



Syllabus

Year II, 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's objective is to 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 Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS).

Visit <http://www.balagokulam.org>

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Shloka

सद्गुरुं (sadgurum)

ब्रह्मानन्दं परमसुखदं केवलं ज्ञानमूर्तिं	brahmānandaṁ paramasukhadam kevalaṁ jñānamūrtim
द्वन्द्वातीतं गगनसदृशं त्वमस्यादिलक्ष्यम् ।	dvandvātītaṁ gaganasadrśaṁ tattvamasyādilakṣyam ।
एकं नित्यं विमलमचलं सर्वधीसाक्षि भूतं	ekaṁ nityaṁ vimalamacalaṁ sarvadhīsākṣi bhūtaṁ
भवातीतं त्रिगुणरहितं सद्गुरुं तं नमामि ॥	bhavātītaṁ triguṇarahitaṁ sadgurum taṁ namāmi ॥

Meaning:

I bow to the Sadguru, who is the bliss of Brahman and the bestower of the highest joy. He is absolute. He is knowledge personified. He is beyond duality, (all pervasive) like the sky, and the object of (the great Upanishadic statement) “Thou art That”. He is one. He is aternal. He is pure. He is steady. He is the witness of all thoughts. He is beyond all modifications (of mind and body) and free from the three gunas (sata, raja, tama).

मंत्र (Mantra for chanting)

ॐ गुरु ॐ गुरु ॐ गुरु ॐ	om guru om guru om guru om
जय गुरु सद्गुरु जय गुरु ॐ	jaya guru sadguru jaya guru om

Subhashitam (Words of wisdom)

शीलं परं भूषणम् ।

shIlaM paraM bhUShaNam |

Meaning: Good character is the best ornament.

Bhajan

Radhe Shyama He Ghana Shyama
 Radha Madhava Mangala Dhama
 Jaya Jaya Jaya He Megha Shyama
 Megha Shyama Megha Shyama
 Jaya Jaya Jaya Brindavana dhama

He Nanda lala He Nanda lala
 Gopi Manohara Gokula Bala
 Vishwa Vanditha Vijaya Gopala
 Veda Vedantha Venu Gopala
 Gaana Vilola Raja Gopala
 Radha Vallabha Raasa Vilola

Radha Krishna Kunja Vihaari
 Murali dhara Govardhana dhari
 Shankha chakra Peethambara dhaari
 Shankha chakra Peethambara dhaari
 Karuna saagara Krishna murari (Radha Krishna)



Guru - Shishya Story

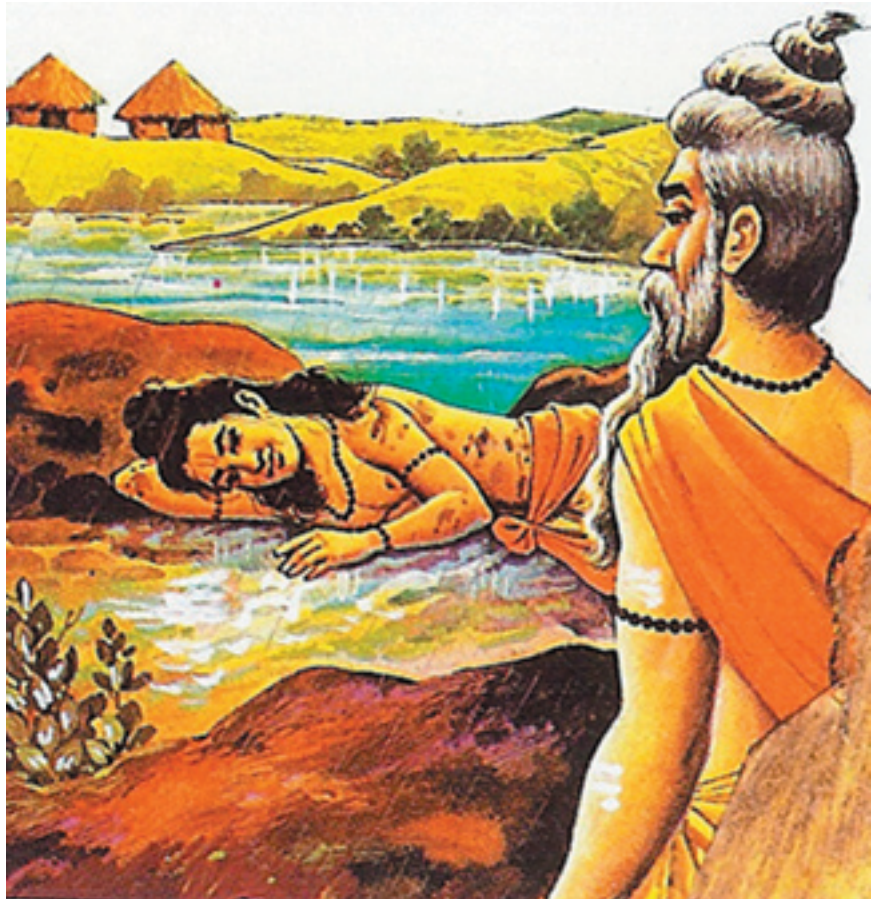
Dhaumya Rishi (Sage) and Aruni

The Guru is considered as the form of the trinity gods Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh (Lord Shiva). One should serve his/her Guru ungrudgingly, selflessly, lovingly and with determination. Guru is the abode of all knowledge and wisdom and blesses his disciples with the same. Here is a story of Dhaumya Rishi (sage), his disciple (shishya) Aruni and his unselfish devotion.

