

# Springboard<sup>into</sup> Comprehension 4

## Main Idea Religions

Green All Around

Sequencing Leading the Field in Green  
Camp Cavendish

Compare and Contrast Crying Wolf  
Sun Tales

Fact and Opinion This Ad's for You  
What Really Happened?

Cause and Effect Water and Food Programs around the World  
Inventions and Discoveries That Changed the World

Bias and Prejudice Graffiti  
Diamonds Forever

RA 9.5–10.5



# Religions



Written by Jenny Baker

# Religions

## Contents

|                              |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| Introduction . . . . .       | 2  |
| Hinduism . . . . .           | 4  |
| Judaism . . . . .            | 8  |
| Buddhism . . . . .           | 12 |
| Christianity . . . . .       | 16 |
| Islam . . . . .              | 20 |
| Glossary and Index . . . . . | 24 |

**Written by Jenny Baker**

# Introduction

religion – 1. the belief in a superhuman controlling power; 2. the expression of this in worship; 3. a particular system of faith and worship

People have always wanted to explain where they come from. They seek to understand life and find meaning in it. They want to know how and why the universe began.

Many people find the answers in a higher purpose, such as leading a good life and being a good person. Some people believe that to lead a good life, a person has to follow certain rules. These rules are often in sacred texts, or **scriptures**. To some, the rules come from a higher being or power who governs the universe – **God**. People who believe in a higher being or purpose are called religious. For many religious people, it is important to perform religious practices, or **worship**.

Religious people often form groups and worship together. The people in these groups share similar beliefs called religions. There are many religions in the world. The five religions described in this book are Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam.

These religions all teach that people must live together in peace and that it is wrong to kill or harm others. Whether a person is good or bad does not depend on religion. Some people value their religious beliefs only a little. Others value them a lot. It is important to respect other people's religions. Some people are not religious. It is important to respect another person's right to choose to be religious or not.

This book only describes some of the **main** rules and beliefs of these religions. People might disagree about these rules and beliefs, because to them, their way of seeing the religion is the truth. However, people of every religion have different ways of practising their religion.



A Buddhist monk meditating



A Christian girl saying prayers



A Jewish woman praying



A Hindu girl praying during a ceremony



A Muslim man praying

# Hinduism

The Hindu religion started more than 4,000 years ago in India. People who follow Hinduism are called Hindus. There are about 900 million Hindus in the world.

## What Do Hindus Believe?

Hindus believe that all religions, Hindu and non-Hindu, are part of a plan to teach people the truth about life. They think the truth about life comes from one perfect spirit called Brahman. Hindus believe Brahman forms many gods and goddesses. Some protect and some destroy, but they are all part of Brahman.

Hinduism says that thousands of years ago, Brahman told wise people the truth about life. These wise people passed on the truth to other wise people who became the first Hindu priests. These priests started to teach the truth to common people. This is how Hinduism began.

## Where Hinduism Started



A painting of the Hindu god Vishnu at a temple in India

## What Brings People Happiness in Life?

In life, Hindus believe that they must do their duty to Brahman, themselves, and other people. This brings them closer to Brahman. This takes a lot of practice, but brings lasting happiness.

Hindus believe that they can also achieve happiness through good deeds. According to Hinduism, everything a person thinks and does has an impact on the person's life. This is called **karma**. Good deeds create good karma and bad deeds create bad karma.

In Hinduism, forgiveness, patience, generosity, unselfishness, and feeling for the suffering of others, or **compassion**, brings good karma. Karma is a set of beliefs that say the quality of people's lives, now and in future, depends on their behaviour in life.

Hindus believe they should avoid jealousy and greed as they bring bad karma. Hindus think that selfish acts harm everyone, including the person who commits the acts.



A Hindu holy man devotes his life to becoming closer to Brahman.

## Hindu Scriptures

Hindus have scriptures called the *Vedas*. The Vedas tell Hindu history. They teach people how to be good Hindus. Hindus believe that the Vedas contain the truth Brahman told wise people a long time ago. Hindu tradition says that about 3,000 years ago, Hindu priests wrote down this truth in the sacred language of ancient India, Sanskrit.

## How Do Hindus Worship?

Hindus worship Brahman and their gods and goddesses every day. They worship at a shrine in their home and sometimes at a temple.

An important Hindu holiday is *Diwali*. It is the Hindu New Year celebration in October or November. Diwali lasts a few days. During this time, Hindus light up their homes and temples with candles. Light symbolizes good winning over evil. Hindus also celebrate knowledge and light chasing away ignorance and darkness.



A Hindu devotee reading from a holy book