all with your magic power of Yoga but at present you are near me and without the magic power. So you're sure to be defeated." The boar escaped to put the earth at a safe place and paid no attention to the furious (angry) Hiranyaksha. Hiranyaksha became very angry and shouted, "How can you run away like a coward? Return me my earth, if you love life."

The earth was already frightened but seeing Hiranyaksha it began to tremble more. The boar brought the earth over the surface of the ocean and placed Bhoomidevi (Mother Earth) gently on it and blessed her, "May you support yourself in keeping with the divine order."

He then turned to face Hiranyaksha. The demon threw his mace at the boar but the boar stepped aside and raised his mace. They fought for a long time with their maces.

When Brahma got a chance to warn Vishnu, he said "You've only an hour before the sunset. Destroy the demon before it is dark so that he gets no opportunity (chance) to use black magic." (Demons get great black magic powers after dark!!)

Hearing Brahma's words Hiranyaksha hurled (threw) his mace towards Lord Vishnu who flung (pushed) it away. Having lost the mace, the demon began hitting out with his fists on the chest of the boar.

The boar hit the demon hard on his face with his fist and tossed him in the air. Hiranyaksha fell over his head and died on the spot. After the fierce battle was over, Lord Vishnu returned Manu his earth back and the gods their heaven. The Gods were delighted (very happy) to get their heavens back and Manu lived to rule the earth for a long time.

In this way, Lord Vishnu (Varaha Bhagwan) slew (killed) the Demon Hiranyaksha and brought the Earth in her proper orbit.





Avatara 4 - Narasimha Avatara

We all learnt that Lord Vishnu, in the form of a Wild Boar (Varaha Avatara), had killed Hiranyaksha. All were happy, but that didn't last for too long. Hiranyaksha's elder brother Hiranyakashipu was very angry with his death and wanted to take revenge.

Hiranyakashipu then went to Mount Mandarachala to practice severe penance (tapa) to become the master of the whole universe. After his penance, he got a boon that he would never die either by man or god or devil. He would never die indoors or outdoors, on earth or in the sky. With these boons, he was practically as good as immortal.

After getting such a boon, Hiranyakashipu became more wild and aggressive. He took the control of the whole universe and proclaimed (announced), "No one should take the name of (pray to) Vishnu because no one is greater than me, not even Vishnu!" Everyone got worried. They approached Lord Vishnu for help. Lord Vishnu assured them that he knew how to kill Hiranyakashipu and asked them not to worry, and to wait and watch patiently.

While Hiranyakashipu was doing his penance (tapas) on Mount Mandarachala, his wife Kayadhu gave birth to a son, Prahlad in the Ashram of Saint Narada. As Prahlad was growing up, his mother helped him to realize the glory of Lord Vishnu and thus Prahlad became a great devotee of Vishnu.

One day Hiranyakashipu lovingly asked his son, "Dear Son, what do you think is the best thing in life?" Prahlad replied, "To renounce (give up) the world and seek refuge in Vishnu." Hiranyakashipu was shocked to hear this. He could not tolerate the idea that his son loved the sworn enemy of the demons, Lord Vishnu. He felt that someone was deliberately trying to brainwash his son.

Hiranyakashipu tried a lot to change his son's way of thinking. He rebuked his own son. He thought of rigorous punishments for Prahlad. He even tried to kill him. But Prahlad did not change a bit. He stood before his father quietly with his hands folded and said, "O father! You have unnecessarily developed enmity against Vishnu. If you wish well of yourself you too should adore him!"

Now Hiranyakashipu raged in anger. He lost his control. He shouted, "Prahlad! Where is your Vishnu? Bring him before me. I'm going to kill him.... then you will realize

that no one is superior to me!"

Prahlad calmly said, "Father!, Lord Vishnu is omnipresent (present everywhere). There is not a single place where he is not found. You do not know the power of that omnipresent Vishnu."

Hiranyakashipu's fury (anger) was at its climax (peak). He stood in front of a heated iron pillar and asked Prahlad, "Can you embrace (hug) this pillar if your Vishnu is in it also?" Prahlad did not hesitate even for a moment but rushed towards the pillar and embraced it. The heated iron did not burn him. The king got up from his throne in fury (anger) and kicked the pillar with his foot.



