

Sharing blessings

After puja, there are usually two more types of worship. Each of these involves sharing the blessings of the gods and goddesses.



Q1. What is the name of the ceremony being performed in this picture?



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Q2. In the ceremony, a lamp is waved in front of a god or goddess. What do the worshippers do with the flame after this?



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Q3. Why is this ceremony important?



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Q4. What is prasada? 

Q5. Why is sweet food often used for prasada?



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Q6. Name another thing that is sometimes blessed and then given to worshippers.



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Answers

1. **Aarti.**
2. **Each worshipper waves their hands over the flame and then over their head.**
3. **It is a way of receiving blessings from the gods and goddesses.**
4. **Another type of shared blessing that involves food.**
5. **It is a reminder of the sweetness of God.**
6. **Flowers.**

Lesson objectives

- ▶ To introduce the concept of shared blessings.
- ▶ To show that there are different ways of sharing blessings in the mandir.
- ▶ To introduce the aarti ceremony and the prasada ceremony.

Lesson outcomes

- ▶ The children know that worshippers in the mandir share blessings.
- ▶ The children know what is involved in the aarti ceremony.
- ▶ The children know what prasada is and what it is used for.

Teaching notes

Aarti

There are many different explanations of the aarti ceremony and many different ways to perform the ceremony, although all involve fire. The aarti ceremony is also performed on other occasions, such as weddings. The flame is made by placing a cotton wick in a small

pool of ghee (clarified butter) on a metal plate. The light of the flame is believed to dispel darkness and ignorance and remind Hindus of God. The aarti ceremony also includes chanted or spoken prayers, said in Hindi or another Indian language. These prayers are different for each god and goddess.

Prasada

Prasada means holy food. Many Hindus believe that when they offer food to the gods and goddesses it becomes blessed. They can then share in the blessing by eating the food. Prasada can be anything worshippers want and some Hindus believe in offering all food to God before eating it. In some mandirs, the water and milk the statues are bathed in is also shared with worshippers.

Complementary work

The children could investigate the prayers that are said during the aarti ceremony.

Resources

Secondary sources on the aarti ceremony.