

INDIA

Lessons for Mission Minded Kids

Lesson 6

God in India



India

Lesson 6: God in India

Goals for Lesson 6:

- Children will gain a basic understanding of Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism.
- Children will understand that following the rules of a religion cannot offer forgiveness and a relationship with the Living God.
- Children will respond with compassion towards the millions of people who are lost in the futility of trying hard to please an indifferent god.

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 the lesson and decide what you will use according to your age group and time allotted.
- Prepare the pictures, including the one on the lesson cover, as power point slides, or print them and back them with cardstock for stability.
- Print the God/god page and back it with cardstock for stability.
- Collect one Bible for each child. Plan to ask some of your good readers to help you by reading certain passages at the appropriate time. Children can look up the scriptures in the Bibles, or you can print the included verse sheets, cut them apart into individual readings, back them with sturdy paper, and hand them to children to read. The printed scriptures are taken from the NLT, but you may prepare them in another version if you prefer.
- Read through the "Shiva Says" activity and prepare as necessary.
- Copy the coloring page onto regular white paper, or if desired, copy onto clear transparency sheets and cut out around outer border to make a stained glass window craft. Gather crayons for the regular paper, or markers for the stained glass windows.

Lesson Plan:

- Open your time together with a welcome, announcements and a brief prayer. (5 min.)
- Show the picture of the Hindu God, Shiva and explain the “Shiva Says” activity. Add many of your own demands to the list given, and be as unreasonable as possible throughout the activity. Make sure the children have discovered for themselves the futility of trying to please a stone or painted statue. End the activity in peace, with a calm, gentle voice, handing each child a Bible and reading the India verse out loud together in a quiet voice. (15-20 min.)
- When children are sitting quietly with their Bibles, read or tell the story part of the lesson, showing the picture as indicated, and stopping to have students read scriptures aloud, either from their Bibles, or from the printed readings. Take the time to discuss what each scripture says and why it is relevant to this lesson. Make sure your students understand the power of the One True God and why what He says is true, in relation to the powerless statues of Hinduism and Buddhism and why what they say is changeable and unpredictable. (20-25 min.)
- Use the “Jesus Loves You” sheet to make a stained glass window craft (or just color it on paper with crayons). Tell students to hang it up at home where it will remind them to pray this prayer, thanking God for His great love for all people. (15-20 min.)

Lesson 6 Story: God in India

There are many gods in India; millions of them, in fact. Out of all those gods though, only One of them can answer those who pray to Him and have a relationship with the ones He created. If a god is created by humans out of wood or stone or gold, then it has no ability to interact with the humans who made it. That kind of god is spelled with a small “g”, and is not alive. **(Show the God/god page to illustrate the difference.)** The One, True God, however, was the one who made the humans. He is a living Spirit and His name is spelled with a capital “G”. He knows each of His created people intimately and has the power to change the hearts and lives of those who choose to follow Him.

About 80% of the people in India practice the Hindu religion. Hinduism is a system of good behavior rules by which a person must attain his own salvation through his good works and devotion to the religion. The Hindus worship millions of gods and live in fear of making them angry. Every bad thing that happens is blamed on something someone did to make a god angry. Every day, the Hindus visit the statues and pictures they have made of their gods and leave gifts of food and drink and flowers, hoping to make them happy.

Hindus believe that when they die, they will come back to earth as another human or another creature, based on how good or bad they were in this life. This belief is called reincarnation. They think that they might have to go through hundreds or even thousands of cycles of death and rebirth in order to be good enough to finally be liberated from reincarnation.

Because they believe these things, they try not to ever kill any other creature, because they say the soul of that creature is sacred and it is in the process of finding perfection. This creates a lot of hardship for the country of India. Cows and other animals cannot be eaten, so they roam freely through the streets, while children starve to death for lack of adequate nutrition. Rats and other harmful animals and insects are allowed to multiply and devour and contaminate food meant for humans. They spread diseases and add to the dirty, unsanitary conditions that bring sickness and death to many poor families.

About 15% of the people in India follow the Muslim faith. Muslims have only one god, whom they call “Allah”, which is the Arabic word for god. They believe that Allah is the creator of the world, but Allah has not given them any way to come to him, except through their own devotion to the rules of their religion. Every day they must repeat the words, “There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet”. They also pray five times every day, give money to needy people, and fast during the daylight hours of their special month of Ramadan. Muslims also try to travel to their holy city, Mecca, at least once in their lifetime.

These are five ways that people can be devoted to the Muslim religion, which is called Islam. However, they have no way of knowing if they have been good enough to please Allah. They cannot have a relationship with Allah, because he is distant and “unknowable”. He does not help them with the difficulties of life, or fill them with the comfort and peace of his presence, because Muslims believe that Allah is all powerful, but not all-loving. Most of all, the Allah of Islam never gave his own son, a part of himself, to die as a sacrifice to cover the sins of the people he created. As a Muslim, there is no way to be forgiven; one must only try harder to be a better person. Allah is not the One, True, Living God of the Bible, because how Allah described himself to Mohammed, the writer of the Muslim’s holy book, the Koran, is very different from how God describes himself in the Bible.

