|  |
| --- |
| The goddess Durga represents the power of Brahman that preserves moral order and righteousness in creation. The Sanskrit word Durga means ‘a fort’ or ‘protected place.’ She protects humans from evil and misery by destroying evil forces such as selfishness, jealousy, prejudice, hatred and pride. When might a Hindu ask Durga for help?  |
| In her images, Durga is shown in female form, wearing red clothes. The red colour symbolises action and so her red clothes show that she is always busy destroying evil and protecting people from pain caused by evil forces. Who would worship Durga? |
| A tiger symbolises unlimited power. Durga is riding the tiger. What do you think this is saying about her? |
| Durga has many arms. What do you think this says about her? |
| Durga holds a conch shell. The sound that comes from the shell is the sound of the sacred AUM (**ૐ**), which is said to be the sound of creation. What do you think this is saying about her? |
| Durga has lots of weapons in her hands. What do you think she is fighting? What does this say about her? Why does she need different weapons? |

**Durga**

|  |
| --- |
| Lakshmi is the goddess of wealth and prosperity, both material and spiritual. The word ‘Lakshmi’ comes from the Sanskrit word meaning ‘goal.’ Lakshmi therefore represents the goals of life, which is spiritual and material wealth. Who or why would a Hindu worship Lakshmi? |
| Lakshmi wears clothes in red and gold. Red symbolises activity and gold symbolises wealth. What do you think Lakshmi’s clothes say about her? |
| Lakshmi is often shown standing in a lotus flower and a lotus flower is in one of her hands. Lotus flowers are beautiful and float above the murky waters that they grow in. What do you think this is saying about Lakshmi? |
| Lakshmi holds a conch shell. The sound that comes from the shell is the sound of the sacred AUM (**ૐ**), which is said to be the sound of creation. What do you think this is saying about her? |
| Lakshmi holds a jar of gold coins which are pouring out. What does this say about her? |
| Lakshmi has four arms which point to the four corners of the earth. What does this say about her? |

**Lakshmi**

**Saraswati**

|  |
| --- |
| Saraswati is the goddess of learning, knowledge and wisdom. Who do you think would worship Saraswati? |
| The lotus flower is a symbol of Brahman. Saraswati is sitting in the lotus. What do you think this is saying about Saraswati? |
| The colour white symbolises purity and knowledge. What is white in the picture? What does this say about Saraswati? |
| Saraswati has four arms which represent the four corners of the earth. What does this say about Saraswati? |
| Saraswati is holding a book and a rosary. What does this say about Saraswati? |
| Saraswati is harmoniously playing a musical instrument with her front hands. The front hands symbolise the mind and intellect. What does this say about Saraswati? |
| In Hindu mythology the swan is believed to have a sensitive beak that can distinguish between pure milk and milk that has been watered down. Saraswati rides on a swan. What does this say about Saraswati? |
| In what ways would Saraswati be an example to Hindus? |

**Shiva**

|  |
| --- |
| Shiva represents the aspect of Brahman that continuously creates, preserves, destroys and then recreates the universe. He does this because he wants to protect people from the pain and suffering of a universe that is corrupted by evil. Shiva is therefore a god of mercy and compassion. Who would worship Shiva? |
| The river Ganges is coming out of Shiva’s head. According to Hindu tradition if a person bathes in the Ganges at the right time and in the right way they will be free from sin and receive knowledge of Brahman and peace. What can we learn about Shiva from this image? |
| If Shiva has opened his eyes wide then a new cycle of creation starts. If Shiva closes his eyes then he destroys creation. What does it mean if Shiva’s eyes are half open? |
| The snake is coiled around Shiva three times representing the past, present and future – time in cycles. Shiva is wearing the snake. What does this say about the relationship between Shiva and time? |
| Shiva’s right hand is in a position that signifies blessing. Why might a Hindu find this reassuring? |
| Shiva holds a three-pronged trident, this is a weapon. What do you think Shiva wants to destroy? |
| Shiva wears a tiger skin. Think about the nature of a tiger. What do you think the tiger skin says about Shiva? |
| **Vishnu** |
| Vishnu represents the aspect of Brahman that preserves and sustains the universe. He has come in nine forms (avatars) to help humans in times of great evil. He has a tenth avatar which is yet to come. Who would worship Vishnu? |
| Vishnu has a blue body. The sky is blue and appears (to the naked eye) to fill the universe. What does this say about Vishnu? |
| The colour yellow represents existence on earth. What in the image is yellow? What does this say about Vishnu? (clue: avatars) |
| Vishnu has four arms which represent the four corners of the earth. What does this say about Vishnu? |
| Vishnu holds weapons in his hands. What do you think that Vishnu is fighting? |
| Just as a snake destroys with its venom, Hindus believe an uncontrolled mind destroys people and the world. Vishnu is sitting on the snake. What does this say about Vishnu? |

**Ganesh**

|  |
| --- |
| Ganesh represents the aspect of Brahman that removes obstacles and ensures success. Who would worship Ganesh? |
| Ganesh has an elephant’s head, with big ears and strong tusks. What does this say about Ganesh? |
| Ganesh has four arms which represent the four corners of the earth. What does this say about Ganesh? |
| Lotus flowers are beautiful and float above the murky waters that they grow in. Ganesh holds a lotus and an axe. What do the lotus and the axe say about Ganesh? What might Ganesh want to cut away with the axe? |
| Ganesh has a tray of tasty snacks to share. What does this say about Ganesh? |
| A rat would like to eat Ganesh’s tasty snacks, however Ganesh has mastered the rat and uses him to travel on. What does this say about Ganesh? What do you think the snacks symbolise? |