



South Asia

Culture Kit

SIM



SIM Purpose Statement

Convinced that no one should live and die without hearing God's good news, we believe that He has called us to make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ in communities where He is least known.

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◇ South Asia Culture Kit



Dear Teacher or Parent

Thank you for your interest in teaching children about missions! This kit is designed to introduce children to the beautiful diversity in our world, hoping that they might develop a passion to cross barriers and love people living and dying without Jesus.

Learn

This kit contains information about South Asia as well as activity pages, games, craft ideas and visual aids. This resource will work in family settings or larger groups such as Sunday School or VBS. For many of the sections there are corresponding activities or crafts. Look through the whole kit before you begin to make sure you have materials you need for the activities you decide to use. (For instance there is a dress up activity you may want to do throughout the entire lesson.) The information is broken up into small chunks, so you can choose what you want to share or use it as unit study over a longer period of time.

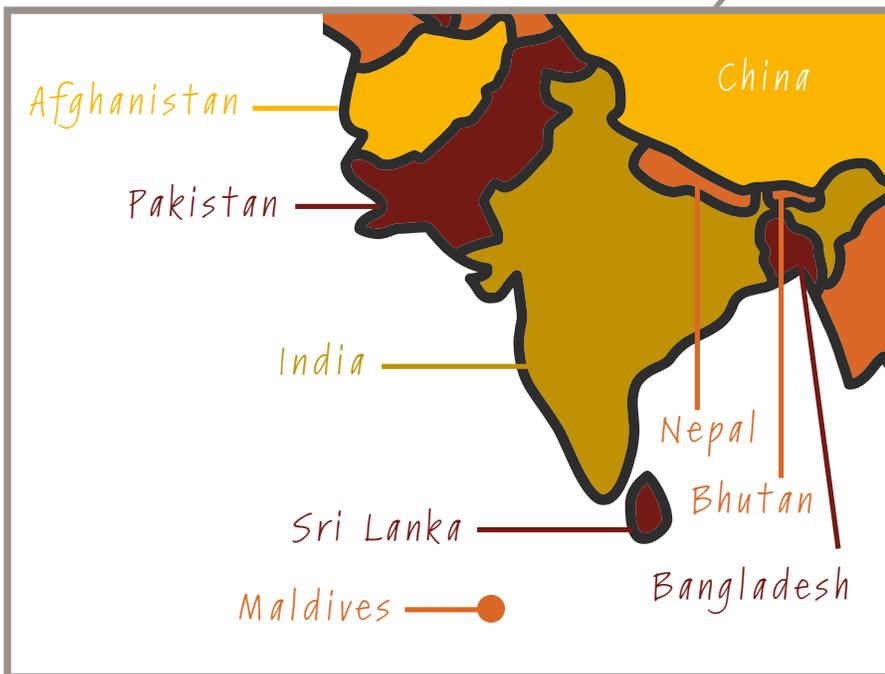
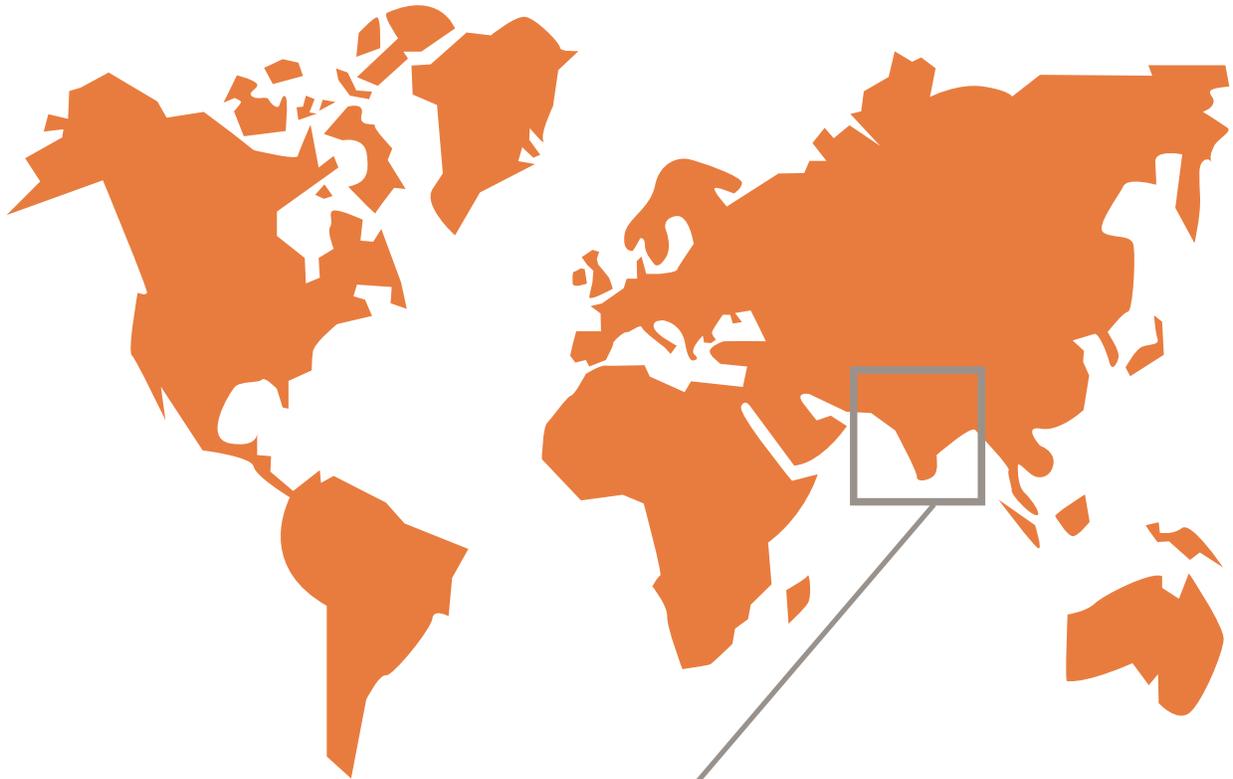
Inspire

