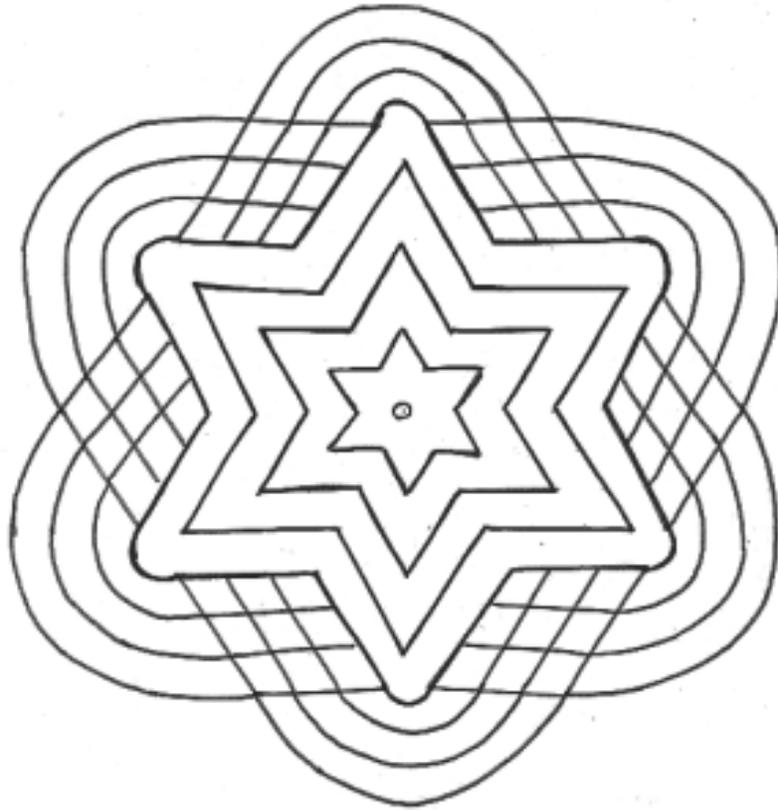


CHAPTER THREE



STORIES

The Story of Dhruva



Activity 1 - Color the above picture.

DHRUVA

The story of Dhruva is described in Bhagavata Purana, an ancient scripture written by Sage Veda Vyasa.

King Uttanapada had two wives named Suniti and Suruchi. Suniti had a son named Dhruva, and Suruchi had one named Uttama.

King Uttanapada favored Suruchi and her son Uttama. One day, when the king was in the garden, playing with Uttama, he lifted him up, and sat him on his lap. Along came Dhruva, and he also wanted to sit on his father's lap. While he was trying to climb on his father's lap, Suruchi rushed and dragged Dhruva away. She pushed him aside and said that only her son can sit on King Uttanapada's lap; If Dhruva were ever to sit on his father's lap, he should perform a long penance and pray to the Lord to make him the son of Suruchi on his next birth. The king was listening to her but he could not say anything because he was blinded by his love for Suruchi.



Dhruva was very hurt by his stepmother's mean and cruel words. He rushed out of there crying and went to his mother. Suniti realized what had happened at the garden but she did not lose her gentle nature. She said to Dhruva not to be angry with his stepmother. Instead, she requested him to carry out what Suruchi told him to do -- pray to the Lord. She said that by praying to the Lord Narayana, he will get rid of his unhappiness, and that is the only way she thought of comforting him.

Dhruva obeyed his mother, did namaskara, asked for her Blessings, and set out to the forest to pray to the Lord Narayana. He wandered in the forest without any directions and without knowing where to start.

Meanwhile, Narada, with his yogic powers, knew about what happened to Dhruva. He wanted to help Dhruva. Narada wanted to talk him out of his goal. With the idea of dissuading him from praying to the Lord, he came in front of Dhruva, and placed his hand on his head, blessing him. He tried talking to Dhruva about how difficult a job it is to find Lord Narayana and how much concentration and sacrifice it takes. He even said that at his age, he should be home playing with toys, and he should not let his stepmother's thoughtless words bother him so much. He requested Dhruva to give up his search and return to the palace.

Dhruva was very determined to go after what he came for. Narada's words did not alter his mind. Instead, he requested Narada to teach him the method, however difficult it may be, by which he can reach and see the Lord Narayana. Narada was charmed by the little boy's determination. He taught Dhruva the incantation -- the mantra -- to recite. He said that if Dhruva constantly repeats this mantra, then the Lord will grant all his desires. The mantra is "Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya". Narada described, in detail, to Dhruva the form of Lord Narayana. Narada left after blessing Dhruva. Dhruva fixed the image in his mind as he recited the mantra.



Dhruva started his prayers immediately. In the forest, he did not have much to eat. He lived on fruits and water alone. He denied himself everything else. He was bent on only one thing -- the mantra that Narada taught him and the image of Lord Narayana in his mind. There were dangerous animals in the forest, but nothing frightened him. To him, they did not even exist because his mind was on the Lord's image and the mantra. Days rolled into weeks, and weeks into months, and months into years.

Lord Narayana was very much impressed by Dhruva's prayers and decided to come to him. He came where Dhruva was doing his prayers. Dhruva opened his eyes and was overcome by the suddenness of Lord Narayana's presence. He knew it was Lord Narayana because, all these days, he had the Lord's image in his mind. The only difference now was that Lord Narayana was standing in front of him, for real. He fell at the feet of the Lord, and his lips moved but no words came out. Lord Narayana knew what the boy wanted to say -- he wanted to praise him. Lord Narayana took his conch and touched the boy's cheek with it.



The moment the conch touched his face Dhruva began to speak. He praised Lord Narayana and asked that he could always pray to him. Lord Narayana was pleased with his young worshipper and blessed Dhruva, saying that his father, King Uttanapada, will crown Dhruva as the king, and Dhruva will rule the world for a long period of time. Lord Narayana also said that he would be given a place where the sun and the moon will both revolve around him.