And what a surprise! The pillar cracked with a thundering sound and Lord Vishnu appeared there in the form of Narasimha. One half of his body was of a man (nara) and the other half of a lion (simha). And that is why Narasimha! He had matted hair on his head, large moustaches on the face and terrible teeth in the mouth. His paws had terrible nails on them.

Narasimha was half man-half lion. The demon king, Hirayakashipu lifted his iron mace to strike Narasimha but almighty that he was, he brushed it aside swiftly. Now it was twilight, Narashimha in his furious form came forward to punish Hiranyakashipu for troubling his beloved devotee Prahlad. But Prahlad fell at the feet of the Lord and asked for his father's forgiveness. On seeing Prahlad, Narasimha calmed down and forgave Hiranyakashipu.

Pleased with Prahlad's sincere devotion Narasimha blessed him with eternal happiness and splendour. He made him the crown prince of the Kingdom which Prahlad for many years ruled righteously.

The above story illustrates (tells us) as to how belief and hope determine our perception (idea) of God. Prahlad believed that God exists everywhere and that every object in the world had the essence and presence of God. And his belief turned true when the Lord did appear from the pillar!





The Story of Lord Krishna and Kalia

The day Janmashtami falls on the 8th day of the month of Shravan (July-August). This is a birth day of Lord Krishna. Vasudeva was his father and Devaki his mother. He was nurtured by cowherd (milk-man) Nanda and his wife Yashoda. They loved him very much. Lovingly they used call him as Kanha! Krishna (Kanha) did amazing things in his childhood.

You must have seen a picture of child Krishna. He has a flute in his hand. He wears a peacock feather on his head. He loves them. Child Krishna was full of Pranks. Every one in Gokul loved him. Women gave him curd and butter to eat. They loved him as if their own child.

Krishna's childhood was full of fun and frolic. He was dark and handsome. Krishna had many friends and he went playing with them in the village. He was the leader of the group. He loved to play tricks on people but never with a bad intention. But everybody still loved him. Krishna became a cowherd. He liked cows and the green fields in which they grazed.

All the cowherds were his friends and every morning they use to take out the cattle to the jungle for grazing. Krishna and all his friends use to play in the jungle. Krishna would play his flute sitting on a branch of tree or on a big rock. The cows and even the wild animals got addicted to the sweet music of Krishna's flute.

One fine day, a huge snake by the name of Kalia came to live in the river Yamuna, the only source of safe drinking water for the cows and the cowherds! Kalia was a poisonous snake and soon the whole river became poisonous. All the fish in the river died and other water animals including the crocodiles left the river. There was hue and cry everywhere. Krishna decided to teach the wicked Kalia a lesson.

One day, Krishna and his friends were playing by the riverside. While playing with the ball, they got very close to the river Yamuna. Accidently, one of Krishna's friend



dropped ball in the river. All puzzled, how to get ball back? Nobody dared to jump into the river and get it back. They thought that they lost the ball. Suddenly, Krishna said, "let me jump into the river and get the ball back". All cried, "Krishna! Don't go! There is a snake inside. It is very dangerous". But Krishna wasn't afraid at all!



Krishna went to the river looking for Kaliya and found that Kaliya lived in the deepest part of the river. Krishna jumped into the river. Kaliya got angry at the very sight of Krishna and immediately pounced to kill Krishna. But Krishna slipped away! He rushed towards Kalia's tail. He twisted Kalia's tail so badly that Kalia cried, "Ahhhh!!!!".

In a flash Krishna got hold of Kaliya's head. He stood on it. Kaliya tried to shake off Krishna but Krishna stayed on his head. Kaliya then dived deep into the river, trying to drown Krishna but Krishna could hold his breath as long as he wanted.

Meanwhile, a big crowd already gathered on the banks of Yamuna. Nanda and Yashoda also arrived there. Everyone was afraid and worried about Krishna. Yashoda was recklessly crying, "Kanha!! Oh, Kanha! Where are you? Oh! God, please save my Kanha from that poisonous snake!!"

