

Peace for the World

Krishna Saves the World (Hindu/Vedic)

PREVIEW

- ✓ Review Guidelines
- ✓ Background – Hinduism
- ✓ Lesson/Story
- ✓ Creative Response – Krishna Craft
- ✓ Activity – Swinging Calf
- ✓ Take-Home Opportunity – Peace to Your Friends
- ✓ List of Previous Peace-Makers Lessons
- ✓ Images Provided – Shiva, Ganesha

REVIEW

Review just a few stories from the Peace-Makers section. You might want to include something about peace-makers who keep people from fighting and peace-makers (like Jesus) who help people feel less afraid. The list of previous topics can be found at the end of this lesson plan. Then, review the first story from the Peace for the World section.

Prompt: Last week, we started talking about people who want peace for the entire world! That story was about Isaiah, who imagined what a peaceful world might look like. Does anyone remember what kinds of images Isaiah used? [wolf/lamb, leopard/goat, cow/bear, lion/ox, baby/snake]

Prompt: Isaiah also talked about peaceful behaviors being like a part of your clothing. Do you remember what part of clothing Isaiah talked about? [Hint #1: it wraps around your waist. Hint #2: we made it as our craft = belt]

BACKGROUND – HINDUISM

Supplies

World map

Prompt: Today we'll read another story about bringing peace to the world. It's a Hindu story which means we have a lot of new words to learn!

Prompt: Hinduism began in a place called India. [Show where you are and where India is on the world map.]

Prompt: Hinduism is said to have one Supreme Being called Brahman. [Make sure they can say that.]

BACKGROUND – HINDUISM (cont.)

Prompt: Brahman is all things and is found in all things, so there are lots of different ways to show who Brahman is and what Brahman is about. Many Hindus talk about, and worship, different aspects of Brahman. Sometimes, these different aspects are called gods and goddesses, but in one way or another, they are all really Brahman.

Prompt: Many times, these gods and goddesses are shown with lots of arms and legs and heads. Here's one example. This is the god Shiva, shown with 2 heads, 4 faces, and 10 arms. [Show image on p. 89]

Prompt: Why do you think gods and goddesses are often shown this way? What would it mean if you had lots of arms and legs and heads? [Brainstorm/Guess. Maybe to show that gods and goddesses can do lots of different things or think about lots of different things at one time, but the kids might have other ideas.]

Prompt: One of the most famous Hindu gods has the head of an elephant! His name is Ganesha. [Show image on p. 90, and make sure they can say that.]

LESSON/STORY

Prompt: Our Hindu story for today is about another god named Vishnu {VISH-noo (as in “moon”)}. [Make sure they can say that.]

Prompt: In this story, an evil demon tried to destroy the world, so Vishnu turned into a very handsome and very smart boy named Krishna.

Prompt: There are actually many stories about Krishna saving the world and restoring peace to the universe. Our story talks about just three of those legends.

Read: Krishna: The Boy who Kept Saving the World (pp. 91-94)

Prompt: Do you think demons like the one described in this story really exist? [Share]

CREATIVE RESPONSE – CRANE CRAFT

Supplies

One Krishna image (p. 95) and one crane image (p. 96) per person, large glue sticks/tape/stapler, and crayons/markers/colored pencils

Helpful Hints

If you want to offer realistic colors for the fire, be sure to include reds, oranges, and yellows.

Preparation

Use a utility knife to cut along the dotted lines of the crane's neck and form a flap.

Prompt: Today, we'll start by making a big crane with an image of Krishna inside. This will remind us of the part of the story when Krishna was inside the crane and created fire, so the crane would spit him out.

CREATIVE RESPONSE – CRANE CRAFT (cont.)

Color/decorate the image of Krishna.

Add flames above, below, and around Krishna.

Attach the page with the crane image to the page with the Krishna image. Position the crane so the Krishna image is directly underneath the flap. Use large glue sticks/tape/stapler to keep the pages together.

Open and close the flap to reveal Krishna, surrounded by flames, inside the crane's throat.



ACTIVITY – SWINGING CALF

Supplies

One small (2") Styrofoam ball, about 2½ feet of duct tape (any color), 2-4 strips of fabric/ribbon measuring about 1" x 15" each per child; sharp scissors. A box/bucket is optional.

