

RELIGIOUS STUDIES REVISION

FORM 6

HINDUISM

Name: _____

Form: _____

Your exam will be divided into three sections.

The first section is on HINDUISM and you will have two questions (one is worth 1 mark and the other is worth 3 marks). You need to write paragraphs for each question.

The second section is an essay question, worth 15 marks. You have a choice of two questions and you need to answer one of them. This needs to be in paragraphs.

The third section will be on CONTEMPORARY ISSUES. You are not expected to have any prior knowledge for these questions (so you can't revise for them). It is all about how you argue for and against things. There is a set structure for these questions and you will be expected to use this structure. You will be given a statement and will have to write a mini essay that includes the following:

- Introduction
- Opinion that agrees with the statement (opinion for)
- Opinion that disagrees with the statement (opinion against)
- What a Christian thinks
- A conclusion that includes YOUR opinion

Examples of statements are:

"Helping the poor is more important than spending money on places of worship."

"Violence is sometimes necessary to defend one's beliefs."

HINDUISM AND PLURALISM

- The religion originally started in North West India
- Hinduism is different from other religions because it has more than one holy book and has no specific founder
- Hindus believe in many gods and goddesses, who are all aspects of one Supreme Being (Brahman)
- Hindus believe that everyone can think of, and approach the same God, in different ways. This is pluralism.

- The sacred symbol of Hinduism is the **Aum**, which is spoken at the beginning and end of every prayer. According to the scriptures, it was the first sound, out of which the rest of the world was created.

THE TRIMURTI

- The Trimurti refers to the three main gods that represent the one Supreme Being (Brahman/God).
- The three main gods are Brahma (the Creator), Vishnu (the Protector) and Shiva (the Destroyer).
- When Hindu gods appear on Earth, it is in the form of a person or animal. This animal or person is an **AVATAR** of the god.
- Vishnu's avatars are called Krishna and Rama

Brahma



- Creator god
- God of wisdom
- He has four faces, so he can look in every direction at once.
- He has four arms, symbolising the points of the compass and showing that he made the universe
- He carries a water jug, representing the source of life, a spoon, which represents offerings at worship, prayer beads, which symbolise time and the sacred texts.

Vishnu



- Protector god
- Also the god of goodness and mercy
- He is often shown as smiling, with sky blue skin, and wearing a high crown.
- He is everywhere and everlasting
- He has four hands and carries a lotus flower, a conch shell, a club and a wheel or discus
- He comes to earth from time to time to save the world from danger.

Shiva



- Is the destroyer of evil
- He is shown with either two or four arms and holding a trident (a symbol of destruction)
- He sometimes wears a cobra around his neck.
- On his forehead is an extra, all-seeing eye.
- Water, symbolising the River Ganges, flows through his hair
- He is often shown dancing with a circle of fire surrounding him.

THE CASTE SYSTEM

- Hinduism teaches that different people have different abilities
- For hundreds of years, the Hindu society was divided into groups called **varnas**.
- There were four varnas
 - 1) Brahmins (priests)
 - 2) Kshatriyas (soldiers and rulers)
 - 3) Vaishyas (shop-keepers, traders and farmers)
 - 4) Shudras (servants for the other three groups)
- The idea was that each group contributed something different to society, and so, one would create the 'ideal' society; all were equal
- Over time, these varnas were divided up into **jatis or castes**
- Your jati was dependent on your job, which was passed down the generations
- Over years, a **hierarchy** formed (where some were thought to be better than others)
- The Brahmins were the top, then the Kshatriyas, then the Vaishyas and then the Shudras
- It became that people could not marry out of their caste, and certainly not into a higher caste.
- As Brahmins are at the top, they are usually more strict than the others

The Harijans / The Untouchables

- The Harijans were considered 'so low' that they never even featured on to the caste system.
- They were usually the ones who worked with leather
- Gandhi worked hard to improve their lives
- Harijans means "Children of God"