Long time ago there was a Guru named Dhaumya Rishi (sage). He had three disciples who came to him to learn the Vedas and Shastras. All of them were brilliant, honest, obedient and keen in learning. Aruni was one of them. One day,

Dhaumya Rishi asked him, "Aruni! Go and water the fields so that the crop would grow well!." Aruni right away got on to work. The water had to be brought into the field through a canal from a tank which was a little far away. The tank was shallow. Aruni dug the canal, and water started flowing into the field. Then unfortunately, a breach developed in one of the bunds of the canal and the water started draining out and escaping away through the breach, thus stopping the flow of water into the field.

Aruni tried his best to



fill up the breach by piling up stones, putting sand etc., over there, but could not succeed. The water was going waste and he was worried as to how to get the field filled with water. He murmured, "Hmm!! What should I do now?" Then he got an idea; he laid down at the side of the breach, thus blocking it. The water thereby, started flowing into the field. He remained there in the same position so that the field would get water fully.

It was quite late in the night. Aruni did not return home. Dhaumya Rishi was puzzled, "What happened to my Aruni? He should have come back by this time." After waiting for some time, he came to the field to search Aaruni. He was surprised and felt glad to find the field full of water, which had never happened before, but at the same time, he was worried as Aruni was nowhere in sight. He called out loudly, "Aruni! Aruni!". From the waters of the canal Aruni replied in a feeble voice, "Gurudev! I am here." Dhaumya Rishi reached him. He was taken aback when he saw Aruni laying down to hold the water.

Dhaumya Rishi quickly pulled Aruni out. Aruni fell prostrate at Dhaumya Rishi's feet and offered his obeisance to him. Dhaumya Rishi was touched by the boy's unselfish devotion to him. He placed his hand on the boy's head and blessed him saying, "Aruni! May you become proficient and gain mastery in all Vedas and the Shastras." No sooner than the Guru said this, Aruni became fully enlightened and obtained the knowledge of Vedas and Shastras.

This story teaches us that, one should surrender to the Guru and serve him with great dedication and devotion.



Guru-poornima is a day when Guru is worshipped. It falls in the month of July. It is a day to show gratitude and appreciation towards the Guru.



Guru - Shishya Story

Dhaumya Rishi and Upamanyu

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Long time ago there was a Guru named Dhaumya Rishi (sage). He had three disciples who came to him to learn the Vedas and Shastras. All of them were brilliant, honest, obedient and keen in learning. Upamanyu was one of them. He had a nasty habit of over eating. He would be hungry all the time. Dhaumya Rishi wanted to curb his habit of over indulgence with food.

Once, Dhaumya Rishi gave Upamanyu the task of looking after his herd of cattle. Upamanyu used to leave home early morning along with the herd and come back very late in the evening. Dhaumya Rishi would give him very little food to eat. As food wasn't sufficient for him, he would get hungry in the afternoons. To get more food, Upamanyu started begging bhiksha (alms) from the houses which were nearby and was thus having his afternoon food.

Dhaumya Rishi found the boy still fat. He puzzled, "I am giving him very little food to eat. Still he is fat! How come?!" He asked Upamanyu, "Did you eat anything other than what I gave?" The boy was honest. He told him that he was begging alms from the houses near the grazing grounds and was eating whatever food obtained. Dhaumya Rishi said, "You should not eat alm-food, but should bring it to me." Upamanyu apologized and started doing what Dhaumya Rishi said.

Then, to satisfy his hunger, Upamanyu started begging alms twice in the afternoon. In first round whatever he got, he would give it to the Guru and in

the second whatever he received, he would eat it alone. Again, when Dhaumya Rishi found out, he asked him to bring home the second Bhiksha (alm) too.

Now Upamanyu started drinking the remnants of the milk that continued to drip from the cow's udders, after the calves had drunk their fill. The Guru, Dhaumya Rishi, prohibited that even.



Upamanyu became very much emaciated for the lack of food. Unable to bear the hunger, one day, seeing some milk-like sap exude from the plant producing cotton flowers, he drank it. That exudation was poisonous and it affected his eye nerves and made him blind. In the evening while going home, as he lost eyesight, he could barely see anything. Still, he was trying to drive the cattle home. Being unable to find the way back due to his lost eyesight, he fell into a well.

As Upamanyu did not reach home, Dhaumya Rishi came searching for him calling out his name, "Upamanyu! Upamanyu!!" When Upamanyu answered the Guru, "Guruji! I am here in the well!" Dhaumya Rishi saw his disciple Upamanyu fallen into the well. He quickly pulled him out.

Dhaumya Rishi was touched by the boy's truthful and implicit obedience to his words. Happily he asked him to chant the invocation mantra to the Aswini Devatas. As soon as Upamanyu invoked the mantra, he regained his sight.

Not only that, the Guru - Dhaumya Rishi, through his blessings, endowed Upamanyu with all the scriptural knowledge and wisdom. Later, after completing studies, Upamanyu became a most renowned Rishi. He became Guru to a great shishya like Udanka who was a great just like his Guru.





Guru - Shishya Story

Dhaumya Rishi and Baid

The Guru is considered as the form of the trinity gods Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh (Lord Shiva). One should serve his/her Guru ungrudgingly, selflessly, lovingly and with determination. Guru is the abode of all knowledge and wisdom and he blesses his disciples (shishya) with the same. Here is a story of Dhaumya Rishi (sage), his disciple (shishya) Upamanyu and his unselfish devotion.