Lord Narayana then vanished from the site, and Dhruva was left alone to savor the moment. He was glad in a way that he was able to finally see the Lord, but was also very sad because he wanted freedom.

His father made Dhruva the king and he ruled for a long time. He prayed to the Lord, and Lord Narayana granted him the boon, and he was made the Pole Star. ■

Activity 2

Questions to stimulate discussion

Question 1

Have you ever seen the northern pole star? Look for it in the sky. What do you think makes it a special star?

Question 2

What are the qualities that made Dhruva special?

Activity 3**Fill in the blanks**

Complete the Dhruva story by filling in the blanks with the appropriate words given below.

Suniti	Surichi	Dhruva	Uttama	Narada
conch	pray	sad	king	pole

1. Uttanapada had two wives, _____ and Surichi, whose sons were Dhruva and _____.
2. _____ was the king's favorite queen.
3. _____ was not permitted to sit on his father's lap.
4. _____ dissuaded Dhruva from praying to the Lord.
5. The Lord touched Dhruva's cheek with his _____.
6. Dhruva asked the Lord for the company of his devotees so that he could always _____ to him.
7. Even though the Lord granted his boon, Dhruva was _____ because he did not ask the Lord for freedom.
8. Uttanapada made Dhruva the _____.
9. Dhruva again prayed to the Lord and was given a special place as the _____ star.

PRAHLADA

The story of Prahlada is also described in Bhagavata Purana, an ancient scripture of the Hindus.



Hiranyakasipu was an *Asura* (demon) King. He was a mighty ruler but evil minded. He hated God. He hated God because his brother Hiranyaksha was killed by the incarnation (avatara) of Lord Vishnu - *Varaha Avatara*. Hiranyaksha challenged Lord Vishnu while He was lifting the earth from the bottom of the ocean of *Pralaya* and was killed during the fight. Hiranyakasipu vowed to avenge the death of his brother. He went to the mountains and performed the most rigorous "meditation" - *tapas*. The force of his *tapas* was so great that the earth rocked, the waters of the oceans rose high and the mountains toppled over. Unable to tolerate the destruction caused by his *tapas*, the *Devas* went to Brahma the creator and pleaded to him to save them from the disaster. Brahma went to Hiranyakasipu's ashram and was amazed at his *tapas*. He took some water from his Kamandalu, and sprinkling it on Hiranyakasipu, asked him what boon he wanted. Immediately Hiranyakasipu prostrated before Brahma and said, "Lord, grant me this boon. Let me not die in the hands of any being created by you, nor at the hands of any being not created by you, be it god, man, demon, animal or even an inanimate thing. Let it not be by day or by night, indoors or outdoors, in the sky or on the earth". Hiranyakasipu also wanted complete control of his kingdom and wanted everyone to obey him.

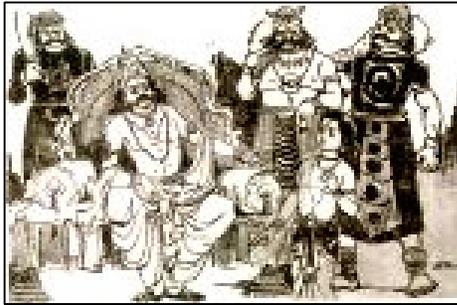
"So be it - *Tathaastu*" granted Brahma, the creator of the Universe.

On the strength of his boon, Hiranyakasipu became arrogant. He wanted the people in his Kingdom to disregard all the scriptures and offer prayers to him only. People were fed up with his rule of terror. They secretly prayed to Lord Vishnu for help. Lord Vishnu consoled them saying that he shall destroy the demon king Himself, in spite of his boon from Brahma.

Hiranyakasipu had four sons and the youngest of them was Prahlada. From birth itself, he was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu. He would constantly chant the names of Lord Vishnu, which caused great alarm to his father. His teachers taught him to hate God. Prahlada refused to listen to them. "I shall utter only the name of Lord Vishnu", he said.

Hiranyakasipu was thoroughly frustrated with Prahlada. He tried various methods to kill Prahlada. He ordered him to be trampled upon by a mad elephant. The enraged animal came rushing towards Prahlada, but stopped just a few yards away, bowed his head and turned away. Prahlada was given poison to drink; he was rolled down a mountain. Yet no harm came to Prahlada. This is the grace of the Lord - *Narayana Kripa*. Numerous attempts were made to get rid of him; but everytime Hiranyakasipu failed. It was a challenge to his authority and pride. Due to his boon from Brahma, he had never known failure. The teachers of Prahlada tried to calm Hiranyakasipu by saying that Prahlada was young and that he will learn to hate God as he grows older.

But Prahlada did not change. He continued to repeat Lord Vishnu's name. He also taught young kids of his age to



chant the names of Lord Vishnu. This news reached Hiranyakasipu and he ordered the young Prahlada to be brought before him. He was very angry and told Prahlada that time and again he has disobeyed him by praying to Lord Vishnu. He asked Prahlada where Lord Vishnu is and how come he never sees this

Lord Vishnu. "Show me your God here if you dare! If he is in this pillar let him come out" and kicked hard at the pillar.

Suddenly the pillar split into two and out of the pillar came a mighty being - half man - half lion (*Nara-Simham*). He was the man-lion avatara of Lord Vishnu. Hiranyakasipu lifted his iron mace to strike him. But the Narasimha roared a tremendous roar, which was like a man's laughter and a lion's roar put together. With a great ease, He picked Hiranyakasipu placed him on his lap across his thighs. And with a great roar tore open his belly and killed Hiranyakasipu. He also killed all his wicked supporters.



Flowers showered on Him from above. Prahlada prostrated in front of Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu placed His hand on the head of His little devotee and asked him what ever wish he wants. Prahlada did not want any boon except the everlasting devotion - *Bhakti* - and love for Lord Vishnu.

