**Hinduism**

* More than 5,000 years ago, the faith known as **Hinduism** began in India.
* It evolved out of the many different practices of the Ancient Indian people.
* Hinduism is not a single religion, but a family of religious traditions.
* **750 million** Hindus in the world today.
* **Third** most popular religion.
* Believe in **one God** reincarnated into different forms.
* **Brahman** – Universal Spirit

**Holy Book**

* The ***Vedas***
* The oldest Hindu sacred writing was written in Sanskrit.
* The***Vedas*** is a set of four books.
* **Veda** means “vision” or “wisdom”.
* Hindus believe that prayers and hymns contained in the Vedas are revelations from gods.

**Reincarnation**

* The idea of passing through many lives to reach Brahman.
* Reincarnation is the belief that the soul repeatedly goes through a cycle of being born into a body, dying, and being reborn again in a new body.
* A Hindu’s goal is to become free from continuous reincarnations.

**The Goal is to end Reincarnation**

* Three ways to end reincarnation

1. Be devoted to any of the Hindu God or Goddesses
2. Mediation. Acknowledge life as an illusion and realize that Brahman is the only real thing.
3. Dedicate oneself to various religious ceremonies

**Karma**

* Karma, a force that determines the quality of each life, depending on how well one behaved in a past life.
* Hinduism says we create karma by our actions on earth.
* If you live a good life, you create good karma.
* If you live a bad life, you create bad karma.

**Moksha**

* One attains **Moksha** when one has "overcome ignorance", and no longer desires anything at all.
* Perfect happiness.
* The ones who reach this state no longer struggle with the cycle of life and death. (**Reincarnation**)
* Ending reincarnation and becoming one with Brahman.

**Dharma**

* **Dharma** – The divine law that requires people to perform the duties of their caste.
* Righteousness, duty, law, virtue, ethics: that which ‘upholds’ society

**Yoga and Meditation**

* **Yoga** – physical and mental control*.*
* **Meditation** – Inner stillness.

**Hindu Duties**

Each Hindu has 4 daily duties:

1. **Revere the deities**
2. **Respect ancestors**
3. **Respect all beings**
4. **Honor all humankind**

**Gods and Goddesses**

* There are 300,000 different reincarnations of Brahman.
* **Brahmins** – Hindu priests

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Majors Gods** | **Major Goddess** |
| * **Brahman** (Creator) **(**Universal Spirit) * **Vishnu** (Preserver) * **Shiva** (Destroyer) * **Krishna** (Teacher of the Worl) * **Ganesh (**Remover of obstacles**)** Son of Shiva and Parvati | * **Saraswati** (Knowledge) * **Lakshmi** (Wealth) * **Parvati** or Shakti (Power) (Universal Mother) |

**Symbols**

* “Aum" is a holy word often spoken during the practice of any Hindu rites.
* *Swastika – auspicious symbol represents t*ruth, four ends describes the four Vedas.

**Sadhus** (**Guru**)

* “Holy Men”
* Renounce the world
* Cut of family ties
* No possessions
* No home

**How Hindus Worship**

* Hindu worship is called **puja**.
* They worship at **shrines** or **temples** where there is an image of a god or goddess.
* Hindus believe that the gods live within the shines and viewing their image is the same as being with them.
* Hindus pray, sing, and make offerings to their favorite god.

**Pilgrimage**

* **Pilgrimage** - a special journey to a sacred place.
* **Pilgrims** – People who travel to religious sites.

**Holy Rivers**

* Rivers are sacred places to many Hindus.
* The act of bathing in a river cleans the body as well as the spirit, helping to wash away sins.
* In India, the most famous holy river is the **Ganges River**.
* Thousands of Hindus come to the **Ganges** **River** on a **pilgrimage**.

**Festivals / Holidays**

**Diwali** is the Festival of Lights.

* New year
* Celebrating Ram beinganointed King in the Ramayan.

**Holi** is the Festival of Color

* **Holi** *–* annual spring festival of color*.*
* Represents triumph of good over evil.
* Popularity - Lord **Krishna** is believed to have popularized the festival by playing pranks on the **Gopis**.

**“We are not human beings having spiritual experiences;  
We are spiritual beings having a human experience!”**