

Hindu Worship at Home and in the Mandir

Learning Objective:

To identify some characteristics of Hindu gods and goddesses.

The elephant-headed Ganesha is a Hindu god worshipped by virtually all Hindus. He is the god of wisdom and intellect. Many believe that worshipping him will bring them good luck.



Hindus believe that Brahman is the one supreme God. They also believe that this supreme god is represented in many different ways through other gods and goddesses.



Confused? Think about it this way:

You are not the same person to everyone you meet:



To your
parents,
you are
their child.



To your
teacher,
you are
their pupil –
one of
many!

You are not the same person to everyone you meet:

You might also
be a brother or
a sister, a
nephew or a
niece, a cousin,
or even an
aunt or uncle!

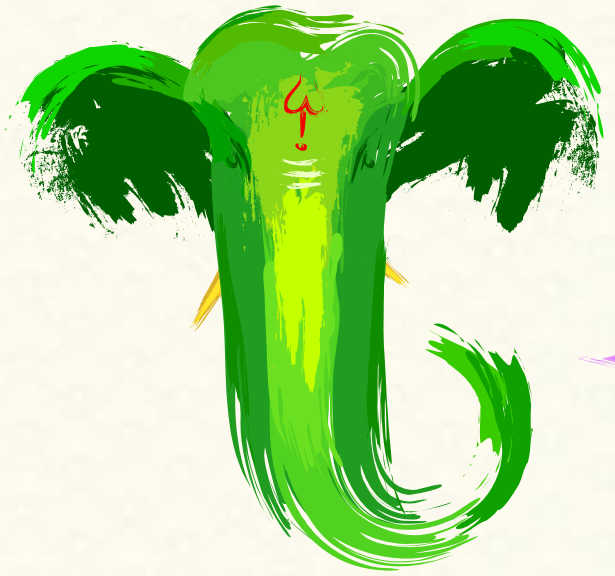


Even though
you are one
person, you are
also many
people.

Who else might see you differently?



There are thousands of gods and goddesses (or deities) in Hinduism. Each has different roles, qualities and attributes.



Some Hindu families choose one deity to worship at home.

Some temples (mandirs) worship one deity in particular, although many mandirs have images and statues of a number of gods and goddesses.



This is Neasden Temple, a mandir in London. Can you see the statues of different deities?





Look at these Hindu deities. Do you recognise any of them? What might they be gods and goddesses of? How are they posed? What are they holding? What are their attributes?









Brahma

Brahma created the world and the human race. His four faces look in every direction - north, south, east and west.



Saraswati

Saraswati and Brahma were husband and wife. She is the goddess of music and the arts. Here, she is playing a veena.



Vishnu

Vishnu - The Preserver. He protects the earth from being destroyed. In one of his left hands he holds a mace- a club-like weapon.



Lakshmi

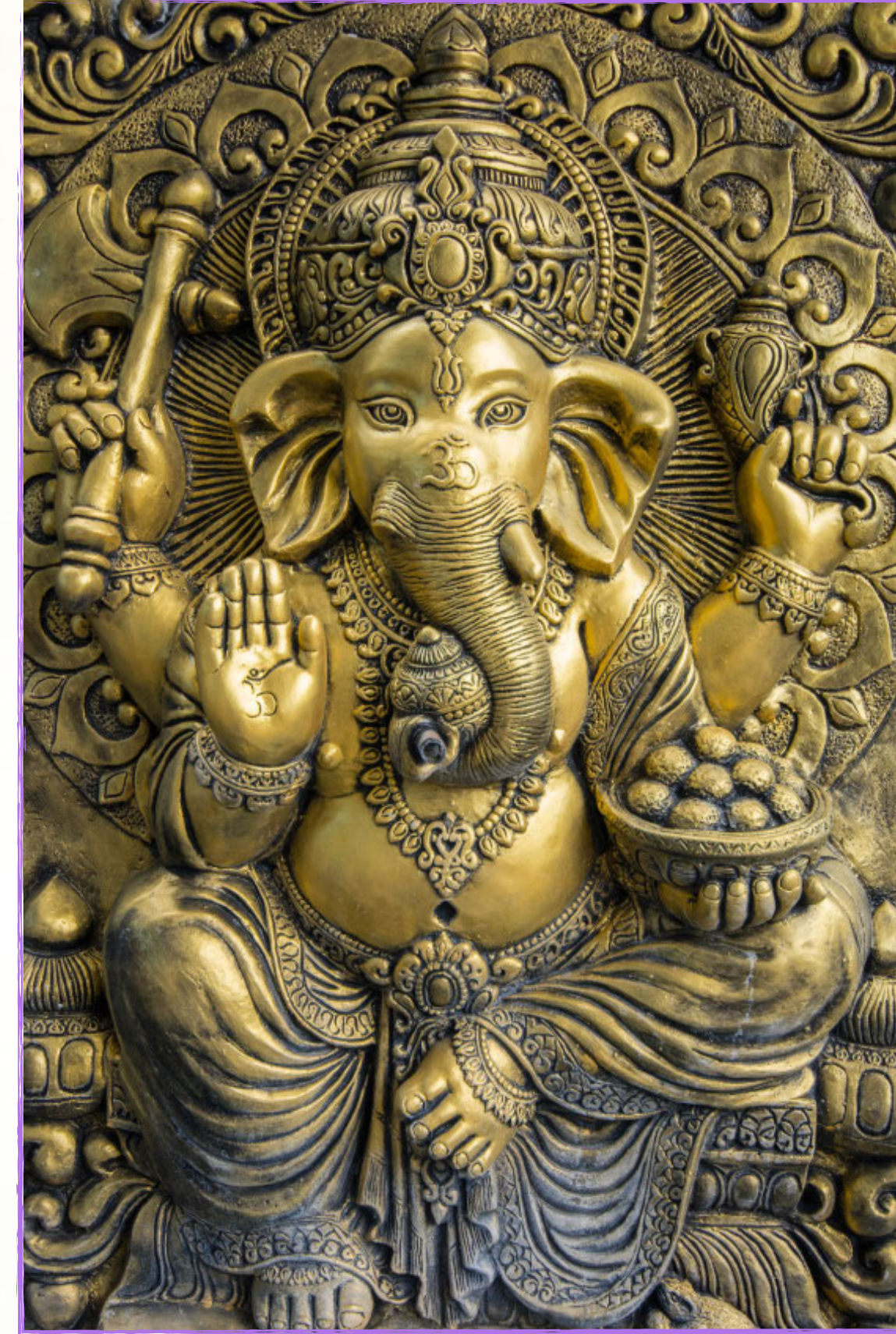
Lakshmi is married to Vishnu. She is the goddess of beauty, wealth and prosperity. She is shown holding gold.





Shiva

Shiva is the destroyer. He removes all evil from the world. He is shown as being blue because, according to a legend, he swallowed poison to save the universe.



Ganesha

Ganesha is the remover of obstacles. When people start a business, buy a car or begin something else important, they worship him. He is holding a bowl of sweets given to him by a worshipper.