And the Lord blessed him; "You have asked Me for no reward. Yet it is My wish that you should rule as a King and enjoy". Prahlada bowed his head in obedience to the wish of Lord Vishnu. ■

Activity 4

Fill in the blanks

Complete the Prahlada story with the appropriate words given below.

devoted Narasimha naughty
Hiranyakasipu playful promise kill

1. The asura king _____ wanted to be immortal and all-powerful.
2. His son Prahlada was _____ to the Lord.
3. The asura tried many ways to _____ his son Prahlada.
4. The Lord came in the form of _____.
5. The Lord fulfilled his _____ and destroyed the king.

Activity 5

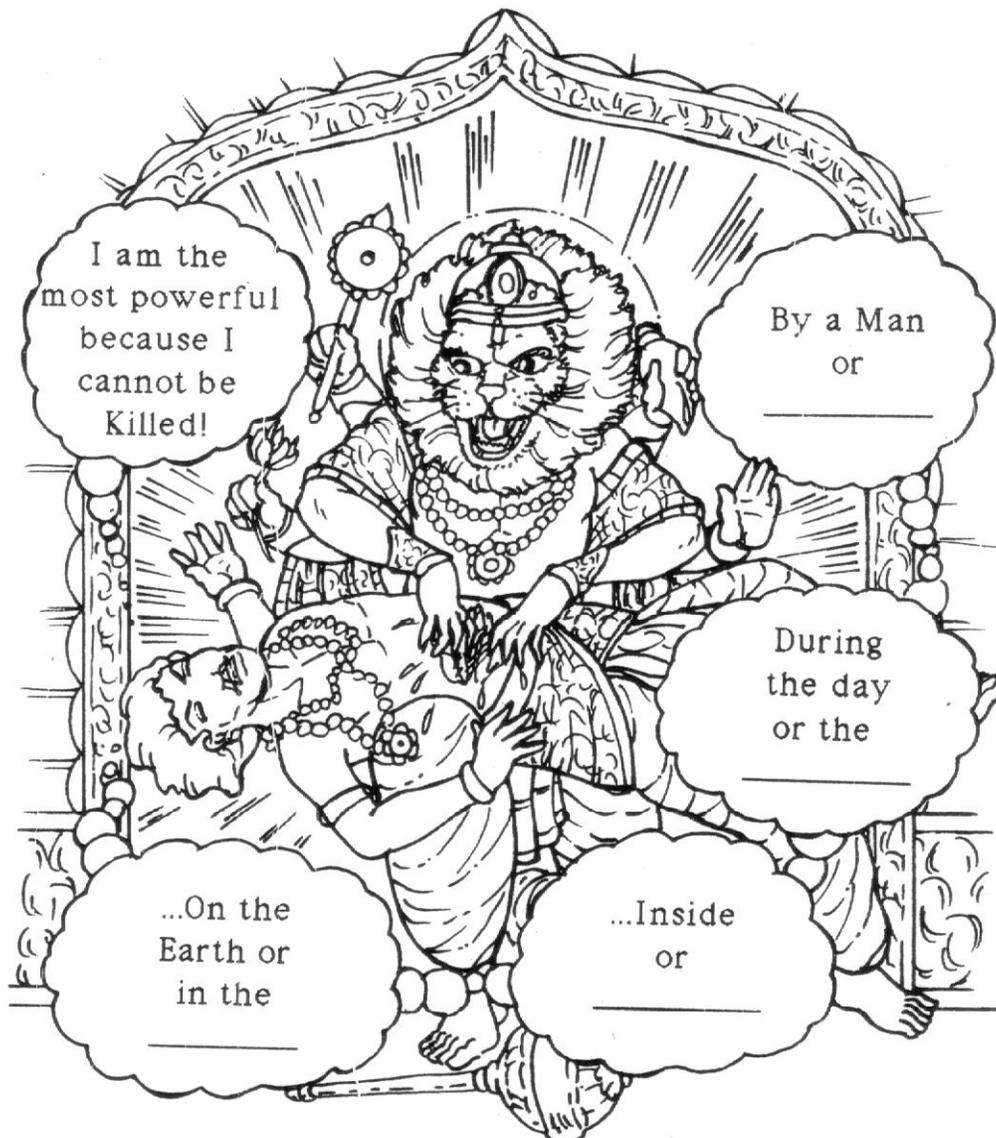
Identify four items shown below that were used to kill Prahlada and color them.



Activity 6

The Story of Prahlada

Fill in the correct words to describe the boon that King Hiranyakasipu asked of the Lord.



Activity 7

The Story of Prahlada

Word Search

Find the following words, which appear up, down, across, and diagonally in the word game.

Hiranyakasipu lord snake fire prayer
poison asura Narayana elephant pillar

H	R	S	H	N	P	S	T	R	M	O	N	Y
P	I	L	L	A	R	N	T	G	U	P	U	B
Q	S	R	N	X	R	A	D	A	N	R	M	I
W	E	R	A	D	I	K	R	U	M	A	I	M
R	T	E	V	N	E	E	O	A	P	Y	S	B
T	B	S	W	O	Y	S	L	E	M	E	I	C
M	N	A	R	A	Y	A	N	A	N	R	S	G
N	T	G	N	J	Y	R	K	S	E	O	V	V
S	O	S	W	A	S	U	R	A	M	B	L	T
H	O	S	M	W	A	B	P	E	S	M	F	Y
V	T	E	I	N	M	W	I	S	D	I	O	U
O	F	G	W	O	M	R	S	S	R	O	P	T
E	T	N	A	H	P	E	L	E	T	M	O	U

MARKANDEYA

The story of Markandeya is described in Markandeya Purana, an ancient scripture written by Sage Veda Vyasa.

Sage Mrikandu was leading an ascetic life in a forest. His wife was Maruthavati. They were childless for a long time. Longing for a son, Mrikandu performed intense tapas for several years in order to please Lord Shiva. At last his efforts bore fruit. Lord Shiva in his entire splendor appeared before him. He said, "I am pleased by your devotion. Ask from me any boon you desire." Mrikandu was overjoyed. He prayed to Lord Shiva thus: "O Lord! I am childless. Grant me a son."

