

Lord Rāmacandra's Appearance Day

Activities and Resources
For Teaching and Guiding
Ages 2-18



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Thanks to Guru-vāṇī Devī Dāsī for many of the “general ideas” for learning activities. Thanks to the 1998 curriculum team for the “Bringing the Festival into the Rest of the Curriculum, verse by verse.” Thanks to Mahāvana Dāsa for poster layout (separate from this book.) Thanks to Prāṇa Dāsa and the Hare Kṛṣṇa School in Auckland, New Zealand, for the rubrics, for providing much of the facility to work on this book, and for the idea of organizing the festivals around the five main limbs of devotional service. Thanks to Tārakā Devī Dāsī for inspiration. The authors of “The Story in Simple Form” and “Detailed Story” are unknown.

Overview of the Program

Schedule:

Each festival can be the focus for a five-day week, with a concentration each day on one of the five most potent items of devotional service as related to that festival.

This program is flexible and can be used in other ways. For example, it is entirely possible to take one item of devotional service and concentrate on it for more than one day, or even an entire week. And, some people might want to only spend one day on a festival.

Uses:

- For children in non-devotee schools as a supplementary program in the morning or evening
- For children being home-schooled to enrich the devotional part of the program
- For regular academic schools that are related to Kṛṣṇa consciousness
- For Sunday schools, children's clubs, and similar supplementary programs.

Organization of the material:

- First, there is a simplified version of a story associated with the festival that can be read to the children. A detailed version is also provided at the end.
- Second, there is the educational focus in three parts: Learning Aims, What children will accomplish by the end of this unit, and Assessing how well the aims have been achieved. Some parents and teachers may find these brief ideas to be sufficient for them to develop their own programs.
- Third, there are lists of suggested activities for children of various ages. There are also general suggestions not categorized by age.
- Fourth, there are pages of resources—songs and prayers, where to find stories in scripture, pictures to color, Internet links, and so forth, to assist with the suggested activities.
- Fifth, there are suggestions for how the study of this festival may be related to other areas of study

Explanation of the Three-part Educational Focus at the Top of each Page of Activities:

- Learning Aims: A very general idea of the goal from the perspective of the adult who is guiding the learning
- What children will accomplish by the end of this unit: A very general idea of the goal from the perspective of the children
- Assessing how well the aims have been achieved: Specific and measurable ways in which the adult can decide how well the aims have been achieved.

Experienced teachers will note that the range of activities for each section demands more general ideas of assessment criteria than would be used for a lesson centered around one or two activities. Teachers may want to write up more focused aims, intentions, objectives, and assessment criteria which will correspond to the specific activities they choose.

Please note that this is the first printing—feedback is welcome and wanted to improve later editions

The Most Important Point

The following letter from Srila Prabhupada is a good indication of the mood that is essential when training young children in serving Lord Kāñḍea:

"Yes, the proof of your teaching method shall be seen in the spiritual improvement and fresh enthusiasm exhibited by the children. If they are allowed to worship the Deity by practicing performing aratrika very seriously, plus always be engaged in different various activities centered around Krishna, then their education will be completely successful. The children should always be instructed by taking advantage of their playful mood." (Srila Prabhupada letter: 72-6-15)

The Science of "Triggers" as Related to Festival Programs

All of us have some sensory input that triggers an emotional and physiological reaction—pleasant or unpleasant. For example, certain smells, foods, places, songs, and so forth exert such a powerful influence that we find ourselves almost reliving the original association. Something becomes a trigger for a physiological reaction either through one very strong incident or frequently repeated weaker ones. Each of us tends to avoid things which have become negative triggers and surround ourselves with things that are positive triggers.

When those who are our pupils now are adults, what will the various aspects of festivals trigger in them? Will they associate kirtana, Deity worship, and the other activities with fun, love, friendship, safety, and adventure? Will their association be blasé and neutral? Or will thoughts of kirtana or a festival trigger feelings of embarrassment, discomfort, or boredom?

Think of the various aspects of festival learning and participation that can act as triggers for our pupils. They are: the time, the place, the music, chanting, the specific festivals, or some of the activities. We cannot possibly control all the factors that might cause some of these to become negative triggers, but we can surely make a deliberate attempt for them to be only positive ones!

Spiritual Holidays

HOLIDAYS! A break from routine, a special mark on the calendar, a day that can absorb a child's mind for weeks or more beforehand. Holidays connected with Lord Kṛṣṇa help children become absorbed in pleasing Him. The calendar of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement overflows with days to celebrate. Major festivals commemorate the divine birth, or appearance, of Kṛṣṇa and His incarnations. Other festivals celebrate Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and the anniversaries of the appearance and passing of pure devotees of the Lord.

Unfortunately, we might neglect to take full advantage of the intense spiritual effect Kṛṣṇa conscious holidays can have on a child's life. On minor festival days, the occasion may pass by unnoticed, or there may be only a scriptural reading geared to an adult audience. Adults may even plan events mostly for adults. Children come to the adult gathering, but they simply learn that a holiday means being bored, or running and playing wildly.

How can our children find the spiritual highlights of their lives in festivals?

PLAYS: Putting on a play about the holiday is exciting for children. They love rehearsing, dressing up, and getting on stage. And they love pleasing the adults, who enjoy the plays in spite of (and to some extent because of) the imperfections. Older children can spend many weeks striving for professional results. They can also write or adapt a script, buy costumes and make-up, create the soundtrack, and so on. Children can also prepare a dramatic reading related to the holiday. Such readings require far less work for the adults directing the show, and absorb the children's minds almost as much as a full production.

PROJECTS: Every year at the Govardhana Puja festival, honoring Lord Kṛṣṇa's lifting of Govardhana Hill, our students make a small hill of papier mache over wire and balloons. We paint it and decorate it with plants, streams, pools, plastic or clay animals, and so on. (We make the pools from mirrors and the streams from tinsel over tin foil). One year, to celebrate Rathayatra each student made his or her own cart from a shoe box and cardboard. We've also made dioramas inside boxes. A simple one- or two-day project: writing about the festival and then mounting and decorating the poem or essay.

GAMES: To celebrate the appearance of Lord Varāha, the Lord as a giant boar who lifted the earth with His tusks, the children play "stick the earth on Varāha's tusks." Some years we have groups of students make a picture of Varāha and the earth and then play the game with the best picture. Last year our grown daughter drew Varāha, and the students competed for the best earth drawing. Then, blind-

folded, each of us tried to tape the earth as close as possible to the tips of the Lord's tusks. A simple prize awaited the winner.

KIRTANAS: Children love singing "Sītā-Rāma" on Lord Rāma's appearance day, or whatever songs and prayers relate to the incarnation or event we are celebrating. Sometimes we make copies of a song in Devanāgarī, the original Sanskrit alphabet, to have the children practice their Sanskrit while they learn the prayer.

STORIES: What is more fun for a child than a story? But so often we adults just read, without expression or explanation, from a book written for adults. If we dramatize a little, have lively questions and answers, and concentrate on the story line, children will be entranced. Today we also have many Kṛṣṇa conscious stories on audio and video tape.

CHILDREN HELPING ADULTS: Children can decorate the temple, help with cooking a feast, and do extra cleaning at home or at the temple. If they worship a Deity of the Lord, they can make Him a special flower garland or a new outfit, or decorate His altar with flowers. Older children can help in many ways at the temple.

FASTING: Fasting may not sound like fun for a child, but most children delight in performing some austerity for Kṛṣṇa. Many festival days call for fasting, either until noon or the evening. I generally ask children under age seven to eat, even if they want to fast. I encourage children over ten to try the fast, and I have prasādam available if they can't stick to it. Children remember with fondness the first Janmastami they fasted until midnight.

GENERAL MOOD: We can find many more ways to include children in holidays. The real key is the mood of the adults. We need to remember that celebrating the glory of the Lord is for children too.

This section originally appeared as an article in "Back to Godhead" magazine, 1988

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

The Story in Simple Form

Millions of years ago in India, Lord Rāmacandra's father, King Daśaratha, ruled from his capital of Ayodhyā.

King Daśaratha, had three wives, Kaikeyī, Kausalyā and Sumitrā. Kaikeyī was the proud mother of Bharata and Kausalya was the mother of the eldest, Lord Rāma. Sumitra's sons were Lakṣmaṇa and Śatrughna. Thus King Daśaratha had four sons. Rāma and his brothers were incarnations of the Supreme Lord.

The four princes grew into valiant and chivalrous warriors. They learned the military arts of fighting with bow and arrow and with sword and shield. They became expert in the science of government, treating the citizens as their very own family. Rāma broke the bow of Śiva to marry the goddess of fortune—the beautiful princess called Sītā—and they lived happily in Ayodhyā.

One day, as King Daśaratha looked into the mirror, he noticed a grey hair. “I am getting old,” he considered. After consulting his ministers, he announced to the citizens his wish to hand over the kingdom to Rāma and to retire to the forest.

The citizens were overjoyed and happily prepared to crown Rāma. They swept the roads till they were spotless and sprinkled them with scented water. They hung garlands on the gates and doorways and decorated every building with flags and festoons.

Not everyone, however, was celebrating. Within the palace, a wicked and hunch-backed maidservant was talking with Kaikeyī. She convinced the queen that Rāma's coronation was actually a plot to do away with her own son, Bharata. Smouldering with anger, Kaikeyī lay down on the floor.

Seeing her anguished face, Daśaratha asked, “My dear wife, what is the matter? Have I done something to upset you? How may I make you happy?”

“My husband, do you remember when you fell from your chariot on the battlefield?” Kaikeyī asked him.

“Yes, and you saved my life.”

“At that time,” Kaikeyī continued, “you granted me two boons, to ask of you at any time. I want you now to fulfil my wishes. First, I want my own son Bharata

The Story in Simple Form continued

and not Rāma to be crowned as king. And secondly, I want you to banish Rāma to the forest for fourteen years.”

Daśaratha fainted in shock. Coming to his senses he cried out, “Kaikeyī! Your evil words are sharper than any sword. As king, I must keep my word, through fulfilling it is worse than death.”

Bound by his promise, Daśaratha had no choice but to comply with Kaikeyī wishes. Rāma was not disturbed in the least and tried to console His grieving father. Both Sītā and Rāma’s younger brother, Lakṣmaṇa, refused to live without Rāma. They decided to join Him during His exile. All three gave up their royal garments of silks, jewellery, and crowns, putting on coarse cloth made of tree bark. In the middle of wails of grief from their family and citizens, they passed through the city gates. Without looking back, they entered the forest.

Life there was simple. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa build a cottage. Sītā collected fruits, vegetables, and herbs for their meals. They enjoyed the peaceful atmosphere and the company of saints and sages. Rāma took a vow to protect the forest sages from demons who would eat them. So, Rāma killed several of these man-eating demons and heard about spiritual life from the sages. Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Sītā lived happily – until the fourteenth and final year.

One day a hideous, man-eating Rākṣasī named Śūrpaṇakhā saw Rāma. Rāma’s elegant and divine features captivated her and she longed to marry him. Rāma, however, refused her repeated requests saying, “I am content with one wife.”

The ugly Rākṣasī flew into a jealous rage and rushed at the beautiful Sītā. Lakṣmaṇa stepped forward and, with his sword, sliced off her nose and ears. Howling, she fled into the jungle, screaming of revenge.

A few days later, Rāma and Sītā were enjoying the splendour of their garden. The princess suddenly saw a beautifully golden deer with silver spots. “Oh Rāma,” she cried out, “I’d love to have it as my pet. Please get it for me.”

Rāma, however, was suspicious. “It is certainly no ordinary deer,” he agreed. “But it may be an illusion created by a magician. Lakṣmaṇa, stay here and guard Sītā. Do not leave her alone!” Thus ordering his brother, he set out to follow the delicate creature. Finally convinced that it was indeed a demon in disguise, he re-

The Story in Simple Form continued

leased his arrow. The creature fell and resumed its original form as a frightful demon. Just before dying, it cried out in a voice like Rāma's, "Lakṣmaṇa! Help Me! Help Me!"

Lakṣmaṇa was unmoved when he heard these cries. He knew that no one could defeat his brother. Sītā, however, could not contain her grief. "Lakṣmaṇa! Did you not hear? Rāma is in trouble. Why do you stand there? Please go and help him?" Sītā could not convince him. "Now I understand," she declared, "you want Rāma out of the way so you can marry me!"

Sītā's cruel words pierced the pure heart of Lakṣmaṇa. Determined to prove her wrong, he left the hermitage to look for Rāma, leaving Sītā alone.

Rāvaṇa, King of the Rākṣasas, was waiting. Now was the time to avenge his mutilated sister, Sūrpaṇakhā! Springing forward, he grasped Sītā by the wrist and bundled her, screaming for help, into his chariot. Drawn by donkeys, the magical vehicle soared through the skies towards Rāvaṇa's capital of Laṅkā. The vulture Jaṭāyu tried to stop Rāvaṇa, but Rāvaṇa horribly wounded him. As Jaṭāyu died, he was able to tell Rāma who had taken his wife.

Lakṣmaṇa could not console Rāma over the loss of His beloved wife. The two brothers wandered the forests, plains, valleys and mountains searching for any clue of Sītā's whereabouts. After several months they enlisted the help of an army of monkey warriors. Their commander Sugrīva sent search parties throughout the land in all the four directions. They were almost ready to give up when a vulture Sampati brought news that Sītā was captive on the isle of Laṅkā.

From their ranks, the monkey generals chose Hanumān for a dangerous mission: to go to Laṅkā, find Sītā and determine the enemy's military strength. With a single bound, Hanumān crossed the ocean and after many adventures found Sītā sitting in a wooded grove. She had grown thin, and was constantly shedding tears for her husband. She told Hanumān how she had refused to be Rāvaṇa's queen and how the demon king threatened her that, "If by the end of the year you do not agree, my cooks will serve you for my supper!" Hanumān pacified Sītā and assured her that he would return with Rāma. Although Rāvaṇa captured him and put a fire on his tale, Hanumān escaped and jumped from building to building, until all of Laṅkā was on fire! Bidding farewell to Sītā, he again leapt into the skies and returned to the army, poised on the shores of the ocean.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

The Story in Simple Form continued

Vibhīṣaṇa, Rāvaṇa's brother, left Laṅkā to surrender to Lord Rāma. First, the monkeys didn't trust him, but Rāma accepts anyone who surrenders. Vibhīṣaṇa really helped Rāma's army because he knew all of Rāvaṇa's secrets.

Rāma fasted at the seashore, asking the ocean to help them cross. When the ocean surrendered after Rāma threatened him, the monkey soldiers threw boulders into the sea. By the Lord's power, the rocks floated on the water and formed a bridge all the way to Laṅkā. Cheering, the army marched to Rāvaṇa's capital.

As the two armies met, the ground appeared to tilt and tremble and the clash of weapons was deafening. The Rākṣasas released volleys of spears, arrows and tridents. Against them the monkey warrior hurled trees, rocks and mountain peaks. Gradually Rāma's army began to push back the enemy.

Rāvaṇa's army was highly organised and almost invincible. When he heard of the defeat of his best generals and the death of his sons, he became enraged. Mounting his personal aeroplane, he showered missiles on the monkey troops. Lakṣmaṇa once got hurt in the battle, but then Hanumān brought a mountain with healing plants to save him.

Rāma confronted him and challenged, "Oh, worst of the man-eaters, you resemble a dog! A hound steals food from the kitchen when the owner is out. Similarly, you stole My wife Sītā when I was away. Therefore, on this day I will send you to the kingdom of death!"

Rāma invoked a celestial weapon. Fixing the arrow to His bow, He released it towards the demon's chest. It hissed through the air like a serpent spitting poison and pierced the demon's heart. Vomiting blood, Rāvaṇa fell from his plane and his lifeless body thudded to the ground. Vibhīṣaṇa was then made king of Laṅkā.

When Sītā saw her husband once again, her lotus-like face blossomed with joy. After going through fire to show her purity, she and Rāma then mounted a flower aeroplane and, with Lakṣmaṇa and Hanumān, returned to Ayodhyā.

It was the night of the new moon and pitch black. Millions of oil lamps lit up the capital and the roads along the way. Seeing their king returning after so long, the citizens of Ayodhyā offered flower garlands, waved their shawls and danced in great jubilation. Bharata, his eyes full of tears, embraced his elder brother and welcomed him home.

Rāma as King of Ayodhyā

When Lord Rāmacandra, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was the King of this world, all the pains of the body, all sickness, getting old, losing what you love, crying, problems, fear and feeling sleepy were completely gone. You didn't even have to die if you didn't want to. Even though the kings in those days sometimes married many women, Rāmacandra had promised to have only one wife, Sītā. He had no material anger. He taught good behavior for everyone, especially for families.

Lord Rāmacandra had various sacrifices where He worshipped Himself. At the end of these sacrifices He gave all the land in the world to the brāhmaṇas, the priests. After giving everything in charity to the brāhmaṇas, Lord Rāmacandra had only His own clothes and jewels, and the Queen, mother Sītā, was left with only her nose ring.

Then the brāhmaṇas prayed to Rāmacandra and gave everything back to Him. They said that His gift was in their hearts. The brāhmaṇas realized that they are souls, so they were very happy. Then Lord Rāmacandra dressed like an ordinary person in the kingdom to find out if the people were happy. He found out that one person was not happy with Sītā, so Sītā went to live in the forest away from Him. Sītā had two baby boys, and then went back to her mother, the Earth. Rāmacandra then had a sacrifice for thirteen thousand years with a golden Deity of Sītā by His side.

Rāmacandra's brothers helped to keep the whole world safe, while Rāmacandra was in the city of Ayodhyā. He took care of everything the people needed. The people in the kingdom offered obeisances, touched His feet, thought of Him as their father, and even sat or lay down with Him as a good friend.

The streets were always clean with perfume water that elephants would throw around with their trunks. Flags and gold pots decorated the city. Lord Rāmacandra would visit the people. To greet Him, they would decorate their doors with banana trees and betel nut trees, full of flowers and fruits. The gates were decorated with flags made of colorful cloth and with mirrors and garlands. When people saw Lord Rāmacandra walking in the street, they got on their roofs and showered flowers on Him.

After seeing all the people, Lord Rāmacandra went into his palace. The benches on the two sides of the door were made of coral, the floor was made of highly polished jewels, and the foundation was made of marble. The whole palace was decorated with flags, garlands, and jewels that shone like the sun. The palace was fully decorated with pearls and there was lots of incense.

At the end of His ruling the kingdom, Lord Rāmacandra went back to the spiritual world, Vaikuṅṭha. All the people of his kingdom went, too. If we think of Him we will be very happy and never envious.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Scripture

Learning aims:

- Learn & describe some aspects of Lord Rāmacandra's pastimes as they are described in scriptures such as the Rāmāyaṇa & the Bhāgavatam
- Become familiar in greater depth with one or more parts of Rāmacandra's pastimes
- Explore a theme from the story of Rāmacandra's pastimes & how that theme relates to present life
- Establish an emotional connection with the story

What children will accomplish by the end of this unit:

- Be able to tell part or all of the story of Rāmacandra through one or more of the following: oral presentation, writing, dramatizing, drawing, or singing
- Explain one part of the story in detail
- Name a theme from the story & how it relates to personal life
- Express how an event or theme from the story has an emotional affect

Assessing how well the aim has been achieved:

- Whatever activities the children do in order to focus on Lord Rāmacandra's life accurately reflect the descriptions of scripture
- Children exhibit reverential & respectful behavior toward the story & the personalities of the story
- Children can explain how Rāma is the Supreme Lord, not an ordinary person

NOTE: Activities marked with an ॐ have resources in this section.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Scripture

General ideas:

- Hear Amala Bhakta Dāsa reading the Rāmāyaṇa (this will take several days)
- Watch the ITV video of the Rāmāyaṇa
- When Lord Rāma was king there was no disease, old age, lamentation, fear, fatigue or distress. Make a jingle, song or rap to help us remember that this material world gives us only trouble unless we are under the protection of Kṛṣṇa or Rāmacandra.
- On a long roll of paper, construct a time line of the events from Lord Rāma leaving Ayodhyā to when He returns. Draw a simple line drawing (or cut out images) to illustrate each point.
- List 10 reasons why Lord Rāma was such a great personality/king.
- ☞ Lord Rāma became king in Tretā-yuga but the atmosphere felt like Satya-yuga. Research the 4 yugas and describe the different conditions of each.
- Describe in your own words - What is varṇāśrama?
- Name the 8 components of varṇa and āśrama.
- Make a chart of the qualities of the four varnas as given in BG 18.42-44. For older children, discuss what some of these qualities mean. Which qualities do you have or would like to develop? Why?
- ☞ The monkey soldiers fought with primitive weapons like trees, stones and mountain peaks. Rāvaṇa's soldiers fought with modern warfare. Draw a vivid picture of this scene. (The monkeys won because they had Lord Rāma on their side, so remember to put Lord Rāma in your picture)
- Research various weapons used throughout history. Make a collage of photos or drawings of these.
- Make a cartoon strip of Hanumān jumping to Laṅkā and setting the city on fire.
- Research major city fires (like San Francisco 1906) and compare/contrast with Laṅkā fire.
- Discuss and practice what to do if our clothes catch on fire. (Stop, drop, roll)
- List the incidents in Rāma's pastimes that show His power as God. List the incidents in Rāma's līlā that are human-like. Compare & contrast the two lists
- Create a slide show, powerpoint, or other similar media to show Rāma's līlā chronologically.
- Write a script of any section of Rāma līlā. Perform.
- Choreograph a dance-drama of any section of Rāma līlā. Perform if possible.
- Write a list of the 10 parts of Rāma's līlā that you like the most. Choose one and write a poem or song expressing your feelings.
- Create a model from water and either dirt, sand, or clay of the building of the bridge from India to Laṅkā
- Listen to various pieces of recorded music & choose which ones would be best for various parts of Rāma līlā (background for dramas, etc.)
- List the moral lessons from Rāma līlā. Pick one & discuss how to apply at the present. Create a picture, song, or drama to teach that lesson.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Scripture

2-4 years:

- After getting dressed up in costumes (or pieces of cloth) and simple make-up, act out parts of the story. The adult can direct each child on the action and words bit by bit.
- Make “stones” out of crumpled paper and pretend to throw them into a place designated as the “sea”
- Listen to a part of the story dramatized
- ☞ Learn a song about the story of Rāmacandra

5-7 years:

- Tell or draw or dramatize which part of the story is most liked and why
- Discuss & decide which parts of the story are the most scary, exciting, happy, & so forth
- Discuss kidnapping and how to stay safe—role play

8-10 years:

- ☞ Look at pictures of various bridges & discuss the different kinds of bridges. Compare and contrast these various kinds of bridges with the one the monkeys built. Build a bridge from clay, wood, etc.
- ☞ Compare & contrast how Kṛṣṇa appears in several of His incarnations, such as Kṛṣṇa, Rāmacandra, Varāha, & Nṛsimha

11-13 years:

- ☞ Hear a story of devotees who got captured by demonic people—such as in the former Soviet Union, or by deprogrammers. Make a plan for what to do if captured, & then compare & contrast the plan with what Sītā did
- List at least 10 devotees who served Rāmacandra to find Sītā & what service they did
- ☞ Make a Jaṭāyu costume & possibly research about vultures (habitats, food, etc.)