Long time ago there was a Guru named Dhaumya Rishi (sage). He had three disciples who came to him to learn the Vedas and Shastras. All of them were brilliant, honest, obedient and keen in learning. Baid was one of them.

Once, Baid was asked by the Guru to till the land, sow the seeds, raise the crop and take all care till harvesting was completed and the grains were safely brought home. Baid was working on the field, day in and day out, without wasting a single moment, and sparing no pains.

Due to all the labor exerted and pains taken by him, the crop came out very well and yielded a very rich harvest. Baid loaded the grains on the cart and started to drive the cart to the Guru's house. The load was too heavy and the bullock was unable to draw the cart. Baid was also trying to pull the cart along with the bullock. Unfortunately, the bullock got stuck up in the mire on the way and the cart wheels also sank deep down in the mud. The bullock was not able to pull the cart.

Baid let the bullock free and started with all his strength to push the cartwheels and make the cart move. In the process, he almost lost his breath and was about to collapse. At the same time, Dhaumya Rishi was coming to see how Baid was doing faring with the collection of the harvest. On the way, he saw the heavily loaded cart and Baid. But alas he found Baid tottering on his feet and

collapsing almost on the verge of death.

The *Guru*, Dhaumya Rishi, was very much moved with the selfless and steadfast devotion of his disciple, Baid. He pulled Baid out of the mire and placed his right hand on his head, which immediately revived him. Not only that, Baid received total illumination and enlightenment, and all knowledge dawned on him with the blessing touch of the *Guru*.



- Guru means a teacher.
- Guru gives us a knowledge and wisdom. HE enlightens us, thus removes ignorance.
- Parents are our first Guru. They teach us the very first lesson of the life.
- One must respect parents. One must respect Guru.
- One receives knowledge from others too such as school teachers, friends, BalaGokulam shikshaks.
- One must respect all of them. One must respect Guru.



Skit - Arjuna and Dronacharya

Characters: Dronacharya - a sage, Drupad - A king, Arjuna - One of the Pandavas, Duryodhan - One of the Kauravas, Narrator. (Bhim, Dushasan if we get more kids)

Narrator: During the Mahabharat period there was a sage named Dronacharya who was also a good archer and an expert in other warfare skills. He was appointed by the Royal family of Hastinapur to teach the young Pandavas and Kauravas the fine skills of archery as well as other warfare skills. Kauravas and Pandavas have finished their education and now it is a time of examination. Dronacharya tries everybody's skill. Now it is Duryodhan and Arjuna's turn.

Scene 1

(Narrator - Dronacharya asks Duryodhana to aim at the bird's eye only)

Dronacharya to Duryodhana – (orders) Duryodhana, try to concentrate and aim at the eye of the bird.

Duryodhana - (overconfident!!, garvani) Hu... Guruvarya !, it is a piece of cake for me. You should give me a little difficult task. (Duryodhana tries and fails).

Dronacharya to Arjuna – (orders) Now, Arjuna, try to concentrate and aim at the eye of the bird.

Arjuna – (calmly and with all respect) Yes. Guruvarya!!

(All other students keenly observing Arjuna. Arjuna touches the feet of Dronacharya. Then few seconds he stares at the bird's eye and aims at it successfully).

Other Pandavas - (excitedly !!) Hurrey !! Well done Arjuna.

Dronacharya – (happy but not excited) Well done, Arjuna. I was confident that only you could have done this.

Arjuna – (with all respect) This is all because of you, Guruji. I could become such a good archer only with your teaching and ashirwad. (bending to touch dronacharya's feet)

Dronacharya – Arjuna, you have been my best student always. I am proud of you.

Duryodhana - (angrily !!) Hu... Guruji always take Arjuna's side. I could not aim at the eye of bird, but I am still as brave as Arjuna.

Dronacharya – OK Duryodhana ! I will give you a chance to prove your warfare skills.

Arjuna to Dronacharya - Guruji ! Now it is the time to offer you Dakshina. What do you expect from us as Dakshina?

Dronacharya to Everyone – My dear Students !, I did not teach you to get any Dakshina. But if you still want to give me something, go and get (capture) king Drupada. He is a king but a bad guy. He has humiliated me as well as other sages.

Duryodhana to Dronacharya - Guruji, give me a chance. I will fight Drupada and capture him.

Dronacharya to Duryodhana – (annoyingly !!) OK Duryodhana, As I promised, I give you first chance to prove your warfare skills. Go and get Drupada. He is also a great warrior... so be careful.

(**Narrator** - Duryodhana and his brothers take their army and fight Drupada... but Drupada defeat them and makes them prisoners. Everyone is shocked. Now Dronacharya tells Arjuna to capture Drupada and rescue Duryodhana)

Dronacharya to Arjuna - (worrying !!) Arjuna, Drupada has captured Duryodhana. This isn't good. I am worried for Duryodhana and his brothers.

Arjuna - (calmly!) Don't worry Guruji!! (confidently!) With your blessings, I will fight Drupada and teach him a lesson.

Scene 2

(**Narrator** - Arjuna, with his brothers, go to Drupada's kingdom and request Drupada to come with them. Drupada is arrogant).

Arjuna to Drupada - Drupad !!! be a nice guy and come with me !!

Drupada - (arrogant !!) Hu... Who are you? How dare you to enter my kingdom without my permission. Go away.... otherwise I will kill you.