The Lord said in reply, "Do you desire to have a virtuous, wise and pious son who will live up to sixteen years or a dull-witted, evil-natured son who will live long?"

The sage Mrikandu did not hesitate over the choice. He did not want a worthless son. He begged only for the short-lived son of whom he could be proud. Lord Shiva granted the request of his devotee and departed.



After some time Maruthavati conceived and gave birth to a son. The parents were extremely happy about the new arrival whom they named Markandeya.

When Markandeya was five, Mrikandu arranged for his studies. Even in boyhood Markandeya mastered all the Vedas and Shastras. His pleasing ways endeared him to his teachers. The boy was

liked by one and all. When he reached the age of twelve, his parents arranged his Upanayana. He was initiated into the chanting of the mystic Gayatri Mantra. The boy was very regular in performing the Sandhya Vandana, which pleased his parents and other elders. He was thus spending his days very happily, delighting everyone by his charming looks and pleasant behavior. But the parents were sad at heart and whenever they looked at their son a gloom spread over their face. They did not tell Markandeya that he was not destined to live long.

The sixteenth year was fast approaching. One day, unable to control their grief, they wept before him. Markandeya was surprised. He asked them gently the reason

for their grief. Mrikandu, with tears running down his cheeks, said, "O my son! According to Lord Shiva's boon you are destined to live only for sixteen years. How can we withstand this? We are helpless and do not know what to do".

Markandeya consoled his parents saying that death was not a thing, which wise people should dread. It is as natural as birth.

The next day the boy came to them and said, "Dear father and mother, do not worry for me. I am confident of winning over death. Pray, bless me that I may succeed in my endeavor. Permit me to perform severe penance to please the Lord". The parents blessed him heartily and sent him for penance.

Markandeya entered a forest and started performing severe penance, wearing barks of trees for his dress and growing matted locks. He was soon engrossed in deep meditation. Days and nights passed.

Markandeya was to complete the sixteenth year on a certain day. Yama knew that Markandeya's life was to come to an end. As usual Yama's servants came to take his life. But they could not approach him for the radiation from him was too intense for them. So, Yama, the god of Death, himself came on his wonted black buffalo. He had in his hand the well-known rope with a noose for taking out the young lad's soul from his body and carrying it away. Yama saw the young devotee engaged in the worship of Lord Shiva. Yama could not let the worship be completed if his duty as the God of Death was to be properly performed. Markandeya could not be allowed to live a minute longer after the completion of the sixteenth year. Normally invisible to



human eyes, this time Yama had been forced to show himself to the young boy by virtue of the latter's intense piety and devotion to God. Yama threw his rope with the loop and it went and encircled Markandeya's neck and also the Shiva Linga. The Shiva Linga at once split into two and out came Shiva, trident in hand. He pushed Yama aside and killed him to save the child. From that day onwards, Shiva got the names Mrityunjaya and Kalakala. After that at the request of other gods, Shiva restored life to Yama. Then,

turning to the young devotee, with whose piety he was highly pleased, Lord Shiva blessed him with deathlessness. He said to Markandeya, "Every desire of yours will be fulfilled. You will never be old or gray-haired. You will live virtuous and famous till the end of the world. Omniscience will be an asset in you."

To this day, the Hindus reckon Markandeya as one of their immortals. It is said that Markandeya is a great Chiranjeevi, one who lives with the body forever and whose body always appears young, beautiful and saintly on account of his yogic powers. Markandeya has become proverbial for long life. The blessing of the elders even today is, "May you live like Markandeya, forever youthful and beautiful". People believe that even now he is living somewhere in the Himalayas in deep meditation for the good of the world. ■

Activity 8

Questions to stimulate discussion

1. Who was Markandeya?
2. What had God said about Markandeya?
3. What did Markandeya do on hearing about his fate?
4. What happened to him at the completion of his sixteenth year?

HARISCHANDRA

The story of Harischandra is described in Bhagavata Purana.

There were many great kings in ancient India. Some of them were born in the Soorya Vamsa (family of sun-god) and others in Chandra Vamsa (family of moon-god). Harischandra belonged to the former.

He ruled over Ayodhya long before Dasaratha.

King Harischandra was learned, noble, generous, honest and truthful.

Once, gods wanted to try his truthfulness. They sent Rishi Viswamitra to him. Viswamitra went to him and said, "Oh, King! I want your kingdom-all of it".



The king was so generous that he at once gave away his entire kingdom to him.

But, said Viswamitra, "You must give a thousand gold coins over and above, as dakshina!" (Money given along with a gift is called dakshina).

The king said, "Sir, I have just now given to you everything I had. Please give me a months time and I shall earn enough money to pay you dakshina".

The rishi said "All right!" and went away.

Harischandra, his wife Chandramati, and their young son Rohitaswa, left the city without taking even a begging-bowl. They reached Kasi. There Harischandra sold his wife to a merchant to do household work and young Rohitaswa was left with her.

Harischandra sold himself to a person whose job was to burn out the corpses (the dead bodies) that came to the ghat of river Ganga.

Harischandra assisted him in the work. With the money so earned, he paid the rishi his dakshina.

One day, a snake bit young Rohitaswa, and the boy died.

Chandramati cried and cried. At last, she carried the boy's body to the burning ghat.

Harischandra was at work at the time. It was late in the evening. So the husband and wife did not recognize each other at first. When, later they did, they cried together over their dead son.

Chandramati had to give to the owner of the ghat a piece of cloth as fee, but she had none to give. All the same Harischandra said the fee must be paid.



At last Chandramati started to tear off a part of the cloth she wore around her body.

At that moment the gods appeared before them and said,

"Harischandra! We are satisfied with your nobility and love of truth. It was all a device (a plan) by which we meant to test you".

"Your son is not dead. Look, he has come back to life. You may now return to Ayodhya and rule over it, again. May your name be ever remembered for truthfulness"!

Then they disappeared.

Harischandra ruled over Ayodhya for a long time.

