

Hinduism for Kids

For Kids: The Indian subcontinent is host to many religions. One of those religions is Hinduism.

Today, Hinduism is a major world religion. It began in ancient India. Hinduism is different than other major religions because there is no single founder. Hinduism is based on the Vedas, the sacred texts and teachings of the Aryans, the ancient people who settled in India around 1500 BCE.

Hinduism is a religion of many gods. However, all Hindus worship one supreme being who created a bunch of gods to be his helpers. One of the unique beliefs in Hinduism is that God is not up in some remote, far away heaven, but is instead inside each and every soul, waiting to be discovered. Knowing God is always with them gives Hindus great hope and courage.

There are Hindu temples all over the world. Each temple has one or more priests. Most Hindu priests today still come from the top caste as they did in ancient times. This caste is called the Brahmin.

Some of the main concepts of Hinduism are called dharma, karma, and reincarnation.

- Dharma is a person's religious and moral duties

- Karma is the Hindu idea that sums up a person's deeds during their lifetime. The phrase "what goes around comes around" comes from a belief in karma.
- Reincarnation is the belief that the individual soul of a person is reborn in a different form after death, based on their karma, or their deeds in their prior life or lives. A belief in reincarnation or rebirth is part of both Buddhism and Hinduism. This is something these two major religions have in common.

Dharma, karma, and reincarnation, which comes first? It's pretty simply. How well you perform your dharma (duty) determines your karma (fate). If you do a good job, you'll earn good karma, and have a good rebirth. If you do a bad job, you'll earn bad karma, and have a bad rebirth. This continues until you get it right. If you have trouble remembering the order, think CAR for karma - a car gets you where you are going next.

If you ever visit the Ganges River area of modern day India, you'll see a great many people bathing in the Ganges River. As in ancient times, many Hindus still believe the waters from the Ganges River will help purify their souls.