14-18 years:

- Activities based on the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (see page 56 of this guide):
 - Why did Rāmacandra refer to Rāvaṇa as a dog?
 - Draw a story map of a scene from the Rāmāyaṇa and give it a title.
 - Who spoke these words: “By your deeds you have made your body fit to be eaten by vultures and your soul fit to go to hell.” Explain what is meant.
 - Describe Sītā’s condition when Rāma found her.
 - Why do you think Rāma lamented the position of Bharata?
 - ☞ Compare Rāma’s returning to Ayodhyā with Kṛṣṇa entering Mathurā or Dvārakā. Use a Venn diagram to show similarities and differences.
 - Should Bharata have ruled the kingdom in Rāma’s absence? Give reasons for your answer.
 - Describe the scene of the return to Ayodhyā of Sītā and Rāma. (The place, the vehicle, the people, the time.)

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Scripture: Resources

Story of Lord Rāmacandra:

- The summary stories at the front of this guide
- The verses from Bhāgavatam canto 9, chapter 10, listed in this guide
- The detailed story of the Rāmāyaṇa at the end of this guide, page 73
- Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, canto 9, chapter 11, available on:

<http://www.Krishna.com/en/taxonomy/term/58>

<http://www.causelessmercy.com/>

From this site; <http://www.thekrishnastore.com/StoreFront.bok> (search: Rāmāyaṇa) You can get:

- Rāmāyaṇa, retold by Kṛṣṇa Dharma (also on Vedabase/Folio 2003)
- Amala Bhakta reading Rāmāyaṇa
- DVD's of the Rāmāyaṇa
- And other books, colouring books, & dolls related to Lord Rāmacandra

Most of the above & some different items related to Rāma are also available from:

<http://www.krishnaculture.com/> & <http://www.blservices.com/>

Paintings on each of these sites tell the story of Rāma chronologically:

<http://www.glimpseofkrishna.com/ramayan/index.htm> (each picture includes an explanation)

http://www.iskconmedia.com/photos/Kṛṣṇa_Art/A_tale_of_Gods/

Information on types of bridges (as of April, 2008):

<http://www.matsuo-bridge.co.jp/english/bridges/index.shtm>

<http://www.bardaglea.org.uk/bridges/bridge-types/bridge-types-intro.html>

<http://library.thinkquest.org/J0113129/DB~1.HTM>

Information on Jaṭāyu & other devotees who helped Rāma:

Detailed Rāmāyaṇa at the end of this guide, page 73

Note: Jaṭāyu was a huge vulture who tried to fight Rāvaṇa & rescue Sītā soon after Rāvaṇa kidnapped her. Rāvaṇa fatally wounded Jaṭāyu, who was able, before his death, to tell Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa the name of Sītā's abductor. Rāma gave Jaṭāyu a funeral befitting a father.

Story about devotees who were captured by demonic people:

Salted Bread, available from www.Krishna.com store & in the March/April 2008 issue of *Back to God-head*

Comparing Rāma entering Ayodhyā with Kṛṣṇa entering Dvārakā:

Rāma: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam canto 9, chapter 10, texts 32-49 (see *Bhāgavatam* section in this guide)

Kṛṣṇa: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam canto 1, chapter 11 (available to read on-line from Krishna.com or causelessmercy.com; see full Internet address at the top of this page)

Comparing Rāma's appearance to the appearance of other incarnations mentioned in Bhāgavatam:

(References are for canto, chapter, and verses in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, available free online from Krishna.com or causelessmercy.com) Kṛṣṇa: 10.3.1-13 & 32-53; Matsya: 7.24.1-46; Nṛsimha: 7.8. 1-39; Varāha: 3.13.15-33; Vamana 8.17.1-23

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Scripture: Resources

Yugas:

Bhagavad-gītā 8.17: By human calculation, a thousand ages taken together form the duration of Brahmā's one day. And such also is the duration of his night.

PURPORT

The duration of the material universe is limited. It is manifested in cycles of kalpas. A kalpa is a day of Brahmā, and one day of Brahmā consists of a thousand cycles of four yugas, or ages: Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali. The cycle of Satya is characterized by virtue, wisdom and religion, there being practically no ignorance and vice, and the yuga lasts 1,728,000 years. In the Tretā-yuga vice is introduced, and this yuga lasts 1,296,000 years. In the Dvāpara-yuga there is an even greater decline in virtue and religion, vice increasing, and this yuga lasts 864,000 years. And finally in Kali-yuga (the yuga we have now been experiencing over the past 5,000 years) there is an abundance of strife, ignorance, irreligion and vice, true virtue being practically nonexistent, and this yuga lasts 432,000 years. In Kali-yuga vice increases to such a point that at the termination of the yuga the Supreme Lord Himself appears as the Kalki avatāra, vanquishes the demons, saves His devotees, and commences another Satya-yuga. Then the process is set rolling again. These four yugas, rotating a thousand times, comprise one day of Brahmā, and the same number comprise one night. Brahmā lives one hundred of such "years" and then dies. These "hundred years" by earth calculations total to 311 trillion and 40 billion earth years.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.10.51: Lord Rāmacandra became King during Tretā-yuga, but because of His good government, the age was like Satya-yuga. Everyone was religious and completely happy.

PURPORT

Among the four yugas-Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali-the Kali-yuga is the worst, but if the process of varṇāśrama-dharma is introduced, even in this age of Kali, the situation of Satya-yuga can be invoked. The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, is meant for this purpose.

kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann; asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ; kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya; mukta-saṅgaḥ paraṁ vrajet
"My dear King, although Kali-yuga is full of faults, there is still one good quality about this age: simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom." (SB 12.3.51) If people take to this saṅkīrtana movement of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Rāma, they will certainly be freed from the contamination of Kali-yuga, and the people of this age will be happy, as people were in Satya-yuga, the golden age. Anyone, anywhere, can easily take to this Hare Kṛṣṇa movement; one need only chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, observe the rules and regulations, and stay free from the contamination of sinful life. Even if one is sinful and cannot give up sinful life immediately, if he chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra with devotion and faith he will certainly be freed from all sinful activities, and his life will be successful. Paraṁ vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam. This is the blessing of Lord Rāmacandra, who has appeared in this age of Kali as Lord Gaurasundara.

For further information, see: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.1.21

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Scripture: Resources

Weapons:

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.10.20: Aṅgada and the other commanders of the soldiers of Rāmacandra faced the elephants, infantry, horses and chariots of the enemy and hurled against them big trees, mountain peaks, clubs and arrows. Thus the soldiers of Lord Rāmacandra killed Rāvaṇa's soldiers, who had lost all good fortune because Rāvaṇa had been condemned by the anger of mother Sītā.

PURPORT

The soldiers Lord Rāmacandra recruited in the jungle were all monkeys and did not have proper equipment with which to fight the soldiers of Rāvaṇa, for Rāvaṇa's soldiers were equipped with weapons of modern warfare whereas the monkeys could only throw stones, mountain peaks and trees. It was only Lord Rāmacandra and Lakṣmaṇa who shot some arrows. But because the soldiers of Rāvaṇa were condemned by the curse of mother Sītā, the monkeys were able to kill them simply by throwing stones and trees. There are two kinds of strength—daiva and puruṣākāra. Daiva refers to the strength achieved from the Transcendence, and puruṣākāra refers to the strength organized by one's own intelligence and power. Transcendental power is always superior to the power of the materialist. Depending on the mercy of the Supreme Lord, one must fight one's enemies even though one may not be equipped with modern weapons. Therefore Kṛṣṇa instructed Arjuna, mām anusmara yudhya ca: [Bg. 8.7] "Think of Me and fight." We should fight our enemy to the best of our ability, but for victory we must depend on the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Songs about Rāma:

See resources for "Holy Name"

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Deity

Learning aims:

- Gain a positive experience out of serving the Deity of Lord Rāmacandra
- Do some practical service for a picture or murti of Lord Rāmacandra
- Meditate on the qualities of the Lord's form
- Practice inoffensive Deity service

What children will accomplish by the end of this unit:

- Show or describe a service they have done for Rāma's form
- Describe Rāma's form
- Connect their service to the Deity to how devotees serve Rāma in His manifest pastimes

Assessing how well the aim has been achieved:

- Service done will be inoffensive (pictures of Rāma will be kept from being directly on the floor, children will not touch pictures or murtis of the Lord to their feet, there will be only pleasing speaking in front of the murti, etc.)
- Descriptions of Rāma's form will be in accord with scripture
- Children will be able to describe how service to Rāma's picture or murti is related to how His devotees served Him in His manifest pastimes (such as Rāma would bathe in sacred rivers, and we now bathe His murti with holy water)

NOTE: Activities marked with an ॐ have resources in this section.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Deity

General ideas:

- Decorate the house or altar for Rāma's arrival. Make flags with colorful cloth, garlands, scatter fragrant water around the house...
- Discuss how you would feel if someone very special returned to see you after being away for a very long time.
- Write a song or poem in prayer to Lord Rāma. Then decorate it and hang it on the wall.
- ☞ Make a batch of Simply Wonderful sweet mix using a touch of green food color. Offer to a Deity or picture of Lord Rāma.
- ☞ Using colored play dough; make all different variety of foods to offer Sītā & Rāma. Then, chanting the Sītā Rāma bhajana, ring the bell & "offer" to a picture of Sītā & Rāma.
- Find pictures of Lord Rāma and things in relationship to Lord Rāma (ie. Hanumān, a golden deer, a bow...). Stick them on the walls. Pretend to be a tour guide & give people a tour of Lord Rāma's story.
- Discuss how Rāmacandra had a golden Deity of Sītā made when she went to the forest, & how Viṣṇupriyā worshipped a Deity of Lord Caitanya when He took sannyāsa. Compare & contrast spiritual separation with separation from people we love in the material world.
- Make, out of paper, cardboard, clay, cloth, or any combination of these, various articles to offer to a Deity of Rāma, such as quiver, arrows, bow, helmet, belt, shoes, etc.
- Hear about the rivers that Rāma bathed in, both in Ayodhyā and on His travels. Pretend to gather water from all these rivers & then bathe a Deity made from earth or sand outside with the sacred water.
- Pretend to be Lakṣmaṇa, going outside to collect fruits & roots to give Sītā & Rāma in the forest
- Study edible wild plants in your area (Research, books, photos).
- Find edible wild plants in your area.
- Cook a preparation from local, edible wild plants and offer to Rāmacandra.
- Hear about how truthful Lord Rāmacandra was and how He went to the forest so His father would also be truthful. Discuss about why it is an offense to speak a lie in front of the Deities. (Many extended activities bases on truthfulness could be related to this area.)
- Look at photos of Deities of Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, Gaura-Nitāi, and Rāma-Lakṣmaṇa. See how many items can be listed from memory.
- Hear about how Kaikeyī banished Rāma, & discuss why it is an offense to speak harshly in front of the Deities.
- ☞ Define harsh speech & learn the austerities of speech in Gita 17.15. Analyze discussions to determine if all the aspects of austere speech are included. Make a personal plan to improve one's speech.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Deity

2-4 years:

- ☞ Color or paint a line drawing of Rāma & Sītā. Use glue & glitter to show their jewelry, crowns etc.
- Gather flowers and decorate an altar with a Deity or picture of Rāmacandra.
- Make a simple “altar” out of cardboard for a picture of Rāmacandra
- ☞ Look at pictures of Rāma as king and Rāma in exile and talk about what is the same & different
- Dress up and pretend to be Sītā, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Hanumān (and more monkeys) in the forest. Then dress up in fancier clothes and pretend to be Sītā, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Hanumān, Bharata, Śatrughna, Vibhīṣaṇa, etc. after the return to Ajydhya.

5-7 years:

- Make various types of fans to fan a picture of Sītā Rāma (or other children dressed up as Sītā and Rāma). The fans can be made from feathers, grass, paper, large leaves, etc. They can be decorated in various ways.
- Dress up as Sītā and Rāma with other children “serving” them with food, fans, seats, singing, etc. Discuss how to serve a king and queen.
- Make & decorate paper or cardboards crowns for Sītā & Rāma. Offer them to a picture of Sītā and Rāma & then wear as prasādam.

8-10 years:

- ☞ Color or paint pictures of Sītā & Rāma. Glue onto cardboard & make cardboard stands.
- Make paper “clothes” for the cardboard mounted pictures of Sītā and Rāma
- Make paper flowers to decorate a home altar or the local temple.
- Help with arranging real flowers for a home altar or the local temple.

11-13 years:

- Make bead jewelry for the Deities at home or at the temple
- Research how many temples, in what places, have Deities of Rāmacandra. Do a report on one temple and the standard of worship.
- Write a poem or song, or draw a picture about the golden Deity of Sītā that Rāma had after Sītā went to the forest

14-18 years:

- Help with the festival at the local temple.
- Design an advertisement for Rāma’s appearance festival.
- Help with making clothes for the Deities—designing, cutting, sewing, decorating, etc.
- Research an ancient temple where there is a Rāmacandra Deity. Give a report—with a speech, slide show, film, music, or any combination, about this temple to a group. Prepare invitations to the show & arrange for there to be prasādam & kīrtana, as well.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Deity: Resources

Sītā-Rāma bhajanas can be found in the resources section for Holy Name.

Austerities of Speech from Bhagavad-gītā Bg 17.15:

anudvega-karam vākyam
satyam priya-hitam ca yat
svādhyāyābhyasanam caiva
vān-mayam tapa ucyate

SYNONYMS

anudvega-karam—not agitating; vākyam—words; satyam—truthful; priya—dear; hitam—beneficial; ca—also; yat—which; svādhyāya—of Vedic study; abhyasanam—practice; ca—also; eva—certainly; vāk-mayam—of the voice; tapa— austerity; ucyate—is said to be.

TRANSLATION: Austerity of speech consists in speaking words that are truthful, pleasing, beneficial, and not agitating to others, and also in regularly reciting Vedic literature.

PURPORT: One should not speak in such a way as to agitate the minds of others. Of course, when a teacher speaks, he can speak the truth for the instruction of his students, but such a teacher should not speak to those who are not his students if he will agitate their minds. This is penance as far as talking is concerned. Besides that, one should not talk nonsense. The process of speaking in spiritual circles is to say something upheld by the scriptures. One should at once quote from scriptural authority to back up what he is saying. At the same time, such talk should be very pleasurable to the ear. By such discussions, one may derive the highest benefit and elevate human society. There is a limitless stock of Vedic literature, and one should study this. This is called penance of speech.

Recipe for “Simply Wonderfals”:

PREPARATION TIME: 20 minutes YIELD: about 15 sweets

1 1/4 cups sifted icing sugar (confectioners sugar)

190g unsalted butter

1/2 teaspoon finely grated orange rind (optional, can use other flavors such as vanilla)

2 tablespoons currants (optional, can use other dried fruit or omit)

1 1/2 cups sifted full-cream milk powder

1. Cream the butter, sugar, and orange rind in a mixing bowl.

2. Fold in the currants and powdered milk & knead until a firm fondant-like dough is formed. Pinch off walnut-sized portions & roll into smooth even-sized balls. Chill & offer to Krisna.

Pictures of Rāma on-line on the Internet to look at:

(Paintings on each of these sites tell the story of Rāma chronologically)

<http://www.glimpseofkrishna.com/ramayan/index.htm> (each picture includes an explanation)

http://www.iskconmedia.com/photos/Kṛṣṇa_Art/A_tale_of_Gods/

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Deity Resources



www.iskcondesiretree.com

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Deity Resources



Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Holy Name

Learning aims:

- Learn a song, verse, or bhajana about Lord Rāmacandra
- Learn about the meaning of the “Rāma”
- Learn about the meaning of a song, verse, or bhajana about Lord Rāmacandra
- Improve personal chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra
- Practice chanting in a focused mood of affection for the Lord

What children will accomplish by the end of this unit:

- Recite from memory a song, verse or bhajana about Lord Rāmacandra & explain the meaning
- Explain the meaning of “Rāma”
- Practice chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra

Assessing how well the aim has been achieved:

- A song, verse, or bhajana about Rāma can be said or sung from memory with some explanation of the meaning
- Children can discuss moods & feelings in relation to chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra
- Demonstration of focused chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra (perhaps only for a very brief time)
- Exhibition of delight & excitement in relation to activities connected with chanting “Rāma”
- Children can explain “Rāma”

NOTE: Activities marked with an ॐ have resources in this section.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Holy Name

General ideas:

- ☞ Learn a song or bhajana glorifying Lord Rāma & Sītādevī. Discuss the meaning of the words
- ☞ Listen to several different recordings of the same Rāma song & rate for ease to follow, musical quality, recording quality, ease to understand, and style.
- ☞ When Lord Rāma was king there was no disease, old age, lamentation, fear, fatigue or distress. Srila Prabhupada says that in Kali Yuga, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa can achieve the same result. Use a flowchart to explain how chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa can solve all our problems.
- ☞ Draw the word “Rāma” on a poster (or “Sītā Rāma”) in English, Sanskrit, Bengali, or other languages. Make the letters very large. Decorate the name in various styles (older children can refer to Medieval or Islamic illustrated manuscripts for ideas).
- Write the word “Rāma” in various colours, with different mediums (crayon, paint, ink, pastels, charcoal, etc.) and form a design from the names.
- ☞ Create a graphic to list the activities, mood, form, & qualities of the various incarnations called Rāma—Rāmacandra, Paraśurāma, & Balarāma.
- ☞ Hear about Vālmīki becoming purified through chanting “mara” that became “rāma.” Write and perform a skit of this pastime.
- ☞ Learn the Bhāgavatam verse about Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, & Aniruddha. Discuss how these personalities appear as Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata, and Śatrughna.
- Learn a new tune for the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.
- Try various ways to chant (as in japa) the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra—fast, medium, & slow; sitting & walking; while looking at the Deities & with eyes closed; with others & by oneself; with beads, counting on fingers, & with no counting method, etc. Evaluate each (in groups or individually) in terms of concentration, mood, pronunciation, etc.
- Survey as to which way people prefer to chant & tabulate the results.
- Each person takes turns leading the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra in a different tune.
- Act out the citizens of Ayodhyā calling out Rāma’s names when He left for the forest, & when He returned. Listen to various recordings of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra & pick which recordings suit each time.
- Focus on the time right after Sītā’s kidnapping, when Rāma & Lakṣmaṇa were calling for Sītā, & Sītā was calling for Rāma. Create a song, poem, drawing, or dance to depict this scene.
- Act out the golden deer calling, “Rāma! Lakṣmaṇa!” before it dies & Sītā’s anguish. Discuss how we can judge whether or not something is authentic or whether someone is trying to cheat us. Discuss how Kṛṣṇa can tell our motives & desires when we call for Him. Discuss how we can be honest & also avoid being cheated.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Holy Name

2-4 years:

- ☞ Learn and chant “Sītā Rāma” while walking & dancing
- ☞ Act out Vālmīki chanting “mara” and how it turned into “Rāma”
- Talk about how “Rāma” means happiness & enjoyment & what it means to be happy. Draw a picture of happiness.

5-7 years:

- ☞ Learn a song or mantra about Lord Rāmacandra, along with the meaning & accompanying gestures or mudras (these can be authentic or made up).
- ☞ Trace, copy, or write Rāma in English, Sanskrit, & Bengali. Write in different colors & styles, with decorations of the letters. Make a pattern from the name Rāma in each language. (For non-writers, have the name in one or more languages photocopied to be cut out & pasted into designs and patterns.)
- ☞ See how many times you can write the name Rāma (in different languages) in 5 or 10 minutes.

