

# Primary Teaching Idea 3

## Creating a Display/Shrine

You can make displays for the classroom, corridor, foyer or elsewhere. They are particularly useful for special projects/days or multicultural events. They are a creative activity for your pupils, and can be linked to a relevant scheme of work. They also help inform others about the work of the RE department, and stimulate interest in the subject. You might want to create a shrine or altar as a display, or part of a display. In India it is common to see small shrines erected anywhere, on car dashboards, in shops or on the street. There is not much difference between a display and a shrine. A display could include other items not normally found on a shrine; for example, shrine in the centre surrounded by other artefacts.

Building a shrine might be more relevant if you have Hindu pupils but is also valuable for non-Hindus. Although they will not give the shrine the same reverence a Hindu, they can at least learn to honour the fact that it is important to others.

In making a display there is a huge range of items you can use, including practically anything from India! In creating a shrine or altar, some items are more appropriate, as we have listed herein. You might want to add others, and examples of students' work.

### Props:

#### a) For a Shrine

- Cloth or prayer shawl (traditionally red)
- Murtis
- Pictures of the deities (see the "Photo-cards")
- A small Shiva-linga
- Conch shell
- Divas/candles
- Flowers, real or artificial
- An arati tray (usually to the left side of the shrine)
- Hindu Scripture e.g. Bhagavad-Gita & bookstand
- Misc. brass/wooden/clay statues e.g. elephant, peacock, cow etc.
- Incense in a holder
- Peacock feathers/fan

## **b) For a Display**

- Indian fabrics/saris/prayer shawls
- Books on Hinduism
- Flower garlands, real or artificial
- Packets of Incense
- Musical instruments e.g. manjira or karatels.
- Indian cooking implements/food (especially sweets!)
- Divali cards
- A Hindu calendar
- Bindi & kumkum
- Henna
- Dolls/puppets
- Jewellery
- Indian craftwear
- Prayer beads/neck beads
- Rakhis

Do consider putting drapes or posters behind the display.

You can also add live features (at certain times), such as:

- Playing background music (as included on the Heart of Hinduism “Audio CD”)
- Burning incense
- Light “divas” (see “Teaching Idea” 9)
- Adding a bowl of traditional sweets (see “Teaching Idea 11”)

You might sometimes sit in front of the shrine, maybe cross legged on the floor) e.g. when teaching about worship or discussing meditation (see “Teaching Idea 4”).

The shrine can be effective for parents’ evenings and for school inspections. If you have previously visited a Hindu temple, you can surround the shrine with pictures and accounts of the trip.