Encourage children to follow Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations by praying for people who don't yet know Him in South Asia. Brainstorm creative ways to join in the Great Commission with the children. Remind them that anyone who loves Jesus can share His Good News with the people around them.

Matthew 28:19-20

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

◇ Where is South Asia?



South Asia

South Asia is found in the south central portion of the continent of Asia and consists of the countries Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. South Asia includes about 3.5% of the world's land mass, but 24% of the world's population.

◇ Climate & Population



Climate

The climate in South Asian countries varies from tropical monsoon in the south to temperate in the north. Southern countries such as Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Southern India are mostly hot in the summers with heavy rains during the monsoon. In the North, Nepal, Bhutan and Northern India are hot in the summer but cool in the winter. The Himalayas in northern India and Nepal block the north-Asian bitter cold winds, so the temperatures are far more moderate in the plains below. Largely, the whole region is considered to have a monsoon climate, with hot, humid summers and dry cooler winters.

Population

South Asia is the most populated region of the world. South Asia is home to some of the most populated cities in the world. Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh, Delhi, the capital city of India, Mumbai, a **megacity** in India, and Karachi, a metropolis in Pakistan, are four of the world's largest megacities.

Economy

Around 24% of the South Asian population falls below the **international poverty line** of \$1.25/day. Afghanistan and Bangladesh have the highest number of people below the poverty line and Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka have the lowest. India has been working to alleviate poverty and as of 2011, 21.9% of India's population lives below the poverty line, compared to 41.6% in 2005.

◇ Languages



South Asian Languages

In South Asia there are a vast number of languages. The script used in writing the diverse languages depends mostly on the religion followed by the **linguistic group**. For instance in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which are **Muslim** countries, the Arabic alphabet is used. The Devanagari script is used by many non-Muslim languages including Nepali and many Indian languages. The language spoken by the largest section of the population is Hindi, found in India. English is also widely spoken, especially in urban areas and in business relationships.

Indian Languages

India has 22 official languages and its people speak over 1,700 languages. Hindi is one of the national languages based on the ancient language Sanskrit spoken widely in the north.

येसु ने कहा, मैं दुनिया का प्रकाश हूँ

Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world."

Greetings

In India, how you greet someone depends on what they believe, and what language they speak. In Hindi when speaking to a **Hindu**, you say "Namaste" while placing both of your hands together (in a prayer pose.) If you're speaking to a Muslim in Urdu, you would say "Salaam." And if you're speaking to a Christian in Hindi, you would say "Jai Masi ki" which means victory to the Messiah. You can also always say "Jai Hind" which means victory to India!

◇ Faith Diversity



Diversity

South Asia has the world's largest Hindu, **Sikh**, and **Jain** populations and also has a very large Muslim population. Sixty eight percent of the population are Hindu, 35% are Muslim, and the remaining follow Christianity, **Buddhism** and Sikhism. Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs and Christians are concentrated in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan, while the Muslims are concentrated in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Maldives.

Conflict

One of South Asia's great strengths and beauty lies in its diversity, but it can also be a source of tension. Religious extremism and fighting between the different religions continues to be a significant challenge. Severe persecution of Christians has taken place over the past several years in some South Asian countries.

