

NEPAL

LESSONS FOR MISSION MINDED KIDS

LESSON 3

THE HINDU RELIGION



Nepal

Lesson 3: The Hindu Religion

Goals for Lesson 3:

- Children will grow in their understanding of the Hindu religion and see the oppression and hopelessness it brings.
- Children will be introduced to what God is doing through the E.C. churches in Nepal.
- Children will begin to realize the joy Christ can bring to “His needy ones...who are oppressed”.

Verse for Nepal:

“The humble will see their God at work and be glad. Let all who seek God’s help live in joy. For the Lord hears the cries of His needy ones; He does not despise His people who are oppressed.” Psalm 69: 32-33

Before Class:

- Read through lesson and decide what you will use according to your age group and time allotted.
- Prepare the colored picture of Ganesh and the cover picture of a Hindu temple as slides for a screen, or mount them on cardstock paper for stability. Locate a map of India and Nepal from Lesson 1 if you wish to use it.
- Decide how you will use the “Erase A Word” Game, and prepare according to the directions.
- Make copies of the coloring pages of Ganesh and his Rat. Gather crayons or markers.
- Plan which prayer game you will use and prepare as directed. You can find the national anthem of Nepal and a nice set of Nepalese pictures on this YouTube video. Use it as the music for your prayer game, or just show it to the children before praying. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9E40D796Dik>

Lesson Plan:

- Begin your lesson time with prayer. (5 min.)
- This lesson is a continuation of Lesson 2. Details about the Hindu religion are reviewed and expanded on. It is important that the children understand the truth about God and the claims of Jesus and His plan for salvation. You need to know your group of kids and make sure that they have had the opportunity to accept Christ. Learning about the Hindu religion may bring up many questions. If this is the only thing you accomplish during this lesson time that is okay. What could be more important for a Mission Minded Kid? They need to be sure of their own faith and understand the other religions of the world before they can bring their faith to others. (5-15 min.)
- As a way of reviewing the memory verse for Nepal, play the “Erase-a-Word” game. (10-15 min.)
- Read or tell the story part of the lesson, taking time to answer questions and explain in simple terms the differences between Christianity and Hinduism. Have older children look up the verses included in the story, or for younger students, repeat as for verses in Lesson 2. (15-20 min.)
- Use the coloring pages of Ganesh and his Rat to discuss the use of idols and statues in the worship of hundreds of Hindu gods. Talk about not being able to see the One True Living God, and how we can know He hears our prayers and is with us always. (10-15 min.)
- Choose one of the prayer games and spend time praying for the millions of people in Nepal who practice Hinduism and are living with rejection and oppression because of the caste they were born into, or emptiness and hopelessness because of the endless cycle of reincarnation they believe they are caught in. Use the YouTube video as music or to enhance your students’ understanding of the Nepalese culture. (15-30 min.)

Lesson 3 Story: The Hindu Religion

Do you remember what religion is most often practiced in the country of Nepal? It is Hinduism. The Hindu people believe that certain animals like cows and rats are sacred, and they believe that when each creature dies (including humans), they are reincarnated (come alive again) into another creature. Hindus also believe that there are many hundreds of different gods and each one represents one area of life on earth. Each person can choose a god or goddess to devote themselves to. For example, Ganesh is a god that has the head of an elephant. If you worship him, he is supposed to help you overcome obstacles in your life and bring you success.

There are over 2500 temples in the area of Kathmandu. (The capital city) Each temple is built for individual worship (for one person to go inside and say a prayer or leave a gift for the statue, like flowers or fruit), and Hindu people are encouraged to visit a temple every day for a few minutes. **(Show temple picture)** Most Hindu homes also have a statue or a picture of a god in a special shrine, where the people who live there can leave a gift and pray each day. Here is a picture of the Hindu god Ganesh. **(Show picture)** Notice the small rat at his feet. The story says that Ganesh rode on a rat, which symbolizes his control over vanity and impertinence. This is why Hindus worship rats and consider it a crime to kill them. Hindu men carved and painted this picture and built a temple for people to come and worship this god. Do you think that he is real? Do you think that he could help you with your problems? Do you think he has power to do something that you cannot do? The Hindu people believe that there are hundreds (some say millions) of gods and they touch their pictures and statues and talk to them and hope that they can do something for them.

When Jesus was on the earth, he told the people around him that He was the only way to get to heaven, and the only way to have a relationship with the One, True, Living God who created everything on the earth. (John 1:1-3)(Gen.1:1)(John 14:6) Jesus' followers wrote down His words, and after they saw Him die and come back to life, they wrote what they had seen and we can read what they wrote in

our Bibles. Jesus was a real man who told us that He was also God. He told us how to live here on earth and how to get to heaven. The people who love Jesus and follow Him can tell about the power He has to change their hearts and their lives. Jesus' followers don't have to *hope* He can do something, they know from experience that He can fill them with peace and change their circumstances and speak to their hearts.