Meanwhile, in the river, battle was going on between Krishna and Kalia. At last, Kaliyan was forced to come up to save himself from Krishna. Kalia tried to escape but could not! Krishna began kicking Kaliya left and right on his head. Soon Kaliya was badly injured and also began losing strength. Kaliya started vomiting poison and Krishna kept stamping his head until all the poison came out. Kaliya gave up the struggle and begged Krishna, "Hey Krishna! I beg you. spare me. I will not bother anyone". Krishna ordered Kaliya, "You must leave the river immediately and don't come back here again". Kaliya bowed his head and quietly left the Yamuna.

People including Nanda and Yashoda, standing on the banks of the river, were watching this battle. They were amazed and also surprised, "How can such a small child fight a poisonous snake?" But when Kalia left the river, everyone rejoiced. Krishna became a Hero and sweet-heart of everyone!



-: Exercise :-

Fill up the blanks

- 1) _____ is the third avatara (incarnation) of the Lord Vishnu
a) Kurma b) Varaha c) Krishna d) Vamana
- 2) _____ is the fourth avatara (incarnation) of the Lord Vishnu
a) Kurma b) Matsya c) Narsimha d) None of these
- 3) Lord Vishnu incarnated as Varaha and killed _____.
a) Earth b) Heaven c) None of these d) Earth and Heaven
- 4) Lord Vishnu incarnated as Narsimha and killed _____.
a) Hiranyaksha b) Hayagriva c) Ravana d) Hiranyakashipu
- 5) Lord Vishnu incarnated as Varaha and killed _____.
a) Hiranyaksha b) Hayagriva c) Ravana d) Hiranyakashipu
- 6) Hiranyakashipu's son, _____ was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu.
a) Shravan b) Dhruva c) Prahlad d) None of these
- 7) _____ was Krishna's father and _____ was his mother.
a) Devaki b) Vasudev c) Yashoda d) Nanda
- 8) Lovingly Nanda and Yashoda used to call Krishna as _____.
a) Rama b) Prahlad c) Kanha d) Brahma
- 9) A poisonous snake, Kalia came to live in the river _____.
a) Yamuna b) Ganga c) Saraswati d) None of these
- 10) Krishna taught _____ a lesson.
a) Rama b) Kalia c) Ravana d) Mandavi

Questions:

1) Why did Lord Vishnu incarnate as Varaha (Boar)?

2) Why did Lord Vishnu incarnate as Narsimha (half man, half animal)?

3) Who raised (nurtured) Krishna?

4) Describe the battle between Krishna and Kalia?



Make a Rakhi for your brother....

Rakhi, a colourful piece of art, with silken threads entwined together in an attractive manner and adorned with beads and golden threads are placed on the wrists of brothers for their good health, wealth, happiness and success. This festival establishes the bond of love and affection amongst brothers and sisters. Let us learn how to make a Rakhi.

Material needed:

- » Strands of silk threads-2/3
- » A pair of scissors
- » Cotton thread to tie knots
- » Beads, sitaras, golden threads and sponge to decorate
- » Glue
- » A toothbrush with hard bristles

Method:

Take 20-24 inches long silk thread strands in a bunch. If you want to make multi coloured rakhis take silk threads of different colours.

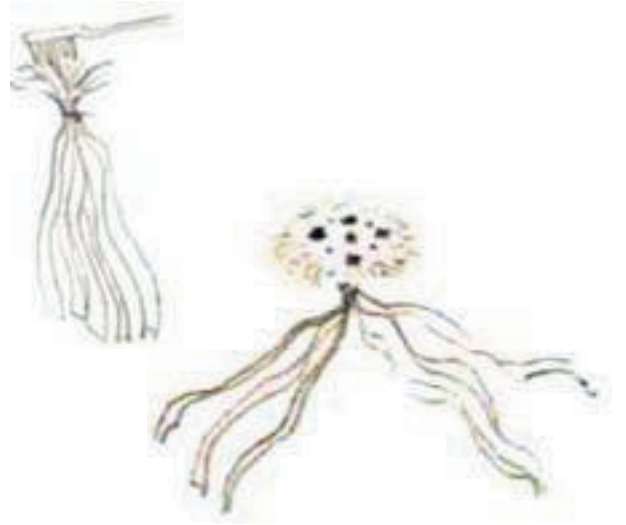


Tie a tight knot with a cotton thread on the one-fourth part of the silken thread bunch. The one-fourth part will be made into a rakhi while the three-fourth will be the string to tie around the wrist.