8-10 years:

- Learn a song, mantra, or scripture verse about Lord Rāmacandra. Chant it for the Deities. Be able to explain the meaning.
- ☞ Carve the name of Rāma (in one or more languages) in a cut potato or piece of wood and use the stamp to create ink patterns of Rāma’s name on various colors of paper.

11-13 years:

- ☞ Read about Mayadevi receiving the “Hare Rāma” part of the mahā-mantra from Lord Siva & the “Hare Kṛṣṇa” part from Haridasa Thakura. Discuss the implications for our own chanting.
- ☞ Compare the different ways Srila Prabhupada explains the “Hare Rāma” part of the mantra. Draw a picture or make a dance for each explanation.
- Hear how “Rāma” means the greatest pleasure. Make a Venn or double-bubble diagram to compare & contrast material & spiritual happiness (or create your own graphic)

14-18 years:

- ☞ Read where it is explained that “Rāma” in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra can refer either to Rāmacandra or Balarāma. Research other incarnations or expansions that can be called Rāma (Paraśurāma & Kṛṣṇa as Radha-Raman). Discuss how the same name of God can refer to different expansions depending on the mood & intent of the worshipper. Reflect, in groups or individually, what one’s mood is while chanting. Make a plan to improve one’s mood.
- ☞ Learn a song, mantra, or scripture verse about Lord Rāmacandra along with the word-for-word meanings.
 - Sing it from memory.
 - Teach it to a younger child.
 - Plan a performance of the song before an audience.
 - Create pictures, slides, or film to accompany the song.
 - Put the English of the song to music.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Holy Name: Resources

Mayadevi receiving the name of Rāma from Siva and the name Kṛṣṇa from Haridasa:

In Caitanya Caritamrita, Anyta līlā, chapter 3, verses 227-260, (available free on-line from www.Krishna.com & www.causelessmercy.com)

On-line sites where one can hear & download many mantras & bhajanas:

<http://esotericteaching.org/content/mp3/>

<http://www.mahamantra.it/>

Places in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam about Paraśurāma & Balarāma:

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is available free on-line at [available free on-line from www.Krishna.com](http://www.Krishna.com) & www.causelessmercy.com)

Paraśurāma: canto 9, chapter 15, texts 1-41; canto 9, chapter 16, texts 1-27

Balarāma: canto 9, chapter 3, texts 27-36; canto 10, chapters 15, 18, 65, 67, 68, 78, & 79

Vālmiki Chants Māra Which Becomes Rāma and Purifies Him:

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 20.330-335 -- New York, December 23, 1966:

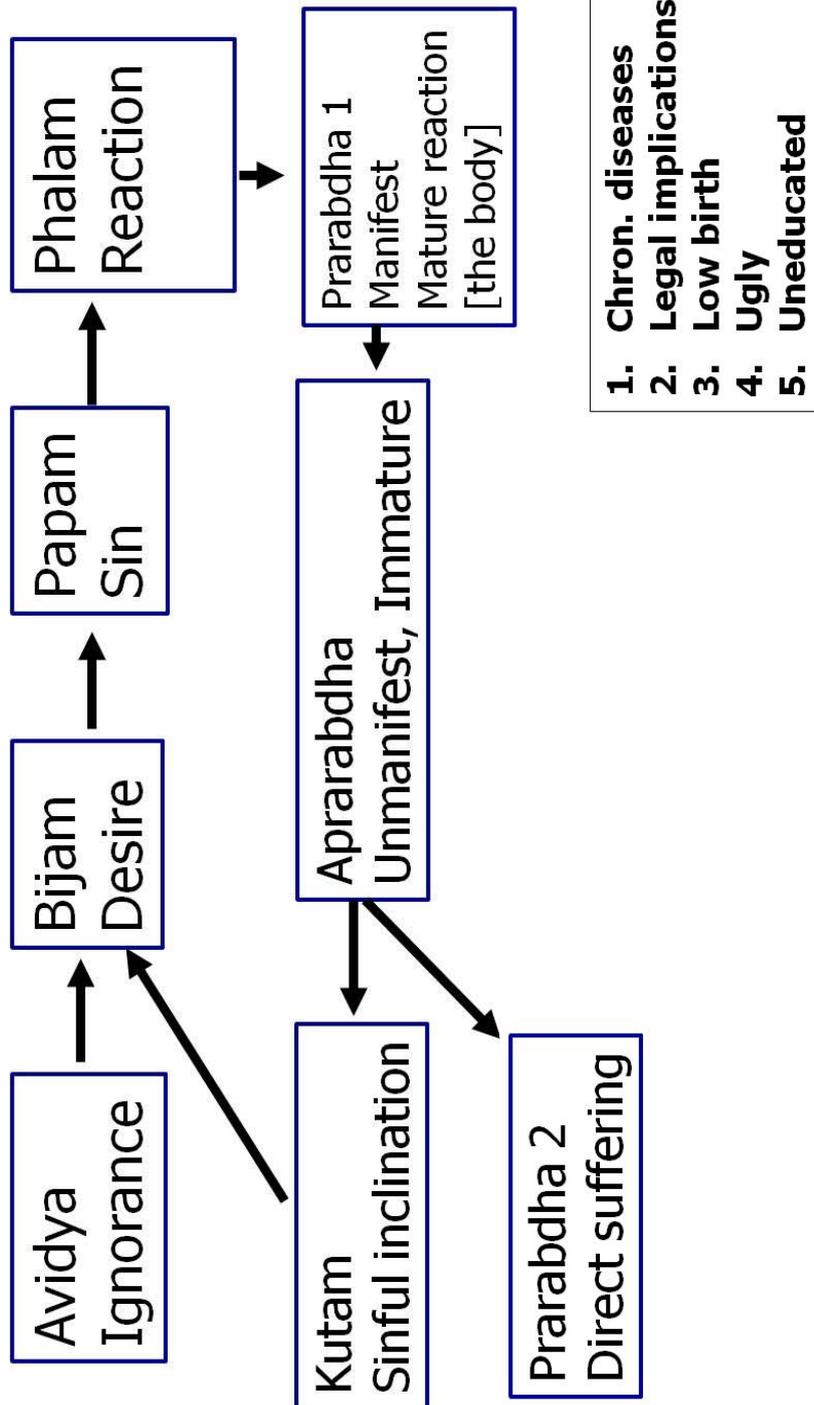
Vālmiki Muni meditated for fifty thousands of years, and then he wrote Rāmāyaṇa. The Rāmāyaṇa is not an ordinary book. You see? Therefore Rāmāyaṇa is so much popular in India. Before the appearance of Rāma, he wrote Rāmāyaṇa, all the activities of Rāma. So this Vālmiki Muni... And what this Vālmiki Muni was? This Vālmiki Muni was a dacoit, a plunderer. He used to plunder, I mean to say, innocent men on the road, kill him and take everything. That was his business. But by chance, he was associated with Nārada Muni, and he rectified him. This is the process. When a devotee meets even a dacoit like Vālmiki Muni, he becomes... Nārada Muni elevated so many fallen souls. This Vālmiki Muni was also. So he was given this mantra, "Rāma." He could not chant it. Then he was advised to just the opposite, māra. Māra means dead body. So māra māra māra. Three māra means one "Rāma" is there. So in this way he was initiated and he became a great sage. For sixty thousands of years he meditated simply on "Rāma, Rāma, Rāma, Rāma, Rāma, Rāma." And when he was liberated, he wrote this Rāmāyaṇa.

Information on Vālmiki is also contained in the detailed story of Rāmāyana at the end of this guide

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Holy Name: Resources

Sample flowchart of the process of suffering—
the Holy Name ends all our problems because it burns up the seed of suffering.



Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Holy Name: Resources

Rāma in Roman script, Sanskrit Devanāgarī, & Bengali

Roman script: **rāma**

Sanskrit Devanāgarī: **राम**

Bengali: **রাম**

Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 8.138, purport:
“The mantra depicted in letters is also Kṛṣṇa.”

Holy Name: Resources

Songs & Verses about Lord Rāmacandra

ramante yogino 'nante
satyānande cid-ātmani
iti rāma-padenāsau
param brahmābhidhīyate

SYNONYMS

ramante—take pleasure; yoginaḥ—transcendentalists; anante—in the unlimited; satya-ānande—real pleasure; cit-ātmani—in spiritual existence; iti—thus; rāma—Rāma; padena—by the word; asau—He; param—supreme; brahma—truth; abhidhīyate—is called.

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Absolute Truth is called Rāma because the transcendentalists take pleasure in the unlimited true pleasure of spiritual existence. (*quoted in Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 9.29*)

In the Bṛhad-viṣṇu-sahasranāma-stotra, Uttara-khaṇḍa, Padma Purāṇa (72.335) it is said:

rāma rāmeti rāmeti, rame rāme manorame;
sahasra-nāmabhis tulyaṁ, rāma-nāma varānane.

Lord Śiva addressed his wife, Durgā: “O Varānanā (lovely-faced woman), I chant the holy name of Rāma, Rāma, Rāma and thus constantly enjoy this beautiful sound. This holy name of Rāmacandra is equal to one thousand holy names of Lord Viṣṇu (*Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma-stotraṁ*).”

vitarsi dikṣu raṇe dik-pati-kamaṇīyaṁ
daśa-mukha-mauli-balim ramaṇīyaṁ
keśava dhṛta-rāma-śarīra jaya jagadīśa hare

SYNONYMS

vitarsi—You distribute; dikṣu—in all directions; raṇe—in the battle (of Laṅkā); dik-pati—to the presiding deities of the ten directions; kamaṇīyaṁ—which was desired by all of them; daśa-mukha—the ten-headed demon Rāvaṇa; mauli-balim—as a great offering; ramaṇīyaṁ—delightful; keśava—O Lord Keśava, of fine hair!; dhṛta-rāma-śarīra—who have accepted the form of Rāmacandra; jaya jagadīśa hare...

TRANSLATION

O Keśava! O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed the form of Rāmacandra! All glories to You! In the battle of Laṅkā You destroy the ten-headed demon Rāvaṇa and distribute his heads as a delightful offering to the presiding deities of the ten directions, headed by Indra. This action was long desired by all of them, who were much harassed by this monster. *Śrī Daśāvātāra-stotra, verse 7*

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Holy Name: Resources

Songs & Verses about Lord Rāmacandra

janaka-sutā-kṛta-bhūṣaṇa (he)

jita-dūṣaṇa (e)

samara-śamita-daśa-kaṇṭha

jaya jaya deva hare

SYNONYMS

janaka-sutā-kṛta-bhūṣaṇa—O Lord who has become the ornament of Sītā Devī, the daughter of Mahārāja Janaka!; (he)—oh!; jita-dūṣaṇa—O Lord who is victorious over all wicked demons; (e)—oh!; samara-śamita-daśa-kaṇṭha—O Lord who defeated the ten-headed Rāvaṇa in battle!; jaya jayadeva hare...

TRANSLATION

O Lord who has become the ornament of the daughter of Mahārāja Janaka! O Lord who is victorious over all wicked demons! O Lord who defeated the ten-headed Rāvaṇa in battle!-O Lord Jayadeva, O Lord Hari! All glories unto You!

Śrīta Kamalā Maṅgala Gītam, verse 6

kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! he

kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! he

kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! rakṣa mām

kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! kṛṣṇa! pāhi mām

rāma! rāghava! rāma! rāghava! rāma! rāghava! rakṣa mām

kṛṣṇa! keśava! kṛṣṇa! keśava! kṛṣṇa! keśava! pāhi mām

SYNONYMS

kṛṣṇa—Lord Kṛṣṇa; he—O; rakṣa—please protect; mām—Me; pāhi—please maintain; rāma—Lord Rāma; rāghava—descendant of King Raghu; keśava—killer of the Keśī demon. “O Lord Kṛṣṇa, please protect Me and maintain Me.”

Rāma! Rāghava! Rāma! Rāghava! Rāma! Rāghava! rakṣa mām

Kṛṣṇa! Keśava! Kṛṣṇa! Keśava! Kṛṣṇa! Keśava! pāhi mām

TRANSLATION

“O Lord Rāma, descendant of King Raghu, please protect Me. O Kṛṣṇa, O Keśava, killer of the Keśī demon, please maintain Me.” *Caitanya Caritamrita Madhya 7.96 (prayer chanted by Lord Caitanya)*

Sītā Rāma Jaya Sītā Rāma

Rāghupati Rāghava Rājā Rāma Patita-pāvana Sītā Rāma

These are different names for Lord Rāmacandra—the Lord of the Raghu dynasty, the ideal king, the deliverer of the most fallen, and the husband of the goddess of fortune (see *Servant of the Servant*, chapter 1)

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Holy Name: Resources

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam verse about Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, & Aniruddha, 1.5.37:

om namo bhagavate tubhyam
vāsudevāya dhīmahī
pradyumnāyaniruddhāya
namaḥ saṅkarṣaṇāya ca

SYNONYMS

om—the sign of chanting the transcendental glory of the Lord; namaḥ—offering obeisances unto the Lord; bhagavate—unto the Personality of Godhead; tubhyam—unto You; vāsudevāya—unto the Lord, the son of Vāsudeva; dhīmahī—let us chant; pradyumnāya, aniruddhāya and saṅkarṣaṇāya—all plenary expansions of Vāsudeva; namaḥ—respectful obeisances; ca—and.

TRANSLATION

Let us all chant the glories of Vāsudeva along with His plenary expansions Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Saṅkarṣaṇa.

PURPORT

According to Pañcarātra, Nārāyaṇa is the primeval cause of all expansions of Godhead. These are Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. Vāsudeva and Saṅkarṣaṇa are on the middle left and right, Pradyumna is on the right of Saṅkarṣaṇa, and Aniruddha is on the left of Vāsudeva, and thus the four Deities are situated. They are known as the four aides-de-camp of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Holy Name: Resources

How Vāsudeva, Saṅkarsana, Pradyumna, & Aniruddha appear as Rāma, Bharata, Lakṣmaṇa and Śatrughna

1) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.7.23:

Due to His causeless mercy upon all living entities within the universe, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, along with His plenary extensions, appeared in the family of Mahārāja Ikṣvāku as the Lord of His internal potency, Sītā. Under the order of His father, Mahārāja Daśaratha, He entered the forest and lived there for considerable years with His wife and younger brother. Rāvaṇa, who was very materially powerful, with ten heads on his shoulders, committed a great offense against Him and was thus ultimately vanquished.

PURPORT: Lord Rāma is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and His brothers, namely Bharata, Lakṣmaṇa and Śatrughna, are His plenary expansions. All four brothers are viṣṇu-tattva and were never ordinary human beings. There are many unscrupulous and ignorant commentators on Rāmāyaṇa who present the younger brothers of Lord Rāmacandra as ordinary living entities. But here in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the most authentic scripture on the science of Godhead, it is clearly stated that His brothers were His plenary expansions. Originally Lord Rāmacandra is the incarnation of Vāsudeva, Lakṣmaṇa is the incarnation of Saṅkarṣaṇa, Bharata is the incarnation of Pradyumna, and Śatrughna is the incarnation of Aniruddha, expansions of the Personality of Godhead. Lakṣmījī Sītā is the internal potency of the Lord and is neither an ordinary woman nor the external potency incarnation of Durgā.

2) *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 5.153:

Śrī Rāma and Śrī Lakṣmaṇa, who are plenary portions of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma respectively, entered into Them at the time of Kṛṣṇa's and Balarāma's appearance.

PURPORT: With reference to the Viṣṇu-dharmottara, the *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* explains that Rāma is an incarnation of Vāsudeva, Lakṣmaṇa is an incarnation of Saṅkarṣaṇa, Bharata is an incarnation of Pradyumna, and Śatrughna is an incarnation of Aniruddha. The *Padma Purāṇa* describes that Rāmacandra is Nārāyaṇa and that Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata and Śatrughna are respectively Śeṣa, Cakra and Śaṅkha (the conchshell in the hand of Nārāyaṇa). In the *Rāma-gīta* of the *Skanda Purāṇa*, Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata and Śatrughna have been described as the triple attendants of Lord Rāma.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Holy Name: Resources

Explanations of the Meaning of Rāma in the Hare Kṛṣṇa Mantra:

1) *Caitanya Caritamrita, Ādi 5.132:*

In whatever form one knows the Lord, one speaks of Him in that way. In this there is no falsity, since everything is possible in Kṛṣṇa.

PURPORT: In this connection we may mention an incident that took place between two of our sannyāsīs while we were preaching the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra in Hyderabad. One of them stated that “Hare Rāma” refers to Śrī Balarāma, and the other protested that “Hare Rāma” means Lord Rāma. Ultimately the controversy came to me, and I gave the decision that if someone says that the “Rāma” in “Hare Rāma” is Lord Rāmacandra and someone else says that the “Rāma” in “Hare Rāma” is Śrī Balarāma, both are correct because there is no difference between Śrī Balarāma and Lord Rāma. Here in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta we find that Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has stated the same conclusion: *yei yei rūpe jāne, sei tāhā kahe, sakala sambhave kṛṣṇe, kichu mithyā nahe*. If someone calls Lord Rāmacandra by the vibration Hare Rāma, understanding it to mean “O Lord Rāmacandra!” he is quite right. Similarly, if one says that Hare Rāma means “O Śrī Balarāma!” he is also right. Those who are aware of the viṣṇu-tattva do not fight over all these details.

2) *Caitanya Caritamrita, Ādi līlā Introduction:*

Mahā-Viṣṇu is actually an expansion of Balarāma, who is Kṛṣṇa’s first expansion and, in the Vṛndāvana pastimes, His brother. In the mahā-mantra—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—the word “Rāma” refers to Balarāma. Since Lord Nityānanda is Balarāma, “Rāma” also refers to Lord Nityānanda. Thus Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Rāma addresses not only Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma but Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda as well.

3) *Lecture on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.26.7 -- Bombay, December 19, 1974:*

Therefore, those who are yogis, they are also enjoying. *Ramante yoginaḥ anante satyānande*. That is real happiness which increases. Which decreases, that is not real happiness. That is illusion. *Ramante yoginaḥ anante satyānande cid-ātmani*. Cit, that is spiritual, spiritual ānanda. Really we want ānanda, happiness, blissfulness. That is our natural instinct. *Ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt* (Vedānta-sūtra 1.1.12). So... But we are searching after ānanda in this material world, and that is described here that *samsṛtir bandhaḥ pāra-tantrya*, under material condition and changing this body one after another. This is not ānanda. *Satyānande cid-ātmani*. Ānanda is available on the spiritual platform. *Satyānande cid-ātmani*. *Ramante... Iti rāma-padenāsau param brahma abhidhīyate*. Therefore the yogis, they enjoy, *ramaṇa*, in the spiritual world. That ānanda is called Rāma, Hare Rāma. Hare Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is also attractive, and Rāma is enjoyment. So when we dovetail our activities with Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, then our life becomes happy.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Association of Saintly Persons

Learning aims:

- Know the names of various devotees of Rāma & the services they gave Him
- Explore the feelings of serving the Lord with other devotees
- Explain the results of good & bad association
- Describe loyalty & brotherhood
- Hear how Rāma gives shelter to His devotees

What children will accomplish by the end of this unit:

- Describe from memory at least one devotee of Rāma and how that devotee served
- Describe in words, music, art, or dramatization how devotees worked together to serve Rāma
- Explain how Rāma gives His devotees shelter & how we can get His shelter
- Demonstrate loyalty and cooperation in various situations, especially while doing the activities
- Describe or enact the emotions of serving Rāma

Assessing how well the aim has been achieved:

- Descriptions are in line with scripture
- Children are working cooperatively on these activities
- Children relate what they are doing & learning to their own lives

NOTE: Activities marked with an ॐ have resources in this section.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Association of Saintly Persons

General ideas:

- Rāvaṇa was destroyed by his desires for another man's wife. What is the proper Vaiṣṇava attitude towards women?
- When Rāvaṇa was killed his wives were no longer protected. How should women always be protected?
- Write a speech entitled "The quality of a society depends on how its women are treated".
- Write five questions to ask any or all of the following persons: Hanumān, Rāvaṇa, Vibhīṣaṇa, Lakṣmaṇa, Kaikeyī, Daśaratha.
- Write a simple song of Hanumān jumping over the ocean.
- Make a monkey tail (can be done by adults or by the children) out of an old stuffed stocking & a piece of wire through it to attach to the child. Then, while singing a song about Hanumān or Rāma, jump from one place to the next in the garden celebrating having found Sītā.
- Lord Rāma is glorified for being the perfect leader. Good leaders need good followers. Devise a game of follow the leader where first everyone follows & then everyone does their own thing. How did the leader feel in each situation? What can we learn from that? How did the followers feel?
- From Rāma's example, list the qualities of good leaders & good followers.
- Compare qualities of today's government leaders with Lord Rāma's qualities. How would you change today's government policies to make people happy?
- Rāvaṇa means "one who causes crying for others". Think of a time you caused another person to cry. How did you feel afterwards? What would you do differently next time?
- List as many demons as possible that Rāma killed. In groups or individually, decide on what attitudes, thoughts, or actions in one's life act like "demons" & how we can conquer them by taking shelter of Lord Rāmacandra.
- Using the family tree in the Bhāgavatam as a guide, make an illustrated family tree of the sun dynasty until Rāma's appearance, or write a song to remember the key names of the people in the sun dynasty leading to Rāma.
- When Vibhīṣaṇa first came to Rāma, most of Rāma's followers didn't trust him, although Rāma welcomed him. Write a speech, essay, or story about trust & loyalty.
- Discuss how Sītā stayed loyal to Rāma even though she was surrounded by demons, & didn't know where Rāma was, or when He would save her. Explore how we can overcome the influence of bad association & stay firm in our devotion in difficult circumstances.
- Act out how Rāma & Lakṣmaṇa first thought Jaṭāyu was a demon who had eaten Sītā. Discuss how we cannot judge devotees by their body or outward appearance (refer to *Nectar of Instruction*, verse 6)

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Association of Saintly Persons

2-4 years:

- Dress up as monkeys and go on a treasure hunt to find Sītā (various treasures, including a picture of Sītā, should be hidden in the area)
- Colour pictures of devotees of Rāma, such as Hanumān, Vibhīṣaṇa, Jaṭāyu, etc. Talk about how they helped Rāma.

