

Journey of Life: Hinduism

- *Read and discuss the following times of celebration in the life of a Hindu.*
- *Cut and paste each celebration into your book.*
- *Highlight the key words or phrases.*
- *Draw an illustration to symbolise each celebration.*

Celebrating a birth.

When a baby is born, a priest performs a special ceremony and says prayers for the good health and well being of the mother and the baby. Ten days after the birth, a naming ceremony takes place and the baby's horoscope is cast, showing the positions of the stars and planets at the time of birth. It is consulted later to fix a good wedding date.

The sacred Thread.

Boys from the top three castes (large group), who are between nine and eleven years of age, receive their sacred thread from the priest. They must wear these throughout their lives, looped over the left shoulder and under the right arm. This marks a new stage in a boy's life, when he begins to find out more about his religion and to take on more responsibility.

Wedding Day

Many Hindu weddings are arranged by the bride and groom's parents. The wedding itself lasts for several days, with many rituals and ceremonies. The wedding can take place anywhere; it doesn't have to be in a special place of worship. The bride wears special jewellery and a red silk sari. She sits with the groom in front of the sacred fire while the priest recites prayers and offers food to the Gods. Then the bride and groom walk seven times round the fire to symbolise their marriage. After the wedding, the bride goes to live with her husband and his family. In India, several generations of a family often live together and help to look after each other.

Death and cremation

When Hindus die, their bodies are cremated. In India, the body is placed on a pile of sandalwood logs which is set alight by the eldest son or eldest male relation. In other countries, the ceremony takes place in a crematorium. It is followed by twelve days of rites and rituals for the dead person's soul. It is possible, the dead person's ashes are sprinkled into the water of the River Ganges. Hindus believe that when you are cremated, your body perishes in the fire but your soul lives on to be born again in another body-human or animal. The quality of your next life depends on how you behave in this life. This is called Karma.

My ideas about life after death

My ideas about arranged marriages