(**Narrator** - Arjuna, with his brothers, fights Drupada. Drupada is on the run. Arjuna is chasing and trying to capture him).

Drupada - (scared !! running!! Murmuring) Oh my god ! Arjuna is going to kill me. Save me from him.

Scene 3

(At last, Arjuna captures Drupada and present him before his Guru, Dronacharya)

Arjuna to Dronacharya - (brings Drupada before Dronacharya) Guruji !, here is my Guru-Dakshina. As you said... I have captured Drupada.

Dronacharya - (overwhelmed !!) Well done !! Arjuna. You did a great job. You will be the world's best Archer. May god be with you always.

(Everybody, including Duryodhana, hails Arjuna).



-: Exercise :-

Fill up the blanks

- 1) Aruni was _____ Rishi's disciple.
a) Dhaumya b) Vasishtha c) Valmiki d) None of these
- 2) Arjuna learnt _____ from _____.
a) Valmiki b) archery c) Sword d) Dronacharya
- 3) Dronacharya was Arjuna's _____.
a) Friend b) Father c) Guru d) None of these
- 4) Guru-poornima festival falls in the month of _____.
a) May b) June c) July d) August
- 5) _____ had a nasty habit of over eating.
a) Aruni b) Upamanyu c) Baid d) Dhaumya Rishi
- 6) After education, _____ became most renowned Rishi.
a) Aruni b) Arjuna c) Upamanyu d) None of these
- 7) _____ is not Dhaumya Rishi's disciple.
a) Upamanyu b) Arjuna c) Aruni d) Baid
- 8) _____ captures _____ and present him before _____.
a) Drupada b) Arjuna c) Kamsa d) Dronacharya
- 9) _____ are our first Guru.
a) Friends b) Parents c) School Teachers d) None of these
- 10) _____ is the best ornament.
a) necklace b) ring c) ear-rings d) Good character

Questions:

1) What is the moral of Dhaumya Rishi - Aruni story?

2) What is the moral of Dhaumya Rishi - Upamanyu story?

3) What did Arjuna learn from Dronacharya? What Guru-dakshina he gave?

duryondha

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pnadaav

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

dahuyma

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drupdaa

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rajaun

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arnui

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Shloka

गणपती वन्दना (Ganapati Vandana)

वक्रतुण्ड महाकाय	vakratuṇḍa mahākāya
सूर्यकोटिसमप्रभ	sūryakoṭisamaprabha
निर्विघ्नं कुरु मे देव	nirvighnaṁ kuru me deva
सर्वकार्येषु सर्वदा ॥	sarvakāryeṣu sarvadā ॥

Meaning:

O Ganapati, One with a curved trunk, a large body, and a brilliance equal to a crore (10 million) suns! O God, please make all my undertakings free from obstacles always.

मंत्र (mantra - for repetition /chanting)

॥ ॐ गं गणपतये नमः ॥

॥ om gaṁ gaṇapataye namaḥ ॥

Meaning: I bow and pray to you, O Lord Ganesha !

Subhashitam (Words of wisdom)

न कूपखननं युक्तं प्रदिप्ते वहिनना गृहे ।

na kUpakhananaM yuktaM, pradipte vahinana gR^ihe |

Meaning: It is not wise to sink a well after the house is on fire.

Bhajan

Radhe Shyama He Ghana Shyama
 Radha Madhava Mangala Dhama
 Jaya Jaya Jaya He Megha Shyama
 Megha Shyama Megha Shyama
 Jaya Jaya Jaya Brindavana dhama

He Nanda lala He Nanda lala
 Gopi Manohara Gokula Bala
 Vishwa Vanditha Vijaya Gopala
 Veda Vedantha Venu Gopala
 Gaana Vilola Raja Gopala
 Radha Vallabha Raasa Vilola

Radha Krishna Kunja Vihaari
 Murali dhara Govardhana dhari
 Shankha chakra Peethambara dhaari
 Shankha chakra Peethambara dhaari
 Karuna saagara Krishna murari (Radha Krishna)



Story of Bhageerath

King Sagar was one of the greatest kings of Ancient Bharat (India). He was the ancestor of King Dasharath and Lord Rama (Incarnation of Sree Vishnu). In those days, kings used to perform Ashwamedha Yajna to prove their supremacy over others. Once, king Sagar, too, performed a Ashwamedha Yajna to become the king of the entire world. He deserved it anyway!!

But, Lord Indra was jealous and fearful over the results of the Yajna. He decided to stop the Yajna by stealing the horse of the Yajna that was sent around the earth, as a symbol of victory. In an act of jealousy, Lord Indra kidnapped the horse and hid it in Kapil Muni's hermitage.

When learnt that the horse is kidnapped, King Sagar's hundreds of sons along with the entourage of warriors went to search. They found the horse of the Yajna in Kapil Muni's Ashram. They mistook Sage Kapil to be the abductor and attacked him. Kapil Muni became enraged that King Sagar's sons were attacking him for no apparent reason; he burnt all of them to ashes.