Today there is a cremation ground (a place where they burn dead bodies) at Kashi called Harischandra ghat.

Harischandra's name stands for honesty and truthfulness. ■

Activity 9

Answer the following questions.

1. In which family was Harischandra born?
2. What did the gods want to test him for?
3. How did Viswamitra test him?
4. How did Harischandra offer to pay *dakshina*?
5. What happened to Rohitaswa?
6. What did Harischandra ask of Chandramati? What does it show?
7. How did Harischandra get back his son *and* kingdom?
8. What do we learn from this story?

INTRODUCTION TO RAMAYANA AND BALA KANDA

- * One of the two great epics of Hinduism.
- * Vaalmeeki wrote the Ramayana (Picture 1). Sage Narada narrated the story of Rama to Vaalmeeki.
- * Different authors wrote it in their regional language.
- * In Ramayana, Lord Rama is portrayed as a prince with divine qualities and not as an avatar of Lord Vishnu (In some chapters there are exceptions).
- * King Dasaratha ruled Kosala. Ayodhya was its capital.
- * Dasaratha belonged to Raghuvamsha - solar dynasty.
- * Dasaratha had three queens: Kausalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi.
- * For a long time they had no children.
- * Dasaratha did a yaga. An angel came. He gave a golden pot filled with Payasa to King Dasaratha (Picture 2). King gave the Payasa to his queens. They drank it.
- * Later four sons were born. Rama - Kausalya; Bharata - Kaikeyi and Lakshmana and Shatrughna - Sumitra.



(Picture 1)



(Picture 2)

BALA KANDA

All four princes - Rama, Lakshmana, Bharat and Satrughna were playing together peacefully and growing up. At the same time, they were also learning religion and Shastravidya. All the people in Ayodhya were happy and enjoying life.

One-day sage Vishwamitra came to the court of king Dasaratha. King Dasaratha rose and welcomed Vishwamitra with great honor and respect. Dasaratha said with deep respect: "I am very fortunate indeed that you have graced my humble court with your presence. Everything I have is at your disposal. If there is anything I can do for you, please let me know and I shall do so gladly. Vishwamitra's

face became bright with joy and he said, "O King! It is Dharma of King to protect good people. I am performing yaaga. But two Rakshasas - Subahu and Maareecha - and their men disturb us by throwing unclean flesh and blood. Please send Rama and Lakshmana with me to protect us". Dasaratha said, "They are not even sixteen years old and I cannot risk their life. I will come with my army and kill those rakshasas". However, Vishwamitra insisted on Rama and Lakshmana to go with him. King Dasaratha could not go back on his words and finally sent for both princes with deep fear of their safety and life. Both Rama and Lakshmana came and touched their father's feet. With the blessing of the parents and elders, they left with Vishwamitra.



Both Rama and Lakshmana were not afraid for they were very brave. While walking through the jungle, they came to Dandaka forest. A female rakshasa named Tataka attacked them. Sage Vishwamitra told Rama to kill her. Rama said, "We must be kind to a woman. How can I kill her?" The sage said, "If a woman kills other good people without mercy, she has no right to expect mercy, and so you can kill her to help the good people". Rama shot an arrow. Rama's arrow never failed. It killed Tataka. Everyone in the jungle was

happy for now Tataka cannot bother him or her.

Both Rama and Lakshmana were enjoying the nature and they finally reached ashrama. Sage Vishwamitra instructed Rama and Lakshmana to keep a strict watch. One morning, rakshasa army came and covered the sky like a great black cloud. Rama and Lakshmana fought bravely. Rama killed Subahu with an arrow and Maareecha ran for his life. Vishwamitra was very pleased. He blessed Rama and Lakshmana.



One day Sage Vishwamitra told Rama and Lakshmana to go with him to Mithila. King Janaka was holding a ceremony for his daughter Sita to select a husband. They reached the city and entered the hall. All the kings and princes had to come there to win the hand of beautiful Sita. King Janaka stood up and announced, "Here is a divine bow of Lord

Shiva. Whoever lifts and bends it will marry Sita". Lots of kings and princes tried but failed. Finally Sage Vishwamitra asked Rama to go and try. Rama got up and bowed to all elders with respect. He slowly picked up the bow and pulled the string to tie it. With the loud sound of thunder the bow broke into two pieces! King Janaka was pleased. Sita walked in shy steps towards Rama and put the wedding garland around the neck of Rama. King Dasaratha came with whole family and Rama and Sita were married. King Dasaratha went back happily to Ayodhya with all his family including Rama, Lakshmana and Sita. ■



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Activity 10

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words given below.