5-7 years:

- Compare & contrast, using a graphic (such as double-bubble or Venn diagram) the relationship between Rāma & Lakṣmaṇa with the relationship between Vibhīṣaṇa & Rāvaṇa. Discuss what it means to be a brother.
- Dress up & act out Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa insisting they wanted to go to the forest with Rāma. Discuss the differences between palace life and forest life.
- Discuss how some Rākṣasīs helped Sītā. Explore what it feels like to be scared or lost, & how we can help someone else who is scared.

8-10 years:

- Split up into teams & go on a treasure hunt to find Sītā (clues should be hidden in various places that lead to a picture of Sītā. The winning team keeps the picture.)
- Take turns dressing up each other as Sītā or Rāma for their wedding.
- Hear how Vibhīṣaṇa left Rāvaṇa to take shelter of Rāma. Discuss the effects of good & bad association and how we can have the courage to do the right thing, even if people around us are doing something wrong. Role play various scenarios.

11-13 years:

- ☞ List the various devotees who helped Rāma. Write what species they were (human, demi-god, demon, type of animal, bird, etc.) List what type of service they performed. Take the data and analyze it by percentages (how many humans, etc.)
- ☞ Hear about how Sugrīva got absorbed in enjoying his newly-regained kingdom so that Lakṣmaṇa had to remind him of his promise to Rāma. Write a fictional fable/story about loyalty & promises.
- Make a comic, powerpoint, or song about one devotee who helped Rāma or Sītā

14-18 years:

- Four groups of monkeys searched for Sītā, but only Hanumān's group found her. Similarly, Jaṭāyu fought with Rāvaṇa, but was defeated. Discuss how devotees serving the Lord can have seeming, external "failures" & come up with a definition of "success" that would apply regardless of the external outcome. Support the definition with verses from the Gita.
- Create a dance & song of the monkeys working together to build the bridge.
- ☞ Hear or read about the sages in the forest who wanted to marry Rāma & who became gopis in another life. Draw a flowchart showing the progression of devotional service.
- Write a poem or essay about the beauty of Rāma's promise to have only one wife.
- ☞ Create a graphic to show the persons in Rāma līlā who made promises, what they promised, whether they kept their promise, & what was the result. Evaluate each as a role model for truthfulness. Discuss times when promises in one's own life (made by oneself or by others) were kept or broken & why. Analyze the spiritual value of making vows.

Association of Saintly Persons: Resources

Hanumān serves Sītā

Once upon a time there was a great monkey named Hanumān. He was a devotee of Lord Rāma. Hanumān was very powerful. He could make himself very big or he could make himself very small.

Lord Rāma said to Hanumān, “My dear wife, Sītā has been stolen by a great demon. This demon is keeping her on an island in the sea. I want you to build a bridge across the sea. I will then take my army to the island and kill the demon.”

Hanumān was so powerful that he carried huge stones and threw them in the ocean.

Because he carried out the orders of Lord Rāma, Hanumān is the best devotee of all.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Association of Saintly Persons: Resources

Note: Several of the activities in this section require some knowledge of the story. A detailed version of the story is found at the end of this guide, page 73. Adults not familiar with the Rāmāyaṇa are advised to read this version before teaching this section.

Family tree in the Bhāgavatam:

This is found in printed versions of the Bhāgavatam, ninth canto, & is not available on-line

Various devotees who helped Lord Rāmacandra (partial list):

- His brothers: Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata, Shatrugna
- His wife, Sītā
- His mothers: Kauśalyā & Sumitrā
- His gurus, such as Viśvāmitra muni
- His father-in-law: Janaka
- Various sages in the forest
- The vulture brothers, Jaṭāyu & Sampati
- Rāvaṇa's brother, Vibhīṣaṇa
- Many monkeys including Hanuman & Sugrīva
- The king of the bears, Jāmbavān

Persons in Rāma lila who made promises (partial list):

- Daśaratha, Rāma's father—to Viśvāmitra that he would give anything asked, & to his wife, Kaikeyī, to give two boons of anything asked
- Bharata, Rāma's brother—to rule the kingdom in Rāma's absence
- Rāmacandra—to keep Kaikeyī's request of 14 years of exile while Bharata ruled, to protect the forest sages, to have only one wife, to kill Vali for Sugrīva
- Lakṣmaṇa—to follow His brother, Rāma, to the forest
- Sītā—to follow her husband, Rāma, to the forest
- Sugrīva—to engage his army to find Sītā after the rainy season

Association of Saintly Persons: Resources

Sages who saw Rāma in the forest & desired to marry Him, & who thus became cowherd girls with Kṛṣṇa in their next life:

1) *Nectar of Devotion, chapter 16*: This development of conjugal love for Kṛṣṇa is not manifested in women only. The material body has nothing to do with spiritual loving affairs. A woman may develop an attitude for becoming a friend of Kṛṣṇa, and, similarly, a man may develop the feature of becoming a gopī in Vṛndāvana. How a devotee in the form of a man can desire to become a gopī is stated in the Padma Purāṇa as follows: In days gone by there were many sages in Daṇḍakāraṇya. Daṇḍakāraṇya is the name of the forest where Lord Rāmacandra lived after being banished by His father for fourteen years. At that time there were many advanced sages who were captivated by the beauty of Lord Rāmacandra and who desired to become women in order to embrace the Lord. Later on, these sages appeared in Gokula Vṛndāvana when Kṛṣṇa advented Himself there, and they were born as gopīs, or girl friends of Kṛṣṇa. In this way they attained the perfection of spiritual life.

The story of the sages of Daṇḍakāraṇya can be explained as follows. When Lord Rāmacandra was residing in Daṇḍakāraṇya, the sages who were engaged in devotional service there became attracted by His beauty and immediately thought of the gopīs at Vṛndāvana, who enjoyed conjugal loving affection with Kṛṣṇa. In this instance it is clear that the sages of Daṇḍakāraṇya desired conjugal love in the manner of the gopīs, although they were well aware of the Supreme Lord as both Kṛṣṇa and Lord Rāmacandra. They knew that although Rāmacandra was an ideal king and could not accept more than one wife, Lord Kṛṣṇa, being the full-fledged Personality of Godhead, could fulfill the desires of all of them in Vṛndāvana. These sages also concluded that the form of Lord Kṛṣṇa is more attractive than that of Lord Rāmacandra, and so they prayed to become gopīs in their future lives to be associated with Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Rāmacandra remained silent, and His silence shows that He accepted the prayers of the sages. Thus they were blessed by Lord Rāmacandra to have association with Lord Kṛṣṇa in their future lives. As a result of this benediction, they all took birth as women in the wombs of gopīs at Gokula, and as they had desired in their previous lives, they enjoyed the company of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who was present at that time in Gokula Vṛndāvana.

2) *Srimad Bhāgavatam 10.29.9 purport*: the gist of Śrīla Kavi-karṇapūra Gosvāmī's purport: Upon seeing the personal form of Lord Śrī Rāmacandra, the sages who were worshipers of Lord Gopāla immediately became elevated to the mature platform of spontaneous devotion, automatically reaching the stages of firm faith, attraction and attachment. But they had not yet completely freed themselves of all material contamination; therefore Śrī Yogamāyā-devi arranged for them to take birth from the wombs of gopīs and become cowherd girls. By associating with the eternally perfect gopīs, some of these new gopīs fully manifested pūrva-raga loving attraction for Kṛṣṇa as soon as they reached puberty (This kind of attraction develops even before one meets the beloved.) When these new gopīs got the direct audience of Kṛṣṇa and physically associated with Him, all their remaining contamination became burned up, and they achieved the advanced stages of prema, sneha and so on.

Association of Saintly Persons: Resources

Sugrīva absorbed in enjoying his newly-regained kingdom:

When Rāma & Lakṣmaṇa were wandering in the forest, they met Hanuman, who then introduced them to his king, Sugrīva. Sugrīva's brother, Vali, had taken the kingdom & Sugrīva's wife. Rāma promised to help Sugrīva regain his wife & kingdom, while Sugrīva promised to help find Sītā.

Rāma arranged to kill Vali, and Sugrīva was installed as king. At that time the rainy season had started, so searching for Sītā was impossible. Sugrīva promised to start the search as soon as the rains ended. During the rainy season, Rāma & Lakṣmaṇa waited, thinking always of Sītā.

When the rains ended, no message came from Sugrīva.

Here's how Krishna Dharma Dāsa tells the rest of the story:

Although the monsoons were over, however, Sugrīva still did not prepare his army to search for Sītā. Realizing this, Rāma discussed the situation with Lakṣman.

“It seems the Vānara king has forgotten his debt to Us, noble brother. Why have his messengers not arrived here with news of their search? O Lakṣman, I fear that the gentle Sītā is lost forever. What is She doing now? Surely Her mind dwells on Me, even as Mine never leaves Her. Surely She weeps in agony, even as I weep here.”

Rāma's grief was as strong as it had been when Sītā was abducted four months ago. Rāma felt powerless. He was still no closer to finding Sītā than the day She was kidnapped, and now Sugrīva, upon whom his hopes were resting, was letting Him down. Rāma sat distracted by sorrow. Lakṣman reassured Him. “This is not the time to grieve, dear brother. We must strenuously exert Ourselves to find Sītā. With You as Her protector, no one can hold the princess for long. Compose Yourself, Rāma! Let Us do what must be done.”

Rāma sighed and looked around. On a plateau beneath His cave, a large pond had been formed by the rains. Swans and cranes sported joyfully in the water among clusters of white and red lotuses. Rāma could hear the croaks of frogs and the cries of peacocks. In the distance He heard the trumpeting sound of elephants in rut. Large black bees droned around the bright forest flowers, intoxicated with nectar. The sky was a deep blue and the wind, which had blown fiercely during the monsoons, had become a gentle breeze. The sights and sounds of autumn were visible everywhere. Rāma was reflective. Where was Sugrīva? Had he forgotten his promise now that his own problem had been solved? How could he so ungrateful? Rāma's brow furrowed with anger and He turned to Lakṣman.

“These past four months have seemed like a hundred years for Me. I have longed for the end of the rains, O Lakṣman, so that We might find Sītā as We agreed with Sugrīva. Although I have rendered him a great favor, the evil-minded monkey king obviously holds Me in contempt. Seeing Me forlorn and deprived of My kingdom, living helplessly like an ascetic in the forest, the wicked fellow entirely disregards Me.”

Rāma told Lakṣman to go to Kishkindha. He should tell Sugrīva that there is no viler being than one who is ungrateful. Had he forgotten the favor Rāma had done for him, and the promise he had made in return? Did he wish to again see Rāma's golden bow drawn to its full

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length? Did he desire to see Rāma angry on the battlefield? Did he long to hear again the crash of Rāma's bowstring sounding like so many claps of thunder? It was strange that Sugrīva seemed to have forgotten how Vali was slain by a single arrow from Rāma, although Sugrīva himself could never overcome his brother. Rāma's eyes were crimson with anger as He spoke. "It is clear that Sugrīva is lost in sensual pleasures, having regained his kingdom after a long time. Drunk and surrounded by women, he has all but forgotten his pledged word to Me. Tell him, O brother, that the path taken by Vali still lies open. Along with all his kinsmen, Sugrīva may proceed along that path if he does not care for his promise. He should take heed of this warning. Otherwise he will meet again soon with Vali."

Lakṣman Himself became furious as He listened to Rāma. He told Rāma that He would go immediately to Kishkindha. With upraised weapons He would dispatch Sugrīva to Death's abode. Clearly the licentious and unvirtuous Sugrīva was not fit to rule a kingdom. Aṅgada should be installed as king and he could organize the search for Sītā. Sugrīva should be punished without delay.

Lakṣman stood up and reached for His weapons. Rāma, whose anger had already begun to subside, then checked His brother. "I think it not fitting that You kill Sugrīva. Try at first to pursue a gentler path. Remind him of our friendship and his promise. O Lakṣman, do not use harsh words immediately. After all, Sugrīva is but a monkey. Perhaps You can awaken him to a sense of his duty by conciliatory speech."

Lakṣman bowed in assent to Rāma's words, although He could not subdue His anger. He left the cave and began running toward Kishkindha, thinking of what He would say to Sugrīva. He could not disobey Rāma's order, but He would not tolerate any resistance from Sugrīva. If that lazy monkey did not immediately set about his duty, he would be sorry. How dare he be so negligent of his promise to Rāma! Who did he think he was? Lakṣman bit His lips in fury as He bounded down the mountainside.

* * *

In the city of Kishkindha, Hanumān had also noticed the season change and Sugrīva not stirring. The intelligent minister thought carefully about the situation. Rāma would certainly take stern action if Sugrīva failed to fulfill his pledge. Hanumān approached the Vānara king, who was absorbed in sensuality, and spoke to him in a friendly and pleasing manner.

"You have regained sovereignty, fame and prosperity, O Sugrīva. It now remains for you to win the goodwill of your allies. The dominion, fame and glory of a king who acts well toward his allies will always grow. That king who regards equally his exchequer, his army, his allies and his own self, will gain a great kingdom. However, he who fails to take care of any one of these meets with disaster."

Hanumān then reminded Sugrīva of his promise to Rāma. The time had arrived to begin the search for Sītā. The king should immediately send out monkeys in all directions. Rāma should not need to ask. It would be shameful if Sugrīva did not act quickly to repay a debt to his friend and ally.

Sugrīva thanked Hanumān for his wise and timely advice. The monkey king realized his laxity and he immediately summoned his ministers and counselors. He issued orders. "Let all the Vānara generals be quickly assembled. Swift-footed and energetic monkeys are needed. Ten thousand of my army should immediately depart for every country where the Vānaras dwell. Have them fetch the very best of the monkey warriors here to Kishkindha. Anyone sent out

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and failing to return within fifteen days should be executed.” Ordering Hanumān and Aṅgada to organize the army, Sugrīva again retired to his rooms.

Within a few days the monkey hordes began to assemble outside the city. Monkeys resembling elephants, mountains and clouds gathered together. Those powerful Vānaras were like mighty tigers and were all heroic. They were dark and terrible and they made one’s hair stand erect just to see them. Some were as strong as a hundred elephants, some ten times stronger than that, and others ten times stronger again. They stood awaiting Sugrīva’s orders.

As the monkeys milled about in their tens of thousands outside Kishkindha, they noticed Lakṣman approaching in the distance. When they saw the prince running toward the city, His face glowing with anger and His bow grasped tightly, they became fearful. Some of them, not recognizing Him, lifted up trees and boulders, ready to defend Kishkindha. Others ran in all directions as Lakṣman arrived near the city gates, holding aloft His bow and calling for Sugrīva. Seeing the monkeys prepared to attack Him, Lakṣman became even more angry. He heaved deep and burning sighs and licked the corners of His mouth.

Aṅgada quickly came out of the city and, checking the monkeys from fleeing, went before Lakṣman. Rāma’s brother appeared to the monkey prince like the blazing fire of universal destruction. In great fear he bowed low at Lakṣman’s feet and greeted Him respectfully. Although furious, Lakṣman contained His anger and spoke kindly to Aṅgada. “Pray tell Sugrīva of My arrival, dear child. I stand here tormented by grief due to Rāma’s plight. Please ask the king to hear from Me Rāma’s advice.”

Aṅgada bowed again and left swiftly, running to Sugrīva. He burst into his chambers and told him to come quickly. But Sugrīva was asleep, groggy from the night’s pleasures. He lay upon his bed with only garlands as his dress. As he slowly stirred, many more monkeys came near his room, raising a great clamor. They were terrified of the wrathful Lakṣman. Sugrīva heard the tumult and came to his senses. He stood up, troubled in mind, and Aṅgada explained the situation.

Sugrīva told Aṅgada to bring Lakṣman immediately. “Why have you left Him standing at the gates?” he demanded. “He should be offered every respect, even as much as myself.” Aṅgada, joined by Hanumān, quickly left to fetch Lakṣman.

Within a few minutes Lakṣman was led into Kishkindha by Aṅgada and Hanumān. Still fuming, the prince surveyed the city. Great mansions and temples lined the wide avenues, each building set with celestial jewels of every description. The city was illuminated by the jewels’ glow. Rivulets flowed by the avenues and groves of trees grew here and there, yielding all kinds of delightful fruits. As he went along the main highway, Lakṣman saw the large white palaces of the chief monkeys. They shone like clouds lit by the sun. Long wreaths of flowers hung from those palaces and the scent of aloe and sandalwood issued from the latticed windows.

Lakṣman was led into Sugrīva’s palace, the most magnificent of all. After passing through seven heavily guarded gates, he entered Sugrīva’s inner chambers. Here and there were numerous gold and silver couches, spread with costly silk covers. Many beautiful Vānara ladies, wearing garlands and gold ornaments, moved about, their anklets tinkling. As they reached Sugrīva’s private chambers Lakṣman heard the strains of celestial music from within. He became even more annoyed with Sugrīva. The insolent monkey was reveling while Rāma suffered agony! Lakṣman twanged His bowstring, and the sound reverberated through the en-

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tire palace.

Sugrīva was startled. Realizing at once that Lakṣman had arrived, he spoke urgently to Tara, who sat by his side. “Go quickly and greet Lakṣman. He will never display anger in the presence of a woman. Pacify Him with gentle words. Only then will I be able to face Him.” Tara rose up and went out of the room. The gold string of her girdle hung loose and she tottered slightly from intoxication. Bending her slender body low, she covered her head with her cloth and respectfully greeted Lakṣman. As soon as He saw Tara, Lakṣman looked down modestly. His anger abated as Tara spoke gently. “My lord, what gives rise to Your angry mood? Who has disobeyed Your order? Who has recklessly gone before a forest fire while it rushed toward a thicket of dried trees?”

Still annoyed, Lakṣman replied, “This husband of yours appears to have forgotten his duty. He seems intent only on pursuing pleasures. Four months have already passed since Rāma left and We still see no signs of Sugrīva keeping his word. He remains drunk here, enjoying with you and unaware of the passage of time. O Tara, drinking is always condemned by the wise as the root of irreligion. Please remind Sugrīva of his religious obligation.” Tara begged Lakṣman to forgive Sugrīva. After all, he was but a monkey. It was no surprise he had fallen a victim to lust. Even great sages in the forest were sometimes overcome by desire. What then of a monkey living among beautiful women? One under the sway of carnal desire loses all sense of time and place. Forgetting his duty, he casts decorum to the winds and absorbs himself in pleasure. Tara told Lakṣman that Sugrīva was regretful. He was always Rāma’s devoted servant and he longed to fulfill Rāma’s order. Even now he was waiting eagerly to speak with Lakṣman.

Tara led Lakṣman into Sugrīva’s chamber. As the prince entered the apartment He saw Sugrīva seated on a golden couch next to his wife Ruma. He was surrounded by youthful Vānara ladies adorned with shining jewels and heavenly garlands. His eyes were bloodshot and his limbs were smeared with sandal-paste. Sugrīva’s costly silk garment hung loose on his powerful body, and Vali’s brilliant gold chain shone from his chest. Seeing Sugrīva absorbed in sensual delights, Lakṣman’s anger was rekindled. His eyes opened wide and His lips set in a firm line. The furious prince breathed heavily and wrung His hands, looking with blood-red eyes at Sugrīva. The monkey king jumped from his couch, like a tall flag suddenly raised in honor of Indra. He went before Lakṣman with folded palms and bowed at his feet.

Lakṣman addressed him in angry tones. “Who is more hard-hearted than he who makes a false promise to a friend, especially when that friend has done him a great favor? O lord of the monkeys, one who ungratefully fails to repay the service of friends deserves to be killed!” Lakṣman quite forgot Rāma’s request to first speak kindly to Sugrīva. He glared at him. This selfish monkey deserved no pity. He lay here at ease while Rāma was pining away. Lakṣman vented His fury, His voice thundering about Sugrīva’s spacious chamber.

“Ingratitude is the worst of all sins, O thoughtless one! You are lustful and a liar. You have achieved your own ends, made some empty promise, and then simply abandoned yourself to pleasure. Surely you will regret your omission when Rāma’s blazing arrow speeds toward you. Before long you will meet with Vali again!”

