

Primary Teaching Idea 2.2

Diwali Activities

a) Making Ghee Wicks

This is an excellent activity when teaching worship especially for KS2. It practically demonstrates the Hindu ideal of living a simple agrarian lifestyle where many necessities are home-made, using the natural gifts of God. Ghee is central to rituals and cooking. Please note that it can be bought from many Indian or speciality shops. You can use cooking oil instead.

1. Sit the pupils down at a table or preferably on the floor (with a clean cloth such as a tablecloth, sheet etc. in front of them). Arrange small piles of 100% cotton wool in front of them. You will also need melted ghee, a few plates, a small bowl and a lighter.

2. First show them how to make a ghee wick, once or twice. Then they can make them. This is done as follows:

i) Take a small piece of cotton wool. Roll it tightly between your fingers so that it forms a ball the size of a large garden pea. (You will need to practise taking the correct amount of cotton wool.) Put it aside.

ii) Take four times that amount of cotton wool. Gently tease it out into a 3-4 cm. square about ½ cm. thick.

iii) Put this piece onto the palm of your left hand. Place the pea-sized piece on top in the centre.

iv) Wrap the square around the pea-sized piece by turning the corners upward and then twisting them together with your fingers. You may find dampening your fingers slightly helps.

v) When you have several wicks, place them on a plate. Pour moderately hot melted ghee over the wicks so they are covered. Leave to soak for a minute or two. Remove, shaking off excess ghee and put to cool for 5-10 minutes (a fridge helps).

vi) When the wicks are cooled you may place them in a clay or metal diva and light them. They can be stored for a few weeks in a fridge. Sometimes a few grains of camphor is added in the diva (on top of the wick).

***Note:** Please follow your local safety guidelines when lighting candles or ghee wicks in school. The melted ghee should be warm enough to remain melted but not really hot.*

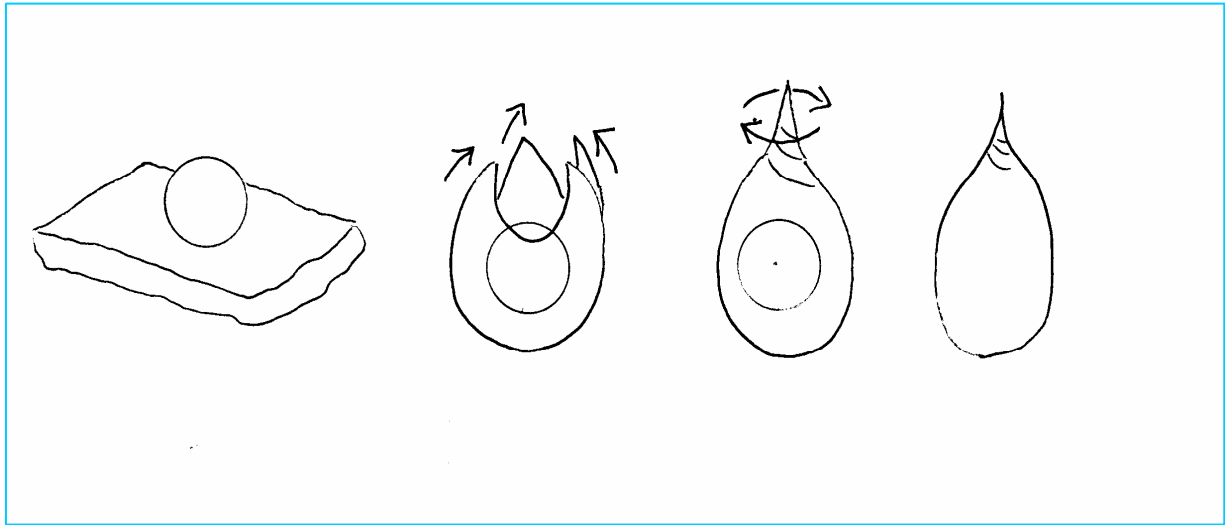


Diagram: Making Ghee Wicks.

b) Painting Divas

This exercise can be integrated with other learning experiences, such as making ghee wicks (see above) and a discussion on light (see Teacher Guide 2.3).

Show an example of painted diva (which you may have completed yourself). Hand-out plain terracotta divas and have children paint them (poster paints are fine).

(You can discuss how the divas are baked in the sun, and how drinking vessels are made in exactly the same way and then thrown away after being used i.e. they are disposable. You might consider discussing the problems with some modern disposable cups and plates (e.g. those made from non-degradable plastic).

Once the divas are dry, add ghee wicks and light them (see section a above). Lighting the divas could be integrated into other activities, such as story-time, or a role-play including Rama and Sita's return (possibly exploring the theme of 'coming home')

Note: plain clay divas, and also sun-baked pots and banana leaf plates, are sometimes available from IES (depending on availability).

c) Drawing Rangoli Patterns

Make different colours of rice, preferably using food dyes. Coloured powders can also be used. Discuss some of the common designs of rangoli patterns (e.g. flowers, swirls, lattice designs) and show examples. Briefly, explain their significance. For example, you might look at the idea of ‘bringing good luck’, comparing it with practices from within the children’s own culture. (note; the idea of good fortune is not necessarily superstitious, but can relate to the idea of being responsible and creating out own good fortune, such as by being clean, behaving well and - as represented by the Rangoli – care and devotion. We could also look at colours – the colours we like, their significance, metaphors and feelings associated with colours (“feeling blue”, “burning with anger”, etc.)

d) Making Diwali Cards

Show pupils some examples of Diwali cards and discuss their significance (e.g. compare to Christmas cards, and ideas of giving and receiving. Explore some common features and recurring symbols (the diva, Lakshmi, etc) .

Have pupils make their own cards using card, glue, glitter, etc.

e) Other activities/resources

The following are found with *The Heart of Hinduism Teachers Pack*, if not already on the IES Website

- Teaching Idea 2.1 (‘The Bridge to Lanka’ - drama role-play)
- Teacher Guide 2.3 (‘The significance of Light’)
- Teacher Guide 2.5 (‘Characters in the Ramayana’)
- Teacher Guide 3.2 (‘Hindu symbols’ – for the diva)
- Teaching Idea 3.4 (‘Hindu Recipes’)
- Teaching Idea 3.3 (‘Making Flower garlands’)