Now make sure the heads of the silk threads of the one-fourth part of the bunch do not remain in loops, in case they are, cut them with a pair of scissors.



Once they are independent of loops, with a toothbrush rub hard on these threads and brush them with strong strokes by holding tight on the knot. With repeated strokes the silk threads turns fluffy and soft.



To make the string, divide the three-fourth part of the silk thread in two equal parts and plait them separately. At the end tie a knot and brush the end again.

Once this is done decorate it with beads or sitaras. Stick them with glue. You can purchase sponge of a suitable colour, cut it into a star shape, decorate it with beads or sitaras. Golden threads can be entwined used for decoration. And then stick it with glue.



Shloka

कार्य सिद्धि (kārya siddhi)

शुक्लाम्बरधरं विष्णुम् ।	śuklāambaradharam viṣṇum
शशिवर्णं चतुर्भुजम् ॥	śaśivarṇam caturbhujam
प्रसन्नवदनं ध्यायेत् ।	prasannavadanam dhyāyet
सर्व विघ्नोऽपशान्तये ॥	sarva vighno'paśāntaye

For the removal of all the obstacles in my effort, I meditate upon Bhagawan Ganesha, who wears a white garment, who is all pervading, who has a bright complexion (like a full moon), who has four shoulders, who has an ever smiling face.

गणेश (Ganesh)

अगजानन पद्मार्कम्	Agajanana Padmarkam
गजाननं अहर्निषं ।	Gajananam Aharnisham
अनेकदन्तं भक्तानां	Anekadhamtham Bhakthanam
एकदन्तं उपास्महे ॥	Ekadantham Upasmahe

(I worship day and night that elephant faced Lord Ganesha who is like sun to the lotus face of Mother Parvati. Giver of many boons, the single tusked Ganesh, I salute Thee to give me a boon)

Geet

Hindu Mission is Prerana

Hindu Mission is Prerana
 Mai Sadhna Neo Sandhna,
 Sadhna true Sandhna

Ganga is for purity
 Himalaya for eternity
 Song and Dance of Dharma
 is the Shakha spirit of quality

||Hindu Mission||

Shakha is through Krishna thought
 Bhagawa is the master sought
 in our struggles of life and work
 follow what the Gita taught
 follow what the Gita taught

||Hindu Mission||

Shine of wealth is charity
 need of hour is unity
 peace and tranquil process is the
 Keshava vision of clarity
 Keshava vision of clarity

||Hindu Mission||



Avatara 5 - Vamana Avatara

After Prahlad renounced his kingdom, Virechana, his son became the King of demons and after Virechana's death, his son, Bali (Prahlad's grandson) ruled the kingdom and was a prosperous king. But Bali was unhappy in spite of being a powerful and strong king. He aspired (desired) to be the lord of the heaven like Indra.

Bali was blessed and granted a divine golden chariot and celestial weapons. He, then, set out to concur the heaven. He defeated Indra and ascended the throne of heaven and became the lord of three worlds.

Meanwhile in a hermitage (ashram), Mother Aditi, the mother of gods and her husband Sage Kashyap could not bear the defeat of Indra and gods and were very sad. After advised by the Sage Kashyap, the Mother Aditi prayed the Lord Vishnu. The Lord Vishnu appeared before her and said, "O Divine lady, I am pleased with your devotion and your worship shall not prove fruitless. I shall be born as a son to you."

Months later, on the twelfth day of the bright half of Bhadrapada (the sixth month of the Hindu calendar), Lord Vishnu was born to Aditi. Shortly, after the birth, Sage Kashyap and Aditi were amazed to see the little baby suddenly grew up to the form of short - statured Brahman. The little boy, Vamana was clad in a loincloth and carried a staff and a gourd in the hand.

