

# LEARNING FROM HINDU VALUES: AN EXTENDED VERSION

## For the teacher

This sequence of lesson ideas, expanded from the book *Opening up Values*, is designed to help your pupils to think for themselves about what is good and bad, nice and nasty, kind and unkind. The raw material for this thoughtful kind of engagement is from Hindu traditions. Too often, pupils learn facts about Hindu dharma without engaging with the visions, ideals and ways of being good that Hindu traditions offer. Among all the religions commonly taught in RE, Hinduism is the most diverse. Teachers will be used to saying 'some Hindus . . .' or 'many Hindu people . . .' in all their work. These examples show just small patches of the splendours of the 'eternal way' (the Sanatan Dharma) that is Hinduism.



The development and expression of values by the pupil is as important as building up understanding of Hindu ideals. This work provides for at least half of the RE lesson time to be spent on values development by the pupils. You will find here four suggested activities that entwine learning about Hindu values together with learning from these values for your pupils:

- **Good Hindu living:** first, a Hindu children's code for goodness enables children to learn about the moral values of the religion and reflect on their own values.
- **Aum – a holy syllable:** second, a Hindu story about the Aum symbol gives children a chance to think about Hindu beliefs as well as values, and to reflect on their own beliefs.
- **How to be naughty:** third, pupils think about being naughty (and conversely being good). This fun activity asks them to create a charter for 'how to be naughty'.
- **Make a play:** next, a drama activity asks groups of pupils to explore choices and consequences through improvised plays. This links to the Hindu values and the 'how to be naughty' charter above.

## Achievement and assessment of this work

The work provides many good opportunities to gather evidence of achievement. These 'I can' statements describe the learning that may be expected of pupils 7–9 years of age.

### Level Description of achievement: I can . . .

- 1**
  - **talk about** what is valuable to me.
  - **talk about** something that matters to Hindu people.
- 2**
  - **retell** a simple values story in a drama.
  - **recognise** the results of a good choice or a bad choice.
  - **respond sensitively** to some Hindu values.
- 3**
  - **describe** what Hindu people think is good.
  - **describe** what I think is good and bad.
  - **make links** between Hindu ideas and my own ideas.
- 4**
  - **use the right words** to show that I **understand** how being a Hindu makes a difference to what people think is good.
  - **apply** ideas like harmlessness, compassion or generosity for myself.

# How to be good

**Always be truthful.** Truth is always victorious.

**Always be happy.** Try to use a smile to help you carry on.

**Always face your troubles.** Have courage and tolerance.

**Do all your work diligently.** Be careful, be enthusiastic.

**Be humble.** Never boast

**Be just.** Never be unfair to others

**Be generous.** Not just with money, but with your appreciation of other people.

**Don't lose your temper.** Try to control your anger.

**Accept success or failure at work.** Don't be conceited about success, and don't be depressed by failures.

**Be polite.** You need never be rude to anybody. Never waste words.

Always try to speak politely, briefly, with understanding.

**Always be compassionate.** Never hurt anyone or thing that lives.

**Aspire to do difficult tasks.** You will attain higher goals in life.

**When you eat, thank God.** Pray at a meal to be grateful for your food.

**Do good deeds.** Always.

God is omnipresent. God is everywhere.

You do nothing without God's knowledge

Keep him with you and let him watch over all your life.



## About this 'code for good'

This code for 'how to be good' was published in a little magazine for Hindu children and young people in Leicester. The magazine was called *Sanatan Sandesh*. It gives you 16 ideas about how Hindu religion can show Hindu children good ways to live.

- Read it carefully with a partner.
- Choose the six ideas from the code which you agree with most.
- Can you also see two that you don't agree with?
- Is there something for anyone to learn from the code?
- Do you have to be a Hindu to think these are good ideas?
- What would a code opposite of this look like: how to be naughty?

## A Hindu story: the power of Aum

This true story comes from West Bengal in India. Bali and Prasham were both born nearly 50 years ago, in the 1960s.

Bali and his brother Prasham were only small when their mum and dad both died. They were orphans, and had nowhere to live. Bali was the older boy, but he was only 10. The boys lived on the streets in their little village near to the city, and no one cared for them.

Bali was a very brave boy, and he found a way to make money and live. He was a snake catcher. In those days people would take a poisonous snake to the hospital. The doctors could take the poison from the snake's jaw, and use it to make serum to treat anyone bitten by that kind of snake.

Bali waited in the grassy places outside the village where snakes came in the early morning, and trapped them with a forked stick. He was sure that he could catch the most poisonous snakes safely. These ones were worth more money, because most people were too afraid to touch them.

Bali would wait in complete stillness until the snake was in reach. Then, as fast as he could, he would jab his stick down over the snake's neck, catch it behind the head and push it quickly into a canvas bag he carried. Off to the hospital, and he would come back to his little brother Prasham with enough rupees to buy rice and dhal for the day.

For many months Bali and Prasham lived on the streets, with only the money that came from catching snakes to live on. Then one day rescue arrived: some monks from a children's home came to their village, and found the boys. They invited them to live at their orphanage. Bali never had to catch another snake. Prasham grew to be a strong young man.

When he was grown up, Bali told his story. 'I was never bitten,' he said. 'I had something to protect me. Before my mother died, she gave me a tiny Aum symbol made of metal, on a string. From the day she gave it to me, until now, I have always worn it around my neck. I pray to the gods for courage and for peace. My mother's love and the power of the Aum kept me safe.'

The names in this story are interesting. 'Bali' means 'brave' and 'Prasham' means 'peace'.