Some of the people in Nepal have learned about Jesus and discovered the emptiness of the Hindu beliefs. Some missionaries from our E.C. churches in Northeast India have traveled over to Nepal and are teaching the Nepali people about Jesus. **(You can use one of the maps from Lesson 1 to show the northeast part of India in relation to Nepal.)** They have shown love to the very poor people who are in the lowest caste and are considered "untouchable" by their Hindu neighbors. Because Jesus offers peace and joy and access to the Living God, many Hindu people are choosing to follow Him. The Dalit people who are rejected by the other Hindus are finding acceptance and love through Jesus, and are turning away from the hopelessness of Hinduism to find hope and joy in Christ.

Because the E.C. churches in India (a country that largely follows Hinduism as well) were willing to reach out to the Nepalese Hindus, there are now 16 E.C. churches in Nepal as well. (There are over 400 E.C. churches in India.) Each church has between 50 and 100 Nepali Christians worshiping there, and each church is now reaching out to their neighbors as well. Four new fellowships (church plants) have been started recently. These new fellowships will continue to grow into established churches and more fellowships will be started as the Christians there show Christ's love and acceptance to the Nepali people.

One of the missionaries who traveled into Nepal from India has now become the director of all of the E.C. work in Nepal. His name is Pastor Janga and he and his wife and children live and work among the Nepalese people. In our next lesson, we will meet their family and learn what God is doing through them.

Erase-A-Word Game

To review the memory verse, use the footprints made for the “trekking” game in Lesson 2, or make new index cards, writing one word of the verse on each card, with the reference on the last card. You will have 40 cards or footprints. Before class, use sticky tack or rolls of masking tape to attach the cards or footprints in order on a blackboard, a section of wall, or the back of a door. You will need to have memorized the verse yourself by now in order to be able to lead the children in memorizing it. To begin the activity, read the verse together as a group, pointing to each word as you say it. Ask three volunteers to come forward and randomly take one of the words in each of their hands, leaving blank spaces where they were (six words removed). Have those volunteers stand in front of the class and hold up their word when they come to it in the verse. Say it again as a class, still pointing to each word or space as you say a word. Ask three more volunteers to come take one word in each hand, and join the others at the front (twelve words removed now). Repeat the verse again, pointing to the words and spaces, with each child holding up their word when they come to it. (Some kids will forget to hold up their word at the right time. Just keep the flow of the verse and keep the activity going.) Repeat this process a few more times, or until all of your students are in front holding cards. As you repeat it together for the last time, pause at each space and have the student holding that word replace it into that space. As each child puts their last word up, he should sit down. After class, remove the cards and keep them to reuse later.

Variations of Game for younger children:

- If you have a **mixed** group of readers and non-readers, just call on the readers to come and hold cards. As you all repeat the verse together, pointing to the words, young readers and non-readers will be able to memorize the words without being able to read them.
- If you have a group with **only** young readers and non-readers, put a large number on the back of each word card in the order it will appear in the verse. (“The” will have a large “1” on the back; “humble” will have a large “2” on the back; etc., drawing a line under the 6 and the 9 to differentiate.) Most Kindergarten students can recognize numbers through 40 pretty well, and first and second graders can help younger kids. Shuffle the cards and randomly hand them out to your students until all 40 are given out. Have 40 pieces of sticky tack or small rolls of masking tape attached to a door, wall or black board. Call on number one and show the child with that card how to stick their card with the word showing onto the first sticky spot. Read the word aloud and call for number two to come up. Continue to read each word and construct the verse, word by word. Keep it moving so it doesn’t drag out, helping as necessary. When the verse and reference are completed, say the whole verse together as a group, pointing to each word as you say it. Beginning readers will be learning to recognize the words. You will be amazed at the ability of very young non-readers to memorize and understand a lengthy piece of scripture. They will feel ownership of the verse because they helped to put it together, and the physical activity will keep them interested.