Narada

yaaga

Rama

Kausalya

bow

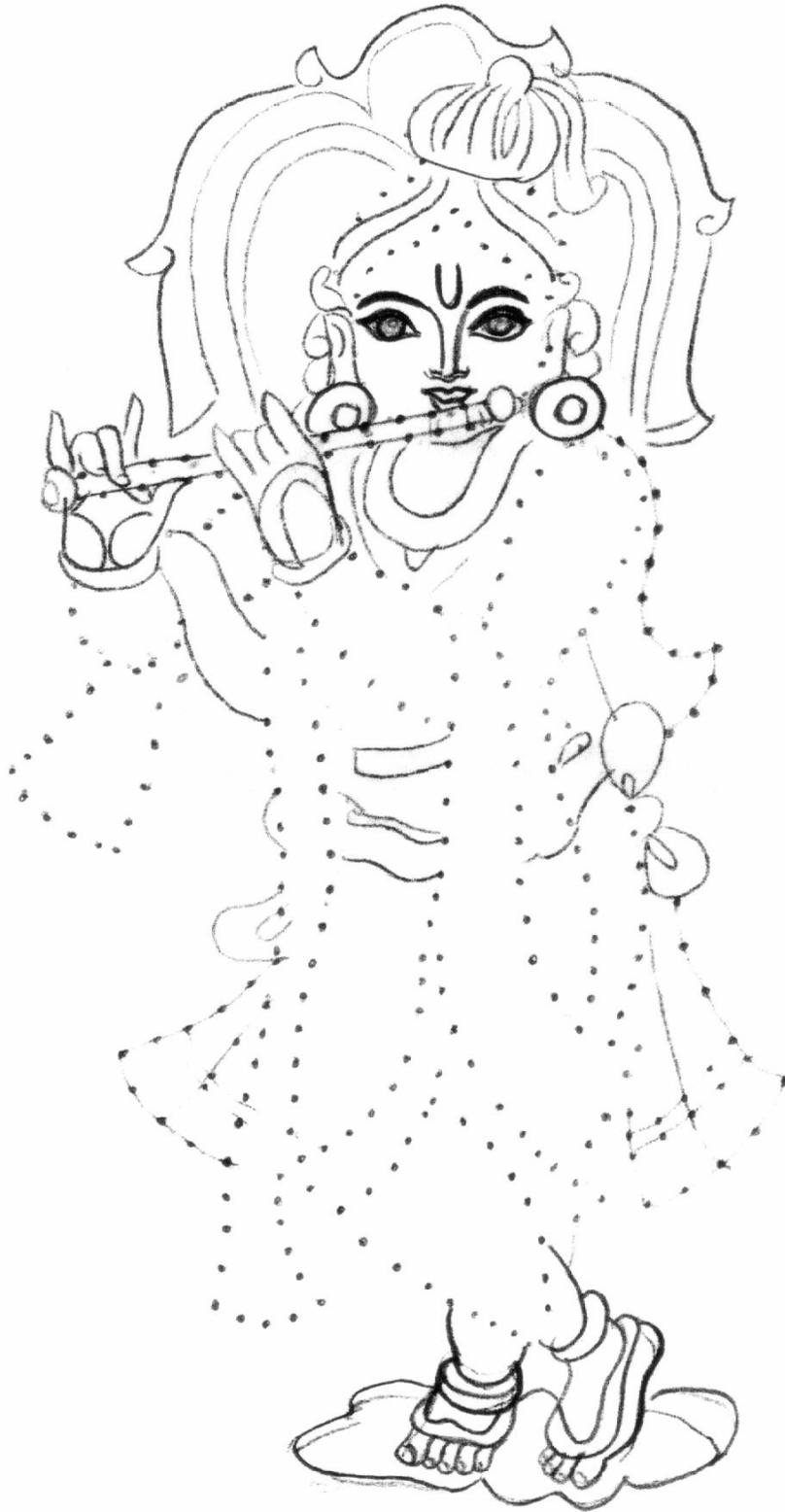
Sita

Sumitra

Vishwamitra

1. Narada told Vaalmeeiki the story of _____ .
2. Rama is the son of King Dasaratha and the queen _____ .
3. Sage _____ took Rama and Lakshmana to the Dandaka forest.
4. Rama and Lakshmana protected the _____ from being disturbed by the rakshasas.
5. _____ was the daughter of King Janaka.

Lord Krishna



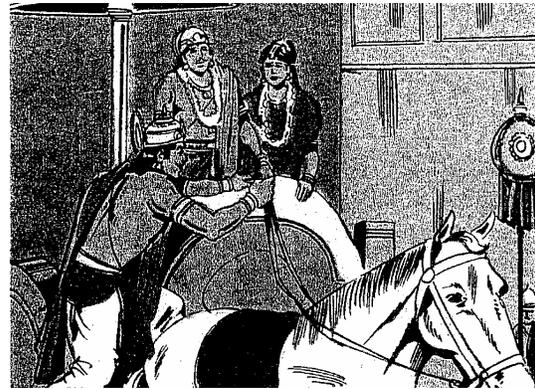
Activity 11 – Complete the picture drawing a continuous line through the dots and color it.

LORD KRISHNA'S BIRTH

Different names for Lord Krishna: Gopala, Nanda Gopala, Bala Gopala, Achyuta, Keshava, Madhava, Nandalala, Yashodabala etc.

Just like RAMAYANA deals with the birth and life of Lord Rama, SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM deals with the birth and life of Lord Krishna. In fact it deals with the DASAVATARS of Lord Vishnu and Krishnavatar is the ninth avatar of Lord Vishnu. Srimad Bhagavatam is a very sacred scripture and Sage Veda Vyasa wrote it. It has twelve chapters or Skanda. The tenth chapter deals with the story of Lord Krishna in detail.

King Ugrasena was the ruler and King of Mathura. Devaki was the Princess and she got married to Vasudeva. Kamsa was the brother of Devaki. Kamsa wanted to drive Devaki and Vasudeva to the house of Vasudeva in his chariot. Things were going okay when all on a sudden Kamsa heard a voice from the Heaven that the eighth child born to Devaki will kill



him. Kamsa was very upset and angry that he wanted to kill his sister thinking that if she is not alive then the baby will not be born and then there will be nobody to kill him. But Vasudeva calmed him down and asked him to spare Devaki's life with the promise that he shall give each one of the children as soon as they are born to Kamsa. Only with this promise he let go of Devaki's life but still imprisoned both Devaki and Vasudeva.

Years went by and Devaki gave birth to six children but as promised each child was given to Kamsa. It was a very sad thing but they still kept their promise. The seventh child was miraculously carried to Rohini, second wife of Vasudeva in Gokul.