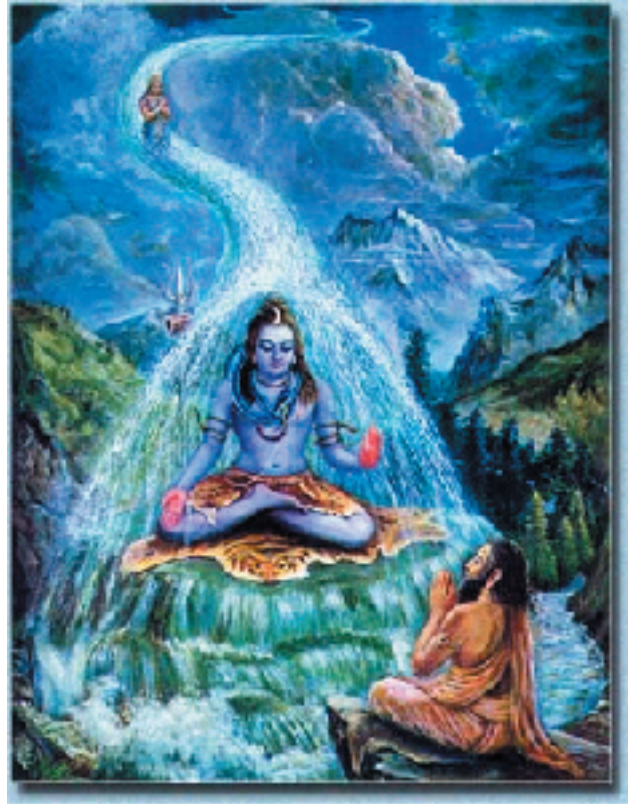
King Sagar was worried about his sons' salvation. Pacified Kapil Muni advised that the holy river Ganga could give them salvation. The waters of the holy river Ganga would miraculously bring back the dead princes to life. It should be brought down to the Earth from the heaven. King Sagar's son Dilip tried his best, but could not succeed. His grandson Anshuman succeeded upto some limit but could not give them salvation.

Bhageerath was another grandson of King Sagar. He heard about the plight of his father and uncles. Bhageerath resolved to bring Ganga to the Earth from the Heaven to



purify the ashes of his ancestors and bring them back to life.

He performed severe penance to please Lord Brahma who came to bless him and grant him the desired boon. Ganga was allowed to come down to Earth. The only problem was that the force of its current was too great for Earth to withstand. Fearing a catastrophe, Bhageerath prayed to Lord Shiva, who held out his matted hair to catch the river as she descended. From this point onward, Lord Shiva is also known as Gangadhara. River Ganga then gently followed Bhageerath as he came to the hermitage of Sage Jahnu's ashram. Sage Jahnu, who was in a state of meditation inside the ashram, had been disrupted in his penance. He became enraged and swallowed Ganga in a single gulp.



Bhageerath offered his prayers to Sage Jahnu who finally released Ganga. As a result Ganga is also known by the name of Jahnvi.

Finally, Bhageerath overcame all the obstacles in the process of releasing Ganga. He patiently led Ganga down to the sea where Kapil Muni was residing. Holy Ganga then bathed the remains of the King Sagar's sons, offered salvation to the souls of them and merged into the sea-water. Thus the sea where Ganga merges is called as "Ganga Sagar".

Ganga is also known as Bhageerathi because her coming to the Earth was by the continued sacrifices and efforts of Bhageerath.





Story of Devavrat

King Shantanu was a famous king of Hastinapur. He was married to Gangadevi, who gave birth to a son, Devavrat. On account of her past life's karma, she went to Heaven leaving Devavrat in his father's care. He was taught the Vedas, and the Puranas, and also archery, by the greatest archer of the time, Parshuram. Devavrat learned from his father how to rule the kingdom following the ideals of truth and justice. Devavrat was trained in every way to take up the throne. King Shantanu in due time enthroned Devavrat as the Crown Prince. Devavrat looked after his subjects with love and kindness.

One day, King Shantanu went out on a hunting expedition and saw a very charming young girl. She was the daughter of a fisherman named Dashraj. Her name was Satyavati. He asked her hand in marriage, but she replied telling him to ask her father for her hand. When he sent messengers to her father asking for her hand in marriage, the shrewd old fisherman would not relent. He asked, "Shantanu is not young any more. Who would care for my daughter, were he to die?"

King Shantanu decided to go in person and tried to persuade him with promises of riches and rewards, but the fisherman was adamant. "Nothing less than the throne for my daughter Satyavati and her descendants is acceptable," he said stubbornly. Dashraj was keeping the future interest of his daughter in mind. Shantanu thought that he couldn't harm his beloved son Devavrat's future of whom he was so proud, yet he longed to marry Satyavati. He couldn't bear this dilemma and this caused the king to be sick. He spent all his time alone, he wouldn't speak to any one.

Devavrat saw that his father was always sad. He inquired of his father and got no answer. Devavrat went to inquire the reason from the charioteer who disclosed everything. In order to keep his father happy, Devavrat went to see

Satyavati's father Dashraj and promised that for his father's sake he would give up the throne. "This is my vow and I shall be true to it," he said assuring Dashraj who was still worried. He said, "You will keep your oath alright, but your son will fight my daughter's son for the throne. What will happen then?" But Devavrat immediately set Dashraj's fear at ease, saying, "I take another oath, I swear in the name of my parents, I shall never marry. This is my firm vow." Upon hearing this, Dashraj gladly agreed to his daughter's marriage with the king.



As young Devavrat, took this pledge, the heavens opened and the gods cried out "Bhishma!", as they showered flowers upon him to honor his selfless resolve. Ever since then, Devavrat was known as Bhishma or the one who makes and keeps a great vow. When Devavrat took his new mother Satyavati to his father, King Shantanu was amazed when he heard about his son's vows. He was full of praise for him. His father granted him a boon, "Death will not come to you unless you give your explicit permission to it, and Death will wait upon you with folded hands." Satyavati married King Shantanu and bore him two sons, Chitrangada and Vichitraveerya. After King Shantanu died, they ruled the kingdom.