Some of the Indian people practice other religions like Buddhism and Animism. The Buddhist religion is based on the experiences of a man named Siddharta Goutama (Sid-HEART-ah GOWT-ah-mah). Siddharta was raised in ancient times in a very wealthy family, and was never exposed to any of life’s problems. He got married to a beautiful princess and had a son. The story goes that the gods were angry that his family had protected him from seeing all the suffering in the world, so the gods appeared to him in the form of an old man, a sick man, and a dead man. Siddharta was crushed by what he saw, so one night, he left his wife and little boy to go out and find the meaning of life. He never went back. Through a series of visions brought on by days of meditation, Siddharta became the Buddha, or “the enlightened one”. Today, millions of people meditate and pray to the Buddha, visiting his statue and rubbing his feet, hoping to find the meaning of life within themselves, but still carrying their heavy burdens of poverty, hopelessness and despair. **(Show picture of Indian lady on lesson cover, trying to touch the statue, hoping it will help her.)**

About 3% of Indian people are Christians. This is about 30 million people (about the population of the city of Tokyo, Japan. Do you remember that after Jesus went back to Heaven, one of his disciples, Thomas, was taken to India and became the first missionary there? The 30 million people in India who now follow Christ, have Thomas to thank for the hope they have. As they live and interact with the millions of Hindus and Muslims and Buddhists around them, they see that the words of Jeremiah 10 and John 14 are true. **(Have some students read the passages from Jeremiah and John.)**

Jesus is the only way to Heaven, and it is the peace Jesus offers that brings rest to our weary souls. Trying hard to be good and leaving gifts for statues only produces worry about whether we have been good enough or done the right things. Let’s pray for the Indian people who carry such a heavy burden of worry and fear. Pray that the 30 million Christians in India will love their neighbors enough to introduce them to Jesus.

God

god

Jeremiah 10: 2, 3-5, 12-13, 16

This is what the Lord says: Do not act like the other nations...
their ways are futile and foolish. They cut down a tree
and a craftsman carves an idol. They decorate it with gold and silver
and then fasten it securely with hammer and nails so it won't fall over.
Their gods are like helpless scarecrows in a cucumber field.
They cannot speak, and they need to be carried
because they cannot walk.

Do not be afraid of such gods, for they can neither harm you
nor do you any good.....

But God made the earth by his power, and he preserves it
by his wisdom. With his own understanding
he stretched out the heavens.

When he speaks in the thunder, the heavens roar with rain.

He causes the clouds to rise over the earth.
He sends the lightning with the rain and releases
the wind from his storehouses.

The God of Israel is no idol!
He is the Creator of everything that exists.
The Lord of Heaven's Armies is his name!

Jeremiah 29:13

When you pray, I will listen.

If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.

“I will be found by you”, says the Lord.

John 14:6

Jesus told him,

“I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one can come to the Father except through me”.

John 14:27

I am leaving you with a gift—

peace of mind and heart.

And the peace I give is a gift the

world cannot give.

So don't be troubled or afraid.

“Shiva Says”

Activity Preparation: Print the picture of the statue of Shiva and back it with cardstock, or prepare the picture as a slide and project onto a screen. Read through the directions below and make up some of your own “demands” to fit your group. Attach the verse cards and reference onto the poster board in order. Gather one Bible for each of your students and stack them at the front of the room close to you.

Activity: Read through the verse out loud together as a class. Tell students that the people of India have many gods, and they are always trying to please them, hoping that if they do, life will go well for them. The problem is that since their gods are statues made of stone, or pictures made of paint, they have no way to talk with their gods or know what they should do. Show the picture of Shiva and tell your students that they are going to try to meet all the demands that Shiva makes of them in a game called “Shiva Says”. You will pretend to be the spokesperson for Shiva. Call out the following demands in a brisk, commanding way, randomly identifying students who didn’t please Shiva and need to re-do the demand.

- **Shiva Says, “Stand up and put your arms in the air.”**
- **Shiva Says, “March in place.”**
- **Shiva Says, “March faster.”**
- **Shiva Says, “Clap softly.”**
- **Shiva Says, “You clapped too loudly.” (Point to one or more students, who will have to clap more softly to satisfy Shiva.)**
- **Shiva Says, “Bring me a gift.” (Children scatter around the room and bring anything they think Shiva might like to lay on the floor in front of the picture.)**
- **Shiva Says, “I don’t like this gift.” (Randomly choose any gift and have the child who brought it go find another. Repeat this demand at will.)**
- **Shiva Says, “Do ten jumping jacks.”**
- **Shiva Says, “Walk in a parade around the room.”**
- **Shiva Says, “Sit down on the floor.”**
- **Shiva Says, “You are sitting wrong.” (Point to one or more students, who will have to change their position in order to please Shiva.)**
- **Shiva Says, “Stand up and put your hands on your head.”**
- **Etc. (Give as many demands as you wish, being as commanding and unpredictable as possible. Be careful not to imitate worshipful actions like bowing or rubbing the picture. The point is that the children need to figure out that pleasing Shiva is difficult and wearisome, and is a lot of hard work.**

Change back to your normal voice and begin to recite the India Verse as you slowly and calmly walk among the students, handing each of them a Bible. When they are each holding a Bible, tell them quietly to sit down in their chairs and ask them to read the verse aloud with you.

A statue of a Hindu god, named Shiva. Notice the size of the people in the picture.



JESUS LOVES YOU!

**Dear God,
Thank You for loving us.
Thank You for sending
Your Son, Jesus, to earth
to show us Your love.
Please forgive us for the
wrong things we do. Thank
You that we can be a part
of Your family. Please
help us to love others.
In Jesus' name, amen.**