

# RE – Vows and commitments

Lesson 5: I understand how commitment is shown through marriage ceremonies.

Key vocabulary: Marriage, ceremony, religious, non-religious, legal, wedding, place of worship, Hindu(ism), jayamaala (garland), mandap, Purohit, Sanskrit, dharma, prosperity, symbolic.

# Let us review:

## My commitment for the next six weeks:

## What have you committed to? How are you doing?

My commitment is:

How well did I commit to my goal since setting it? (out of 5 stars)

Something I need to improve on in order to reach my commitment goal is:

Which trait did I demonstrate last week:

Trait	This means that you will...
<b>Attentiveness</b>	Pay close attention to what you are doing.
<b>Confidence</b>	Believe in yourself and your abilities.
<b>Dedication</b>	Be devoted to the task you've set yourself.
<b>Determination</b>	Stick to your choices no matter what.
<b>Loyalty</b>	Never give up on what you are doing.
<b>Patience</b>	Put up with any delays or setbacks.
<b>Perseverance</b>	Continue even when the task is difficult.
<b>Resilience</b>	Get back up and try again when you fail.
<b>Responsibility</b>	Hold yourself to account for your own success.

# What Is Marriage?

How would you define marriage?

What is the What might be the **official ceremony** included in the definition?



# What Is Marriage?

Marriage (noun): A **legally recognised relationship** between two people, in which they take part in an **official ceremony** and then usually **live together**.

Have you ever been to a **wedding**?

Where was it held?

Who was there?

What happened?



# What Is Marriage?

- Every wedding is different. Some are held in a place of worship; others are held at a hotel or a local registry office.
- Some weddings have thousands of people there, while others might have less than five.
- At some weddings, the bride might wear a big, white dress. At others, they may wear a suit or even a swimming costume!
- At some weddings, it may be a man and a woman making a commitment to each other. At others, it could be two women or two men making the same commitment.

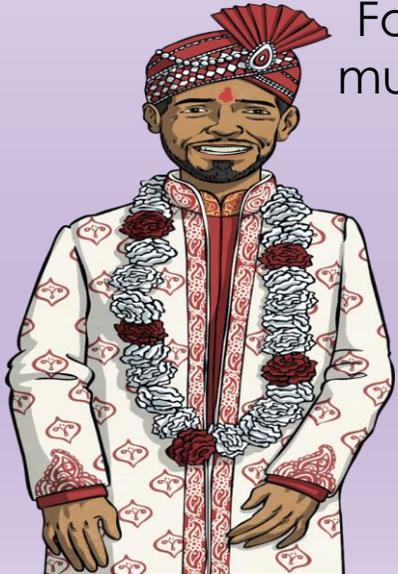


# The Commitment of Marriage

- Sometimes, when people have religious beliefs, this can affect the way in which they make the commitment to marry each other.
- To people with religious beliefs, getting married in their place of worship in front of their god is very important.
- Getting married in a place of worship gives people the assurance that God cares about their relationship and will help to make their marriage stronger. They believe they can then turn to God for help and guidance throughout their marriage.

# The Commitment of Marriage

- This is Sanjay and Avni. They are about to make the commitment of getting married. They will be having a religious wedding ceremony because they are both Hindus.



For us, as Hindus, marriage is a duty – something we must do. Marriage will not only link us together for the rest of our lives, it will link our families and communities together, too.

Hindu weddings take a lot of planning because they contain so many different parts.



# Jayamaala



First, my parents will welcome Sanjay to the place we are getting married. They will put a red powder on his forehead. Our families will meet and get to know each other. Then, Sanjay and I will give each other a garland, called a jayamaala. We will say: "Let all the learned persons present here know that we are accepting each other willingly, voluntarily and pleasantly."



# Mandap



Next, I will be taken to the mandap. This is where the marriage will take place. Wherever the mandap is, it is always covered by a canopy or piece of material to keep the good energy inside. While I wait for Avni to arrive, I will sit down and have a sweet drink, made from milk, yoghurt, honey and sugar.