Kamsa was very nervous because the time for the eighth child to be born was nearing. He ordered his guards to chain both Devaki and Vasudeva so that they will not escape. On the eighth day of the waning moon of Shravan, it rained very heavily. Devaki gave birth to Lord Krishna. It was a divine baby because he knew he should not cry and wake up the guards. Vasudeva wished that he were not in chains so that he could hug and kiss the child. His wish became true and his chains fell off. He wanted to save the

baby and decided to take the baby to his friend, Nanda's house in Gokul. The prison doors opened by itself and the



guards were fast asleep and Vasudeva was able to carry the baby out. Gokul was on the other side of the river Yamuna and because of the heavy rain there was flooding. But as Vasudeva approached the river with the baby, the waters parted and Vasudeva was able to walk towards Gokul without any difficulty. As he came closer to Nanda's house he heard the cry of a newborn baby. Nanda's wife Yashoda had just given birth to a beautiful girl. Thinking that Kamsa will not hurt a baby girl, he switched Lord Krishna and placed him next to Yashoda. So Vasudeva left his eighth child in his friend's house

and carried the baby girl to Mathura. The guards were still asleep and as soon as Vasudeva entered the prison the doors closed again and it looked as though nothing had happened. Few minutes later the guards woke up when they heard the cry of a newborn child. They informed Kamsa and he soon came to see the baby. He wanted to kill the baby and lifted the baby by the feet and was about to throw the baby on the floor, when it escaped from his hand flew towards the sky and there was another voice from the heaven which said that the person who will kill Kamsa was still alive.

Kamsa was very upset and he set out a wicked person Putana to find out where the newborn baby was (the actual eighth child of Devaki & Vasudeva). Putana pretended that she was a very nice lady but killed every one of them. One day she learned about Yashoda and Nanda's newborn baby and tried her usual trick and pretended that she was Yashoda and Putana tried to poison Lord Krishna. But Lord Krishna knew about her and she was killed. Even as a child He was a very strong and Divine child.

- * Biological parents of Lord Krishna: Devaki and Vasudeva.
- * Foster parents of Lord Krishna: Yashoda and Nanda.
- * Lord Krishna was born in Mathura.
- * Lord Krishna was brought up in Gokul. ■

Activity 12 (The Story of Krishna)

Unscramble the words.

V A Y E A S D V A

The Sage who wrote Srimad Bhagavatam

_____ .

R A N A S E U G

The King Of Mathura

_____ .

I S R N K H A

Son of Vasudeva and Devaki

_____ .

O K L G U

Lord Krishna was brought up here

_____ .

A N P A U T

A wicked lady who tried to kill baby Krishna

_____ .

Activity 13 (The Story of Krishna)

Matching:

Show the relationships by drawing lines between the columns.

<u>WHO</u>	<u>RELATED TO WHOM</u>	<u>HOW</u>
Devaki	Yashoda	daughter
Kamsa	Krishna	foster son
Balarama	Ugrasena	uncle
Krishna	Vasudeva	friend
Nanda	Krishna	brother

SUDAMA

The story of Sudama is also described in Bhagavata Purana, an ancient scripture of the Hindus.

Sudama was a poor brahmin boy who became a close friend of Krishna in sage Sandipani's hermitage. Krishna learnt to chant from Sudama.

Once, Sandipani's wife asked Sudama and Krishna to get some wood from the forest. While they were collecting the wood, a storm came and they got lost. Sudama was scared. Krishna held his arms and assured his safety. When the storm was over they found their way to the hermitage. Sudama was relieved. Sandipani blessed them with a long life and happiness.

After completing their studies Sudama and Krishna went their own ways. Krishna became the king of Dwarka and married princess Rukmini, the goddess of prosperity. Sudama on the other hand married a simple brahmin girl and began to lead the life of a devotee reading scriptures, praying, forsaking worldly pleasures. Everyone loved Sudama. His family was quite happy.

Then Sudama's wife gave birth to two children. Because of Sudama's austere life style, the family began to face difficult days, with little food to eat and no clothes to wear. Sudama's wife was extremely devoted to her husband but when her children began to suffer, she was concerned.

Finally on a cold night, when her children were without blanket, she approached Sudama and humbly said, "Aren't you and Krishna the Lord of Dwarka friends? And Krishna married to the goddess of prosperity, Rukmini?"

Sudama replied, "Yes".

Sudama's wife dreamed of seeing an improvement in her family's poor condition. She earnestly said, "Go my lord, I beseech you, for the sake of our dear children, meet



Krishna".

The very prospect of meeting Krishna, his old friend, made Sudama happy. "I will go and see him, but I will not ask him for anything". Sudama's wife could hardly conceal her joy. She happily said, "Even a visit to Krishna will bless our family. Do not ask anything from him. I will be content my lord".

Just before his departure for Dwarka, Sudama came to his wife. Both had the same thought; "What will I

give to Krishna when I see him after such a long time?"

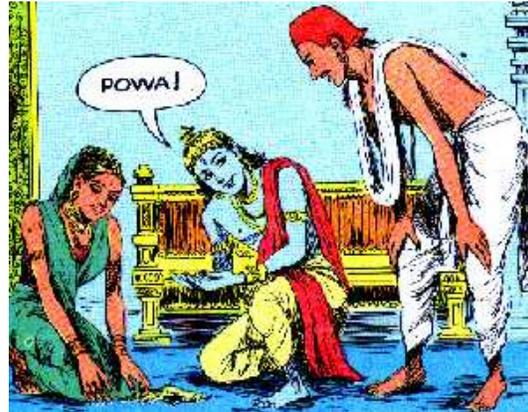
Sudama's wife suddenly remembered, "My lord, you used to tell me that Krishna immensely loved Powa, the flattened rice!" Sudama too remembered Krishna's great liking for Powa. Sudama's wife ran to her neighbor's house and they happily gave her the gift of Powa in a small bundle. Sudama then set out on his long journey to Dwarka.

When Sudama came to the palace, surprisingly enough, no one stopped him. He looked through various rooms and finally located Krishna and Rukmini. When Krishna saw Sudama he ran to embrace him. Then Krishna sat down and washed Sudama's tired feet with warm water and put sandalwood paste on them.

After the royal meal, they all settled down to chat. Krishna and Sudama exchanged the happenings of their lives since they departed from Sandipani's hermitage. Suddenly Krishna noticed a small bundle on Sudama's waist. He remarked, "Ah! You have brought a present for me!"

Sudama hesitated, "How do I give a king, a poor man's Powa?" When Krishna noticed that Sudama was ashamed to give him the bundle, he remarked, "Sudama, the poorest gifts given to me with love is dearer to me than the richest of gifts given without love".