Tara again beseeched Lakṣman to be patient. Sugrīva was an ordinary being subject to the sway of his senses. No one could easily avert the strong urges of the body. Even the great

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Viśvāmitra had once lost himself in sexual pleasure for a hundred years, thinking it to be a day. Sugrīva had now been awakened to his duty. He had taken action and sent out many monkeys to raise an army to find Sītā.

Tara spoke passionately to the angry Lakṣman. “Vali told me there are a hundred million powerful Rākṣasas in Lanka. These must be overcome if Rāvaṇa is to be defeated. Therefore Sugrīva is now amassing a force sufficient to encounter all the Rākṣasas. The army will be ready within some days. Do not be angry. The search for Sītā will soon begin.”

Lakṣman was pacified when He heard that Sugrīva had already made arrangements. He nodded His head and relaxed.

Seeing Lakṣman relaxing, Sugrīva said, “Everything I have depends upon Rāma. How can I ever repay Him? Rāma alone is powerful enough to recover Sītā and is merely using me as His instrument. This again is His kindness on me. I only wish to serve Him in whatever way I can. Please forgive any transgression on my part, for there is no servant who is without fault.” Lakṣman began to feel ashamed of His angry outburst. He spoke kindly to Sugrīva. “With you as His supporter My brother is blessed in every way, O gallant monkey. I feel sure He will soon destroy His enemy with your assistance. Please forgive My harsh words, for I am sorely afflicted by My brother’s plight.”

Lakṣman asked Sugrīva to come with Him to see Rāma. Sugrīva immediately had a large palanquin fetched and he mounted it along with Lakṣman. Accompanied by Sugrīva’s ministers, they departed toward Prashravana. The golden palanquin, covered by a white canopy, was carried swiftly toward the mountain where Rāma waited. Conches and kettledrums were sounded as the procession of monkeys moved in state. Sugrīva was surrounded by many warlike monkeys bearing weapons in their hands. He was fanned on both sides by his servants and eulogized by bards as they traveled.

They soon arrived at Rāma’s cave. Sugrīva jumped from the palanquin and prostrated himself at Rāma’s feet, who lifted the monkey and embraced him with love. Rāma seated Sugrīva on the ground and, sitting next to him, spoke in a gentle voice. “A wise king is he who pursues in their proper order religion, wealth and pleasure, allotting proper time to each. He who pursues only pleasure, neglecting the other two, wakes up after falling, like one asleep on a treetop. The king who wins pious allies and destroys sinful foes gains great religious merit, O Sugrīva. The time has come for you to make an effort for merit. What then has been done, O King?”

Sugrīva replied that he was ever indebted to Rāma for His kindness and favor. The Vānara king explained how he had dispatched thousands of monkeys to gather an army. Soon there would be millions of fierce monkeys, bears and baboons gathering at Kishkindha. All of them were sprung from the loins of gods and Gandharvas and all were terrible warriors capable of changing their forms at will. Sugrīva would have at his command a vast army, countless in number. They would quickly find Rāvaṇa, completely uproot him, and recover Sītā. Rāma was delighted and He looked like a blue lotus in full bloom. He embraced Sugrīva tightly. “It is no surprise that one of your caliber renders such good to his friends. With you by My side I shall easily conquer My enemies. O Sugrīva, you are My greatest well-wisher and are fit to help Me in every way.”

Rāma and Sugrīva discussed for some time, planning how to make their search. Sugrīva then left to meet with his emissaries who were returning with the troops they had gathered.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Holy Places

Learning aims:

- Become familiar with the holy places connected with Rāma's pastimes (Ayodhyā, Daṇḍakāraṇya , setu bandha, Laṅkā)
- Create a sacred place
- Explore how to treat animals in holy places
- Imagine being in the holy places with Rāma during His pastimes (meditation)

What children will accomplish by the end of this unit:

- Describe in words, song, pictures, or enactment, one or more holy places connected with Lord Rāma
- Create an area that becomes one of the holy places in Rāma's pastimes
- Discuss the animals in Rāma's pastimes & how this relates to animals in holy places today
- Improve personal treatment of animals
- Absorption in Rāma's pastimes through play, enactment, etc.

Assessing how well the aim has been achieved:

- Descriptions of holy places are in accord with śāstra
- Behavior in the created holy place is fun & reverential
- Children make & demonstrate plans to improve animal treatment
- When doing activities to create holy places, focus in on the activity without distraction or disrespect

NOTE: Activities marked with an ॐ have resources in this section.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Holy Places

General ideas:

- ☞ On a map of Ancient India find Ayodhyā & Laṅkā then draw lines to show the path Rāma took (i.e. from Ayodhyā to the Daṇḍakāraṇya forest to the shore of the ocean, building a bridge to Laṅkā & returning to Ayodhyā). Using your map, explain the story to a friend.
- Make a treasure hunt that resembles the path Lord Rāma traveled. For example start at the altar (Ayodhyā). The children must find a message that gives a clue where to go next (outside to a special Daṇḍakāraṇya forest tree) then on to the bath (the ocean) and so on, with a simple reward at the end.
- Draw a picture of the scene of Laṅkā when the monkey soldiers attacked.
- ☞ As one person reads Bhāgavatam 9.10.35-38 line for line out loud, the rest of the group re-enact the scene welcoming Lord Rāma back to Ayodhyā. Use simple props where possible.
- Using the internet try to find the approximate distance between South India & Sri Laṅkā then calculate the length of the bridge to Laṅkā.
- It's an offense to fight in front of the Deity, but Hanumān & the other monkeys used their anger in Rāma's service in a war. Discuss how anger can be used productively to please Kṛṣṇa.
 - Make a presentation—song, poster, slide show, film, dance—of the difference between material and spiritual anger
- ☞ Learn the setu bandha (bridge) haṭha yoga asana. Pretend to be the bridge to Laṅkā.
- ☞ Compare Lord Caitanya's tour of South India with Lord Rāmacandra's travels.
- ☞ Compare & contrast Lord Caitanya's pastimes in the ocean with Lord Rāmacandra's crossing of the ocean.
- Animals in holy places
 - ☞ Compare & contrast Lord Caitanya's relationship with animals (Sivananda Sena's dog, the animals in the forest on the way to Vrindavana), with Lord Rāmacandra's relationship with animals (birds, monkeys, bears, & the creatures in the ocean He crossed).
 - Discuss the position of animals who live in a holy place, & of animals who have direct contact with the Lord.
 - Discuss how we need to see animals as equal souls while at the same time dealing with them according to their body.
 - Look at information from groups that exist to protect animals. Evaluate the materials from the spiritual perspective.
 - Make a plan for giving spiritual benefit to the animals, birds, etc. who live near the home or local temple

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Holy Places

2-4 years:

- All sit in meditation by someplace designated as “the ocean” until someone playing as Varuna gives permission to cross; then all race to cross—whoever crosses first is Varuna for the next round.
- Make a “hut” out of paper, cardboard, or other similar materials. If it is life-size (child-size) the children can go inside and create mats from paper, make clay cups, etc. They can pretend it is Rāma’s hut at Citrakūṭa or Pañcavaṭī.
- Pretend play of being sages about to be eaten by Rākṣasa demons in the forest when Rāma comes & kills the demons with His arrows.

5-7 years:

- Dress up & play killing of Rāvaṇa & then the installation of Vibhīṣaṇa as king of Laṅkā.
- Draw Ayodhyā decorated for the birth of Lord Rāma
- Clean & decorate an area (in the home, school, or temple) that will be Rāma’s room in the palace
- Dress up & play the coronation of Sītā & Rāma with play crowns the children make from paper.

8-10 years:

- Make a three-dimensional model of Setu-bandha/Cape Cormorin/Kanyakumari & of Laṅkā
- ☞ Read how Rāma fasted by the shore of the ocean. List the times when fasting is recommended in śāstra. Discuss the benefits of fasting. Compare fasting to other austerities

11-13 years:

- Decorate a room or area like the Daṇḍakāraṇya Forest. Put a picture of Sītā, Rāma, & Lakṣmaṇa there & have bhajanas there for Their pleasure
- Using a graphic organizer (Venn diagram, double-bubble map, or other) compare & contrast the descriptions of Ayodhyā, Dvārakā, & Vaikuṅṭha

14-18 years:

- Our bodies are holy places if we keep ourselves pure.
 - Sītā was very powerful due to her chastity. Discuss what it means to be chaste.
 - Design a plan of how you can have a mood of chastity – in body, mind & words.
 - Research to find the names of the five exalted chaste women mentioned in śāstra.
 - ☞ Rāvaṇa was destroyed by his own lust. Read Bhagavad-gītā 3.36-43. Why is lust our enemy & how can we “beat the enemy”?
- Create travel advertisements for people to go to ancient Ayodhyā (posters, brochures, Internet pages, radio spots, TV spots, etc.)
- Research & present findings on the controversies, tensions, & fighting that have occurred in present-day Ayodhyā.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Holy Places: Resources

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.10.35-38 is in this guide, in the section entitled, “The Pastimes of the Supreme Lord, Rāmacandra from the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam”

The description of Rāma’s fasting by the shore of the ocean is in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.10.13-15, found in this guide in the section entitled, “The Pastimes of the Supreme Lord, Rāmacandra from the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.” It is also in this guide in the detailed description of Rāma’s pastimes.

Note: Caitanya Caritāmṛta can be read for free on-line at www.Krishna.com & www.causelessmercy.com

Lord Caitanya tours South India:

Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Madhya-Līlā: chapter 1, texts 228-287; chapter 7, texts 91-153; chapter 9, texts 1-17 & texts 166-258 & texts 276-302

Lord Caitanya’s pastimes in the ocean:

Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Antya-Līlā: chapter 18, texts 1-87 & 100-121

A puppet show of this pastime is available from www.Krishna.com store

Lord Caitanya & animals:

When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu returned to Jagannātha Purī from Vṛndāvana, all His devotees from other parts of India, upon receiving the auspicious news, came to Puruṣottama-kṣetra, or Jagannātha Purī. Śivānanda Sena took a dog with him and even paid fees for it to cross the river. One night, however, the dog could not get any food and therefore went directly to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu at Jagannātha Purī. The next day, when Śivānanda and his party reached Jagannātha Purī, Śivānanda saw the dog eating some coconut pulp offered to it by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. After this incident, the dog was liberated and went back home, back to Godhead. For details, see Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Antya-Līlā: chapter 1, texts 17-33

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu started for the town of Kaṭaka. North of Kaṭaka, He penetrated a dense forest and came upon many tigers and elephants, whom He engaged in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.

For details see, Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Madhya-Līlā: chapter 17, texts 24-46

Holy Places: Resources

Bhagavad-gītā chapter 3, texts 36-43:

Bg. 3.36 - Arjuna said: O descendant of Vṛṣṇi, by what is one impelled to sinful acts, even unwillingly, as if engaged by force?

Bg. 3.37 - The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: It is lust only, Arjuna, which is born of contact with the material mode of passion and later transformed into wrath, and which is the all-devouring sinful enemy of this world.

Bg. 3.38 - As fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror is covered by dust, or as the embryo is covered by the womb, the living entity is similarly covered by different degrees of this lust.

Bg. 3.39 - Thus the wise living entity's pure consciousness becomes covered by his eternal enemy in the form of lust, which is never satisfied and which burns like fire.

Bg. 3.40 - The senses, the mind and the intelligence are the sitting places of this lust. Through them lust covers the real knowledge of the living entity and bewilders him.

Bg. 3.41 - Therefore, O Arjuna, best of the Bhāratas, in the very beginning curb this great symbol of sin [lust] by regulating the senses, and slay this destroyer of knowledge and self-realization.

Bg. 3.42 - The working senses are superior to dull matter; mind is higher than the senses; intelligence is still higher than the mind; and he [the soul] is even higher than the intelligence.

Bg. 3.43 - Thus knowing oneself to be transcendental to the material senses, mind and intelligence, O mighty-armed Arjuna, one should steady the mind by deliberate spiritual intelligence [Kṛṣṇa consciousness] and thus-by spiritual strength-conquer this insatiable enemy known as lust.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Holy Places: Resources

Setu Bandha yoga pose:

Lie on your back. Bend your knees so that your feet are flat on the floor near your buttocks. Keep your feet close together, hip width apart maximum. Keep your feet perfectly parallel. On an exhale, keeping your neck and shoulders soft, slowly lift your hips off the floor. Squeeze your buttocks so that the low back lengthens. Squeeze your knees towards each other. As you hold the posture, continue to lift your hips, back, and chest as high as possible. Breathe into the openness of your chest. Relax your eyes and face. Slowly roll down on an exhale.



Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Bringing the Festival into the Rest of the Curriculum: Summary

See Detailed Verse-by-verse suggestions to relate these subjects to specific parts of the story

Language:

Study of story plot structure of Rāma līlā, compared to other famous stories

Speech welcoming Rāma & Sītā back to Ayodhyā

Speech for Vibhīṣaṇa's coronation

Essays focused on any theme from the story

Dramatic storytelling to audiences of various ages

Poems to describe the golden deer

Descriptive essays of:

Laṅkā

Life in the forest

The battle

Rāma's welcome back to Ayodhyā

Art:

Illustration or sculpture of:

Elephants

Flower airplane

Tigers

Crocodiles

Sharks

Any scene in the story

Embroidering cloth

Flower arrangements

Design for a flower airplane

Music:

Creating or choosing music suitable for the various parts of the story—birth, marriage, coronation, exile, kidnapping, search, battle, return

Learning traditional songs about Rāma in various Indian languages, using the instruments & ragas from those regions

Science:

Study of fire—uses, history of famous fires, firefighting

Bridge engineering—types of bridges, history, how they work

Animals

Elephants—types

Tigers

Birds—pigeons, vultures

Creatures of the ocean

Creatures of the forest

Floating and sinking

Trees & plants of various types of forests

Sightings of creatures that are half-monkey/half-man (see Drutakarmā Dāsa's books)

Earth, sun, moon, & stars (Rāma is compared to)

Air

Gravity

Motors & engines

Electrical storms & lightening

Barley & other grains

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

History/Geography:

How and why monarchy is no longer the prevalent form of government in the world
Instances of wars won by smaller, weaker forces against a greater army
Instances of political intrigue to secure the throne
Differences between types of forests (flora, fauna, climate, location)
Regions
 Coastal
 Forest
Role of women in various societies
Model chaste women (Sītā, Draupadī, Mandodarī, etc.)
Various types of families (polygamy in Rāma's family; step-parents, half-brothers)
Family trees

Mathematics:

Formulas to determine the strength of various types of bridges
Force needed to jump from the end of India to Laṅkā
Estimates of size of Kumbhakarṇa
Time & yuga cycles—time calculated differently in different parts of universe

Technology:

Slide show or film showing Rāma's life
Animations of killing of demons or fight scenes

Kṛṣṇa Consciousness: Related Topics:

Kṛṣṇa gives shelter to devotees in all types of bodies
Three modes of nature
The difference between the sura and asuras
Why Kṛṣṇa displays human-like behavior in His incarnations
How demons can see Kṛṣṇa's power and still not surrender
Varṇāśrama
Qualities of devotees
 Real renunciation
 Truthfulness
 Loyalty
 Desireless

Health & Safety:

Personal safety—kidnapping, abuse
Nutrition & diet
Emotional Health
Anger
Results of sin
Fire safety

Dance & Drama:

Welcoming Sītā & Rāma back to Ayodhyā
Victory celebration in Laṅkā
Vibhīṣaṇa's coronation in Laṅkā
Sītā, Rāma, & Lakṣmaṇa going to the forest
Battles (with individual demons in the forest & in Laṅkā)
Monkeys rejoicing having found Sītā

THE PASTIMES OF THE SUPREME LORD, RĀMACANDRA FROM THE ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

1 Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The son of Mahārāja Khaṭvāṅga was Dīrghabāhu, and his son was the celebrated Mahārāja Raghu. From Mahārāja Raghu came Aja, and from Aja was born the great personality Mahārāja Daśaratha.

2 Being prayed for by the demigods, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Absolute Truth Himself, directly appeared with His expansion and expansions of the expansion. Their holy names were Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata and Śatruḡha. These celebrated incarnations thus appeared in four forms as the sons of Mahārāja Daśaratha.

3 - O King Parīkṣit, the transcendental activities of Lord Rāmacandra have been described by great saintly persons who have seen the truth. Because you have heard again and again about Lord Rāmacandra, the husband of mother Sītā, I shall describe these activities only in brief. Please listen.

4 - To keep the promise of His father intact, Lord Rāmacandra immediately gave up the position of king and, accompanied by His wife, mother Sītā, wandered from one forest to another on His lotus feet, which were so delicate that they were unable to bear even the touch of Sītā's palms. The Lord was also accompanied by Hanumān [or by another monkey, Sugrīva], king of the monkeys, and by His own younger brother Lord Lakṣmaṇa, both of whom gave Him relief from the fatigue of wandering in the forest. Having cut off the nose and ears of Śūrpaṅakhā, thus disfiguring her, the Lord was separated from mother Sītā. He therefore became angry, moving His eyebrows and thus frightening the ocean, who then allowed the Lord to construct a bridge to cross the ocean. Subsequently, the Lord entered the kingdom of Rāvaṇa to kill him, like a fire devouring a forest. May that Supreme Lord, Rāmacandra, give us all protection.

5 - In the arena of the sacrifice performed by Viśvāmitra, Lord Rāmacandra, the King of Ayodhyā, killed many demons, Rākṣasas and uncivilized men who wandered at night in the mode of darkness. May Lord Rāmacandra, who killed these demons in the presence of Lakṣmaṇa, be kind enough to give us protection.

6-7 - O King, the pastimes of Lord Rāmacandra were wonderful, like those of a baby elephant. In the assembly where mother Sītā was to choose her husband, in the midst of the heroes of this world, He broke the bow belonging to Lord Śiva. This bow was so heavy that it was carried by three hundred men, but Lord Rāmacandra bent and strung it and broke it in the middle, just as a baby elephant breaks a stick of sugarcane. Thus the Lord achieved the hand of mother Sītā, who was equally as endowed with transcendental qualities of form, beauty, behavior, age and nature. Indeed, she was the goddess of fortune who constantly rests on the chest of the Lord. While returning from Sītā's home after gaining her at the assembly of competitors, Lord Rāmacandra met Paraśurāma. Although Paraśurāma was very proud, having rid the earth of the royal order twenty-one times, he was defeated by the Lord, who appeared to be a kṣatriya of the royal order.

8 - Carrying out the order of His father, who was bound by a promise to his wife, Lord Rāmacandra left behind His kingdom, opulence, friends, well-wishers, residence and everything else, just as a liberated soul gives up his life, and went to the forest with Sītā.

9 - While wandering in the forest, where He accepted a life of hardship, carrying His invincible bow and arrows in His hand, Lord Rāmacandra deformed Rāvaṇa's sister, who was polluted with lusty desires, by cutting off her nose and ears. He also killed her fourteen thousand Rākṣasa friends, headed by

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Khara, Triśira and Dūṣaṇa.

10 - O King Parīkṣit, when Rāvaṇa, who had ten heads on his shoulders, heard about the beautiful and attractive features of Sītā, his mind was agitated by lusty desires, and he went to kidnap her. To distract Lord Rāmacandra from His āśrama, Rāvaṇa sent Mārīca in the form of a golden deer, and when Lord Rāmacandra saw that wonderful deer, He left His residence and followed it and finally killed it with a sharp arrow, just as Lord Śiva killed Dakṣa.

11 - When Rāmacandra entered the forest and Lakṣmaṇa was also absent, the worst of the Rākṣasas, Rāvaṇa, kidnapped Sītādevī, the daughter of the King of Videha, just as a tiger seizes unprotected sheep when the shepherd is absent. Then Lord Rāmacandra wandered in the forest with His brother Lakṣmaṇa as if very much distressed due to separation from His wife. Thus He showed by His personal example the condition of a person attached to women.

12 - Lord Rāmacandra, whose lotus feet are worshiped by Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, had assumed the form of a human being. Thus He performed the funeral ceremony of Jaṭāyu, who was killed by Rāvaṇa. The Lord then killed the demon named Kabandha, and after making friends with the monkey chiefs, killing Vāli and arranging for the deliverance of mother Sītā, He went to the beach of the ocean.

13 - After reaching the beach, Lord Rāmacandra fasted for three days, awaiting the arrival of the ocean personified. When the ocean did not come, the Lord exhibited His pastimes of anger, and simply by His glancing over the ocean, all the living entities within it, including the crocodiles and sharks, were agitated by fear. Then the personified ocean fearfully approached Lord Rāmacandra, taking all paraphernalia to worship Him. Falling at the Lord's lotus feet, the personified ocean spoke as follows.

14 - O all-pervading Supreme Person, we are dull-minded and did not understand who You are, but now we understand that You are the Supreme Person, the master of the entire universe, the unchanging and original Personality of Godhead. The demigods are infatuated with the mode of goodness, the Prajāpatis with the mode of passion, and the lord of ghosts with the mode of ignorance, but You are the master of all these qualities.

15 - My Lord, You may use my water as You like. Indeed, You may cross it and go to the abode of Rāvaṇa, who is the great source of disturbance and crying for the three worlds. He is the son of Viśravā, but is condemned like urine. Please go kill him and thus regain Your wife, Sītādevī. O great hero, although my water presents no impediment to Your going to Laṅkā, please construct a bridge over it to spread Your transcendental fame. Upon seeing this wonderfully uncommon deed of Your Lordship, all the great heroes and kings in the future will glorify You.