# Vivaha-homa



After that, a sacred fire is lit. The Purohit (priest) says our sacred mantras in Sanskrit – the language our holy books are written in. We say “id na mama” which means ‘it is not for me’. This reminds us that our marriage is not just between the two of us, but it is between our families and our communities.

# Paanigrahan



In this part of the ceremony, we make our vows. I will hold Avni's hand and say to her, "I hold your hand in the spirit of **dharma**. We are both husband and wife".



## **Dharma:**

An important Hindu word which means 'the power which upholds the universe'.

# Rituals



There are lots of rituals in a Hindu marriage ceremony which each have their own meaning.

Avni will have to climb over a stone or rock to show that she has the strength to overcome any difficulties in the marriage.

Then, we both walk around the sacred fire. After that, we hold hands and Avni's brother will pour barley on to the sacred fire to show that we will all work together to look after our community.

Finally, Sanjay will part Avni's hair and put red powder on her hairline, just as her family did to him before the wedding. This will show that Avni is married.

# Saptapadi



We then need to complete the main and legal part of the marriage ceremony.  
We will walk seven steps together, reciting a prayer at each step. The seven prayers are for:

Sometimes, in Hindu ceremonies, the couple does something different to celebrate these seven steps: the bride might touch seven different stones, or nuts, with her right big toe!



# Making a Commitment: Nikki and Hamal

Ten symbols of a traditional Hindu Ceremony;

Remember: How people practice varies between each person. What one person may or may not do, will be different to what someone else may or may not do. Everyone has the right to practice how they wish.

- **Henna hand pattern painting: the darker the henna, the deeper the love.**
- **A canopy called a mandap: two people setting up their new home and life together.**
- **Standing together: keeping the good energy in and the bad energy out.**
- **Hemal has his shoes stolen by the bride's family, after the ceremony he'll have to pay to get them back: a fun way to show the two families are linking up**
- **Hemal's face is hidden so he doesn't see the Nikki before the ceremony: it's not all about looks**
- **Nikki wears traditional Indian dress: white symbolises purity and red is for fertility, for children.**
- **Hemal and Nikki are treated like a King and Queen for the day: it's their once in a lifetime 'big day'.**
- **Nikki and Hemal walk around the sacred fire four times: they are united together and protected**
- **Hemal draws a sindoor on Nikki's head, and gives her a special necklace: two symbols that show a woman is married.**
- **Nuts or steps are shared together: Each nut represents a different quality that a couple need in their new life together.**
- **The couple taking seven steps round the fire, tied together: these steps symbolise the qualities with which each partner will try to treat the other.**

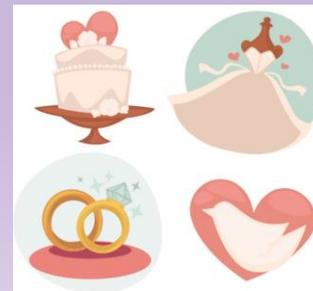
# A Hindu Wedding:

- They mark the bringing together of two families and two communities, and have a very large number of guests.
- Simran shows us pictures of her auntie's wedding in India, and we meet Nikki and Hemal, a young couple who are planning their Hindu wedding in the UK.
- We see traditions such as henna hand painting, getting married under a canopy called a mandap, and the couple walking around a fire tied together.
- The wedding day is about the excitement of dancing and having fun with family and friends, but also about expressing love and creating a new partnership

# Task.



- Which of the ten symbols **do you feel** expresses the meaning of two Hindu people getting married the best? You will need to select your top 3 symbols and explain why these are the symbols you have selected to best represent a Hindu Marriage.
- Draw out the symbol, explain how these best represent a Hindu marriage.
- Next step: Every marriage ceremony has symbols. Do you know of any other symbols used in marriage ceremonies?
  - Draw and explain what you do know about other symbols.



# Your commitment

- Are there any symbols that are connected to your commitment you made?
- How do these symbols help you commit?