Bhishma (Devavrat) kept up with his promises until the end of his life. He lived for 4 generations. He protected the kingdom of Hastinapur and its kings from all odds but never ever desired for a throne, though he deserved it. Later, in the Mahabharata war, just to keep up the promise, he had to support evil Duryodhana as he was the prince of Hastinapur kingdom. Being wounded by Arjuna during the Mahabharata war, Bhishma desired to embrace death on the day of Makar-Samkranti.





Story of Lord Ganesh

Ganesh Chaturthi is one of the most popular of Hindu festivals. It falls on the 4th day of the bright fortnight of Bhadrapada (August-September). It is observed throughout Bharat, as well as by devoted Hindus in all parts of the world. Ganesh or Ganapati is the elephant-headed God. HE is considered as "Adya-Daivat" and worshipped first during the pooja. The following story is narrated about his birth and how he came to have the head of an elephant.

Once upon a time, Goddess Parvati wanted somebody to guard her while she was bathing. She created a pure white being out of the mud of her body. She named him Ganesh (Ganapati). She asked Ganapati to stand at the entrance of the house. She also told him not to allow anyone to enter while she went inside for a bath. Same time, God Shiva himself was returning home quite thirsty. But he was stopped by Ganapati at the entrance of the house.

Shiva became angry and cut off Ganapati's head as he thought Ganapati was an outsider. When Parvati came to know of this, she was sorely grieved. To console her, Shiva ordered his disciples to cut off and bring to him the head of any creature that might be sleeping with its head facing north. The disciples went on their mission and found only an elephant in that position. The sacrifice was thus made and the elephant's head was brought before Shiva. Shiva then joined the elephant's head onto the body of Ganapati and gave him a life again. This is how lord Ganapati came into existence.





Lord Ganesha Wall Hanging

- Material:**
1. Jute fabric cut 9" / 12", rice bag jute is OK,
 2. Felt fabric piece big enough for the image (not bigger than 6" / 8")
 3. Dowel 12", or a bamboo skewer
 4. String, twine or the same jute thread
 5. Sequins, beads, glitter glue for decoration
 6. Tacky glue or hot glue (seek an adult help for this)

Procedure:

1. Trace the image of Lord Ganesha on the felt and cut it out.
2. Take off the weave on the two 12" sides of the jute fabric for about 1" and from the 9" side for 1.5"
3. Fold the other 9" side for about 1" and glue the tip so that you can slide the dowel through it later.
4. Apply a line of tacky glue on the last weave so as to seal it and more threads won't come apart. You have to wait until it dries and then proceed further. Hot glue in this case works faster.
5. Stick the felt Ganesha on the right side (length wise where the fold and the sealing doesn't show) at about the centre and decorate !
6. Now pass the dowel/skewer through the folded end and tie a string to its two ends and the project is ready to be displayed on the wall !



Variation: A kalash or any other Hindu symbol can be used for this project.



-: Exercise :-

Fill up the blanks

- 1) _____ was a grandson of King Sagar.
a) Shravan b) Dhruv c) Bhageerath d) None of these
- 2) Bhageerathi is another name of the holy river _____.
a) Narmada b) Yamuna c) Ganga d) None of these
- 3) _____ brought the river _____ down to Earth.
a) Holika b) Ganga c) Yamuna d) Bhageerath
- 4) _____ was a son of Ganga-devi and the King _____.
a) Ram b) Shantanu c) Devavrat d) None of these
- 5) Another name of Devavrat is _____.
a) Arjuna b) Bhishma c) Bhima d) None of these
- 6) Bhishma desired to embrace the death on the day of _____.
a) New year b) April c) Deepavali d) Makar-Samkranti
- 7) Ganesh-chaturthi festival belongs to _____.
a) Krishna b) Vishnu c) Rama d) Lord Ganesha

Match the pairs:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Lord Ganesha | 1) Hindu Month |
| 2) Bhadrapada | 2) Jahnavi |
| 3) Shiva | 3) King of Hastinapur |
| 4) Ganga | 4) Adya-daivat |
| 5) Shantanu | 5) Parvati |

Identify true or false:

- 1) Lord Ganesha is elephant-headed God.
- 2) Lord Ganesha is Shiva-Parvati's son.
- 3) King Sagar was ancestor of Lord Rama.
- 4) Arjuna is known as Bhishma.
- 5) Bhageerath's main objective was to give salvation to his ancestors.
- 6) Satyavati was King Shantanu's wife.

Unscramble following words

bshiahm

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

hsanntau

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ymanua

--	--	--	--	--	--

vdvearat

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

ggana

--	--	--	--	--

gaenash

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

saagr

--	--	--	--	--

Shloka

स्तुति (Praise of the Goddess)

सर्वमङ्गल माङ्गल्ये	sarvamangaLa mAngalye
शिवे सर्वार्थसाधिके ।	shive sarvArthasAdhike ।
शरण्ये त्र्यम्बके गौरि	sharaNye tryambake gauri
नारायणि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥	nArAyaNi namostu te ॥

Meaning:

Oh Gowri, the auspiciousness in everything auspicious, the one who brings goodness, the one who makes all wishes come true, the one who protects, the three-eyed and the Embodiment of Narayana, salutations to you.