Preparation (optional)

Cut the duct tape. You'll need 2 pieces measuring 8"-10" each and 2-4 pieces measuring 2"-3" each.

Cut the strips of fabric/ribbon.

Prompt: Besides the crane, what other demons tried to kill Krishna? [calf and snake/serpent]

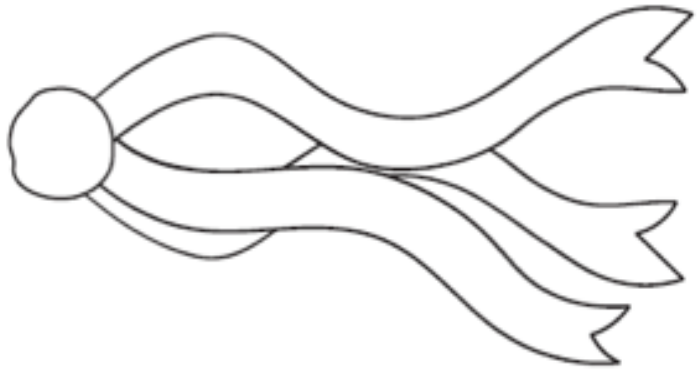
Prompt: How did Krishna kill the calf? [Swung it around by the tail and threw it]

Prompt: Let's make a pretend calf with a tail that we can swing around.

PEACE

Give each child a Styrofoam ball and one piece of duct tape measuring about 8"-10" in length. Have them roll the duct tape around the Styrofoam ball. When finished, press in the ends on either side.

Take the second piece of duct tape measuring about 8"-10" in length and wrap it around the ball the other way. When finished, press in the ends on either side.



Use the smaller pieces of duct tape to attach 2-4 fabric/ribbon strips.

You now have a tail ball, great for any number of activities.

To mimic the story, you could place a box/bucket on one side of the room and have them toss their "calf" into it by the "tail." Alternatively, you could mark a spot up on the wall and have them try to hit the spot, just like Krishna, who swung the calf around and threw it into a tree.

Variations

Simply bat the tail ball back and forth counting the number of hits.

Form a circle and time the kids to see how long they can keep the "calf" in the air.

TAKE-HOME OPPORTUNITY – PEACE TO YOUR FRIENDS

Prompt: In today's story, Krishna saved his friends who had walked right into the mouth of the huge snake demon. This week, try to bring peace to your friends in some way. This should be easy since you already tried being peaceful toward your enemies a couple of weeks ago! Can you think of anything you might do to help a friend feel more peaceful this week? [Brainstorm/Share]

PREVIOUS LESSONS FROM PEACE-MAKERS SECTION

Theme: What peace means, popular symbols of peace, the word peace in other languages

Peaceful Deer (Buddhist): Keeping peace between the king and the man who broke his promise

Muhammad (Islamic): Keeping peace between his followers and the tribes of Mecca

Tribal Chiefs (Native American): Three chiefs keeping peace between their tribes

Gobind Singh (Sikh): Using his bow-and-arrow skills to keep his people from having to fight

Jesus Calms the Storm (Christian): Bringing peace to the disciples when they are afraid in a boat