Christianity in India

According to Indian tradition, the Christian faith was introduced to India by Thomas the Apostle, who may have reached the Malabar Coast (Kerala) in 52 AD. There are over 30 million people who follow Jesus in India, but still 90% of the people in India have never heard the name of Jesus. Let's pray for Jesus followers as they share Hope with their neighbours.

◇ Hinduism



Hinduism

Eighty percent of the population of India practise Hinduism. Hindus worship over 330 million gods and believe in **reincarnation** and **karma**. Cows are considered sacred as they symbolise strength and provide life-giving milk. Of the many gods Hindus worship a few of the main gods are: Brahma who is said to be the creator, Vishnu the preserver and Shiva the destroyer.

It is the goal of every Hindu to live a good life so that, when they die, they might achieve a better position in their next life continually improving until one day they might be a Brahma.

Diwali: Hindu Festival

Diwali is a 5-day festival celebrated in late October/early November honouring the victory of good over evil. It celebrates the victory of Lord Ram over Ravana and the return of Lord Ram and his wife Sita to their kingdom. It is known as the “Festival of Lights” for all the fireworks, small clay lamps (diyas), and candles that are lit. For most Indian Hindu families, Diwali is the most anticipated festival of the year.

Video about Hindu Worldview:
<https://world-views.com/hindu-video/>

◇ Islam & Buddhism



Islam

Islam makes up 100% of the Maldivian population, 99% of the Afghani population and 90% of the Bangladeshi population. Islamic scriptures are the teachings of **Muhammad** who lived from circa 570–632 CE, and the **Quran**, which is believed to be the word of **Allah**, God. Islam teaches that God is merciful, all-powerful. Muslims consider Islam to be the complete and final revelation of Allah. Islam teaches that there will be a final judgement in which the righteous will go to paradise and the unrighteous will go to hell.

Ramadan: Muslim Festival

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of prayer, reflection and community. Ramadan is celebrated every year and is one of the **Five Pillars of Islam**. Ramadan celebrates Muhammad's first revelation. Muslims all over the world celebrate this festival together, including in India.

Buddhism

In the Buddhist tradition there are no gods. Rather than believing in a God or gods, Buddhists strive to achieve a state of **enlightenment** whereby becoming a “god-like” being, ending the cycle of reincarnation.

Video about Islamic and Buddhist Worldview:
<https://world-views.com/>

◇ Clothing



India

Both men and women in India wear loose fitting clothing of natural fabrics such as cotton or silk. Traditionally married women wear a sari which consists of several yards of colourful fabric wrapped at the waist with one end draped over her shoulder. Salwar kameez, which are loose fitting trousers with a knee-length tunic, are worn by all women. In most places it's important for married women to wear a dupatta, which is a scarf draped over the shoulders for modesty. Men wear western clothes or the traditional pyjama which are loose fitting pants with a long kurta, or shirt. Bangladeshi clothing is very similar to Indian clothing.

Pakistan

In Pakistan both men and women wear salwar kameez. Each of the four regions in Pakistan have their own local adaptation of this traditional clothing.

Afghanistan

The clothing in Afghanistan varies widely since it's home to different ethnicities including the Tajiks (Persian-speaking Iranian ethnic group), Pashtun (Eastern Iranian people, who use Pashto as their first language), Hazara (Persian-speaking ethnic group native to the region of Hazarajat, in central Afghanistan), and Uzbek (a Turkic ethnic group native to wider Central Asia among others). Most clothing is similar to the South Asian region and often includes head coverings for women.

◇ Famous India



Taj Mahal

The Taj Mahal is the most popular tourist attraction in India. It is actually a **mausoleum** built by emperor Shah Jahan in 1632 as a tomb for his favourite wife. The emperor and his wife are buried side by side in this ornate white marble structure on the banks of the Yamuna river in the city of Agra. The Taj Mahal is one of the New Seven Wonders of the world.

Invented in India

Have you ever used shampoo or buttoned a button? We can thank India for those amazing inventions! India's cultural history spans more than 4,500 years, and it's contributed a lot to the world like the ruler, the number zero and refined sugar. Cotton was first grown in the Indus Valley, and the game Snakes and Ladders was also created in India.

Gandhi

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, better known as "Mahatma" Gandhi was an Indian lawyer who is best known for launching the "Quit India" movement which finally led to India's independence from British rule. "Mahatma" in Sanskrit means "great souled" or "revered". It was a title of honor given to this peace loving man. Gandhi is now pictured on all Indian currency, which is called rupees.



