

Summer 2 - Week 10 RE

Lesson 3

Can I understand myths and misconceptions about Hinduism?

This lesson we are looking at the misconceptions people have about Hinduism as a religion.

Hinduism is the third largest of the main religions in the world with 900 million followers compared to the 2.3 billion Christians.



Aum the symbol of
Hinduism.

Misconception - Hindus are idol worshippers

This misconception often happens as people do not understand how the religion celebrates God.



Hand sculpted Hindu idols.

This is not true.

Hindus worship a reminder of God. No Hindu will say he or she is worshipping an idol. Instead, Hindus believe a physical representation of God – in the form of an idol - helps them focus on an aspect of prayer or meditation.

For instance, a person who has just opened up a new business may worship Ganesh, the elephant god who represents success.

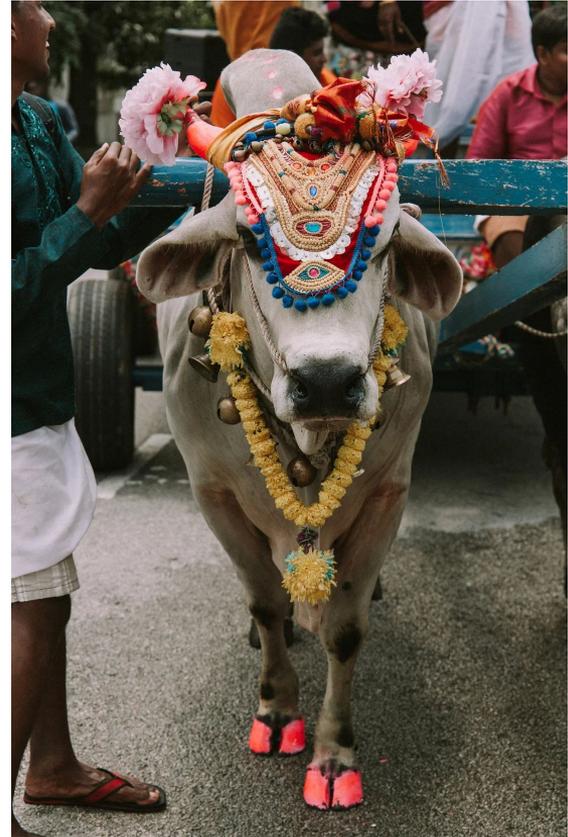


Hindu god Ganesha.

Misconception - Hindus worship cows

This misconception often happens as people see that Hindus value cows and misinterpret this as worship.

A decorated cow in India.



This is not true.

Hindus do not pray to cows but they do regard all creation and all life as sacred. Hindus believe every living thing has a soul. It is true, however, that cows hold a special place in Hindu society. That's why Hindus refrain from eating beef.

Cows are seen as gentle, maternal figures that are providers of milk and other produce. They are honoured for their value.



A cow being honoured.

Misconception - All Hindus are vegetarian

This misconception often happens as some Hindus are vegetarian and people assume this is because of their religion, not their personal beliefs.



A vegetarian Hindu meal.

This is not true.

A majority of Hindus eat meat, but about 30 percent do not. That stems from a fundamental belief in ahimsa, the principle of nonviolence.

Since all living things are manifestations of God, violence against them is considered contrary to the natural balance of the universe.

Misconception - women wearing 'red dots' on their head are married

This misconception occurs because people see women with bindi and are unaware of why they have them.



Hindu woman with a bindi.

This is not true.

A red dot was once a symbol of marriage for Hindu women. Today, the dot, or bindi, is largely decorative. Girls and women – married and single - wear bindis of all colours as fashion statements.

A tilak, also a mark on the forehead, has religious significance. It's generally made with sandalwood paste, ashes or red turmeric and can be in the form of lines or a dot.



Your task. Over this unit we are going to make our own folio style project for myths and misconceptions in religion.

Carrying on from the work of Lesson 2.

In the final third of the page we will write about Hinduism.