The astonished Aditi realized that the little boy was none other that the Lord himself and said to her son Vamana, "Now you should defeat Bali for the welfare of gods and the human beings."

Following the advice of his mother, Vamana went to meet Bali. Vamana knew that though Bali is an evil, he respected Brahmin (noble man) and he would give anything to Brahmin if he deserved it, even how much difficult it might. Vamana appeared before Bali. King Bali was happy to receive the visitor.

Bali rose from his seat to welcome him. Then he gave the Brahman (Vamana) the special seat and washed his feet. After that he asked, "O holy one, what can I do for you? Take from me whatever you desire." But Vamana kept quiet. Seeing this Bali again said, "Do not hesitate, ask for what ever you want - Cows, Elephants, horses, Chariots, Villages, anything?" This time Vamana shook his head and said, "All I need is a strip of land, Three paces long as measured by my stride (feet)."

Bali was very disappointed with Vamana's humble demand and said, "When I am ready to grant you a whole continent, what all you want is only three paces of land? Vamana replied, "He who is not satisfied with three paces of land will not be satisfied with the whole continent. I have asked for three paces of land and that is all I need."

At that moment, King Bali's associates realized the truth that the Brahman was none other than Lord Vishnu. They alerted him. But Bali replied back, "Nothing can be done now. I have given my word. I shall give Brahmin whatever he is asking for" Bali turned to Vamana and said, "You shall have as much you want."

And to everybody's surprise Vamana began to grow and grow. Bali and all others present there were astounded to see the whole creation of the Vamana's body.

Vamana grew big. He began to measure the three paces. With his first stride he covered the earth, and with his second stride he covered the Heavens. Vamana now asked Bali, "You had promised me three paces of land and I have covered all that was yours in two strides. Where should I place my third stride? You have failed to keep your words and for that you shall suffer."

Bali said, "O lord!, I am not afraid of punishment, place your third step on my head, which is more valuable to me than all my possessions put together."

At that moment Prahlad appeared and bowed to Lord Vishnu and asked for Bali's forgiveness. The Lord Vishnu then said, "Your grandson has stood firm by his promise even after knowing the truth about me. He is serene and he is forgiven for all his deeds." Saying so, Lord Vishnu disappeared and King Bali was forgiven and the heaven was returned to gods and Indra to rule.

In this way Lord Vishnu (Vamana) obtained the earth and the heavens for the gods from their enemy - the righteous but vain (proud) king of the demons, Bali.





Avatara 6 - Parashurama Avatara

Once there was a King named Arjuna, who was a warrior, brave, strong and dare-devil! But Arjuna misused his powers and became an evil person. To end Arjuna's misdeeds, Lord Vishnu came to earth as Parashurama. He was born as the youngest son to Sage Jamadagni and his wife Renuka.

As Parashurama was growing up, he became very powerful and was unparalleled in generosity and in his strength. Though a Brahmin son, Parashurama developed love for weapons and his favorite weapon was the Axe. Sage Jamadagni, his wife Renuka, Parashurama and his 4 brothers were happily living in the Ashrama. They had a Kamadhenu, a cow, who used to fulfill all their needs.

King Arjuna knew about the power of Kamadhenu. He thought to himself, 'If I possess this Kamadhenu, it will fulfill all my desires!' Once upon a day, Jamadagni and Renuka were alone in the Ashrama, King Arjuna came there with his soldiers. Without Jamadagni's knowledge, he and his soldiers seized the Kamadhenu (cow) and her calf and took them to the capital. Renuka had loved Kamadhenu and the calf more than her life.

After few days when Parashurama returned to the Hermitage. He found his mother was weeping and was in distress. Renuka turned to him and complained "My son, what a misery! Arjuna has robbed us of Kamadhenu and the calf."

Parashurama was wild with anger and he said "How dare he commit such a sin, do not worry I shall deal with him?" Parashurama set out to Arjuna's palace to get back his Mother's beloved cow and her calf.