### To talk about:

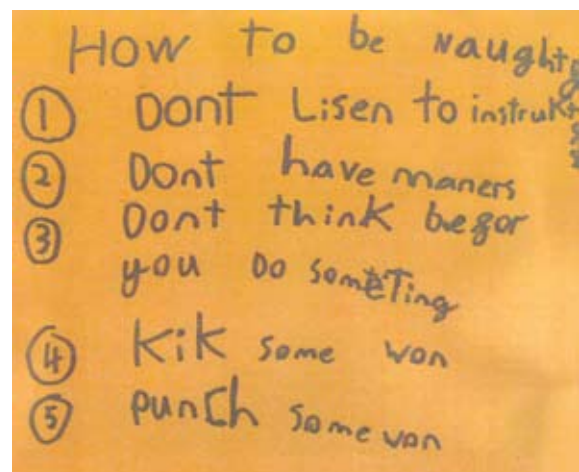
- What sort of person do you think Bali and Prasham's mum was?
- Are the two names of the boys well chosen? Why?
- Bali's snake catching was very dangerous. How did he explain the fact that he was never bitten?
- What other ways of explaining Bali's safety can you think of?
- The sacred syllable 'Aum' is chanted every day by many Hindu people in their prayers. What do you think Bali and Prasham think about when they chant 'Aum'?

## How to be naughty: a cheeky activity

Joe and Daisy have been good children for all their lives, but today they are going to try being naughty for a change. But they don't really know how. Some of you do! Can you help them? Start off by making a list of naughty behaviour in the first column of the table.

Ten things we think are naughty	Who might be upset if you did this?	A good thing you could do instead of this:
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

Here are two 'charters for being naughty' made by Joanna (9) and Jonathan (8). Can you work out what these two children think is good?



We can often tell what somebody thinks is good from what they say about being naughty. In circle time, talk about the charts you have made about good and naughty, and things you could do instead of being naughty. How do your ideas link up to the ideas in the Hindu code for goodness?

## Consequences drama: six little plays for the whole class

Put the class into six groups for dramatic improvisation. Give the scenarios below out, one per group. Ask half of the groups to make a script and develop a drama where there are good consequences, and half to make dramas with dreadful consequences. The idea may need some explanation!

### The New Boy

Jodie, Judy and Jade are in the playground. There is a new boy in the school, and the girls decide to play a joke on the new kid. They go up to him and say 'Mrs Jackson wants to see you.'

'Who's Mrs Jackson?' asks Jonathan, the new boy.

'She's the head teacher, silly,' they reply. 'She probably wants to tell you off about your sweatshirt. It's not a proper school one, you know. You'd better go and stand by her door.'

Jonathan goes in to the school, and stands by the head teacher's door, looking worried. The girls spy on him, laughing. When playtime is over, they go back to class, still giggling, but Jonathan is still standing by the door . . .

***What happens next?***

### The Changing Room Window

At football on Wednesday after school, Tim, Jim and Kim are messing about in the changing rooms. There is no teacher there.

'I bet you can't climb out of that window,' says Jim to the other two. The window is quite high up, but there is a table to stand on. The boys climb onto the table, and look out of the window, which is open on its hinges. Outside, there is a flat roof. The window is quite big. Tim checks the door. There is no one around.

'You're chickens,' says Jim. 'If you're too scared to do it, I will!'

***What happens next?***

### Breaking the Hedge

Sharon, Karen, Darren and Haran are walking home together one day. They go past Mrs Bridge's house, where they usually walk. Yesterday, they had been scrapping on the way home, and fell through the little hedge into her garden. They had broken the flowers there.

Mrs Bridge comes out. 'You children,' she says 'I saw you breaking down my flowers yesterday. Tell me your names. I'm going to phone the school.'

Darren speaks up straight away, but he's not telling the truth: 'No, Miss, it wasn't us. We know the kids who did that, but it wasn't us. You must be mixing us up because we all wear the same school uniform.' He is thinking of four other children. He's going to blame them, give their names, and get out of trouble . . .

***What happens next?***

When pupils have had time to create their improvised plays, then arrange the class theatrically and watch the dramas two at a time. In between each pair of dramas, spend some discussion time looking again at the Hindu code for good and the children's codes for being naughty. What happened in the dramas that links up to the codes? Who was following the code for 'how to be good'? Who was living by the 'how to be naughty' codes? Teachers should draw attention to the idea that being naughty often makes other people unhappy.

## How to be good

<p>Always be truthful. Truth is always victorious.</p>	
<p>Always be happy. Try to use a smile to help you carry on.</p>	
<p>Always face your troubles. Have courage and tolerance.</p>	
<p>Do all your work diligently. Be careful, be enthusiastic.</p>	
<p>Be humble. Never boast.</p>	
<p>Be just. Never be unfair to others.</p>	
<p>Be generous. Not just with money, but with your appreciation of other people.</p>	
<p>Don't lose your temper. Try to control your anger.</p>	
<p>Accept success or failure at work. Don't be conceited about success, and don't be depressed by failures.</p>	
<p>Be polite. You need never be rude to anybody.</p>	
<p>Never waste words. Always try to speak politely, briefly, with understanding.</p>	
<p>Always be compassionate. Never hurt anyone or thing that lives.</p>	
<p>Aspire to do difficult tasks. You will attain higher goals in life.</p>	
<p>When you eat, thank God. Pray at a meal to be grateful for your food.</p>	
<p>Do good deeds. Always.</p>	
<p>God is omnipresent. God is everywhere. You do nothing without God's knowledge, to keep him with you and let him watch over all your life.</p>	