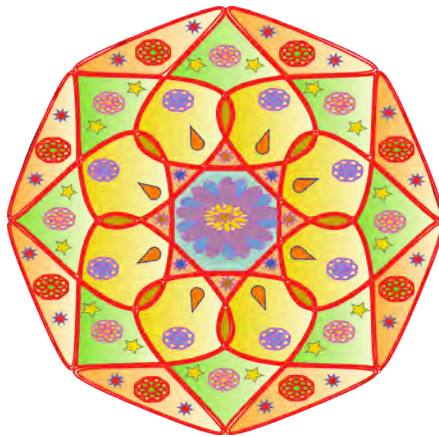


Teacher's Information File

Introduction to the book

Looking for Lord Ganesh provides a unique, contemporary take on Hinduism, from a child's perspective, as well as focusing on universal themes that will affect the majority of today's children at some point in their lives: friendship, teamwork, moving home, settling in to a new school and fitting in. In the modern age of information, the book also raises the question of where wisdom 'comes from'. What place does spiritual guidance, advice passed down through the generations and inner wisdom have in an age, since the advent of Google, when the answer to any question is literally at our fingertips.



A mandala, a spiritual and ritual symbol in Indian religions representing the universe.

Information about Lord Ganesh

Ganesh, the elephant deity, is one of the most recognisable aspects of Hindu iconography. He is the son of Lord Siva and the Goddess Parvati and is depicted with an elephant's head and a human's body. Ganesh is normally known as the Lord of Success and Remover of Obstacles and is therefore often prayed to by people embarking on a new enterprise of starting a new business. He is also known as the patron god of travelling and poets traditionally invoke him at the start of books.

Ganesh is traditionally represented with a large head, small eyes, large ears and a big belly. He is commonly shown with one tusk intact and one broken off and, in addition to this, he is typically presented with a series of significant objects, each of which has a deeper meaning.

There are many useful diagrams available on the internet to explain the significance of each aspect of Ganesh's body and the objects that he holds. Try this site for a very clear image: <http://www.lotussculpture.com/blog/sacred-symbols-lord-ganesh-statue/>. This picture could be used in the classroom in conjunction with the free resource 'RE Focus on Lord Ganesh' which is available to download from our website.



Further information from the author

The festival of Ganesha Chaturthi is celebrated between the months of August and September. Ganesha is worshipped for 10 days after which the clay figure is immersed in water. In ancient times, this ritual was believed to have purified the drinking water. Personally, I have always been fascinated by Lord Ganesh who has the head of an elephant and the body of a human. How he got the elephant's head is a fascinating story...definitely worth Googling.