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Name:..... Form:.....

See pages 18 and 19 of Hindu mandir

A Hindu story

Many Hindu holy books contain stories that help people to understand important lessons in life. Here is one story used to teach children.

The Blue Jackal

Once upon a time there lived a jackal who wandered into a city in search of food. Because he was not used to being in the city, he accidentally entered the house of a dyer and fell into a vat of blue dye and was stained blue from head to toe. When he escaped back into the forest all of the animals were surprised at his appearance and did not know what he was. The blue jackal decided to take advantage of this situation. He chased all the other jackals out of the forest and told the other animals that he was Fierce Owl, sent by Indra, the king of the gods, to guard the forest. The animals all believed the blue jackal and treated him like a king – bringing him food and doing whatever he wanted.

Then one day a herd of jackals came passing by the forest, howling as they went. The blue jackal was unable to control his natural instinct and howled in return at his brother jackals. When they heard his howl, the other animals realised they had been tricked and they killed the blue jackal instantly.

Now answer these questions about the story

Q1. What do you think is the moral of this story?





Q2. Why did the other animals kill the jackal?





Q3. What do you think the jackal should have done after he was dyed blue?







Activity objectives

- ▶ To give the children an opportunity to read a Hindu fable.
- ▶ To give the children an opportunity to think about the meaning in stories.

Preparation and resources

Copies of the story on the activity sheet.

Introducing the activity

You may like to introduce the story by telling the children that many Hindu holy texts tell stories with morals. One group of these stories are called the Panchatantra, and this is how they started: Long ago in the kingdom of Mahilaropya, there lived a very good king. He had three sons, but they were not very clever. The king was desperate to find a good teacher who could teach his sons how to be good kings. One day an old teacher named Vishnu Sharman came to the king and said that he could teach his sons. The king asked Vishnu Sharman how he would teach such stupid sons, and Vishnu Sharman replied that he would use stories. He compiled a collection of stories, called the Panchatantra, to teach the princes. Now you have a chance to read one of these stories and see for yourself if they can teach good behaviour.

Teaching notes

The Panchatantra are not part of the Hindu holy scriptures, but they are used throughout India as a way to teach children important lessons about Hinduism and life. These stories are more appropriate to children than many of the Smirti stories, which often involve death and sex. The Panchatantra were compiled around the 5th century, but are thought to be much older. Many of the stories made their way into Arabic fables and later into European folk tales. The stories were originally intended to teach the sons of royalty.

The moral of 'The Blue Jackal' is generally given as: too much greed is harmful. But there are a variety of other morals that can be drawn from the story, such as: do not try to be something you are not and, it is better to tell the truth. The children should be encouraged to think of their own morals and to realise that, in Hinduism, religious learning is often done through thinking about morals and lessons.

Concluding the activity

Let the children discuss their answers.

Activity outcomes

- ▶ The children can read and interpret a story.
- ▶ The children can think about morals to a story.

Complementary work

The children can investigate other stories in the Panchatantra. A large collection of Panchatantra stories can be found on <http://panchatantra.org>. All the stories have appropriate content for children.

Resources

Access to a computer and the internet or printouts of stories from the Panchatantra.