

Janmashtami

The Hindu festival of Krishna Janmashtami celebrates the birth of Krishna, one of the most popular Gods in Hinduism.

Lord Krishna is thought to be an incarnation (or avatar) of Vishnu one of the Tri Murti's (one of three gods, Brahma and Shiva being the other two). He is known as the preserver god, who is regarded as the highest avatar.

Hindus celebrate Janmashtami by going without sleep and singing special songs called bhajans. Hindus believe that Krishna was born at midnight and it is at this time that the true celebrations begin. The food that is prepared usually includes milk and curds, as this was believed to be Krishna's favourite food.

Some Hindus actually go without food during for the first day of Krishna Janmashtami, only eating after the midnight celebrations. This is when sweet foods are shared with those worshipping in the temple. An image of Krishna is placed in a cradle, bells are rung and the conch shell is blown to remind Hindus that the celebrations can begin.



- ① Sit down with the children and show them the series of pictures overleaf. You may wish to lay the sheets out either on a table or the floor, and then read the story.
- ② Ask the children the following questions and discuss them:-
Which pictures did you like and why?
Which pictures didn't you like and why?
- ③ Talk to the children about the good things that they can do, and the naughty things they might try to do.
- ④ Talk to the children about how we celebrate the birth of a baby.
- ⑤ Try making some food using milk, with the children.
- ⑥ Listen to the music played to celebrate Janmashtami, and get the children to play some musical instruments (such as ringing bells).

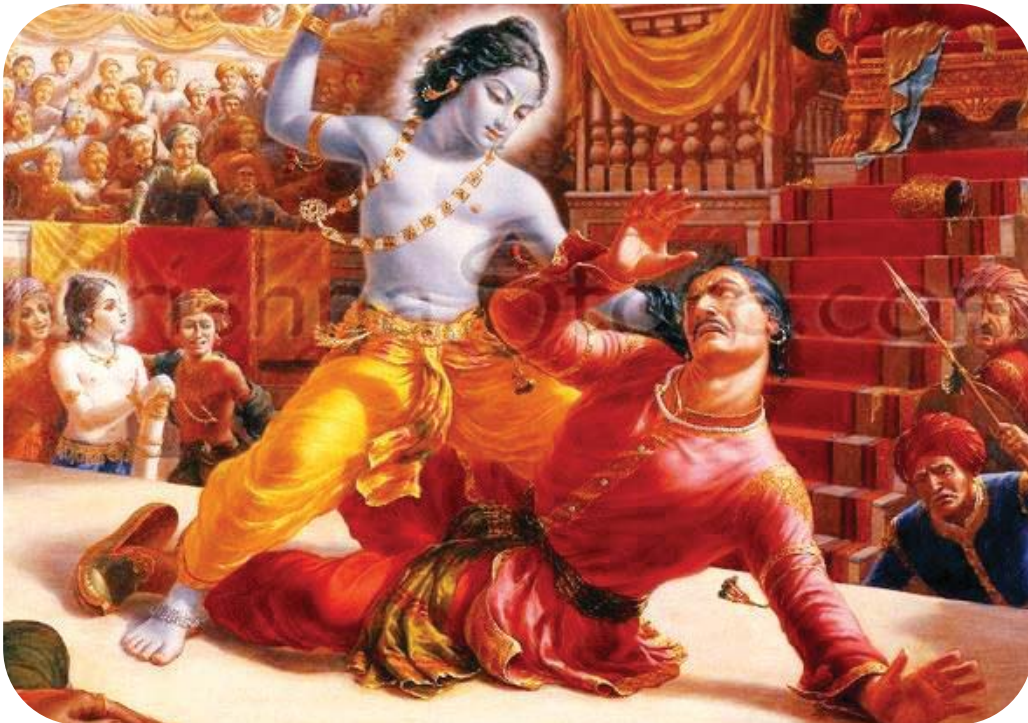
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This Hindu festival celebrates the birth of Krishna. This is a story of good overcoming evil. Kamsa and Devaki were brother and sister. Kamsa was very evil.



When Devaki married, it was heard that her 8th son would destroy her evil brother Kamsa. Kamsa tried to kill all of Devaki's children, but her last son was saved.



Krishna was safe with his mother Yashodha in Gokul (India). Eventually Krishna did destroy the wicked Kamsa and good overcame evil.