

# **INDIA**

## **Lessons for Mission Minded Kids**

### **Lesson 4**

#### **An Indian Festival**



# India

## Lesson 4: An Indian Festival

### Goals for Lesson 4:

- Students will understand that Christmas is celebrated by Christians all over the world.
- Students will recognize the emptiness of the Hindu celebration of Diwali, as the people hope to gain favor with the goddess of wealth and prosperity.
- Students will begin to relate the verse for India with the weariness and lack of peace one finds in trying to please thousands of gods.

### Verse for India:

Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)

### Before Class:

- Read through lesson and decide what you will use according to your age group and time allotted.
- Make various colors of salt glitter, make copies of the patterns, and collect trays or newspapers and glue sticks to complete the Rangoli craft.
- Decide which recipes you will make and how you will serve the food. Prepare food ahead of time and gather paper products you will need. Make copies of the recipe page to send home with the children so they can try the recipes at home.
- Put the lesson cover picture of the "Diyas" on a power point, or print it and back it with card stock for stability.
- Gather the cloth you used in the first lesson to make Indian clothing.
- Practice singing "Blessed Be the Name" in Hindi, or arrange for someone else to lead the children in learning and singing this Christian song in the national language of India. Write the Hindi pronunciation on a large poster board, or arrange to have it projected on a screen so that everyone can see it at once. Make enough copies of the song to send home with the children so they can remember it and sing it at home.
- Read through the directions for "Team Scramble" and make preparations as necessary for your group.
- **You may want to allow more time for this lesson, and recruit extra helpers to make this a special learning and celebration time.**

## Lesson Plan:

- Welcome the children to the Indian Festival. Help them to use the cloth to dress themselves in Indian clothing if they want to dress up for the festival.
- Have students sit down and start working on the Rangoli craft.
- As they are finishing the craft, tell them the story part of the lesson, helping them to understand the fun of having family celebrations, but the emptiness of having a holiday for the purpose of trying to gain favor with a goddess who can't give them the wealth and prosperity they are hoping for. Talk about their own family Christmas celebrations, and the celebrations of the Christians in India. Talk about the craft they just completed and how Christ doesn't promise wealth and prosperity, but peace and hope.
- Teach the song "Blessed Be the Name". Sing it through several times and talk about the Christians in India singing to their neighbors and teaching them about Jesus. Give the students a copy of the song to take home so they can remember it, and pray for the Christians in India singing this song.
- Use the "Team Scramble" activity to review the Verse for India. Remind the students that Christians don't have to hope to find favor with God in order to get His good blessings. We can talk to Him any time and know that He hears us and lightens the burdens we carry.
- Arrange to have some students serve the others the special foods that were prepared, but make sure that there are some boys and some girls serving. Talk about each food and the ingredients. Compare these foods to special foods we share on holidays. Remind the students about how traditional Indian meals are served, with the women cooking and serving the men first and then the children and then finally eating their own meal and cleaning everything up.

## Lesson 4 Story: An Indian Festival

Do you remember what religion most of the people in India practice? About 80% of the people in India are Hindu. The Hindu people worship several thousand gods and goddesses, and they try hard to make them happy. If something bad happens to someone, they believe it is a result of one of their gods being angry with that person. We will learn more about the Hindu religion in some upcoming lessons. Today, we will learn about some festival celebrations in India.

The largest and most important Hindu Festival is called Diwali (dee-WAHL-ee), or the “Festival of Lights”. This is a five day festival when the Hindu people worship their gods and try to please them. Just like our Easter date, Diwali has a different date each year, depending on the cycles of the moon, but it generally falls between late October and early December.

During the Diwali festival, the people light many oil lamps (**show picture from cover of lesson**), and set off beautiful fireworks at night. Bowls of water with candles and flowers floating on the surface are also popular decorations. The Hindu people are celebrating the triumph of good over evil as told in some of their legends about their gods and goddesses.

Many Hindu people work hard to clean their homes and yards before Diwali in an effort to please and welcome their goddess of wealth and prosperity. They may also wash themselves with water and fragrant oils, wear new clothes and give gifts of sweets to family members and friends.

In America, one of our major celebrations is Christmas. This is especially important for followers of Jesus, since that is the time we celebrate his birth in Bethlehem. Do you think that Christmas is celebrated in India? Compared to other festivals, Christmas is quite a small celebration in India, because only about 3% of the people are Christians. However, since the population of India is over 1 billion, that means that about 30 million people follow Jesus and want to celebrate His birth. So in areas of India where many Christians live, Christmas is actually a very popular celebration.