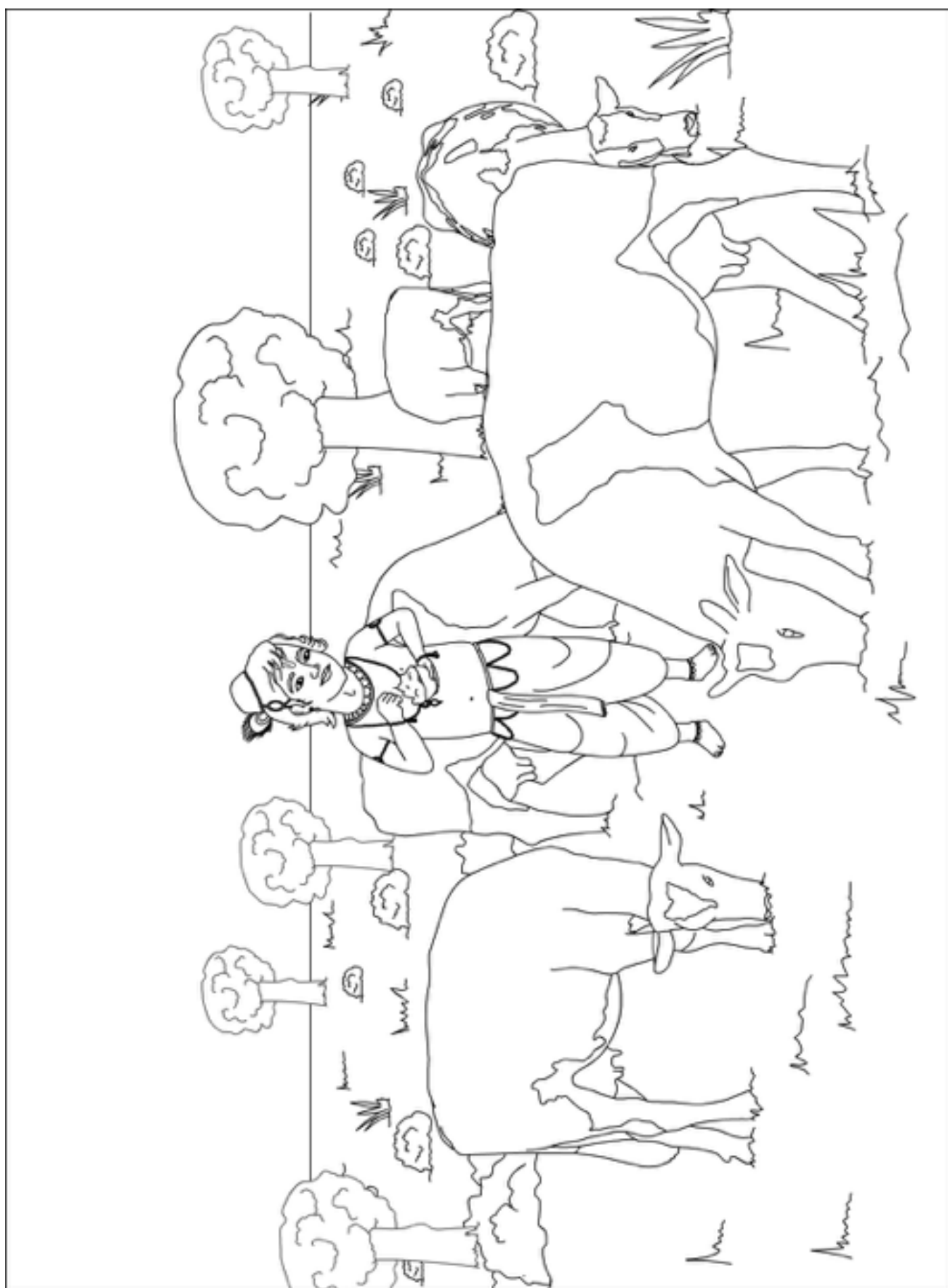
Jesus Appears to Disciples (Christian): Bringing peace to disciples who are afraid and locked in a room



[Wikimedia Commons: Hindu God Shiva (public domain courtesy of the LA County Museum of Art)]



[Wikimedia Commons: Ganesh (public domain courtesy of Kalakki)]



Krishna

The Boy who Kept Saving the World

1 Allow me to introduce myself. I am Vishnu, one of the most important gods in the Hindu tradition. My job is to preserve and protect all of creation. When the world is out of balance or at war, I restore peace and harmony. As you might imagine, this keeps me very busy!

It's almost impossible to draw a picture of me because I am a god, but people still try. Sometimes I hold several special objects. Some of my objects are weapons used to restore order to the world. Some of my objects are symbols of my heart which is always pure and full of beauty.

2 As you know, most humans are good people. They work hard, are kind to one another, and share what they have. But every once in while, there is a human who seems downright wicked – full of anger, pride, and envy. Those humans can upset the balance of good and evil, and that's when I have to appear on earth to make things right again.

Because I am a god, my power is overwhelming to humans, so I often take another form when I appear on earth. This story tells of the time I appeared as a boy named Krishna.

Do you think God ever appears to people? If so, what does that look like?

3 My enemy this time around was the demon king Kamsa {KAHM-suh}, who was both very powerful and very greedy. He hurt people if they refused to follow his commands. He even overthrew his father, the peaceful king, Ugrasena {oo (as in “moon”)-GRAH-seh-nah}, and hid him away in the dungeons!

Clearly, something had to be done about Kamsa and his out-of-control behavior. The humans began praying to me, and the other gods and goddesses turned to me for help. It seemed

that I, Lord Vishnu, was the only god who could handle the job.