16 - Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After constructing a bridge over the ocean by throwing into the water the peaks of mountains whose trees and other vegetation had been shaken by the hands of great monkeys, Lord Rāmacandra went to Laṅkā to release Sītādevī from the clutches of Rāvaṇa. With the direction and help of Vibhīṣaṇa, Rāvaṇa's brother, the Lord, along with the monkey soldiers, headed by Sugrīva, Nīla and Hanumān, entered Rāvaṇa's kingdom, Laṅkā, which had previously been burnt by Hanumān.

17 - After entering Laṅkā, the monkey soldiers, led by chiefs like Sugrīva, Nīla and Hanumān, occupied all the sporting houses, granaries, treasuries, palace doorways, city gates, assembly houses, palace frontages and even the resting houses of the pigeons. When the city's crossroads, platforms, flags and golden waterpots on its domes were all destroyed, the entire city of Laṅkā appeared like a river disturbed by a herd of elephants.

18 - When Rāvaṇa, the master of the Rākṣasas, saw the disturbances created by the monkey soldiers, he called for Nikumbha, Kumbha, Dhūmrākṣa, Durmukha, Surāntaka, Narāntaka and other Rākṣasas

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

and also his son Indrajit. Thereafter he called for Prahasta, Atikāya, Vikampana and finally Kumbhakarṇa. Then he induced all his followers to fight against the enemies.

19 - Lord Rāmacandra, surrounded by Lakṣmaṇa and monkey soldiers like Sugrīva, Hanumān, Gandhamāda, Nīla, Aṅgada, Jāmbavān and Panasa, attacked the soldiers of the Rākṣasas, who were fully equipped with various invincible weapons like swords, lances, bows, prāsas, ṛṣtis, śakti arrows, khaḍgas and tomaras.

20 - Aṅgada and the other commanders of the soldiers of Rāmacandra faced the elephants, infantry, horses and chariots of the enemy and hurled against them big trees, mountain peaks, clubs and arrows. Thus the soldiers of Lord Rāmacandra killed Rāvaṇa's soldiers, who had lost all good fortune because Rāvaṇa had been condemned by the anger of mother Sītā.

21 - Thereafter, when Rāvaṇa, the king of the Rākṣasas, observed that his soldiers had been lost, he was extremely angry. Thus he mounted his airplane, which was decorated with flowers, and proceeded toward Lord Rāmacandra, who sat on the effulgent chariot brought by Mātali, the chariot driver of Indra. Then Rāvaṇa struck Lord Rāmacandra with sharp arrows.

22 - Lord Rāmacandra said to Rāvaṇa: You are the most abominable of the man-eaters. Indeed, you are like their stool. You resemble a dog, for as a dog steals eatables from the kitchen in the absence of the householder, in My absence you kidnapped My wife, Sītādevī. Therefore as Yamarāja punishes sinful men, I shall also punish you. You are most abominable, sinful and shameless. Today, therefore, I, whose attempt never fails, shall punish you.

23 - After thus rebuking Rāvaṇa, Lord Rāmacandra fixed an arrow to His bow, aimed at Rāvaṇa, and released the arrow, which pierced Rāvaṇa's heart like a thunderbolt. Upon seeing this, Rāvaṇa's followers raised a tumultuous sound, crying, "Alas! Alas! What has happened? What has happened?" as Rāvaṇa, vomiting blood from his ten mouths, fell from his airplane, just as a pious man falls to earth from the heavenly planets when the results of his pious activities are exhausted.

24 - Thereafter, all the women whose husbands had fallen in the battle, headed by Mandodarī, the wife of Rāvaṇa, came out of Laṅkā. Continuously crying, they approached the dead bodies of Rāvaṇa and the other Rākṣasas.

25 - Striking their breasts in affliction because their husbands had been killed by the arrows of Lakṣmaṇa, the women embraced their respective husbands and cried piteously in voices appealing to everyone.

26 - O my lord, O master! You epitomized trouble for others, and therefore you were called Rāvaṇa. But now that you have been defeated, we also are defeated, for without you the state of Laṅkā has been conquered by the enemy. To whom will it go for shelter?

27 - O greatly fortunate one, you came under the influence of lusty desires, and therefore you could not understand the influence of mother Sītā. Now, because of her curse, you have been reduced to this state, having been killed by Lord Rāmacandra.

28 - O pleasure of the Rākṣasa dynasty, because of you the state of Laṅkā and also we ourselves now have no protector. By your deeds you have made your body fit to be eaten by vultures and your soul fit to go to hell.

29 - Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Vibhīṣaṇa, the pious brother of Rāvaṇa and devotee of Lord Rāmacandra, received approval from Lord Rāmacandra, the King of Kosala. Then he performed the prescribed

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

funeral ceremonies for his family members to save them from the path to hell.

30 - Thereafter, Lord Rāmacandra found Sitādevī sitting in a small cottage beneath the tree named Simśapā in a forest of Aśoka trees. She was lean and thin, being aggrieved because of separation from Him.

31 - Seeing His wife in that condition, Lord Rāmacandra was very compassionate. When Rāmacandra came before her, she was exceedingly happy to see her beloved, and her lotuslike mouth showed her joy.

32 - After giving Vibhīṣaṇa the power to rule the Rākṣasa population of Laṅkā for the duration of one kalpa, Lord Rāmacandra, the Supreme Personality of Godhead [Bhagavān], placed Sitādevī on an airplane decorated with flowers and then got on the plane Himself. The period for His living in the forest having ended, the Lord returned to Ayodhyā, accompanied by Hanumān, Sugrīva and His brother Lakṣmaṇa.

33 - When Lord Rāmacandra returned to His capital, Ayodhyā, He was greeted on the road by the princely order, who showered His body with beautiful, fragrant flowers, while great personalities like Lord Brahmā and other demigods glorified the activities of the Lord in great jubilation.

34 - Upon reaching Ayodhyā, Lord Rāmacandra heard that in His absence His brother Bharata was eating barley cooked in the urine of a cow, covering His body with the bark of trees, wearing matted locks of hair, and lying on a mattress of kuśa. The most merciful Lord very much lamented this.

35-38 - When Lord Bharata understood that Lord Rāmacandra was returning to the capital, Ayodhyā, He immediately took upon His own head Lord Rāmacandra's wooden shoes and came out from His camp at Nandigrāma. Lord Bharata was accompanied by ministers, priests and other respectable citizens, by professional musicians vibrating pleasing musical sounds, and by learned brāhmaṇas loudly chanting Vedic hymns. Following in the procession were chariots drawn by beautiful horses with harnesses of golden rope. These chariots were decorated by flags with golden embroidery and by other flags of various sizes and patterns. There were soldiers bedecked with golden armor, servants bearing betel nut, and many well-known and beautiful prostitutes. Many servants followed on foot, bearing an umbrella, whisks, different grades of precious jewels, and other paraphernalia befitting a royal reception. Accompanied in this way, Lord Bharata, His heart softened in ecstasy and His eyes full of tears, approached Lord Rāmacandra and fell at His lotus feet with great ecstatic love.

39-40 - After offering the wooden shoes before Lord Rāmacandra, Lord Bharata stood with folded hands, His eyes full of tears, and Lord Rāmacandra bathed Bharata with tears while embracing Him with both arms for a long time. Accompanied by mother Sitā and Lakṣmaṇa, Lord Rāmacandra then offered His respectful obeisances unto the learned brāhmaṇas and the elderly persons in the family, and all the citizens of Ayodhyā offered their respectful obeisances unto the Lord.

41 - The citizens of Ayodhyā, upon seeing their King return after a long absence, offered Him flower garlands, waved their upper cloths, and danced in great jubilation.

42-43 - O King, Lord Bharata carried Lord Rāmacandra's wooden shoes, Sugrīva and Vibhīṣaṇa carried a whisk and an excellent fan, Hanumān carried a white umbrella, Śatrughna carried a bow and two quivers, and Sitādevī carried a waterpot filled with water from holy places. Aṅgada carried a sword, and Jāmbavān, King of the Rākṣas, carried a golden shield.

44 - O King Parīkṣit, as the Lord sat on His airplane of flowers, with women offering Him prayers and reciters chanting about His characteristics, He appeared like the moon with the stars and planets.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

45-46 - Thereafter, having been welcomed by His brother Bharata, Lord Rāmacandra entered the city of Ayodhyā in the midst of a festival. When He entered the palace, He offered obeisances to all the mothers, including Kaikeyī and the other wives of Mahārāja Daśaratha, and especially His own mother, Kauśalyā. He also offered obeisances to the spiritual preceptors, such as Vasiṣṭha. Friends of His own age and younger friends worshiped Him, and He returned their respectful obeisances, as did Lakṣmaṇa and mother Sītā. In this way they all entered the palace.

47 - Upon seeing their sons, the mothers of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata and Śatrughna immediately arose, like unconscious bodies returning to consciousness. The mothers placed their sons on their laps and bathed Them with tears, thus relieving themselves of the grief of long separation.

48 - The family priest or spiritual master, Vasiṣṭha, had Lord Rāmacandra cleanly shaved, freeing Him from His matted locks of hair. Then, with the cooperation of the elderly members of the family, he performed the bathing ceremony [abhiṣeka] for Lord Rāmacandra with the water of the four seas and with other substances, just as it was performed for King Indra.

49 - Lord Rāmacandra, fully bathed and His head clean-shaven, dressed Himself very nicely and was decorated with a garland and ornaments. Thus He shone brightly, surrounded by His brothers and wife, who were similarly dressed and ornamented.

50 - Being pleased by the full surrender and submission of Lord Bharata, Lord Rāmacandra then accepted the throne of the state. He cared for the citizens exactly like a father, and the citizens, being fully engaged in their occupational duties of varṇa and āśrama, accepted Him as their father.

51 - Lord Rāmacandra became King during Tretā-yuga, but because of His good government, the age was like Satya-yuga. Everyone was religious and completely happy.

52 - O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, best of the Bharata dynasty, during the reign of Lord Rāmacandra the forests, the rivers, the hills and mountains, the states, the seven islands and the seven seas were all favorable in supplying the necessities of life for all living beings.

53 - When Lord Rāmacandra, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was the King of this world, all bodily and mental suffering, disease, old age, bereavement, lamentation, distress, fear and fatigue were completely absent. There was even no death for those who did not want it.

54 - Lord Rāmacandra took a vow to accept only one wife and have no connection with any other women. He was a saintly king, and everything in His character was good, untinged by qualities like anger. He taught good behavior for everyone, especially for householders, in terms of varṇāśrama-dharma. Thus He taught the general public by His personal activities.

55 - Mother Sītā was very submissive, faithful, shy and chaste, always understanding the attitude of her husband. Thus by her character and her love and service she completely attracted the mind of the Lord.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Canto 9 chapter 10, by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

Bringing the Festival into the Rest of the Curriculum: Verse by Verse

Verse 1&2 – Ancestry of Lord Rāma

Śāstra – Sambandha

Incarnations and appearances of the Lord.

Social Studies – Society

Family relationships.

Make family trees for own family.

This could lead to the study of surnames, spiritual names, Family crests, etc.

Verse 4 – Very short summary of the Rāmāyana.

Language Arts – Writing

Talk about what a summary is. Write own summaries of the story from memory.

Reports. Tell the story in the style of a report, i.e. a newspaper report.

Poetry. Tell in the style of a narrative poem.

Verse 5 – Mode of Darkness

Śāstra – Sambandha

Modes of material nature.

Verse 6&7 – Lord Rāmacandra’s pastimes likened to those of a baby elephant

Language Arts – Writing

Using descriptive words about elephants.

Science – Life and Living—Animals and mammals.

Characteristics of elephants. Differences between African and Indian.

Arts and Crafts —Drawing

Illustrations of elephants.

Verse 8 – Lord Rāmacandra renounces everything.

Śāstra – Abhidheya

Understanding the principle of real renunciation

Vaiṣṇava behaviour — without material possessions; desireless; indifferent to material acquisitions.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Verse 9 – Lord Rāmacandra’s life of hardship in the forest

Language Arts – Writing —

Imaginative writing: What kinds of hardships would be encountered in the forest ?

Science – Life & Living

Trees.

Social Studies – Geography

Jungles, forests.

Environmental issues

Destruction of rainforests linked to meat industry; Clearing forests for cattle.

Verse 10 – Rāvana’s lusty desires

Śāstra – Sambandha

Misidentifications of the soul (maya).

Demigods – Story of Lord Siva and

Vaiṣṇava behaviour

Qualities of a devotee

Desireless

Controlling bad qualities.

Śāstra – Adidheya

Encourage development of healthy, enthusiastic desire to follow reg. Principles.

Language Arts – Writing

Summary of story of Lord Siva and Dakṣa.

Explain why Lord Rāmacandra’s killing of the deer is likened to this story.

Language Arts – Speaking and Listening

Debate on these two issues.

Verse 11 – Sītādevī left unprotected; Lord Rāmacandra’s separation from her.

Śāstra – Vaiṣṇava Culture

protection of women.

Śāstra – Sambandha

Omnipotency of the Lord

Separation from Sītā is spiritual.

Social Studies – Society

Gender roles.

Science – Health & Safety

Personal safety against physical, mental or sexual abuse.

Science – Life & Living

Animals.

Characteristics of tigers.

Art & Craft —Drawing

Illustrations of Tigers.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Verse 12 – Lord Rāma assumed form of human being; Funeral of Jatāyu. Arrival at the ocean.

Śāstra – Sambandha
Incarnations.

Social studies – Geography
Coastal regions.

Verse 13 – Lord Rāma exhibits anger.

Science – Life & Living
Life within the oceans.
Fierce creatures.

Science – Health & Safety
Anger and other emotions.

Art and Craft—Drawing
Pictures of crocodiles and sharks, etc.

Śāstra – Sambandha
Demigods.

Verse 14-15 – Prayers by the ocean personified.

Śāstra – Sambandha
3 modes of material nature.
Soul in relation to the Supreme Lord and the material world.
Omnipotency of the lord.
The source of all beings.
Misidentification of the soul (maya).

Śāstra – Abhidheya
Distinguishing between sura and asura.

Science – Life & Living
Water
Digestion and elimination. (Urine).

Verse 16 – Constructing a bridge of mountain peaks, and entering Lankā

Science – Earth and Beyond
Sun, moon and stars
Sinking and floating

Social Studies – Geography
Mountainous regions.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Verse 17 – Description of the City of Laṅkā

Language Arts – Writing

Reports on the destruction of Laṅkā.

Explaining – What kinds of occupations were to be found in Laṅkā

Descriptive writing about Laṅkā.

Arts and Crafts –Architecture.

Colour – Pictures of Laṅkā from the descriptions before and after destruction; elephants in the river.

Drawing real objects – perspective (buildings, etc).

Science – Life & Living

Common Birds

Pigeons.

Mammals

Elephants.

Verses 18-20 – The Battle

Language Arts – Writing

Descriptions of the battle in the forms of reports and narratives

Arts & Crafts—Drawing

Draw battle scenes.

Find pictures of and draw weapons mentioned, animals, etc.

Verse 21 - Airplanes

Science – Health & Safety

Anger and other emotions.

Science – The Physical World

Air, atmosphere.

Gravity.

Motors and engines.

Arts & Crafts—Drawing, sculpture

Pictures of planes, flower planes.

Models of planes

Verse 22 – Lord Rāma chastises Rāvana

Śāstra – Sambandha

Two types of living entities, sura and asura.

Karma. Punishment by Yamarāja.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Verse 23 – Lord Rāma kills Rāvana

Science – Earth and Beyond

Electrical storms

Thunderbolts.

Śāstra – Sambandha

Karma.

Return to earth when results of pious activities exhausted.

Verse 26 – The women of Lankā lament.

Science – Health & Safety –

Protecting self against troublemakers such as Rāvaṇa.

Sinful activities.

Mental and emotional health.

Verse 27 – The power of Chaste women

Śāstra – Sambandha

Karma

Regulative principles.

Qualities of a devotee

Desireless

Controlling bad qualities.

Śāstra – Vaiṣṇava Culture

Examples of Vaiṣṇava saints

Draupadī, Mandodarī, etc.

Verse 28 – The women of Lankā left with no protection. Rāvana fit for hell.

Śāstra – Sambandha

Karma.

Śāstra – Vaiṣṇava culture

Protection of women.

Social studies – Thinking skills

Ethics and morality.

Verse 29 – Vibhīṣana performs Rāvana's funeral ceremony to save him from hell.

Śāstra – sambandha

Karma

Vedic ceremonies.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Verse 30-31 – Lord Rāma finds Sītā.

Science – Life & living

Trees

Science – health & safety

Health & hygiene

Nutrition & diet

Mental and emotional health

Verse 32 – Vibhīṣaṇa rules Laṅkā. Returning to Ayodha

Maths

Yugas, Time

Science – physical world

Air, atmosphere

Gravity

Motors, engines.

Art & Craft – Illustrations & sculpture

Planes & flower planes.

Verse 33 – Arrival in Ayodhyā.

Science – life & living

Flowers

Verse 34 – Bharata's austerities

Science – Life& living

Seeds, bulbs, plants, flowers, barley, and other grains.

Verse 35-41 – Bharata greets Lord Rāma.

Language Arts – writing & speaking

Welcoming Lord Rāma to Ayodhyā: Reports, Descriptive essays, Poetry

Performing Arts- Music

Melody, rhythm, Vedic & Western scale

Instruments for kīrtana, bhajana.

Art & craft

Sewing – embroidery

Jewelry making

Flower designs and decorations – garlands.

Science – life & living

Rocks and minerals

Precious stones.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Verse 42-43 – Greeting Lord Rāma, continued.

Śāstra – sambandha
Arati & arati paraphernalia

Verse 44 – The Lord likened to the moon with stars and planets

Science – Earth and beyond
Moon
Stars and planets
Space, space exploration
General astronomy

Verse 45-47 – Lord Rāma meets His family members

Śāstra – Vaiṣṇava culture
Interpersonal skills
Dealing with different levels of devotees/non-devotees.

Social studies – society
Ideal family relations
Gender roles

Verse 48-49 – Lord Rāma's Abhiseka

Śāstra – Abhidheya
Deity worship
Abhiseka.

Science – life & living
Oceans.

Verse 50 – Lord Rāma becomes king

Śāstra – Vaiṣṇava culture
Awareness of Iskcon's heritage and relation to Vedic culture.
Kṛṣṇa Consciousness and Vaiṣṇava culture.

Social studies – society
Occupations
Citizenship
Interdependence in a community
Varṇāśrama

Verse 51 – Tretā and Satya Yugas.

Social studies – history
Four yugas

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Verse 52 – All necessities of life present during Lord Rāma’s reign

Social studies – geography

Mountainous regions
Food
Clothes
Shelter
Tropical jungles
Major continents, countries, bodies of water.

Science – life & living

Air
Water
Trees

Verse 53 – Lord Rāma’s reign, continued.

Śāstra – sambandha

Misidentification of the soul, maya.
Birth, old age, disease, death.

Science – Health & safety

health & hygiene
Diseases, preventive measures.
community health measures.
water supply
sewage disposal
nutrition & diet
disease carrying insects and pests.
mental and emotional health

Verse 54-55 – Lord Rāma as the ideal husband, Sītā as the ideal wife.

Śāstra – abhidheya

necessity of following the 4 regulative principles, 4 pillars of religion.
understanding the real purpose of renunciation.

Śāstra – Vaiṣṇava culture –

respect and social responsibility
dealing with devotees and non-devotees
inspiration of lives through lives of Vaiṣṇava saints (Lord Rāma and Sītādevī here).

Social studies – society

Varṇāśrama.
Ideal family relations
Gender roles

Social studies – Thinking skills

Ethics, morality

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Rubric for Collaborative Work Skills For assessing how well children work together on projects

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Contributions	Routinely provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A definite leader who contributes a lot of effort.	Usually provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A strong group member who tries hard!	Sometimes provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A satisfactory group member who does what is required.	Rarely provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. May refuse to participate.
Quality of Work	Provides work of the highest quality.	Provides high quality work that occasionally needs to be checked/redone by other group members to ensure quality	Provides work that often needs to be checked/redone by others to ensure quality.	Provides work that usually needs to be checked/redone by others to ensure quality.
Time-management	Routinely uses time well throughout the project to ensure things get done on time. Group does not have to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities because of this person's procrastination.	Usually uses time well throughout the project, but may have procrastinated on one thing. Group does not have to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities because of this person's procrastination.	Tends to procrastinate, but always gets things done by the deadlines. Group does not have to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities because of this person's procrastination.	Rarely gets things done by the deadlines AND group has to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities because of this person's inadequate time management.
Working with Others	Almost always listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Tries to keep people working well together.	Usually listens to, shares, with, and supports the efforts of others. Does not cause "waves" in the group.	Often listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others, but sometimes is not a good team member.	Rarely listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Often is not a good team player.