मंत्र (mantra - for repetition /chanting)

ॐ नमो भगवते	om namo bhagavate
वासुदेवाय	vāsudevāya

Meaning: Salutations to Bhagvan Vasudeva (Lord Vishnu).

Subhashitam (Words of wisdom)

भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः ।

bhadraM karNebhiH shR^iNuyAma devAH |

Meaning: Let auspicious words always fall on our ears.

Bhajan

Radhe Shyama He Ghana Shyama
 Radha Madhava Mangala Dhama
 Jaya Jaya Jaya He Megha Shyama
 Megha Shyama Megha Shyama
 Jaya Jaya Jaya Brindavana dhama

He Nanda lala He Nanda lala
 Gopi Manohara Gokula Bala
 Vishwa Vanditha Vijaya Gopala
 Veda Vedantha Venu Gopala
 Gaana Vilola Raja Gopala
 Radha Vallabha Raasa Vilola

Radha Krishna Kunja Vihaari
 Murali dhara Govardhana dhari
 Shankha chakra Peethambara dhaari
 Shankha chakra Peethambara dhaari
 Karuna saagara Krishna murari (Radha Krishna)



Shibi, The Compassionate King

Once upon a time there lived a great king called Shibi. He was very kind and charitable and became very famous. His fame spread all over the earth and spread in heavens too.

The lord of heaven Indra wanted to test and see if king Shibi was really as great as his fame proclaimed him to be.

So Indra and god Agni started from heaven. Agni assumed the form of a dove and Indra, of a fierce hawk. Agni flew in the front fluttering wings as though terrified and Indra followed at a distances as if in hot pursuit. They flew straight to the palace of the king.

Shibi was in the garden distributing charities to the poor. The little fluttering frightened dove came and perched upon the wrist of Shibi looking at his with tearful eyes full of fear. Shibi immediately took her in his hands. Stroking her back kindly he said, "Fear not, O dove, I will save you from all harms."

Just as he was saying this, the hawk came angry and haughty and tried to snatch the dove away from the king's hands. But the king raised his hand in a flash and obstructed the hawk. The hawk looked at the king angrily and said, speaking like a human being, "This dove is my bird of prey. I had been pursuing it from the morning. Why do you obstruct me in having my food, O king?"

Surprised at hearing the hawk speak like a man, Shibi replied, "I do not know who you are, O hawk, who can thus speak like a man. This poor frightened dove has sought my shelter. It is my duty to protect her from all harm. I won't allow you to snatch her away from me and make her your prey."

The hawk then said, "Rajan, you are renowned as a kind one. Perhaps it is your duty to protect those in distress. But is your kindness limited only to the dove? What about me? Am I not equally entitled to claim your pity? I am a bird who can live only be eating the meat of small birds. By depriving me of my food are you not condemning me to die? Is this your dharma?"

King Shibi was non-plussed. The hawk could not only speak like a human being but also argue like one! Evidently his duty was towards both the dove and the hawk. He was very thoughtful. At last he said, "Hawk, what you say is true. I won't deprive you of your food. But at the same time I can't give up this poor frightened dove. Will you accept if I give you some other flesh as a substitute?"

The hawk replied, "Very well king. I have no objection as long as my hunger is satisfied. But you must give me flesh exactly equal to that of the dove. I won't accept less." And he further mockingly added, "But how will you get substitute flesh from? Will you kill another life to save the life of this dove?"

Shibi hastily replied, "No, no, I won't think of harming another life, be sure. I will give you my own flesh in place of the dove." He then turned to his attendant ordered them to bring a balance. The attendants accordingly brought the balance and erected it before the king. Shibi placed the dove on one side of the balance.

He took out his sword and cutting small portions of his flesh placed it on the other side. But strange! The dove which looked so small and frail in the pan could not outbalance it! King Shibi went on cutting portions after portions from his body and placing it in the balance.. Yet to no purpose... till at last no more flesh remained in him to cut. Wondering at the heaviness of the dove, Shibi then threw away the sword and himself mounted the balance. Lo, now the balance was quite equal. Rejoicing that he was at last able to give the hawk its due, Shibi turned to the hawk and said, "O hawk, my weight is equal to the weight of the dove. Please eat me and leave the dove."

As he said these words there was a cheering applause from the gods who gathered in the sky to witness the test. They beat the heavenly drums and showered flowers on the king. The hawk and the dove shed their assumed forms and stood before him in their shining glorious forms. Shibi looked at them in blank amazement.

Indra said, "O kindly king, know that we are Indra and Agni. We come down from heaven to test you. You have indeed proved yourself to be greater than your fame. You will be blessed with long life and vast riches. Your name will remain in the world as long as the sun and the moon remain."

So saying, Indra touched Shibi with his hand. Lo! All the cuts and wounds vanished from Shibi's body and he stood there as strong as ever. He bowed to the gods with great devotion, who blessed him and returned to their abodes.





Everything happens for the good

In one of Bharat's (India) little kingdoms, long ago there lived a King who (like most of them) was fond of hunting in wild places. His Chief Advisor was a very intelligent man, and also a very optimistic one. He was famous for seeing the rosy side of things. In fact, so strong was his habit of finding good in everything that at times this annoyed his ruler.

One day when the King and his Advisor were on a hunting trip through a dense jungle which went on for miles, the King decided to have a fresh coconut for his breakfast, and, finding a coconut tree near at hand, with his sword cut down a coconut. But as luck would have it, his sword slipped in his hand and came crashing down on one of his toes, cutting it off! Limping over to his Advisor with loud shouts of pain, he was terribly shocked to hear the latter say, "Ah, that's wonderful!"