◇ South Asian Cuisine



South Asian Cuisine

South Asia is famous for its fragrant, colourful, spicy cuisine and just like in landscape, language and culture, there's a wide variety of cuisine in India depending on what region you're in. Staples of most South Asian countries are flat bread, rice, lentils and beans. Foods in this area of the world are flavoured with various types of chili, black pepper, cloves, and other strong herbs and spices. Ginger is used in both savoury and sweet recipes in cuisines from the Indian subcontinent. Religious beliefs also influence what food is eaten. For instance Hindus don't eat beef since cows are considered sacred and Muslims don't eat pork because pigs are considered unclean.

Bangladeshi Cuisine

Many Bangladeshis eat only halal food which follows the Islamic dietary guidelines. Bangladeshis are also known for rules about hospitality, and serving and eating food known as Bangalikota. Rice is the main staple of Bangladeshi food and is served with a wide variety of aromatic lentils and curries.

Nepali & Bhutanese Cuisine

Nepali and Bhutanese cuisine are similar to Tibetan cuisine which is known for its use of noodles, goat, yak, mutton, dumplings, cheese (often from yak or goat milk), butter, yoghurt and soups.

◇ Chapati (Roti) Recipe



Ingredients

1 cup whole wheat flour
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 tsp. salt
2 Tbl. olive oil
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup hot water

Instructions

In a large bowl, stir together both types of flour and the salt. With a wooden spoon stir in the olive oil and enough of the water to make a soft dough that is elastic but not sticky. Knead the dough on a lightly floured surface until smooth. Divide into 10 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a ball and let rest a few minutes.

Heat a skillet over medium heat until hot. Grease lightly. On a lightly floured surface with a lightly floured rolling pin roll out each ball of dough flat like a tortilla. When the pan starts to smoke put the chapati on the pan. Cook until light brown spots appear on the under-side (about 30 seconds). Flip the chapati and cook other side. Repeat for all the balls of dough. (Can be served with hummus, chutney, or other spicy dishes).

If you're cooking on a gas stove, the chapati can be placed for a few seconds over the open flame, giving it the beautiful, charred spots. The chapati should puff up when put on the flame. Rotate it with tongs, leaving in on the flame for only a few seconds for each side.

◇ Kheer (Rice Pudding) Recipe



Ingredients

- ¼ cup basmati rice
- 4 cups full fat milk or whole milk
- 6 T sugar (add as required)
- ½ tsp cardamom powder
- 1 pinch saffron strands
- 1 T chopped or sliced almonds
- 1 T chopped or sliced cashews
- 1 T chopped or sliced pistachios
- 1 tablespoon golden raisins

Instructions

In a large bowl, soak rice for 15 to 20 minutes. While the rice is soaking, pour the milk into a large saucepan and let it come to a boil. Remove 1 T of warm milk into a small bowl and soak the saffron strands in it. Drain the water from the rice and add rice to the boiling milk. Cook until the rice is about halfway cooked and then mix in the sugar. Continue to simmer on low-medium heat until the rice is fully cooked. Add the remaining ingredients, except for the raisins and stir until mixed well. Add the raisins before serving. Kheer can be served hot, warm or chilled.

Vocabulary

Allah: Islamic word for God.

Buddhism: a religion, originated in India by Buddha (Gautama), holding that life is full of suffering caused by desire and that the way to end this suffering is through enlightenment.

Enlightenment: The act or state of attaining spiritual knowledge or insight that frees oneself from the cycle of rebirth (reincarnation).

Five Pillars of Islam: Ritual obligations in Islam, considered mandatory by believers, and are the foundation of Muslim life.

Hindu: A person following Hinduism, the common religion of India, which is extremely diverse.

International Poverty Line: The threshold that determines whether someone is living in poverty. The line is based on the value of goods needed to sustain one adult (in 2020, \$1.90/day).

Islam: The religious faith of **Muslims**, based on the words and religious system founded by the prophet Muhammad and taught by the Quran (Koran).

Jain: A person who follows Jainism, a religion founded in India in the 6th century BC emphasizing the perfectibility of human nature and liberation of the soul, especially through nonviolence toward all living creatures.

Karma: The sum of a person's actions will determine their future state of existence. The belief that if a person lived a good life, they will be reborn in a better state but if they have lived an evil life they will return in the same or lesser state of being.

Linguistic Group: A group of related languages from a common ancestral language.

Mausoleum: A burial place for an individual or family.

Megacity: A city with a population of one million or more.

Muhammad: Viewed as the final prophet of God in all the main branches of Islam.