Krishna was thoughtful; "He has not come to ask anything for himself. He came out of love for his wife and me". Then he quickly snatched off the bundle and opened it. There it was, his favorite Powa! He tossed some in his mouth with great satisfaction. Then they talked and talked, as



old friends, to their heart's content. Sudama could not ask anything from Krishna.

Next morning Sudama bid Krishna and Rukmini farewell. The long road back home did not seem to be that hard as he thought of Krishna. When he reached home, he was amazed to see that a huge mansion was standing in place of his poor hut. His wife and children, wearing new clothes, came to receive him. He could hardly recognize them. Sudama felt the touch of the all-knowing Krishna who had rewarded Sudama for his gift of love.

Sudama continued to lead the life of a hermit while his family enjoyed the generous gifts of wealth from Krishna. ■

Activity 14

The Story of Sudama

Circle the correct answer.

1. The story of Sudama is described in
 Bhagawat Purana Vishnu Purana Brahma Purana
2. Sudama met Krishna at the ashram of the Sage
 Vishwamitra Sandipani Vasishta
3. Krishna married the goddess of prosperity,
 Sita Lakshmi Rukmini
4. Sudama went to see Krishna with his favorite dish as a gift, which is
 Rice Powa Wheat

Activity 15

(The Story of Sudama)

Circle the answer – True or False.

1. Sudama's wife was extremely devoted to her husband.
 True False
2. Sudama's wife wanted him to ask help from Krishna.
 True False
3. When Sudama entered Krishna's palace soldiers stopped him.
 True False
4. Sudama was ashamed to give Krishna the bundle of Powa.
 True False

PUNDALIK

Once upon a time there was a devotee called Pundalik lived in a city called Pandharpur. His father Janudeva and mother Satyavati lived in a thick forest called Dandirvan.

Pundalik was a devoted son but soon after his marriage he began to ill-treat his parents. To escape from their misery, the parents decided to go on a pilgrimage to the holy city of Kashi(also known as Varanasi).

When Pundalik's wife learnt about this, she also decided to go. She and her husband joined the same group of pilgrims on horseback. While the son and his wife rode on horseback, the old couple walked. Every evening when the party camped for the night, the son forced his parents to groom the horses and do other jobs. The poor parents cursed the day they decided to go on a pilgrimage.

Soon the party reached the ashrama of the great sage Kukkutswami. There they decided to spend a couple of nights. They were all tired and soon fell asleep-except Pundalik who could not sleep. Just before daybreak he saw a group of beautiful, young women, dressed in dirty clothes, enter the ashrama, clean the floor, fetch water and wash the swami's clothes. Then they entered the inner room of the ashrama, and came out in beautifully clean clothes and passing near Pundalik, vanished.

Next night he saw the same sight again. Pundalik threw himself at their feet and begged them to tell who they were. They said they were Ganga, Yamuna and other holy rivers of India in which the Pilgrims bathed and washed their sins. Their clothes were dirtied by the sins of the bathing pilgrims.

"And because of your ill-treatment of your parents," they said, "You are the greatest sinner."

This brought about a complete change in him and he became the most devoted of sons. Now the parents' rode the horses while the son and his wife walked by their side. By their love and affection, the son and his wife urged the parents to give up the pilgrimage and return to Dandirvan.

One day it so happened that Lord Krishna, the King of Dwarka, while feeling lonely, was reminded of his early

days in Mathura. He particularly remembered his sports with the milkmaids, the cowherd boys, and his love, Radha. Though she was dead, he longed to see her again. By his divine powers he brought her back to life and seated her by his side. Just then his queen, Rukmini, entered the room. When Radha did not rise to pay her respect, Rukmini left Dwarka in anger and hid herself in Dandirvan forest.

After some days, Lord Krishna set off in search of Rukmini. He first went to Mathura, then to Gokul. He played with cows, the milkmaids and cowherd boys. They too joined in the search. They went to Mount Govardhan also in her search.

At last they reached the banks of the river Bhima in the Deccan. Krishna left his companions at Goplapura, and he himself entered Dandirvan forest alone in search of her. At last he found her and managed to calm her.

Krishna and Rukmini came to Pundalik's ashrama. But at that time Pundalik was busy attending to his parents. Though he knew Lord Krishna had come to see him, he refused to pay his respect to the god before his duty towards his parents was done. He, however, threw a brick outside for Lord Krishna to stand upon.

Impressed by Pundalik's devotion to his parents, Lord Krishna did not mind the delay. Standing on the brick he waited for Pundalik.

When Pundalik came out and begged God's pardon, Lord Krishna replied that far from being displeased, he was pleased with his love for his parents.



Lord Krishna then ordered His worship on Vithoba, or God who stood upon a brick. An imposing temple was built at the place where Krishna and Pundalik had met. Inside the temple stands Krishna's image on a brick. By his side stands the image of Rukmini. ■

* Pandharpur (Pandhari or Pandharipuram), located 65 km west of Sholapur, on the banks of the river Bhimarathi, is one of the revered pilgrimage sites in Maharashtra. The saint Pundalik is associated with Pandharpur Vithoba shrine, and hence this shrine is also known as 'Pundarika pura'. Vithoba (Krishna) is also called 'Panduranga', which is a sanskritized form of Pandarga, the old name of Pandharpur. The name Vithoba means Father 'Vitthala'. Vitthala is said to have been derived from the word Vishnu in Kannada. *

Activity 16**Fill in the blanks**

Complete the Pundalik story with the appropriate words given below.

Vithoba Rukmini Pundalik ashrama Varanasi Dandirvan

1. Janudeva and Satyavathi had a son named _____.
2. The holy city of Kashi is also known as _____.
3. The pilgrims group reached the _____ of the great sage Kukkutswami.
4. _____ is the wife of Lord Krishna, King of Dwarka.
5. Rukmini left Dwarka in anger and went to _____.
6. _____ means God who stood upon a brick.