"What?!" yelled the King; "I cut off my toe and you say it is wonderful?"

"This is a real blessing," replied the Advisor. By now the King was furious, thinking the man was making fun of him.

"Take it from me," said his Advisor, "behind this apparent bad accident there is some good which we cannot now see." That was it! The King had noticed a dry well nearby, and being a strong man, he picked up his companion and just threw him into that well. Then he set out to limp back to his fortified town and castle.

This meant, however, walking through dense jungle, frequented by the wild tribes of those days, some of whom were headhunters. On his way the King met a band of those headhunters, who decided that, being royalty, he would make an excellent sacrifice for this month's festival. As you may imagine, the King did not feel at all honored by this decision. The warriors carried him to the tribal priest.

It was the duty of this priest to approve all of the offerings that were to be presented. The priest was most particular to see that the item to be offered to the gods was perfect in all respects. While anointing the King's body the priest noticed that he was lacking one toe.

"I am sorry," he told the King, "but we cannot use you after all for this holy sacrifice. The gods will not accept anyone who is not whole-bodied. You will have to go." Naturally the King was delighted and began hobbling away toward his palace. Aha! he thought, so his Advisor had been right -- there was indeed a hidden blessing behind that accident. As fast as his wounded leg would allow, he turned around and went back to the well where he had left his counselor. There he was, standing down in the well and whistling happily to himself.

Now the king managed to reach down far enough to grasp the hand of the Advisor and with great effort pulled him up. Then he apologized for having doubted him and having thought him a fool.

"Oh how sorry I am that I threw you in there," said the King as he dusted off his courtier. "I was taken prisoner by some wild native headhunters who were about to make me a sacrifice victim. Then they saw that my toe was missing, and let me go. And you foretold all this, in a way. Can you ever forgive me?"

"You need not apologize at all; it was a blessing that you threw me down the well and left me there."

"Now, how are you going to make something positive out of that?" queried the King. "Well," said the other, "if I had been with you they would surely have taken me for their sacrifice"





Story of Markandeya

Mrikandu was a great rishi. Marudvati was his wife. For a long time they had no children.

The rishi prayed to God Shiva. God Shiva appeared to him, and said, "I am pleased with you, Mrikandu. Tell me, do you want a hundred sons, who will live for a long time, but will all be foolish?"

Or, do you want one very intelligent son, who will live for only sixteen years?"

The rishi at once said, "God, give me that one intelligent son."

God Shiva said, "Good! You shall have him."

Soon the rishi got a son. He named him Markandeya. The boy grew to be very intelligent and handsome. The rishi invested him with the sacred thread. Markandeya learnt the Vedas and Sastras, easily. Every one liked him.

As the boy was getting on to be sixteen, Rishi Mrikandu became sadder and sadder. One day Markandeya asked his father: "Father, why do you look so sad?"

The rishi said, "Son! What shall I say? When God Shiva gave you to me, he said you would live only sixteen years. You are now about to reach that age. How can your mother and I bear to lose you as we will at the end of this year?"

Markandeya said, "Father! Is that the reason? God Shiva is very kind to His devotees. You yourself told me that he has saved many from death before. I have read about it in the Puranas. I shall therefore worship God Shiva day and night from today. I am sure, He will save -me too! "

Rishi Mrikandu was very happy to hear his son say this. He blessed his son.

Markandeya built a Shiva-Linga at a spot on the sea-shore. He started worshipping Shiva morning, noon and night. He sang bhajans, and often danced in joy. On the last day, Markandeya was about to sing bhajans, when Yama, the God of Death, came to him. Yama rode on a buffalo. He held a noose in his hand. He spoke to Markandeya, "Stop your bhajan! you boy! Your life in this world is over. Be ready to die."

Markandeya was not afraid. He clung to the Shiva-Linga as one clings to one's mother.

Yama threw his noose round the boy's neck, and pulled him along with the Shiva-Linga.

Then the Shiva-Linga burst open and God Shiva came out of it, and said, "Yama, go away! Don't touch this boy. He is my beloved devotee. He will live for ever!"

Yama went away crest-fallen. Markandeya then prayed to God Shiva more fervently than ever. This prayer says at the end of each line, "What can Death do to me?" Many people recite this prayer even now.

Markandeya came home, and fell at the feet of his parents. They embraced him, and wept with joy.

Markandeya became a great rishi, and lived for a long time.





Color this picture of Lord Ganesha





-: Exercise :-

Fill up the blanks

- 1) _____ and _____ came down to Earth to test King Shibi.
a) Indra b) Shibi c) Agni d) None of these
- 2) Mrikandu and Marudvati were _____'s parents.
a) Aruni b) Bhageerath c) Baid d) Markandeya
- 3) Markandeya worshipped Lord _____.
a) Ganesha b) Shiva c) Indra d) None of these
- 4) _____ threatened Markandeya.
a) Vasistha b) Yama c) Durvasa d) None of these
- 5) _____ assumed the form of Dove and _____ of a fierce hawk.
a) Indra b) Yama c) Agni d) None of these
- 6) _____ became a great Rishi and lived very long.
a) Shibi b) Markandeya c) Yama d) None of these

Identify true or false:

- 1) King Shibi was a compassionate king.
- 2) Agni and Indra wanted to test Markandeya.
- 3) Yama is a God of Death.
- 4) Shibi built a Shiva-linga at the sea-shore.