The festival of Diwali always happens during the fall months. At the end of December, the Christians want to celebrate Jesus’ birth, so they often put out many small oil lamps around the flat roof of their house to show their Hindu neighbors that Jesus is the light of the world. The Hindu people put out small lights to welcome their goddess of wealth and prosperity, hoping to have a better life here on earth in the coming year. These people have no hope for eternity. They can only hope for a better life on earth. The

Christian people put out small lights to show that Jesus is the Light that brings us joy and peace and hope for eternity, no matter what happens here on earth.

Since pine trees don't grow in India, many Christians decorate a banana or a mango tree to celebrate the Christmas holiday. They also might use mango leaves to decorate their homes, just like we would use holly or evergreen branches. In some areas, Christians celebrate Christmas by gathering together and walking through their village in a group, singing and telling others about how God sent Jesus to earth as a tiny baby to rescue us from our sin.

For most Christians in India, a midnight Christmas Eve service is a very important part of their celebration. The church is often decorated with poinsettia flowers and candles. Families will walk to the service together and then return home to enjoy a large feast with special Indian dishes. Gifts are exchanged among everyone in the house, as they remember the greatest Gift God gave the world on Christmas; Jesus, His Only Son.

The Hindu people have a lot of fun celebrating their festival of Diwali each year. They look forward to it as a time to relax and have fun with their family and friends. That is true of the Christian people who celebrate the birth of Christ all over the world, as well. Christmas is a time of beauty and rest and fun with those we love. Even though the Hindu people and the Christian people in India do similar things to celebrate (decorate with lights, dress up and prepare special foods, exchange gifts, etc.) there is a major difference in the two celebrations.

Christians are thanking God for the knowledge of His Love and the gifts of peace and provision here on earth, as well as the great hope that the promise of eternity in Heaven places in our hearts. Hindus are trying hard to please a statue that cannot hear or help them. They are hoping for an easier life on earth, because they have no hope for any heaven after they die. Their burdens of sin and a difficult life make them weary here on earth, and they don't understand that Jesus can give them rest for their souls and make their weary days lighter.

Let's pray for the Christians in India as they celebrate Christmas this year, that many of their neighbors and friends might find the Light of Jesus and decide to follow Him.

## Team Scramble

The object of this game will be to work together as a team to build the India verse. Use only the verse cards without the poster board for this activity.

**Preparation:** Take several pieces of construction paper and cut them in half the long way. Make two strips for each child you will have in class. Take the verse picture and word cards and attach them with a roll of tape or a dot of sticky tack to the strips of construction paper. Word/picture cards will be in the correct order, but only two or three cards on each paper strip, depending on your number of children. After the cards are attached, mix the strips up so they are not in the order of the verse. Children will see if they can line themselves up correctly to put these phrases together in order.

### To Play:

- **If you have older students:** Randomly hand each child two strips of paper containing two or three word/picture cards, or the verse reference. Holding strips at chest level and facing outward, children must trade strips and line themselves up so that the verse reads correctly from left to right, from beginning to end.
- **If you have younger students:** Make one strip for each student that contains 4-6 word or picture cards in order. Holding their strip at chest level and facing outward, students will move themselves into the correct order to make the verse read correctly. Provide help as necessary.
- **If you have a wide mixture of ages:** Give one strip to the younger students, and two to the older students. Help the younger students as necessary, or pair them with older students who will be in charge of making sure the younger one is standing in the correct spot.

When everyone is finished, form the line into a semi-circle so that everyone can see the other's verse strips. Have each student read their strip out loud around the circle. Then everyone join together to read the verse aloud from beginning to end.

# Blessed Be the Name

(In English and Hindi)

Bless ed be the name,

*Hoe moo bar uck nam,*

Bless ed be the name,

*Hoe moo bar uck nam,*

Bless ed be the name,

*Hoe moo bar uck nam,*

Of the Lord.

