

Showing respect

There are many ways that Hindus show respect for the gods and goddesses in the mandir.

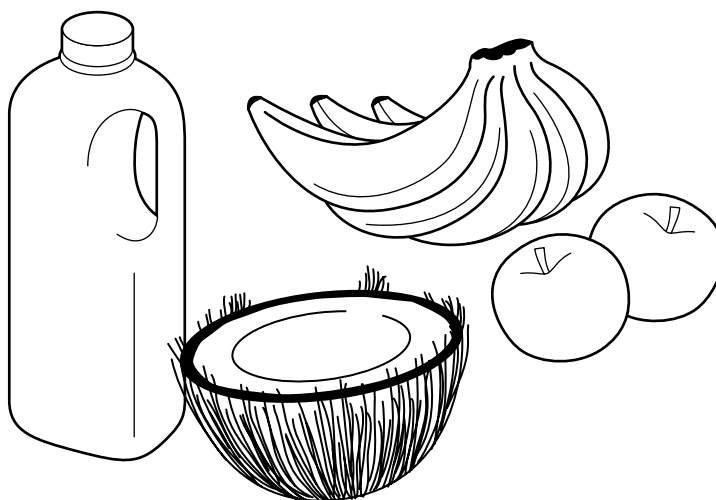
Q1. Why do Hindus take their shoes off when entering the mandir?

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Q2. Here are some foods. What might they be used for in a mandir?

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Q3. List three other things which might be used in the same way as food in a mandir.

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Q4. What is another name for the gifts brought for the gods and goddesses?

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Q5. Why are there usually no chairs inside the mandir?

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Q6. Name two ways Hindus might show respect to the gods and goddesses.

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Answers

1. To show respect for the gods and goddesses.
2. Gifts for the gods and goddesses.
3. Flowers; incense; clothes.
4. Offerings.
5. Because Hindus stand and walk between the shrines when they worship.
6. Bowing, washing and dressing the statues, walking around the shrines.

Lesson objectives

- ▶ To help the children understand that there are different ways of showing respect to the gods and goddesses.
- ▶ To help the children understand the meaning of making offerings and caring for the shrines in the mandir.

Lesson outcomes

- ▶ The children understand the purpose of making offerings.
- ▶ The children understand the purpose of caring for the shrines.

Teaching notes

Offerings

The offerings in a Hindu mandir are a way in which worshippers make a connection to the gods and goddesses, and to God. Once an offering is made to a god or goddess, it becomes blessed. So, the person who makes an offering receives a blessing. One way of explaining this may be to ask the children how they feel when they do a good deed and someone says thank you. When the children say that the thank you makes them feel good,

you can say that Hindus believe the gods and goddesses say thank you whenever offerings are made.

Each type of offering has special meaning and symbolism and bestows certain benefits on the giver. For example, coconuts represent spiritual growth (among other things). So, many Hindus believe that if they make an offering of coconuts, the gods will give them the gift of spiritual growth. Light (lighting a lamp) can represent knowledge and the dispelling of ignorance. Incense can represent spirituality and the desire for purification.

Walking around the shrines

When Hindus walk around the shrines of the gods and goddesses, they are acknowledging the god or goddess as the centre, or focal point, in their lives. The circle also represents the fact that wherever a person may be, they are always the same distance from God, just as any point on the outside of a circle is the same distance from the centre.

Complementary work

The children can look at secondary sources or photographs of different offerings and try to identify what offerings people make at the mandir.

Resources

Secondary sources and photographs of offerings made at a mandir.