






Creating a Garden Mandala

Overview:


Students will learn about the main beliefs of Hinduism, see examples of Hindu mandalas, and work together to create their own mandala in the garden.

Objectives:


At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

-  Describe the five basic Hindu beliefs.
-  Describe the symbolism of a mandala.
-  Use their teamwork skills to create a mandala together in the garden.









or,

-  Design a mandala that shows a graphic representation of the five Hindu beliefs.

Preparation:

-  Depending on which activity option you chose, it might be necessary to create an outline of a mandala in the garden that the students will work on during the lesson.






Vocabulary:

 Hinduism	 Dharma
 Vedas	 Karma
 Sanskrit	 Samsara
 Brahman	 Mandala



Learning Activities:

- I. Warm-Up (5 min.)
 - A. Ask students to recall what they have learned about Hinduism in their history class so far.
 - B. Explain that *Hinduism* is an ancient religion whose origins predate history, but began in Northern India near the Indus River, possibly as far back as 6,000 BCE. It has no single human founder. It is based on sacred



Materials:

-  Photos showing examples of mandalas
-  Handout 1: “The Five Hindu Beliefs Mandala”
-  Projector to show a video
-  Handout 2: “Draw Your Own Mandala”
-  Materials to create an outdoor mandala: sand, bricks, rocks, chalk, or plant parts (petals, leaves, etc.)


On the Board:

-  Vocabulary
-  Student Reflection Questions

Suggested Snack:

-  A simple vegetable curry with brown rice
-  Or vegetable samosas

Other Resources:

-  Time-lapse video of Tibetan Monks creating a Sand-Mandala:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9QItAyepAnI>

scriptures, the *Vedas* (meaning knowledge), written in *Sanskrit* (the ritual language of Hinduism).

2. Presentation: The Five Beliefs of Hinduism (15 min.)
 - A. Discuss the five beliefs of Hinduism using an image of a mandala.
 - *Brahman*, is the one supreme god. He creates, maintains, destroys, and recreates the universe in a never-ending cycle. Everything in the world, including the human soul, is part of Brahman. A Hindu's spiritual goal is to unite his soul with Brahman.
 - Hindus worship multiple gods and goddesses, but they believe all gods are aspects of the supreme god, Brahman. Hindus believe that each god represents a different quality, personality trait, or power of Brahman (like success, luck, or war).
 - *Dharma* means to hold or support. This is the system of rules and values that Hindus follow every day. It is also thought of as the appropriate way to behave or the "right" thing to do in any situation, like non-violence. When people follow their dharma, they contribute to the harmony and balance of society and the universe.
 - *Karma* is the sum of good and bad actions that a human soul carries with them from life to life. Hindus believe in reincarnation, or rebirth. One's karma determines whether a soul is reborn into a human or an animal, into a rich family or a poor one.
 - *Samsara* is the continuous cycle of life, death, and rebirth. The goal of a Hindu's life is to be released from Samsara and united with the supreme god.
 - B. *Mandala* means circle in Sanskrit. A mandala symbolizes the cyclical nature of the universe, and the cyclical beliefs of Hinduism. People often use them to focus when meditating.
 - C. Using the link in "Other Resources," show a video of Tibetan Monks creating a mandala out of sand.
 - D. Share some photos of mandalas in Hindu art and some examples of garden mandalas.
3. Activity: Building a Mandala in the Garden. (20 min.) (This activity can be done in different ways, depending on time and the number of classes that will participate in making the garden mandala.)
 - A. Option 1: Let students design a mandala together and draw it on asphalt with chalk.
 - B. Option 2: On soil, create an outline of a mandala labyrinth. Labyrinths are a type of Mandala. People can walk them as a type of moving meditation. You can do this with spray paint or by putting sticks in the ground and connecting them with string. Let students turn the outline into a 3-D

Mandala using bricks, rocks, or sand. This can become a project for multiple classes, by giving each class a quadrant of the mandala to work on. This can become a place that students return to throughout the year to meditate.

