

## Hinduism in the Classroom: Connecting the Dharmic Dots

Tip: Use authentic, resource-rich **key concepts** to stimulate meaningful learning. Dharmic insights are key in setting up an activity that offers students opportunity to **create** a new and/or deeper **connection** to the conceptual underpinnings of a dharma. It supports the concept of ‘Fewer things in greater depth’ as it prioritises quality over quantity, making every lesson count in extending **coherent** knowledge and understanding. The concepts are **contextualised** into colour bands as **Philosophy**, **Principles** & **Practice**, although many resources such as festivals, will integrate all three.

Key Concepts	Authentic Resource- (Artefact, Story, festival,Text)	Engaging Activity – Primary focus (Exploration/Expression)	Your own Notes /Ideas
1. <b>Universal interconnected Divinity</b>	“Namaste”	Learn to say/enact & explain the Greeting and how it might influence the interaction.	
2. <b>Oneness</b>	“Vasudev Katumbhakam” – the world is one family how would we treat each other if we <b>felt</b> this way?	Walking around with only one sock on. Having an experience of unequal comfort.	
3. <b>Bhumi: Sacred relationship</b> with the earth	Research the ‘Bhumi project’ or Dr Vandana Shiva – Earth Activist	Sushma barefoot walking. Earth greeting our first morning step on her.	
4. <b>Dharma – as way of being:</b> Resonance with Natural world and its diversity of geography	e.g. Holi Spring festival Realise 19 Hindu spring festivals across the states of India	Holi classroom activity with experiential insights: life-affirming, imperfect(messy), spontaneous, vibrant, not nec. Follow Rules.	
5. <b>Dharma – as behaving:</b> Principles and choices ( <b>Karma</b> )	Artefact:Snakes & Ladders Mahabharata Story: Arjun chooses Krishna	Wisdom beyond mental constructs Unpack S & L: human dilemmas not always easy to see right/wrong.	
6. <b>Puja</b> (prayer or stillness practice?), 7. <b>Mandir</b> purpose	Artefacts: Puja Thali  Mandir means ‘Still Mind”	Sensory stillness, demo/ experience how each sense is settled to ‘hear’ deeper wisdom for the greater good beyond self.	
8. <b>Pluralism=mutual nurture, respect &amp; support</b>	“One truth many ways to approach it” Rig Veda Story: Elephant & 6 blind men	Enact the story. Discuss how this might lead to the <b>respect</b> of diversity & collaboration that leads to all flourishing – true pluralism	
9. <b>Pluralism – between AND across worldviews</b>	“Whenever Dharma (universal well-being) is weak, I (spirit) will manifest in every era.” Bhagavat Gita	Think of situations in all different countries and histories when a specially inspired person has changed history.	

Sushma has worked with many schools & advisors. She can be booked for on-line RE lessons, ‘visits’ or teacher CPD. Contact on [Sushma\\_sahajpal@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Sushma_sahajpal@yahoo.co.uk) for details.

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Diwali Bonus - The 'Diwali Story' often covered in RE as the 'Festival of Lights', is part of a sacred text called 'The Ramayana' – The journey of Prince Rama – one of the Human **Avatars** of Vishnu, whose **life purpose** was to re-establish **Dharma**. For Hindus retelling this story is intended to remind us of the contrast and consequences of choosing to be and behave in Dharmic ways (i.e. in service or *sewa* of the greater good) or Adharmic ways (i.e. for personal desires at the expense of others).

Next Diwali, have a go at drawing out some of these key concepts to offer your students a deeper more authentic understanding of Hindu Dharma.

Bonus: Key Concepts From 'Diwali Story'	Authentic Resource (Artefact, Story, festival, Text)	Engaging Activity (Exploration/Expression)	Your own Notes /Ideas
<p><b>10. Dharma (Right-living for all)</b></p> <p><b>11. Adharma (Selfish living, only for themselves)</b></p>	<p>"Diwali Story" (Exile):</p> <p>Characters: Rama, Sita, Lakshman King Dasharat, Queen Keykei, Bharat</p>	<p>Hear the story of the exile and identify qualities in each character that show principles of care for others: (eg. Kindness, Loyalty, Protectiveness, Support, Service, Keeping promises, etc.)</p> <p>And which show lack of care for others: eg. Selfishness, Cruelty, Jealousy, etc.</p>	
<p><b>12. Karma: Choices &amp; Consequences</b></p> <p><b>13. Avatar: Quote from Gita that Vishnu manifests whenever and wherever evil or adharmic elements dominate.</b></p>	<p>"Diwali Story" (Kidnap &amp; Battle):</p> <p>Characters: Sita, Ram (Avatar), Ravana, Hanuman</p>	<p>How did Sita 'contribute' to her kidnapping?</p> <p>How did Ravana cause his own downfall.</p> <p>Why did Rama have to kill the supremely powerful, predatory Ravana?</p> <p>What does the equally powerful but supremely humble Hanuman demonstrate in this story?</p> <p>What does this teach about Power &amp; Karma</p>	
<p><b>14. Ram-Raj, Hope, Gratitude</b></p>	<p>"Diwali Story" (Homecoming):</p> <p>The return and coronation of Prince Ram signalled Ram-Raj, a golden age of Dharma in India. Where it is said, there were no thieves or homeless people, all was peaceful and prosperous as everyone lived to serve and help each other. This is what Hindus wish and hope for at Diwali Time, by lighting the same lights on the same dark new moon night and inviting the same love and wisdom into their homes as Rama demonstrated.</p>	<p>List out all the things we receive for 'free' – to relate to the Hindu idea of abundance and gratitude as a way of being.</p> <p>Reflect and create work on the Symbolism of light as joy and the hope of New beginnings as this date is also Hindu New Year's Eve.</p>	

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