Aim

• To explore the ritual of puja.

Success Criteria

• I can describe what happens when Hindus perform puja.
• I can discuss how I might welcome a visitor.
• I can talk about how the senses are used in the ritual of puja.
Welcoming a Special Visitor

Nadia and Joseph are preparing for the arrival of their grandmother. They are so excited that she is coming to stay! Their father has gone to collect their grandmother from the airport and she will be arriving any minute.

When this very special visitor arrives at the house, what rituals do you think they might perform?

Think carefully about how you welcome visitors to your house.

Discuss your ideas with your talk partner.
Welcoming a Special Visitor

What ideas did you come up with?

Maybe you suggested...

- greeting and welcoming;
- offering a drink;
- offering food;
- giving some flowers;
- offering somewhere to sit.
What Is Puja?

Did you know that when Hindus worship and pray to a god, they act just like they are welcoming a special visitor whom they love very much?

Hindu worship is called puja.

Hindus can perform puja at home or in a Hindu temple.

Many Hindus have shrines in their homes where they perform puja. A shrine is a holy space for worshipping. It often includes a picture of the thing being worshipped.
What Is Puja?

A murti is an image or statue of a god. A shrine might have only one murti or it might have several murtis. Hindus have many gods but they are all part of the same god, Brahman. Puja involves praying to deities (murtis). The murtis are treated like very special visitors. Shrines can be very simple and small or they can be large and richly decorated.
What Is Puja?

Before performing the ritual prayer of puja, Hindus remove their shoes.

Why do you think they do this?

They do it to show respect for God. They chant prayers (mantras) and give offerings to the murtis such as fruit, incense, water and flowers.

Incense is a material which gives off a pleasant (and often strong) smell when burnt.

Why do you think they give these gifts to the murtis?

They do this to show their respect and love for the gods, just as a host would want to offer food and drink to a visitor.

When the puja has finished, Hindus share and eat the food. They believe this food is blessed after it has been offered to the deities.

This blessed food is known as ‘prashad’.
What Is Puja?

‘Aum’ is chanted during puja. This is the symbol for Aum.
What Is Puja?

Each shrine contains a puja tray, which holds several important items:

- **The bell is rung to let God know the people are ready to worship.**
- **The incense gives a lovely smell. It is a gift for the gods but also makes the air around the shrine pure.**
- **The diva lamp is lit to show that God is there.**
- **To show love, care and respect for God, the murtis are offered a drink of water, given on a spoon.**
- **Red kum kum powder is mixed with water to make a paste. A red dot is placed on the foreheads of the worshippers and of the murtis.**
Hindus believe that they feel closer to their gods when they speak to them using all of their senses. All the senses are used during the ritual of puja.

What are your five senses?

Seeing  Hearing  Smelling  Feeling  Tasting
Puja and the Senses

Now, we will be working in groups. Each group will focus on one of the five senses.

You have one minute to tell the person next to you about the things you can think of.

Seeing  Hearing  Smelling

Feeling  Tasting
Puja and the Senses

What ideas did you come up with?

Seeing
- Murtis
- Diva lamp
- Flame
- Flowers
- Food

Hearing
- Sound of bell ringing
- Chanting, “Aum”
- Chanting mantras

Smelling
- Incense
- Flowers

Feeling
- Kum kum powder on forehead
- and placing it on murtis

Tasting
- Blessed food (prashad)
Play with a partner. You should each have different coloured counters. The aim of the game is to make a row of four counters in your colour.

When it is your turn, choose a square and point to it. Say the sense it represents and then say something from the ritual of puja linked to that sense.

Put a counter in the box of the sense you have spoken about. Can you get four in a row? Or will your partner get their row first?
Memory Game

Look carefully at the things shown here which are a part of the ritual of puja.

You will have thirty seconds to look at them and then they will be covered up. How many will you be able to remember?

Now you have a minute to draw or write all the things that you can remember. Work on your whiteboards.
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