Prayer for Nepal

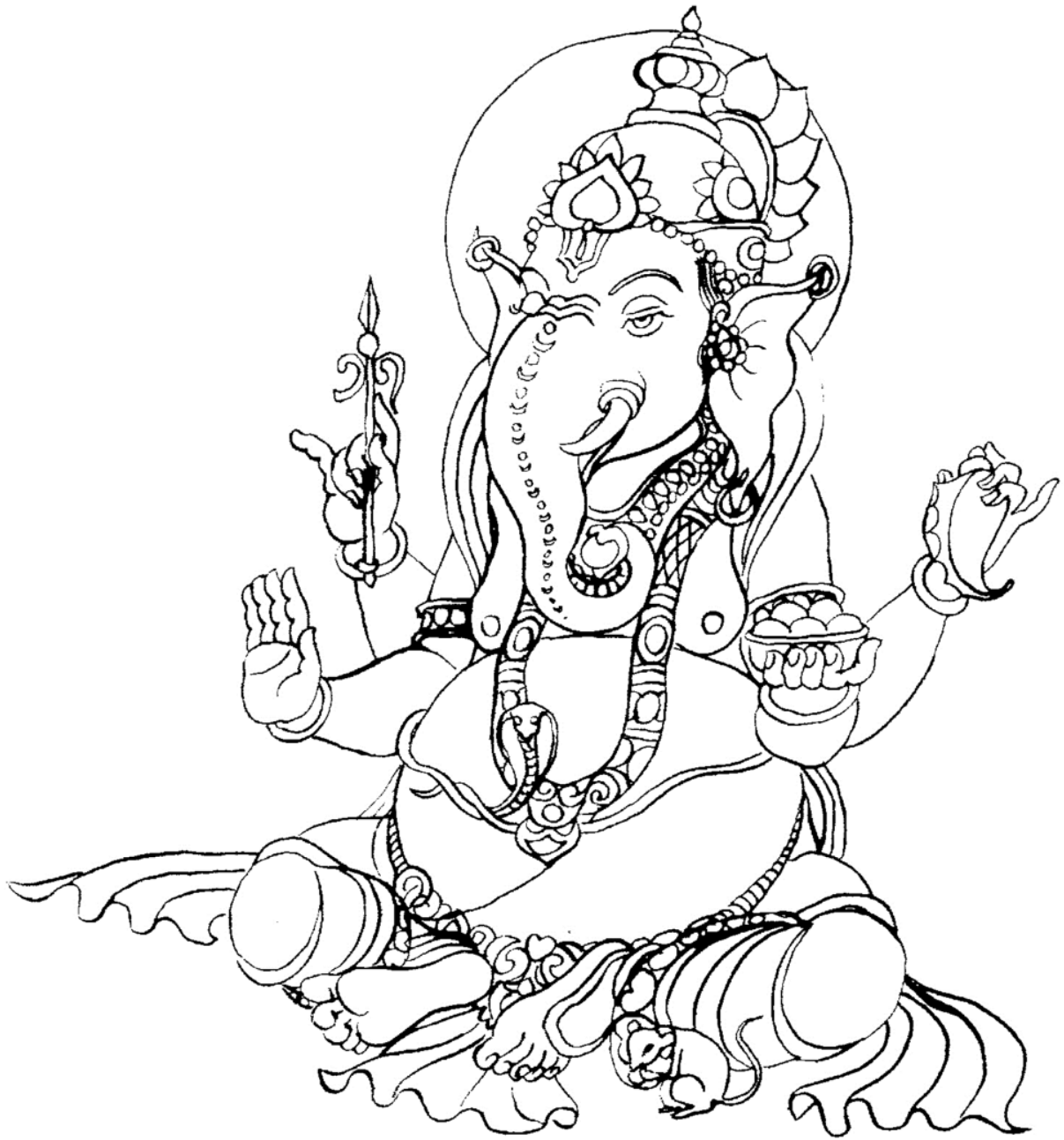
Prayer Ideas: Use ideas from any of the first three lessons. Include the Dalit “untouchables”, those who are living in poverty, the children who live in the cold mountain regions, the Christians in Nepal, the new E.C. churches and fellowships that have been planted, the Christian pastors and missionaries, the Nepalese government officials, those who teach and work with children, etc.

Prayer Balloons

- Cut small slips of paper and write one prayer idea on each. Roll the paper up and push one into each balloon before blowing it up. Prepare several prayer papers and balloons, according to the size of your group.
 - Form children into small or large circles and ‘bob’ a balloon out to someone. Or toss several out at once! No balloon is to touch the floor and no one is to hold a balloon. Rather, they must keep balloons in the air with ‘volleyball-like’ taps.
- *In a few minutes, ring a bell or blow a whistle. The nearest person catches the balloon and holds it.*
- Instruct balloon-holders to pop the balloon, retrieve the slip of paper, and read the slip aloud (or you can read it aloud for younger children). If you’ve used several balloons, the children can form several small prayer groups. With only one balloon, the balloon holder can say a prayer for that idea.
 - Repeat as long as you’re still having fun!

Prayer Walk for Nepal

- On the floor, let students make a giant map of Nepal. (It is basically a lopsided rectangle.) Use rope or string or masking tape for a general outline, or draw on a giant piece of butcher paper. Chalk works well on a parking lot outside. Around the perimeter, draw a circle of stars, letters or numbers to form a walking path.
 - Make at least as many prayer idea cards as there are children in your group. Position prayer cards on the map randomly.
 - Begin exotic (Indian or Hindu) music, or a Christian music tape and have the children move around the perimeter of Nepal.
 - When the music stops, each person hurries to the nearest card, kneels and prays for one minute for that prayer idea. Several may end up sharing one card. Pair readers with non-readers. Kneeling helps to read the card, and promotes a different prayer posture!
 - For variation, play the national anthem and let children carry small flags of Nepal.
- **If you have only non-readers in your class, plan to have everyone stop and kneel when the music stops. Read one card out loud and have the person closest to it pray aloud for that idea. That child can then keep that card and music is repeated until everyone has a card to take home.*



The Hindu god Ganesh



Ganesh rides on a rat.