*Ka ye shoe*

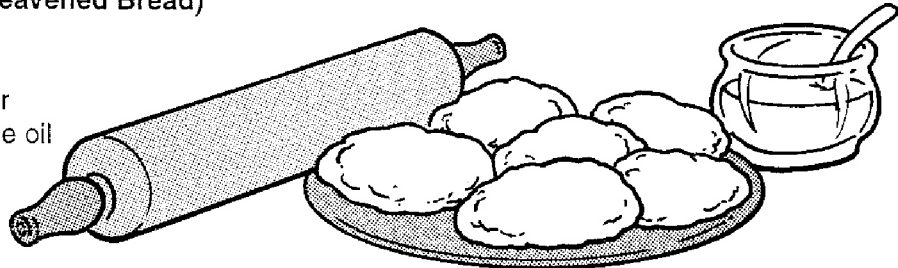
**(Repeat the song again)**



### Chapattis (Popular Unleavened Bread)

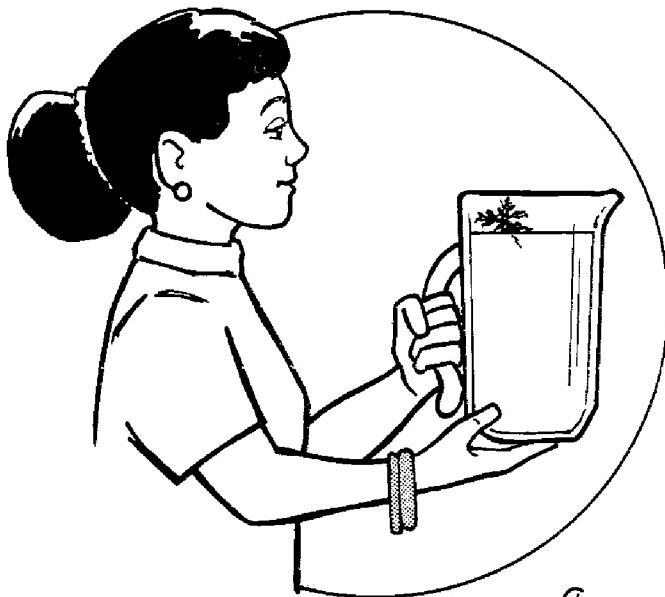
**Ingredients:**

- 4 cups whole meal flour
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup water



**Directions:**

In a large bowl mix the flour, oil, and salt. Gradually add the water to make a thick dough. Knead the dough and divide into twelve equal balls. Flatten each ball with a rolling pin and roll into a 5" circle. Fry on low heat, turning several times to avoid burning. As the chapattis cook, it will puff. Serve warm and dip in butter, curries, or sauces.



### Lassi (Yogurt Mint Drink)

**Ingredients:**

- 1 quart milk
- 1 quart plain yogurt
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup honey
- 4 teaspoons vanilla
- 6 fresh mint stalks

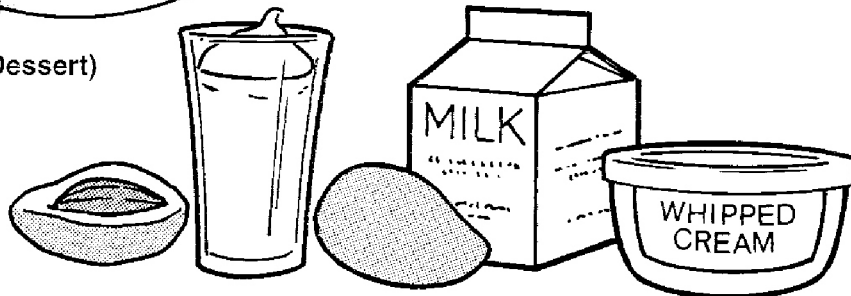
**Directions:**

Mix together the milk, yogurt, sugar, honey, and vanilla. Pour into a pitcher and immerse mint into the lassi. Refrigerate overnight. Remove mint before serving.

### Ahm Phul (Mango Whip Dessert)

**Ingredients:**

- 2 ripe mangoes
- 1/2 cup milk
- whipped cream



**Directions:**

Peel the mangoes, then cut the seeds from the flesh. Puree the mangoes in a blender and add the milk. Mix thoroughly. Serve in a frosted glass with a dab of whipped cream on top.



## Rangoli Craft

In India, intricate rangoli patterns are painted on the ground in front of houses using colored rice powder -- sometimes supplemented by flower petals and other colorful materials.

Use the first, more intricate rangoli pattern as a coloring page, or copy the second and third, simpler patterns onto cardstock and use the salt glitter recipe below to decorate the patterns.

Lay newspapers over your work area to catch most of the salt glitter, or place each cardstock rangoli pattern onto a tray with shallow sides. This will make clean-up much easier. Use glue sticks to make one area sticky at a time. Sprinkle salt glitter onto the sticky area to cover it with the desired color.

### Salt Glitter

- 1/4 cup salt
- 4 or 5 drops food coloring

In a bowl, mix salt and food coloring.

Spread salt in a thin layer on a plate and microwave 1 minute until mixture is dry. Make batches of several different colors and store each color in a salt shaker, glitter shaker or old spice container.

Shake onto arts and crafts projects like you would with glitter!

