



# Religious Education

## Key Knowledge

# Year 9 Hinduism- Nature of God



### Beliefs in God

1) Hindus believe in one supreme God called Brahman. He can be found in everyone and everything, Brahman exists in all hearts and is the absolute, ultimate truth. Brahman: God in the Hindu religion. He may take on the form of anything in the world, usually a god or goddess, and each god or goddess has its own personality and appearance. Brahman is present in every person as the eternal spirit or soul, called the atman. This is why Hinduism is a monotheistic religion as they believe only in one true God. Some of the important other Gods include 'Brahma' (the creator), 'Shiva', (the destroyer) and 'Vishnu' (the protector). These three together form the 'Trimurti'.

Other gods include Ganesh (remover of obstacles), Hanuman (the monkey God), Lakshmi (the Goddess of wealth and good fortune, and Vishnu (the God who preserves life and stands up to evil).

### 2) Krishna and Shakti:

Krishna is the most popular avatar of Vishnu and is worshipped as a god in his own right. Krishna is often shown playing the flute. The vedic scriptures refer to the goddess as the creative energy of Shakti, as the activating force which enables the male gods to exert their power.

### 3) Nirguna and Saguna:

The Hindu scriptures have two ways of thinking of Brahman that help with understanding him. The first of these is nirguna, which means 'without form' and 'without qualities'. The second way of thinking of Brahman is saguna, which means 'with form' and 'with qualities'

### Worship

4) Puja involves images (murtis) and prayers (mantras). Hindu worship is primarily an individual act, as it involves making personal offerings to the gods. The majority of Hindu homes have a shrine where offerings are made and prayers are said. A shrine can be anything: a room, a small altar or simply pictures or statues of the gods.

5) Hindu worship can take place at home, where the devotee can create their own prayer and it is personal. Hindus can however worship in groups or at the Mandir, this would then become congregational prayer.

At the centre of the Puja will be the Murti, a statue of one of the deities. There may also be a picture of a

6) Hinduism is one of the world's major religions. It is the world's 3rd largest religion, with about 1.1 billion followers. It is around 5,000 years old. Hindus are the people who follow Hinduism. It is a very complex religion that is followed by different people in different ways. Many gods are worshipped in Hinduism. All of these different Gods are believed to be a part of the supreme God named 'Brahman.' Hindus believe in karma and reincarnation – that when you die you are reborn as something else. Hinduism does not have one holy book, but several sacred texts. Mandirs are Hindu worship buildings.

## Key Vocabulary

Monotheism	A religions that believes in one God only
Trimurti	The belief in one God Brahman who has three different aspects to him, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva
Shakti	The female consort to each male deity.
Avatara	Whilst there is only one God, he appears in many forms, these are called avataras
Nirguna	A form of Brahman that has no qualities, cannot be seen or touched just exists all around us
Saguna	A form of Brahman that does have qualities, the different forms of him that we see (the different avataras)
Krishna	A favourite Hindu deity. He is an avatara of Vishnu
Murti	An image or statue of a Hindu God
Deity	Another word for Hindu God
Puja	A Hindu prayer/worship, which can be carried out at home or at the Mandir
Mandir	Hindu holy place of worship
Personal prayer	Hindu prayer that is carried out alone or at home by the worshipper
Congregational prayer	Prayer in groups that is carried out at the Mandir or for a special occasion at home

## Key context