Rubric for Projects

For assessing how well individual children completed projects

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<u>Use of Class Time</u>	Used time well during each class period. Focused on getting the project done. Never distracted others.	Used time well during each class period. Usually focused on getting the project done and never distracted others.	Used some of the time well during each class period. There was some focus on getting the project done but occasionally distracted others.	Did not use class time to focus on the project OR often distracted others.
<u>Graphics -Clarity</u>	Graphics are all in focus and the content easily viewed and identified from 2m. away.	Most graphics are in focus and the content easily viewed and identified from 2m. away.	Most graphics are in focus and the content is easily viewed and identified from 1m. away.	Many graphics are not clear or are too small.
<u>Knowledge Gained</u>	Student can accurately answer all questions related to facts in the activity and processes used to create the poster.	Student can accurately answer most questions related to facts in the activity and processes used to create the poster.	Student can accurately answer about 75% of questions related to facts in the activity and processes used to create the poster.	Student appears to have insufficient knowledge about the facts or processes used in the activity.
<u>Content - Accuracy</u>	More than 6 activities completed from each section	5-6 activities are completed from each section	3-4 activities completed from each section	2 activities completed from each section

**Summary of Bloom's Categories of Learning
that was Used to Create the Activities in this Guide**

Knowledge—repetition of facts, recognition of the fact in the form in which it was presented

Comprehension—demonstrating that one internalizes the meaning of the facts, as shown by matching a fact to a description, changing the information into another form, comparing and contrasting facts without evaluation, choosing which facts are implied in a conclusion or statement

Application—using understood facts, though not in an original way, such as solving a word problem in mathematics, putting together a research paper where one takes others' ideas and puts them into a flowing whole, physical action taken on the basis of what one has understood, such as organizing a river clean-up when studying ecology, teaching according to Bloom after studying him

Analysis—identifying logical or illogical means by which someone reached a conclusion, identifying unstated premises from a conclusion, reaching a conclusion from premises, breaking a whole into component parts and examining how they fit together

Synthesis—application that is original and creative, such as taking the principles of cultural capital, resiliency, and curriculum alignment and designing a curriculum model which gives low SES students equal opportunity to learn as well as personal resilience while facilitating middle and high SES students in fully utilizing their own lived experiences.

Evaluation—a determination of value, quality, usefulness, fairness, and so on based on a thorough understanding of the situation and facts as well as an analysis of how they are being or could be applied as well as creative ways of application.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Matrix of Bloom's Taxonomy & Gardner's Seven Intelligences

The activities in this guide were designed by using a matrix of Bloom's Taxonomy (Categories) of learning, along with Gardner's seven types of intelligence. Children will learn best when a wide variety of activities are used as learning experiences.

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES & BLOOM'S TAXONOMY						
Seven ways to be smart	Bloom's Taxonomy: Six Thinking Levels					
	Knowing	Understanding	Applying	Analysing	Creating	Evaluating
Verbal	Make an A-Z list What is the meaning Write facts about What is true or false List relevant info	Summarize Say in your own words Discuss Find the major points Explain Outline	Interview & survey Write a plan to... Make word puzzle about... Write report about Write an advertisement	Compare and contrast How many other ways? What does not belong? Research & report Debate	Original creative writing Original speech Create story board Write motto	Review a book, article Debate pros & cons Write recommendations Choose most important questions
Mathematical	Classify parts Describe steps Make time line Make facts chart	Prepare a flow chart Find patterns Summarize in graph Draw scale model	Summarize findings with numbers & graphs Explain cause & effect	Study info & transfer into a pie chart Create table to show... What is logically wrong? Experiment to prove...	Redesign a presentation Prepare itinerary Make argument to prove Predict Estimate	Decide what data to collect to assess a question Rate from most to least effective
Visual/Spatial	Use maps to... Illustrate ideas Show in chart Make picture book	Summarize in a diagram Illustrate with drawing Make a collage of	Arrange a room or space Plan route from info Use colour appropriately Demonstrate an artistic skill	Venn or Double-bubble Mind map Review art or film	Design board game Design building Create book cover Design logo	Rate art against criteria Choose the best design Develop art criteria
Kinaesthetic	Show by movement List while jumping Show learned skill	Role-play the concept Use gestures to explain	Demonstrate a physical skill Treasure hunt Do an experiment	Cook using principles (health, local foods, etc.) Classify movements Compare physical techniques	Design physical game Create puppet show Create & perform dance or drama	Rate physical training programs Review dance, sport, or drama performance
Musical	Sing from memory Identify instruments Learn while clapping Name sounds heard	Summarize with song Put ideas to music	Pick relevant background sounds or music Give example with music Put poem to music	Analyse pieces of music for select criteria compare & contrast music	Compose a piece of music Put together existing music Make songs to remember	Set criteria for the successful composition of a piece of music Rate music for specific purposes
Interpersonal	Work in groups Tell facts to others Teach facts to others Game based on recall	Teach others the concept Give team presentation	Organise and present a debate for and against Group plan for solving... Implement group plan	Group work to Different perspectives How many other ways? Finding cause & effect	In small groups create a quiz Devise interview format Negotiate solutions Do a group play	Offer feedback to others Work in groups to evaluate or rate...
Intrapersonal	List favourites... List goals... List strengths/weaknesses	Produce a brochure Give personal experience as example	Show how to solve... Solve problem... Think of questions to ask a literary or historical person Think of how others would solve	Imagining oneself in various situations & how one would act & why How one is similar to & different from others	Design a plan for personal change Map out career plan	Self evaluate the learning one has achieved through one's selection of activities Keep a journal recording your habits and evaluate your success

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Detailed Story of Lord Rāmacandra

Lord Rāma, the son of King Daśaratha, descended from Raghu in the Surya (Sun) dynasty.

When Lord Nārāyaṇa descended in this way in His Vāsudeva feature of Rāma, then Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, the quadruple Puruṣas, descended together along with Lakṣmī. Vāsudeva became Lord Rāmacandra, Saṅkarṣaṇa became Lakṣmaṇa, Pradyumna became Bharata, Aniruddha became Śatrughna, and Lakṣmī devi became Śrīmatī Sītā devi. That same Lord Nārāyaṇa thus appeared with His associates, Lakṣmaṇa being Sesa, Bharata His Sudarśana cakra, Śatrughna His śaṅkha conchshell and Lakṣmī the beautiful lotus flower.

Previously Vālmiki, having the name Ratnākara, was living in the forest, and to maintain his family he would kill and rob travelers in the forest. Some days he would come back with not very much, to which his demanding wife would ask, "Is that all you've brought?"

"Be patient dear, tomorrow a group of rich merchants will pass through the forest and I will relieve them of their wealth, " he would dutifully reply.

One day seven great sages passed through the forest. Ratnākara stopped them with his usual demands for their wealth or their lives. The sages replied that they were actually in the renounced order, and did not possess any wealth. They then asked the robber why he robbed as a profession. Ratnākara replied that he had to maintain his family, and robbery was his only means of livelihood. The sages asked him if his family, who lived on the fruits of his sinful activities, would partake of the results of his sins also, and told him to go and ask them and then come back with their answer.

Ratnakra seemed to think they would be with him completely, however, when the robber asked his wife and son if they would also share in the resultant reactions to his sins as well as the fruits, they both replied, "No! You are the sinner. Why should we share your sins?"

Devastated at the replies from his so-called loved ones, in tears he returned to the sages. Throwing himself at their feet, he begged for their mercy and forgiveness. The sages told Ratnākara to chant the holy name of Rāma, but Ratnakra stated that he had always preferred to chant Mara, or death. Anyway, those Saptarṣis, who are full of compassion told him to just sit there and recite "Mara" continuously. As he chanted maramaramarama continuously like that, the holy name of ramaramarama gradually became manifest. Sitting and chanting in this way in deep absorption on the holy name of the Lord, he sat for months and years, until finally his body became covered over by a Vālmiki (ant hill).

One day, many years later, the seven great sages returned and called to the now reformed robber. When he burst from the ant hill, the pleased sages gave him the new name Vālmiki. By his constant and intense devotion, he had meditated on the holy name of Lord Rāma, even at first unknowingly, but the potency of the holy name acts whether chanted knowingly, unknowingly, or even in a mocking way.

Vālmiki, now surcharged with spiritual potency, became respected everywhere by saintly devotees of the Lord. At this time, Nārada Muni came to see Vālmiki. Vālmiki, accepting Nārada as

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

his eternal spiritual master, enquired from him as to who among men is the most perfect. Nārada Muni said that King Rāma, the King of Ayodhyā, is the most perfect person, for He is the Personality of Godhead Nārāyaṇa Himself. Then Nārada Muni narrated the full story of the Rāmāyaṇa - the wonderful life story of Lord Rāma, after which he took his leave.

Vālmīki thought of nothing else, for he was always absorbed in thoughts of Rāma. Once Vālmīki, with some of his śiṣyas (students) headed for the Tamasa River for bathing. As Vālmīki described the glories of the Lord's creation - the river, the forest, the animals and birds who have taken shelter of the forest, he saw two krauñca birds in a tree, in courtship. Then in a second, a hunter pierced the male bird with an arrow and the bird fell to the ground, dead. The female bird, in despair, wailed in grieving tones for her mate.

Vālmīki said, even to his own surprise, to the hunter in perfect rhyme,

ma nisada pratistham tvam agamah sasvatissamah
yat krauncamithunad ekam avadhīh kamamohitam

"O hunter! May you ne'er be blest,
nor reach the realm of timeless rest,
for thou hast rent this krauñca-pari,
while they were joined in love most rare."

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa 1.2.14

As soon as he said these very poetic words from his own mouth, which were born out of grief (shoka), he had realized that a new format of stanza had come about. Later as Vālmīki wrote down the Rāmāyaṇa, the Sanksrit shoka became shloka, the poetry of his writing.

Lord Brahma personally came and instructed Vālmīki Muni, who had heard perfectly from Nārada Muni the story of Rāma, to write down the epic Rāmāyaṇa. Empowered by his gurus, he propounded these following pastimes.

Daśaratha chief wife, Kausalya, was Rāma's mother. The king had two other wives of the names Queen Sumitrā and Queen Kaikeyī. Lakṣmaṇa and Śatrughna were born to Sumitrā and Bharata was born to Kaikeyī.

When Rāma was sixteen years of age the sage Viśvāmitra came to Ayodhyā and requested Daśaratha to allow Prince Rāma to go to the forest with him. Viśvāmitra told Daśaratha that Rākṣasas, man eating demons, were constantly disturbing the sacrificial fires of the brāhmaṇas in the forest. Viśvāmitra Muni insisted that Rāma, was the only one who could perform the task, and so Rāma, accompanied by Lakṣmaṇa, his devoted brother, went with Viśvāmitra to the forest.

Practically as soon as they entered the forest, Tataka, a Rākṣasī, attacked the party.

tam apatantim vegena vikrantam asanimiva
sarebirasi vivyadha sa papata mamara ca

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

"She (Tataka) ran at Rāma in a flash like lightning. But Rāma sent an arrow into her breast and she fell down dead on the ground."

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa 1.25.14

Viśvāmitra then taught Lord Rāma, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, how to master the art of weaponry, using mantra weapons of all magical types. Viśvāmitra, being a great brāhmaṇa, knew all the Vedas, including the Dhanur Veda, governing warfare and weaponry.

After disposing of the demons that were causing a disturbance to the sages' sacrifices, Sri Rāma, his brother Lakṣmaṇa, and Viśvāmitra then headed north to the beautiful town of Mithilā which was ruled by King Janaka, hearing that there was to be the avayamvara of Janaka's impeccable and chaste daughter, the Princess Sītā.

atha me krsatah ksetram langalad utthita mama
ksetram sodhayata labdha namna siteti visruta

"(King Janaka recalled), "And as I was tilling the ground, a girl-child came out from under the plow. I gathered her up as I cleared that field, and I have named her 'Sītā' after that furrow."
Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa 1.65.14

King Janaka put a challenge out to the many suitors to come and win the lovely Sītādevī's hand as their wife. Janakaraजा had stated, "Come to Mithilā, come and string the great bow of Lord Śiva and win the hand of my daughter. Any prince who can do this surely will be qualified." Princes and kings from all over came, even Rāvaṇa, the king of the demons, but none could even lift the bow, what to speak of stringing the famed Haradhanu of Lord Śiva. That is, none except the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the crest jewel of the Surya Vamsa dynasty, "Raghu Pati" Rāma. Without even the slightest effort, Lord Rāma, with one hand, raised that mighty bow that had been wheeled into the assembly by five hundred men carriers. Not only did Rāma raise the bow, he strung it and then, as he flexed the bow string, he broke that bow. Who can imagine the potency of Lord Rāma? Upon winning the hand of Sītādevī, everyone in the assembly was extremely pleased. Mother Sītā then garlanded her Lord and that day their wedding was performed by expert brāhmaṇas.

Lord Rāma and Mother Sītā returned to Ayodhyā where they lived for many years happily. Everyone loved the divine couple and, because of their presence, Ayodhyā prospered. In due course, Rāma's aged father Daśaratha, announced his desire to retire and give up the throne, and that his eldest son, Rāma, was to become heir apparent. All kinds of lavish arrangements were made and the whole of Ayodhyā was decorated like a beautiful bride awaiting her husband.

But fate knew of another plan - the envious hunchback maidservant Manthara, who served Queen Kaikeyī the mother of Bharata, verbally tried to poison Kaikeyī's mind. She suggested to Kaikeyī that actually her son, Bharata, should be king and not Rāma. If Rāma became king, surely Kaikeyī would be banished or treated like a second class person, and made to serve them hand and foot. Kaikeyī could not believe such things, but with the constant badgering of the wicked Manthara, she became infected and weakened, just as sense gratification ruins a brāhmaṇa's austerity even though taken in small doses. Becoming covered over by the nagging

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Manthara, Kaikeyī believed what she said was true, and Manthara manipulated the weakened Kaikeyī into her plot.

Manthara said to Kaikeyī, "Do you remember the time when Daśaratha was once wounded in battle and you alone saved him from death at the hands of his enemy? For your devotion to him and your valor, he gave you two boons. However you chose not to request those boons until you wanted them. Kaikeyī, Now request those boons - ask that Bharata be made King and that Rāma be sent to the forest in exile for fourteen years. Do this. Kaikeyī. and you will be happy."

Kaikeyī sent a messenger to King Daśaratha and he came to her rooms. She then made her demands. Daśaratha, obliged to fulfill her boons, consented to her wish. Poor Daśaratha then collapsed, almost dead. "O Rāma, what have I done?" He remembered the curse of an old couple in the forest when he inadvertently killed their son. Mistaking the gurgling sound of the boy filling his water pot for an elephant drinking at the river, he pierced and killed him. The boy's parents, an old blind couple, cursed Daśaratha that he would die in separation from his son. "O, the reactions of past deeds eventually catch everyone, for every action has its concomitant reaction," the king said.

Daśaratha sent for Rāma, and on his arrival he heard the words that his father had promised to Kaikeyī - the instructions of going to the forest. Lord Rāma, to keep his father's promise intact, prepared himself to go the forest for fourteen years. On hearing this, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa convinced Rāma to allow them to go as well, and they all donned tree bark clothing, giving up costly silks and jewels, and the men took to having matted hair.

The citizens of Ayodhyā were very upset, begging Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā to stay. Upon hearing their plea denied, they said then they would also accompany Rāma to the forest. Rāma however, would not let the citizens accompany him into the forest, though the whole city was ready to go. They accompanied the trio to the edge of the forest, but at their night resting place on the far edge of the kingdom, Rāma Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa slipped away unnoticed. Heading south, they crossed the Rivers Tamasa, Vedaśruti and Gomati, before finally reaching the Ganges. There Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa met the chief of the hunter tribe by the name Guha, who supplied them with a boat to cross the Ganges. At this time they bade farewell to the chariot driver Sumantra and to Ayodhyā.

In Ayodhyā, King Daśaratha, out of intense separation, gave up his very life in constant remembrance of Rāma. When Bharata arrived back in Ayodhyā after spending some time at his maternal parents' house, he found out what his mother had been a party to. With all of his army he took off to the forest to try to request Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa to return.

Seeing the forest animals disturbed and a great movement of dust heading their way, Rāma could understand that Bharata and his army had come from Ayodhyā. Enquiring as to the welfare of his dear father, Rāma hear from Bharata the sad report that their father had passed from this world and had gone to the spiritual world. Bharata stated that he didn't want to be king, and that Rāma should come back and take the throne. When Rāma declined, Bharata, in great humility, put on tree bark clothing, rubbed the sap of bhurja (a kind a birch tree) into his own hair, and begging at Rāma's lotus feet, asked Rāma for his karam chappels (wooded peg shoes).

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Rāma stepped out of his peg shoes and Bharata placed them on his own head. "Rāma, if you will not come back, then I will rule on your behalf, placing your worshipful shoes on the throne, I, Prince Bharata, will daily report the activities of Ayodhyā to your shoes until your return." Bharata then returned to Ayodhyā, and for fourteen years ruled Ayodhyā in that way.

Meanwhile, Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa pushed on further south, and met the sage Atri and his good wife Anasurya. Staying with them for one night, Rāma and Sītā rejoined Lakṣmaṇa to head further south and into the Daṇḍakāraṇya forest.

Rāma protected Sītā from the onslaught of the Rākṣasa Viradha, who was really a demigod cursed to roam in the forest, and who would be freed by the touch of Rāma. The freed Viradha told Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa to go further into the forest. Doing so, they arrived at the āśrama of the sages headed by Sutiksna, who welcomed the party very pleasingly. Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa stayed for some years at the sage's āśrama as their protectors. During Rāma's stay, these ascetics found the peace and tranquility they constantly sought, living lives of recluse in the forest with their Lord. Rāma vowed to protect the forest sages from man-eating demons.

Rāma then moved further south with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa to the āśrama of Agastya Muni. The stern and bold Muni bestowed all kinds of mystical weapons upon Rāma, and told him of Pañcavaṭī just sixteen miles from there. Pañcavaṭī is beautiful and abundant with all kinds of natural opulences, such as fruit-bearing trees and bushes, root crops, fresh water, and deer.

Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa went to that beautiful place, Pañcavaṭī, and stayed there happily for quite some time. Many seasons came and went and they all enjoyed their new forest home. from time to time Rāma and Sītā would explore the forest, enjoying the wonders that nature manifests. All the animals, birds, trees and creepers of the forest were pleased to be there with the Lord and His divine consort, Mother Sītā, served and watched over by the protective Lakṣmaṇa.

Then, one day the sister of the King of the demons came by Pañcavaṭī, the ugly, hunch backed demoness, Śūrpaṇakhā. She saw Rāma and immediately wanted him for herself. Śūrpaṇakhā, lusty and overcome with passion, with copper coloured hair, a blarge belly, deformed eyes, and harsh croaking voice, transformed her appearance into that of a beautiful woman and said to Rāma, "Wearing matted locks and dressed in the bark of an ascetic, wielding a bow and arrows, and accompanied with your wife, how have you come to this region frequented by ogres? What is the object of your visit? Please tell me why."

Rāma told Śūrpaṇakhā the whole story. Śūrpaṇakhā then glorified her own lineage - her father Viśravā, her demoniac brothers Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarna, Khara and Dūṣaṇa, and Vibhīṣaṇa who was not really an ogre at all, being of a pious nature. Then Śūrpaṇakhā glorified herself saying how she surpassed all of them. "O Rāma, ever since I set eyes on you I wanted you for my husband. I am richly endowed with power, therefore be my husband. Forget this Sītā. What can you accomplish with her? She is ugly and deformed and is not worthy of you."

Rāma, laughing, replied, "I am already married, and for you to be a co-wife would be most painful. But here is my younger brother, Lakṣmaṇa, glorious and brave, strong, handsome and here without his wife. Accept him as your husband, charming lady."

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Śūrpaṅakhā spoke to Lakṣmaṇa, "Come with me. I shall be your wife. Possessed as I am with nice complexion, let us wander through the Daṇḍakāraṇya forest together and enjoy delights."

Lakṣmaṇa replied, "I am just a servant of Rāma. How could you want to become a maidservant. You should insist that Rāma accept you as his wife."

"Yes," said Śūrpaṅakhā. "Why, Rāma, do you cling to this hideous human lady, deformed with a sunken belly? I will devour her today then you will marry me."

As the demoness ran at Sītā to devour her, Lakṣmaṇa drew his sword and cut off Śūrpaṅakhā's nose and ears. Yelling and cursing, the demoness, covered in her own blood, ran into the forest screaming. The faithful Lakṣmaṇa was always ready to serve the divine couple in a selfless manner.

Śūrpaṅakhā returned to her brothers Khara and Dūṣaṇa, who then, with their entire armies, attacked Rāma. Killing all of their fourteen thousand Rākṣasas with the mystical weapons given by Agastya, Rāma emerged victorious. Hearing of this, Rāvaṇa planned to go to Pañcavaṭī. With red eyes full of lust and anger, the demon Rāvaṇa took advice from the demon Akampana and desired revenge for his sister and brothers.

When Rāvaṇa approached Pañcavaṭī to distract Lord Rāma from the āśrama, he sent Mārīca the magician, the son of Tataka, disguised in the form of a golden deer with silver spots. Sītā, wanting that deer, asked Rāma to get it for her. Lakṣmaṇa feared a trick, for it was too attractive a deer to be real. Rāma went to the forest and, with an arrow, shot the deer. The fake deer let out cries of, "Lakṣmaṇa, come help me!" before it died, revealing its true form as Mārīca.

