

World Religions in Greater Indianapolis Teaching Module

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Humanities Discipline: U.S. History

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World Religion: Hinduism

Teaching Module Title: Hindu Religious Traditions in U.S. History

Teaching Module Goals:

1. Explore the religious practices and traditions of Hindus in the United States
2. Understand the history of Hindu Temples in the United States
3. Compare and contrast the diverse practices of Hinduism in the United States
4. Be able to discuss Hindus as part of U.S. History

Assigned Readings and/or Websites:

1. *Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs in America A Short History* by Gurinder Singh Mann, Paul Numrich, and Raymond Williams.
2. *Hindus in the United States* Part 1 & 2 PBS www.pbs.org
3. "Gandhi Pilgrim of Peace." You Tube.

Study Questions and/or Discussions Prompts for Students:

1. On page 50 of *Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs in America*, who does the text mention is the most famous Hindu? Why is he famous? What form did his protests take? Does this aspect fall in line with the Hindu beliefs?
2. With which Hindu deities does this practice align?
3. What is a guru? What are their roles? How is the line between human and divine viewed by Hindus?
4. On page 52, explain how American society has affected the practice of Hindus in the United States.
5. What does the term Missionary Hindu mean? How is the Hare Krishna movement an illustration of this term?
6. What does the term Swami mean? Who was Swami Vivekananda? Name three prominent intellectuals who immigrated to the United States and revived Vedanta on the West Coast.
7. What does ISKCON mean? How did it become a popular movement in the United States? What are some of its unique American traits?
8. Why was Transcendental Meditation one of the most successful off shoots of Hinduism in America? Who established it in the United States?
 - a. 8-What are samskaras? What are the five most common rituals performed in the United States?
 - b. 9-Explain why marriage marks a major transition in life for the Hindu? What customs and practices are associated with marriage? Explain the concept of the arranged marriage. Describe a typical Hindu marriage ritual.
 - c. 10-Describe Hindu practice regarding burials. How do Hindus view life and death? What is karma? What does the term dharma mean?
 - d. 11-What is yoga? Is it popular with Hindus who have come to the United States?
 - e. 12-How do Hindus in the United States help their children practice their faith?
 - f. 13-Where are the major Hindu Temples in the United States?

Written Assignments and/or other Assessment Instruments:

1. Locate five major Hindu temples in the United States. Provide the location and illustration of the temple.
2. Explain why the temple is located there. How do Hindus practice their faith at these temples? Which gods do they worship?

3. Select three of the following Hindu deities: Shiva, Ganesh, Vishnu, and Krishna. Write a three page paper explaining who these various gods are and explain why they are important to Hindu religious traditions. How do Hindu Americans regard the worship of these gods?
4. Watch the video on Gandhi's biography. Explain how he used his faith in his political and civil protests. Compare Gandhi's activities to Martin Luther King's civil right struggles in the U.S. South.