- C. Option 3: Students can each create their own mandalas in small groups using plant parts (petals, stems, leaves, etc.) in the garden.
 - D. Option 4: If there is not a good outdoor space to create a 3-D Mandala, students can simply sit in the garden and draw their own Mandala using Handout 2: “Draw Your Own Mandala.” They should incorporate five things that they believe in or that are most important to them.
4. Snack (5 min.)
- A. When working on the Mandala together gets too crowded, students can take a break and have a snack.
 - B. Tell students that Hindus believe that all of God's creatures are worthy of respect and compassion, regardless of whether they are humans or animals. Therefore, Hinduism encourages being vegetarian.
 - C. Serve a vegetable curry or vegetarian samosas.
5. Have students answer the Reflection Questions in their journals. (5 min.)

Student Reflection Questions:

1. Describe a way in which you think the universe is cyclical.
2. Do you think you can apply any of the tenets of Hinduism to your life? If yes, which ones?

Assessment Questions:

1. What does Mandala mean in Sanskrit?
 - A. Water
 - B. Circle**
 - C. God
 - D. Earth
2. Who is the One Supreme God in Hinduism?
 - A. Karma
 - B. Brahman**
 - C. Samsara
3. Explain what reincarnation means.
 - **In Hinduism, this is the belief in rebirth. One's karma determines whether a soul is reborn as a human or an animal, into a rich family or a poor one.**

Standards:

Common Core State Standards

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

Acknowledgements:

“Mrs. Gilmore’s 6th Grade Ancient World.” Birmingham Public Schools.

<http://blogs.birmingham.k12.mi.us/mrsfazzolaragilmore/2014/02/11/a-mandala-and-objectives/>

Photo Credits:

Art Mandala Photo 1 and 2 from: “Mandala.” Wikipedia.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandala>

Garden Mandala Photo 1 from: “Mandala Madness.”

<http://mandalamadness.blogspot.com/2013/07/some-cool-mandala-gardens.html>

Garden Mandala Photo 2 from: “Mandala Garden Designs.” Permaculture Corner.

<http://permaculture-corner.blogspot.com/2012/12/mandala-garden-designs.html>



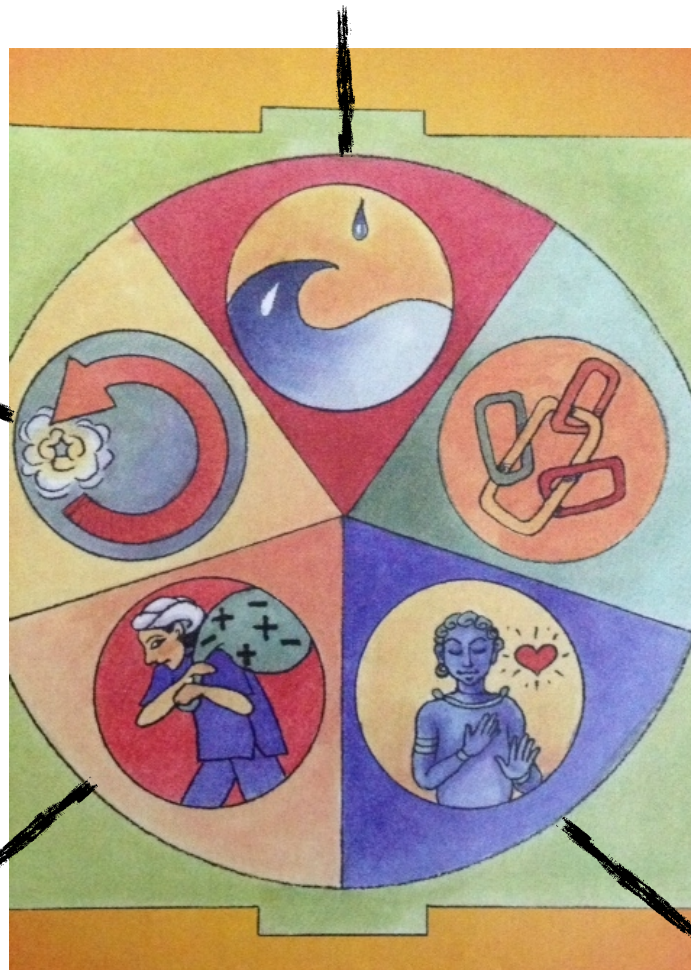
The Five Hindu Beliefs Mandala

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released from Samsara and united with the supreme god.

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Draw Your Own Mandala

Name: _____

Teacher: _____

Date: _____

