

Meet Nia: a Hindu

Nia is 9 years old and lives with her parents, sister Maya and brother Raj in Coventry. She and her family are Hindu.

What does worship mean to you?

To me worship means time to get away from everyone and to sit in peace and relax. It also means lighting a **diva** (holy flame) and sitting in front of an image of God praying for everyone's happiness and good health. I also ask God for blessings so that I become a better person as I get older. If I could not worship I would miss being able to light the diva and having that quiet time. I would also miss going to the **mandir** (temple) where I can sit and listen to the **arti** (worship song) and **bhajans** (hymns).

How does worship make you feel?

When I'm praying I feel very **spiritual**. I also feel very calm, relaxed and happy, knowing that I'm doing something I enjoy. I feel extremely proud to be a Hindu and to be able to take part in lots of religious festivals and ceremonies.

If you could pick one object to represent worship, for you, what would it be and why?

There are many special items, symbols and objects which represent worship, but **my** special item is a diva. This is because we light a diva for all occasions and ceremonies, whether happy or sad, at any time and in any size, from one small flame to hundreds all lit at once! I also like the diva as it lights up everything.



Where for you is your most spiritual place?

For me the most spiritual place has to be jointly the **mandir room** at home, where I can pray alone and where we worship together as a family, and also the Shree Krishna Mandir in Coventry.

I feel totally at peace there as no one is allowed to talk during prayer times and there is complete silence. I can think about things and not be disturbed. There are big, beautiful statues of gods and goddesses and bells to ring. After prayers, the priest gives you some **prashad** – which is food (usually dried fruit, nuts and sweets) that has been offered before God in thanks and we believe is blessed by God.



Meet Saksham: a Hindu

Saksham is 11 years old and lives with his parents and brother Dhruv in Wrexham. He and his family are Hindu.

What does worship mean to you?

Worship to me means a way of getting closer to God. To wish for something you really want and to confess all your sins and crimes. It's something that makes my family feel close.

How does worship make you feel?

It makes me feel very relaxed and very happy from the inside. I think it's a good way of communicating with and getting your feelings across to God and to other people. I usually worship with my family, but there isn't a Hindu community in Wrexham, only a few Hindu people. I have different feelings when I worship just with my family and when we are part of a large group worshipping together. I can be more open when I'm with my family but it's also great with more people as you feel part of a group and proud to be there.



If you could pick one object to represent worship for you, what would it be and why?

My special symbol would be the **Aum** (drawn too), mainly because it's the symbol for the Hindu religion, so I feel it's my symbol. It also means a lot to me as it represents God. I worship God **as** the Aum symbol **and** by using the Aum symbol.

Where for you is your most spiritual place?

My most spiritual place is a temple because it's a special place of worship for Hindus. However there isn't a Hindu temple in Wrexham, so living here means I also feel the **shrine** (place set aside for worship) in our kitchen at home is also a very spiritual place for me.

Every evening at about 7 o'clock, we all gather at the shrine to worship and pray as a family. There are big pictures of different gods and goddesses, such as **Durga** who is a goddess who sits on a tiger to show how powerful she is, and **Ganesh**, who has an elephant head and is believed to be very wise, which I like to look at. This is a peaceful and special time in the day.