Parashurama stormed into Mahishmati, Arjuna's capital carrying his axe and challenged Arjuna, "You have stolen our Kamadhenu. Return it if you love life." Arjuna took Parashurama as a weak boy and he carelessly remarked, "The Kshatriyas have the claim over the best things of the world. You and your father should practice penance only as you are a Brahman. Kamadhenu will suit well in the palace."

Angry Parashurama stormed out of the palace and went in search of Kamadhenu. Arjuna got enraged and sent his powerful army to face Parashurama but Parashurama attacked all of them and killed them. Enraged at the destruction of the core of his army, Arjuna himself rushed towards him with uprooted trees and rocks. But Parashurama

attacked Arjuna and cut off his arms as one cuts off the branches of a tree and then brought his axe down on the tyrant's neck and killed him. When the king fell, the frightened soldiers began to run away for life.

Parashurama then returned home with Kamadhenu and the calf after killing Arjuna. At the ashrama gate Renuka was eagerly waiting for them. Upon Parashurama's arrival, Renuka was very delighted and was joyful. On seeing his mother, Parashurama touched her feet and returned her the beloved Kamadhenu and the calf.

But Jamadagni did not appreciate the adventure of his son. He said, "You have developed enmity between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. You have to go on a pilgrimage to cleanse this sin." And Parashurama obeyed his father and set out on a pilgrimage. Parashurama returned home after his visit to sacred places.

Meanwhile as days went by, Arjuna's sons were planning for the revenge against Parashurama for slaying



their father. Once when Jamadagni and Renuka were alone in the Ashrama, they invaded the Ashrama and cut off head of Jamadagni. Renuka fainted on seeing this. On returning, Parashurama saw this tragedy and asked her mother, "Who did this?" But Renuka's agony was so deep that she could not utter a word. Full of grief and anger, Parashurama made a vow, "Mother you have sighed with grief twenty one times, I'll make the earth devoid (empty) of the Kshatriyas as many times."

Enraged, Parashurama went to Arjuna's capital. With fury he hunted down all the sons of Arjuna one after another and killed them by cutting off their heads with his axe. The existence of the Kshatriyas was wiped out from the surface of the globe. After all the wars fought, Parashurama turned to penance believing that he had made the Brahmins absolutely free from fears of the Kshatriyas.

In this way Lord Vishnu (as Parashurama) exterminated those kshatriyas who were evil and were killing Brahman's for their pleasures.





Story of Lord Ganesha

Ganesha is the god of wisdom and prosperity and is invoked before the beginning of any auspicious work by the Hindus. He is the son of Shiva and Parvati, brother of Kartikeya and the general of the gods. The story of creation of Ganesha is a very fascinating one.

A long long time ago when Lord Shiva, was away fighting for the gods, the lady of the house, goddess Parvathi was alone at home. On one occasion, she needed someone to guard the house when she was going for a bath. Unable to think of an alternative, she used her powers to create a son, Ganesha. She instructed Ganesha to keep strict vigil on the entrance to the house and not to allow anyone into the house. Ganesha agreed and stayed on the strictest of strict vigils.

In the meantime Lord Shiva returned happy after a glorious victory for the gods, only to be stopped at the entrance by Ganesha. Ganesha, acting on Parvathi's orders verbatim, did not allow Shiva to enter the house. Lord Shiva was enraged beyond control and in a fit of rage slashed the head of Ganesha. In the meantime Parvati came out from her bath and was aghast at the scene. She was very very angry at her lordship for what had happened and explained him the situation.

Lord Shiva wanted to make it up to Parvathi very badly and agreed to put life back into Ganesha by putting the head of the first sleeping living creature that came in sight which was sleeping with its head to the north. He sent his soldiers to go in search of the creature. The first creature which came in sight was an elephant. So Lord Shiva re-created his son with the head of the elephant. Hence the trunk of Lord Ganesha.

Parvathi was still not totally happy with the deal and wanted more. Then Shiva granted Ganesha a boon that before beginning of any undertaking or task people would worship Lord Ganesha. Thus the reason for worship of Ganesha before start of any work.

Ganesha went outdoors one day to play and found a stray cat. Too small to know better, he began to pull



her ears and tail. He roughed up that poor cat and even began to beat her with a stick, making marks on her head till, yowling, she ran for her life. Some hours later Ganesha went into the house. His mother, to his astonishment and dismay, was looking terrible. Her hair was a mess, she had scratches on her face and she limped from the bruises on her body.