Although he heard the cry, Lakṣmaṇa was reluctant to leave Sītā alone for fear of Rākṣasa tricks. Sītā, however, forced Lakṣmaṇa to go to Rāma even though Rāma had told Lakṣmaṇa not to leave her. Sītā suggested to Lakṣmaṇa that the real reason he didn't want to go to see if Rāma was all right was that really all these years Lakṣmaṇa had been waiting for the opportune moment to himself take Sītā. Lakṣmaṇa was bitterly hurt by this accusation. Sītā called him an ignoble and merciless enemy of his righteous brother. Bereft of her Rāma, Sītā was ready to throw herself into the Godavari River or even hang herself.

Lakṣmaṇa, unable to bear Sītā's torment any longer, conceded to go and look for Rāma.

Soon after Lakṣmaṇa's leaving the āśrama, the demon Rāvaṇa, came by dressed as a mendicant. He was dressed in saffron robes, wearing a sikha and carrying an umbrella on his right shoulder. In his left hand he was carrying a sannyāsī danda and a kamaṇḍalu fashioned from a coconut shell for carrying water. At the sight of Rāvaṇa dressed as a wandering mendicant trying to trick Sītā, even the sacred Godavari River, which has a swift current, slowed and in places ran backwards out of fear. Rāvaṇa, chanting Vedic mantra to make Sītā think he was saintly, then approached her with lust in his heart.

"O lady, you possess a beautiful countenance. Decorated in gold and silver and dressed in yellow silk, your eyes, hands and feet are like lotuses. Are you Śrī (the goddess residing over

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

modesty), Śrī (the goddess of elegance) or Kīrti (the goddess of fame)? Are you Lakṣmī (the goddess of fortune), Bhūti (the goddess of mystic powers) or Rati (the goddess of bodily love, the consort of Kāmadeva-Cupid)? Your smooth white teeth like jasmine buds, and your large clear eyes tinged at the edges with red and large dark pupils. Your broad and fleshy hips..." the lusty rascal continued.

Aranya Khanda Vālmiki Ramanayana Canto 45.15-28

Sītā received her guest well and offered him some nice foodstuffs. Over the meal Rāvaṇa enquired all about her. He then asked Sītā to become his principal queen. Rāvaṇa glorified himself as the king of the demons. Sītā rebuked the approaches of Rāvaṇa and tried to get away, but Rāvaṇa captured her. Returning to his normal form with ten heads, he summoned his chariot drawn by donkeys. Sītā still verbally challenged him as she was being carried away, saying, "It may be possible to survive after the abduction of Śacī the consort of Indra, but to try to do this to the consort of Rāma, you will never find peace."

"Just as a tiger seizes unprotected sheep when the shepherd is absent, Rāvaṇa kidnapped Sītādevī the daughter of the King of Videha. Then Lord Rāmacandra wandered in the forest with his brother Lakṣmaṇa as if they were very much distressed due to separation from Rāma's wife. Thus he showed by his personal example the condition of a person attached to women." (SB 9.10.11) This was his pastime.

When Rāvaṇa kidnapped Sītādevī he was obstructed by Jaṭāyu, the eagle friend of King Daśaratha, but the powerful Rāvaṇa cut off the valiant Jaṭāyu's wings and claws in a fight that knocked Rāvaṇa from his flying chariot and left him bleeding.

When Rāma came by that area later, he almost mistook the dying Jaṭāyu for a demon. Rāma could see that a fight had taken place and then Jaṭāyu revealed who he was, what had happened, and who had take mother Sītā. Lord Rāma then performed the funeral rite for Jaṭāyu.

As Rāvaṇa flew through the sky with mother Sītā, she saw five monkey chiefs, and threw a small bundle of jewels in their direction, hoping that they may get word to Rāma of what was happening to her. As they passed by the Pampa Lake region, Rāvaṇa, delighted with himself, carried in his arms his own death personified, Sītā. Finally they reached his island kingdom of Laṅkā where he placed Sītādevī in his own rooms and again approached her to become his queen. The pure hearted Sītā refused again, and was then escorted to the Aśoka garden by ugly and demoniac ogresses on the order of Rāvaṇa.

In the meantime, while Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa looked in the forest for Sītā, Rāma killed the demon Kabandha, who, after revealing his true identity and how he was cursed to roam the forest, told Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to make friends with Sugrīva. Reaching the area of the forest where the Vānaras (a race of forest dwelling monkeys) live, he made friends with Sugrīva and other chiefs, and then killed Vali, the brother and enemy of Sugrīva, the monkey king.

Lord Rāma, with the aid of the monkeys, planned how to recover Sītā from the king of the demons. Staying the four months of the rainy season at Hāmpi on the banks of the Tuṅgabhadra River, the rainy season came and went. After the autumnal month of Kārtika, which is the fourth month of the rainy season, water cascades in the rivers and the hills are lush and green.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

This was the time for the Vānaras to go further south and turn upside down every place until they found where Rāvaṇa has hidden Sītā.

The intoxicated Sugrīva needed to be reminded of his promise. Hanumān urged Sugrīva to collect his army to search out Rāma's Sītā. Lakṣmaṇa prepared to kill Sugrīva for breaking his promise, but was pacified by the monkey women. He then cast his angry eyes upon Prince Aṅgada, who dragged out the intoxicated Sugrīva by his feet. He had been sleeping with Ruma Tara. Hanumān told Sugrīva to pacify Lakṣmaṇa and start the search for Sītā.

When Sugrīva commanded the Vānaras to go in different directions to look for Sītā, they each disclosed their capacities to jump across the sea, thus proving that all living entities are not one and the same, for even the monkey soldiers had their limitations, but Hanumān, who has the biggest jumping power, proved his supremacy over the others and flew through the air towards Laṅkā. Hanumān was the last to arrive back and came amazingly, with good news. He had met Sītādevī, and she was safe and well, yet in deep separation from Rāma. He had been captured, set fire to the city, and escaped. Upon hearing this, Rāma wanted to confer all kinds of boons upon the gallant Hanumān, but Hanumān only asked, "Let me be blessed that at every moment of my life it be filled with devotion for You without terms or conditions; this is my desire and let that only increase." This was the pure devotion of Hanumān.

The fact that Lord Rāma controlled the masses of Vānaras, who normally were fidgety and easily distracted proves not only that He is the well wisher of all living entities, but also the natural dependency of all living entities on the Lord. Lord Rāma prepared the Vānara armies and went to the farthest tip of land in the southern direction. Fasting for three days at that place, Rāma awaited Samudra, the ocean personified, to come before him. When Samudra did not come, the Lord exhibited his pastime of anger, and simply glancing over the ocean all the living entities within the ocean were struck with fear. Then Samudra, in a fearful state, approached Lord Rāmacandra. Worshipping him with sweet words and paraphernalia, Samudra said to Rāma that he and his Vānara army may cross to the abode of that demoniac person who is a source of disturbance and cause of crying for the three worlds, Rāvaṇa. The ocean continued by urging Rāma to go now and kill the demons and reclaim his beloved wife.

Everyone helped to construct a floating bridge across the ocean, which was made of the peaks of mountains and huge stone carried by the monkeys. Actually even the lesser physically endowed animals, and even insects like the spider, helped. All came to render service to Rāma. At one stage Hanumān ridiculed the spider for rolling small stones to help construct the bridge, but Rāma rebuked this, saying that his devotional service was just as valuable as that of the monkeys and bears who carried mountain peaks and logs.

In Laṅkā, Vibhīṣaṇa, Rāvaṇa's pious brother, tried to convince Rāvaṇa to give up Sītā, and admit he had made a mistake, thus stopping the destruction of Laṅkā and the dynasty of the demons. Rāvaṇa, full of materialistic false pride and arrogance, stubbornly became angry at the good advice given by Vibhīṣaṇa and threatened him with imprisonment. Vibhīṣaṇa flew through the sky across the ocean and joined Rāma.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

With the inside help given by Vibhīṣaṇa, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and the Vānara army headed by Sugrīva, Nīla and Hanumān, entered Rāvaṇa's kingdom which had previously been devastated by fires set by Hanumān, and a great battle ensued.

When Rāvaṇa saw the disturbance created by the monkey soldiers, he called for various Rākṣasas, and also his son, Indrajit. He then called for his valiant sons and great generals, and finally the giant Kumbhakarṇa, but one by one they were all vanquished by the army led by Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Even though the Rākṣasas were materially very powerful, because their leader had taken Mother Sītā, they were all doomed.

Finally Rāvaṇa tried to attack Rāma while mounted on his aircraft, which was decorated with flowers. He rushed at Rāma. With his arrows Rāma took off the demon's ten heads one by one, but another head would simultaneously grow back. Rāma smashed Rāvaṇa for seven days continuously. It seemed that the Rākṣasa could not be killed, but then Vibhīṣaṇa reminded Rāma of how to kill Rāvaṇa. Loading his bow with an especially powerful arrow given by Agastya Muni, Rāma pierced deep into the Rākṣasa king's heart like a thunderbolt. Rāvaṇa, vomiting blood from his ten mouths, fell from his airplane.

Mandodarī, the chaste and faithful wife of Rāvaṇa, rushed to his side and collapsed at the sight of his dead body. Vibhīṣaṇa looked on sorrowfully at the devastated Mandodarī, but what could now be said? Vibhīṣaṇa had tried his utmost to warn Rāvaṇa and all of his dead accomplices, but they would not listen. Determined to fulfill his lusty materialistic desires for sense gratification and try to enjoy the property of the Lord, Rāvaṇa brought this catastrophe upon himself.

Vibhīṣaṇa then approached and took shelter of Rāma, who gave his approval to perform the funeral rites for the whole of the Rākṣasa clan. Afterwards Vibhīṣaṇa released Sītādevī and reunited her with Rāma.

Sītā was thin, aggrieved out of separation from her Lord, and Rāma, seeing her in that condition, was compassionate, though still a little distant due to her being away from home for some time in another man's house. Sītā swore in a quavering voice that her purity of body and her chastity of heart were never touched by any of the Rākṣasas. Distressed at Rāma's doubt, Sītā opted to enter into fire to prove her point.

Agnideva personally carried out Sītā unscathed from the fire and she resumed her place with Rāma. As the real Sītādevī reappeared from the blazing fire dressed in fine yellow silken sari, Rāma greeted her saying that he never for one moment doubted her purity or chastity, but that this whole ordeal was arranged to remove the doubts of the general people.

Śrīmatī Sītā is definitely the most chaste, for she only had thoughts for Rāma - no other person entered her thoughts for even a second. In the four types of chaste women, the fourth class, even though she has desires to associate with other men, has no opportunity. Obviously this is not Mother Sītā, for the demon Rāvaṇa gave her every opportunity, but she had no interest in anyone other than Rāma.

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Her situation is also not the case of the third class chaste women, who, out of fear of her husband, remains faithful to him. Rāma is the most kind and compassionate husband who saw to Sītā's every need. She didn't live in perpetual fear. Social etiquette and prestige may also play an important restrictive role for a third-class chaste woman. But this is not Sītādevi's situation, for who other than the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Rāma, could offer an alternative, higher in value, to her, and, in the forest, where was the question of prestige?

For the second class chaste woman, the woman or wife sees every man other than her husband as either father, brother or son, and so who is that person to whom the chaste second-class will go to?. Still even this is not Mother Sītā, for no other consideration was there. She has no other desire or thought. Her humility is supreme, alone in the forest full of danger, and on the island of Laṅkā surrounded by Rākṣasīs, but she is so chaste that not for a second did she become separated from Rāma. Her love was instead transferred in the mood of separation, intense and pure, and only for Rāma.

Giving the kingdom of Laṅkā over to Vibhīṣaṇa, Lord Rāma placed Mother Sītā upon his flower decorated airplane, and accompanied by his intimate followers, Rāma, his brother Lakṣmaṇa, Hanumān, and Sugrīva returned to Ayodhyā.

Upon his return, Lord Rāmacandra, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, heard that his brother Bharata, in his absence, was eating only barley cooked in the urine of a cow, living dressed in tree bark, sporting matted hair of an ascetic, and lying on a mattress of kusa grass.

"When Bharata understood that Lord Rāmacandra was returning to the capital, Ayodhyā, he immediately took upon his own head Lord Rāmacandra's wooden shoes and came out from his camp. Bharata was accompanied by ministers, priests and other respectable citizens, by professional musicians vibrating pleasing musical sounds, and by learned brāhmaṇas loudly chanting Vedic hymns. Following in the procession were chariots drawn by beautiful horses with harnesses of golden rope. These chariots were decorated by flags with golden embroidery and by other flags of various sizes and patterns. There were soldiers bedecked with golden armour, and servants bearing betel nut. Many servants followed on foot, bearing umbrellas, whisks, different grades of precious jewels, and other paraphernalia befitting a royal reception. Accompanied in this way, Bharata, his heart softened in ecstasy and his eyes full of tears, approached Lord Rāmacandra and fell at his lotus feet with great ecstatic love.

"After offering the wooden shoes before Lord Rāma, Bharata stood with folded hands, his eyes full of tears, and Rāma bathed Bharata with his own tears while embracing him with both arms for a long time. Accompanied by Mother Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma then offered his respectful obeisances unto the learned brāhmaṇas and the elderly persons in the family, and all the citizens of Ayodhyā offered their respectful obeisances unto the Lord.

"The citizens of Ayodhyā, upon seeing their king return after a long absence, offered him flower garlands, waved their upper cloths, and danced in great jubilation.

"Bharata carried Lord Rāma's wooden shoes, Sugrīva and Vibhīṣaṇa carried a whisk and an excellent peacock fan, Hanumān carried a white umbrella, Śatrughna carried a bow and two quiv-

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

ers, and Sītādevī carried a water pot filled with water from all the holy places. Aṅgada carried a sword, and Jāmbavān, king of the Ṛkṣas carried a golden shield." (SB 9.10.35-44)

Vasiṣṭha Muni, the priest of the family, had Lord Rāma clean shaven ready for the coronation installation. With the assistance of the elders of the family, the bathing ceremony was performed with water from the four seas just as it was performed for King Indra. Clean-shaven, dressed in fresh cloth, decorated with ornaments and garlands, and being blessed by the full surrender and loving submission of Bharata, Lord Rāma accepted the throne of state.

During the time when Rāma ruled the kingdom there were no shortages of anything. Everyone was free of all bodily and mental suffering, old age, disease, fear—all inauspicious things had gone. No woman became a widow. Lifespans stretched to one thousand years, families had many sons, rains fell in just the right amounts just when they were needed, and neither a wild beast nor foreign enemy threatened the peace of the kingdom. Everyone in the kingdom lived very happily according to the tenants of śāstra, thus absorbed in every aspect of the personification of the Lord, His name, fame, attributes, kingdom, law, and pastimes. So, though they lived on earth, they actually lived in Vaikuṅṭha.

Lord Rāma took a vow of eka-patnī—only to accept one wife. By the character of Mother Sītā, her submissiveness, shyness, chastity and faithfulness to Rāma, She was always free from demands and materialistic desires for accumulating mundane possessions like ordinary women. Her loving service mood attracted the mind of the Lord, Sītādevī being the ideal wife.

Lord Rāma and his younger brothers performed various Vedic sacrifices by which He worshipped Himself, and at the end of the sacrifice he gave land to all the different priests. He gave them the eastern, western, northern, and southern directions, and the balance He gave to the ācārya. Lord Rāma's faith in the brāhmaṇas and affection for his servants, was observed by all the brāhmaṇas who offered their prayers to the Lord, and returned whatever they had taken from Him. They regarded the enlightenment given to them by the Lord within the core of their hearts as a sufficient contribution. Lord Rāma then dressed himself like an ordinary person and began wandering within Ayodhyā to understand what impression the citizens had of Him. By chance one night Rāma heard a man talking to his wife who had gone to another man's house. In the course of rebuking his wife, the man spoke detrimentally about the character of Sītā, saying, "I'm not like Rāma who allows his wife to come back after staying at another's house!" Rāma immediately returned home, and fearing such rumors, he externally decided to give up the company of Sītā. He sent her away to the āśrama of Vālmīki Muni. Sītā, who was pregnant at the time, later gave birth to twin sons named Lava and Kuśa.

Rāma continued to perform many sacrifices during his ruling Ayodhyā. At one such sacrifice, some fifteen years later, two boys came into the arena of the sacrifice while Rāma was sitting on his throne. Vālmīki had taught the boys the whole poem of the Rāmāyaṇa and had put the story to a very beautiful and melodious tune. Vālmīki, accompanying the two boys, asked Rāma's permission so the boys could recite his poem. Rāma gave permission, and the boys commenced in perfect unison.

Rāmacandra was deeply stirred by the depth of the knowledge of him and his pastime. Night after night the recital continued until it came to Sītā's abandonment to Vālmīki's āśrama. Rāma

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

was then convinced they were his very own sons born to Mother Sītā. He sent word to Vālmiki that he should come with Sītā and vouch for her purity and faithfulness. If Sītā was willing to come before the assembly and give proof of her innocence, she could resume her rightful place at her Lord's side.

Everyone agreed and the next day Sītādevī came. Everyone was touched at the sight of her, her head and eyes downcast, tears running down her beautiful face, her long hair chastely adorning her back.

iyam dasarathe Sītā suvrata dharmacarini
apapa te oparityakta mamasramasamipatah

lakopavadabhitasya tava rāma mahavarata
pratyayam dasyate Sītā tamanujnatumarhasi

(Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa Uttara Khanda 7.87.14-15)

Vālmiki respectfully approached Rāma saying, "O son of Daśaratha, here is your wife Sītā. She has been staying in my āśrama since you abandoned her, performing austerities. She is completely without blame and is pure and innocent. Due to your position as King you played the part that you feared public opinion may be detrimental for you, and so you have also performed severe austerities. However it is now proper that your impeccable wife be allowed to prove her own innocence."

Sītā stood in silence, her eyes fixed on the ground without blinking. With folded hands she said, "If Rāma has always been foremost in my heart, then may Mother Earth herself deliver me. If I have been only true to him, wholly, mind, body and soul, then may Mother Earth deliver me. If I have loved none but him, then let Mother Earth deliver me."

As she spoke, the earth rumbled, shook and cracked open where Sītā stood. The Earth herself—Bhūmi—then appeared, seated on a throne of incredible natural earthly opulence, surrounded by Nāgas (mystic snakes), and she invited Sītā to take her seat alongside her.

Sītā, entrusting her children to Vālmiki, ascended the throne supported by Nāgas adorned with fiery eyes and jewels on their heads. There, seated beside her mother, Bhūmi, Sītā disappeared from sight. The earth closed up, leaving not even so much as a furrow on the surface, as though nothing had happened.

In Madhvacharya's Mahabharata Tatparayniraya 9.40 he says,

pravisya bhūmau sa devī loke drstyanusaratah
reme ramenavi yukta bhaskarena prabha yatha

"That beautiful Sītā devī seemingly entered into the earth, though actually she always remains with Lord Rāma, just as the sun's rays are always with the sun."

Appearance of Lord Rāma: Viṣṇu/Caitra śukla-pakṣa Navamī

Rāma, true to his vow of eka-patnī, never accepted another woman other than Sītā. Next to him on his seat he kept a golden deity of Sītādevī, performing sacrifices for thirteen thousand years.

At the end of this period, Agastya Muni and many demigods and sages approached the Lord, reminding him that his pastimes on earth had now been fulfilled and he should now return to Vaikuṅṭha. Lord Rāma performed ācamana, sipping water and reciting mantras, once, twice, thrice, then he resumed his form of Viṣṇu, for it is from that seat of Viṣṇu that his pastimes became manifest.

"Lord Rāmacandra returned to his abode, to which bhakti yogis are promoted. This is the place to which all the inhabitants of Ayodhyā went after they served the Lord in his manifest pastimes by offering him obeisances, touching his lotus feet, fully observing him as a father like king, sitting or lying down with him like equals, or even just accompanying him."

(SB 9.11.22)

As Lord Rāma thus appeared, the Vedas personified appeared as this Rāmāyaṇa, the story of Rāma.

About this Festival Book

This festival book represents one of over fifty festival-themed lessons, with each festival divided into the five most potent limbs of devotional service.

About the Compiler/Author

Urmilā-Devī Dāsī (Dr. Edith E. Best)

Born in 1955 in New York City, in 1973 Urmilā became a disciple of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Urmilā has served in ISKCON (The Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement) continuously since 1973. Urmilā's husband, three children, and seven grandchildren are all active in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Urmilā has her Bachelor's of Science in Religion and Education from Excelsior College of the University of the State of New York. She has a Masters of School Administration, and a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership, from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She has done ground-breaking research on job satisfaction of teachers in Kṛṣṇa primary and secondary schools worldwide.

Urmilā-Devī Dāsī taught primary and secondary students (ages 5-18) for 22 years, 18 of which she was also head-teacher (principal). She managed and taught in a pre-school for 5 years. For one year she was an assistant principal in a state primary school of 450 pupils. For 10 years she was a member of ISKCON's international board of education, and for 7 years was vice-chairman of the North American board. Urmilā has developed and taught local, national, and international seminars for trainers, educators, and managers since 1985. She has also developed and taught numerous courses for elementary, high school, college, and adult learners in a wide variety of subjects using interactive and experiential learning. She's the author of *Vaikunṭha Children*, a book on school management and teaching, and is a writer and editor for *Back to Godhead*, an international magazine. Urmilā is also a member of the Sastriic Advisory Council to ISKCON's international Governing Body Commission.