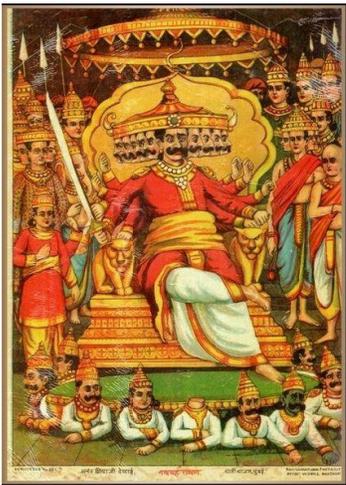


Hinduism

The first known civilization in India developed in the _____ Valley region. This civilization left behind two major collections of literature. Epic



_____ told exciting stories of wars,



Scene from Ramayana of Ravana, the demon king that Rama defeated

kings and heroes like the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. The _____ were books of religious poems, hymns, and rituals that became the first scriptures of

Hinduism was born from the beliefs of the Indus Valley civilization and the Aryan settlers that came from the north. The early Hindus believed in a large numbers of gods. The most important are _____,

_____ and _____.

Priests or _____ recited sacred hymns that had been memorized and passed down for generations.

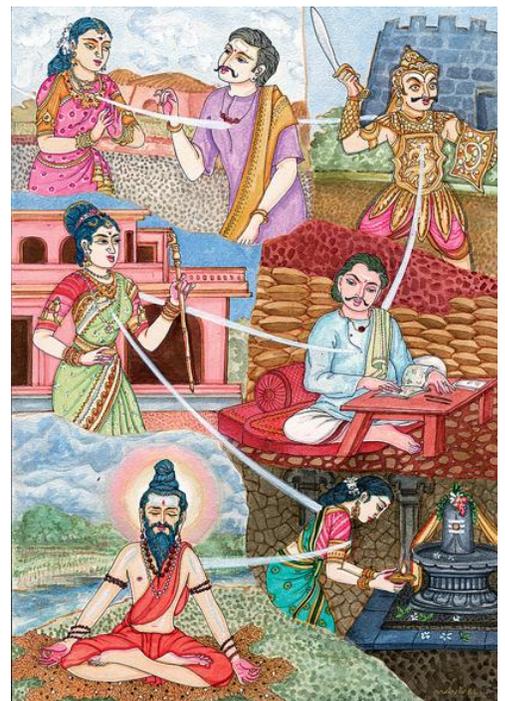
Some Hindu beliefs:

reincarnation

karma

dharma

moksha



Hindu Gods and Goddesses Matching Page



Brahma,
the Creator

The 7th and most important avatar (reincarnation) of Vishnu. One of the most loved Hindu gods, often shown with dark blue skin and playing a flute.



Vishnu,
the Preserver

Preserver of the universe. When humankind needs help, he appears on Earth as an avatar (reincarnation). He is traditionally shown as blue with 4 arms often riding on the mythical bird Garuda.



Shiva,
the Destroyer

God who created the universe and set it in motion. He is traditionally shown with 4 heads.



Parvati

Goddess also named Durga, who is the wife of Shiva. She is fierce and powerful. She is shown with many arms. These are for fighting against demons.



Rama

The 6th avatar (reincarnation) of Vishnu and the hero of the epic, *Ramayana*. He defeated the powerful demon, Ravana. Worshipped for his bravery and goodness.



Krishna

The elephant-headed son of Shiva and Parvati. He is wise, thoughtful and jolly.



Ganesh

God of both destruction and creation. His destructive powers remove the world's impurities.

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Hinduism Answers

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civilization and the Aryan settlers that came from the north.

The early Hindus believed in a large numbers of gods. The most

important are Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva.

Priests or Brahmans recited sacred

hymns that had been memorized and passed down for generations.

Some Hindu beliefs:

reincarnation - Hindus believe that each person has an eternal soul, which is reincarnated or reborn, in a new body after death.

karma - Karma is the sum of all the good and bad actions performed by the person during past lives.

dharma - Dharma is the set of specific religious and social duties assigned to each person according to his or her place in society.

moksha - A person who fulfills his/her dharma may eventually achieve moksha or liberation. In this state of perfect knowledge and happiness, individuals escape the cycle of death and rebirth and merge with Brahman, the One God.

Hindu Books, Resources and Stories:

Ancient India by Virginia Schomp -- A good overview for parents of how Hinduism started and some of the Hindu gods and goddesses.

Hindu Stories by Anita Ganeri - A great book to start with because it has brief overviews of the gods and goddesses.

Savitri: A Tale of Ancient India (from The Mahabharata) by Aaron Shepard

Rama and Sita: A Tale from Ancient Java retold by David Weitzman

How Parvati won the Heart of Shiva (Classic Indian Stories for Children) by Harish Jahari and Vatsala Sperling

The Magical Adventures of Krishna (Classic Indian Stories for Children) by Vatsala Sperling

Little Krishna (Classic Indian Stories for Children) by Harish Johari

Karna, The Greatest Archer in the World (Classic Indian Stories for Children) by Vatsala Sperling

How Ganesh Got his Elephant Head (Classic Indian Stories for Children) by Vatsala Sperling

The Elephant Prince: A Story of Ganesh by Amy Novesky

Hanuman's Journey to the Medicine Mountain (Classic Indian Stories for Children) by Vatsala Sperling

The Bhagwad-Gita

You might want to print out a copy of the three Hindu gods -- just google Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and you'll find some beautiful paintings of the three gods together.