4 Many years before, a voice from the heavens had warned Kamsa that one day he would be killed by his sister's son. That meant I had to be born as a little boy. Kamsa did everything he could to prevent my birth, but with a little help from the other heavenly deities, I was born. I was the 8th child of my mother, and she named me Krishna. Since my mother was Kamsa's sister, I was in the perfect position to defeat Kamsa and fulfill the prophecy.

5 You probably think when gods come to earth, they are very prim and proper, never doing anything wrong. But I decided to enjoy my earthly life as a boy.

As Krishna, I was very handsome and very charming. The other boys admired me for my strength and cleverness, and all the girls thought I was adorable. We were cowherds, which meant we spent our days working with the cows. In our spare time, we engaged in a fair bit of mischief. We all loved the taste of butter; sometimes, we would run through the village and steal butter for a tasty snack.

Butter was Krishna's favorite food. What's your favorite food?

6 When I got into trouble with the village women, I put on my cute face and even my mother couldn't punish me.

The same could not be said for that evil king Kamsa.

Very early on, it became clear that either Kamsa would kill me, or I would kill him. Too bad Kamsa didn't know that Krishna was really I, Lord Vishnu, in disguise. Gods, such as myself, are not so easy to kill.

As it turns out, Kamsa did not try to defeat me himself. Instead, he turned to his demon friends.

The first demon arrived when I was just an infant, but I sucked the life right of her, and she was dead in no time.

7 Several years later, Kamsa called on his demon friend Vatsasura {vaht-SAH-sir-uh}. By then, I was old enough to work in the fields with my brother and our friends.

Vatsasura took advantage of this. He turned himself into a calf and joined our herd. This was especially tricky since calves are usually good-natured and sweet.

“I will behave like a charming calf, running and playing with all the other calves,” Vatsasura thought to himself. “Then, when Krishna tries to pet me, I will stomp him to smithereens!”

I did notice the cute calf. In fact, the calf looked a bit too cute. He was perfect in every way – with a shiny coat, strong legs, and beautiful eyes – but none of the mother cows would let that cute calf drink their milk. This made me suspicious.

“Where is your mother, little calf?” I asked.

“Grrrr,” the demon calf growled.

In the blink of an eye, I grabbed that calf by the tail, spun him around, and threw him into a tree. The cute little calf was now a very dead demon.

If you were a demon, what animal form would you take?

8 Of course, the evil king Kamsa had no intention of giving up so easily.

He soon enlisted the help of his demon friend, Bakasura {bah-KAH-sir-uh}, who disguised himself as a crane.

It didn’t take long for everyone to notice the gigantic crane with the evil eyes. Everyone was terrified of the huge beast, but I knew I could

handle it. I let the crane gobble me up while my friends looked on in horror. Then, I turned into a ball of fire and got so hot the demon crane had to spit me out. Once free, I tore that crane’s beak in two and killed him almost instantly. Everyone could then see that it was Bakasura, the demon, in disguise. I had, once again, restored peace to my village.

9 Unfortunately, Bakasura had a demon brother named Aghasura {ah-GAH-sir-uh}. And Aghasura was not too happy about his brother’s untimely death.

“I will get revenge on Krishna for killing my demon brother,” thought Aghasura. “I will take the form of a snake so I can devour Krishna – and his friends – when they head home from the cow pastures.”

Aghasura’s evil plan almost worked.

10 One evening, we were walking home after a long day of herding cows. Suddenly, we came upon a very large cave with a red road leading into it.

My friends were excited, but I was immediately suspicious. We had never seen a cave like this before in all our years of living in the village. But before I could stop my hasty friends, they ran inside. As I suspected, it wasn’t a cave at all. It was a very, very big snake. The bottom part of his jaw was on the earth, and the top part of his jaw reached all the way to the sky. And that red road? It was the serpent’s tongue!

I had to think quickly if I was going to save my friends and myself.

11 I walked right into the belly of that snake. And then I began to grow.

I grew and grew.

And then I grew some more.

Soon, even the big mouth of the snake couldn’t hold me. His life force flew out of his head, and we all walked safely out of his cavernous jaws.

PEACE

My friends kept thanking me over and over again. But, for me, it was just another day of killing evil demons. After all, bringing peace and harmony to the world is my job.