"Mom!" cried Ganesha. "Who beat you up?" Sadly Parvati replied, "It was you, I'm afraid." Ganesha surprisingly said, "No way! What do you mean? I never did it!"

Mother asked, "Do you remember, a while ago, how you treated a certain cat?"

Now Ganesha thought that the cat's owner must have come and beat her on account of him, and he burst into tears.

"Where is that man?" he sobbed.

"No, not that. You see, my boy, I am not just your physical mother. I have filled the whole universe with my Being. As a matter of fact, whatever you do to any, you do that to Me."

Some years later the Mother was sitting in her dressing room in a very lofty mood. She had recently been meditating and in that mood had become quite conscious of her own divinity. Seeing Ganesha and her other son, Kartikeya playing nearby, she said to them "Look, I will give an apple to whoever comes back first, after traveling all around the universe. So run this race, but cover every mile of the universe."

Kartikeya immediately dropped what he was doing, went out, and finding his peacock, he most liked to ride upon, (which was a magic speed), he set off on the long journey. He went as fast as he could, over the earth, out to the moon and planets, sailed through the galaxies and visited the asteroids, even peeping into a black hole or two. Almost exhausted, he recalled that he had to save energy enough to return. When Kartikeya finally reached home he saw his brother was already eating apple!

Ganesha, you see, had become much wiser now: he had simply gone all the way around his Mother's body and then bowed down before her. He knew full well that apart from her there was no universe. That is how Ganesha won this race.

Did you enjoy the story of Ganesha? Such as wise and intelligent Ganesha worshipped as "Adya-Daivat".



-: Exercise :-

Fill up the blanks

- 1) _____ is the fifth avatara (incarnation) of the Lord Vishnu
a) Kurma b) Matsya c) Krishna d) Vamana
- 2) _____ is the sixth avatara (incarnation) of the Lord Vishnu
a) Kurma b) Matsya c) Vamana d) Parashurama
- 3) Lord Vishnu incarnated as a Vamana to kill _____.
a) Ravana b) Hiranyaksha c) Bali d) None of these
- 4) Sage Kashyap and his wife Aditi were _____'s parents.
a) Ravana b) Vamana c) Bali d) None of these
- 5) Sage Jamadagni and his wife Renuka were _____'s parents.
a) Hiranyaksha b) Hayagriva c) Ravana d) Parashurama
- 6) Jamadagni and Renuka had a cow _____ who used to fulfill their needs.
a) Kamadhenu b) Snake c) Horse d) None of these
- 7) Parashuma's favorite weapon was _____.
a) Sword b) Axe c) Bow and Arrow d) None of these
- 7) _____ is the son of Shiva and Parvati, brother of _____.
a) Rama b) Shankara c) Ganesh d) Kartikeya
- 8) _____ won the race of travelling around the earth.
a) Ahalya b) Seetha c) Urmila d) Mandavi
- 8) _____ was Kartikeya's ride (vehicle).
a) Lion b) Peacock c) Tiger d) Elephant

Questions:

1) What did Vamana demand Bali?

2) What did Vamana cover with his two strides (feet)?

3) Why did King Arjuna seize Kamadhenu?

3) Describe the story of creation of Ganesha?

4) What was the competition between Ganesha and Kartikeya?



Make a Ganesha image for pooja

Material needed :

1. Crayola Model Magic
2. Orange paint/paint brush
3. Sparkly stickers

Take a big ball of model magic. Roll it into three balls, two small in size and one a bit larger in size. Take one of the small size balls for the face of Ganesha and make ears and trunk just like in the picture. Make impressions for eyes too.

Attach the head of Ganeshji to the large ball of model magic. On the body make an impression for belly. Later make arms and legs with the remaining small size ball and attach them to the body of Ganeshji just like in the picture. After the model of Ganeshji is made leave it for 24hrs to dry before you can color it with orange paint and decorate Ganeshji with sparkly stickers.

Lo ! Ganeshji is ready for pooja.