Quran (Koran): The sacred book of the Islamic faith believed to be the word of God given to the prophet Mohammad by the archangel Gabriel.

Reincarnation: The rebirth of a soul into a new body (either animal or human).

Sikh: A person who follows Sikhism, a monotheistic religion, founded in India in the 15th century by the guru Nanak.

◇ Games



Gilli Danda

Gilli Danda is one of the most well-known childhood games played in rural India. It is a popular street game which rivals the popularity of cricket and has similar rules. The game is played with a small piece of wood tapered on both sides known as gilli and a larger piece of wood that is used to strike the gilli known as danda. The object of the game is to get the gilli as far away from home base as possible.

Kho-Kho

Kho-Kho is a popular tag game of 12 players. Teams are required to chase down and tag the players of the opposite team to win this game. The chasing team sends out nine players onto the field and they sit in a straight line with alternate players facing opposite sides. The chasers have to make sure that they catch the runners before the stipulated time, which is usually around 9 minutes per inning.

Pitthu

In Pitthu, players are divided into two teams. A small stack of flat stones and a ball are the two things required for this game. Each team takes turns at toppling the stack and running while the other team has to hit/touch each of the players in the opposing team with the ball. If the team that takes their shot at the stack manages to rebuild the stack before they are hit/touched by the ball then they win. Any player who is hit is out of the game.

◇ Deepa: A Kid Like You



Deepa had only ever known hard work.

As a little girl, she had cut grass and sold vegetables in the local market by herself to provide for her family. Deepa had come to know Jesus while in her teens and, despite the opposition of her family, clung to her faith – praying to find freedom.

When one must choose between education and earning an income for the survival of the family, education almost always loses. So Deepa could barely recognise letters and numbers when she arrived in the Big City looking for work. The only job Deepa could find required her to begin work at 4am and work straight until 11pm for a fraction of the pay others were receiving.

Still Deepa prayed to find freedom and dreamed of a better life.

She joined a church in the city and found believers to help her on her journey. She moved into a safe environment, was discipled, and found a better job. She was even able to go back to school to earn her certificate. Through connecting with God's people in the Big City, Deepa found the resources, help and opportunities she desperately needed.

Deepa still claims that passing her class 10 and class 12 class exams is a miracle – though those around her can affirm her hard work and growth in wisdom to make good life-giving choices. Passing her high school exams gave her a chance to have a new dream. Deepa is now studying to be a nurse to help people when they need it most, just as she found help when she needed it most.

*"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."
Joshua 1:9*

◇ Sharing Hope



South Asian People

People from South Asia are often very open to talking about faith. Since South Asians come from diverse faith backgrounds, one good way to engage in spiritual conversations is to ask what god they worship. (They may be believers!) This will give you an opportunity to learn about their worldview and share about yours. South Asians connect well to stories, so think about a story from the Bible, or a story from your own life, that shows God's love for his people.

Hindus

In Hinduism, there are many gods to worship, but none of them have a deeply personal relationship with people. That's one way our God is unique! When sharing about God, talk about how Jesus came to earth to be with people and save them because of His great love.

Family Engagement Ideas

◇ 1 *Pray*

Pray that God would reveal the Truth of His Son Jesus Christ to South Asians around the world.

◇ 2 *Invite*

Invite an international student or person from another country to your home. Enjoy getting to know each other.

◇ 3 *Share a Story*

Share a story from your life or from the Bible that shows God's love for all people.

◇ Pray for South Asia



1 *Least reached people groups*

Pray for more workers for the harvest both from within South Asia and from other parts of the world, who have a heart for people who are living and dying without Christ.

2 *Vulnerable people*

Pray for new creative ventures in social justice, business, community development, and medicine so that more people in vulnerable populations can get the care they need.

3 *Jesus Followers*

Pray for South Asian believers who are sharing Jesus with their neighbors who may face difficulty or persecution. Pray for protection and boldness as they love their communities.

4 *Kids Like You*

Pray for South Asian children who don't yet know Jesus. Ask God to protect them and give them access to good education and the resources they need to thrive.

◇ Recommended Books

Festival of Colours

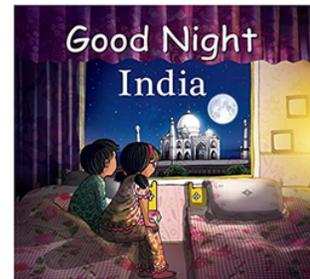
Brother and sister, Mintoo and Chintoo, are busily gathering the flowers that are used to make the colourful powders that are thrown during the Indian festival of colours known as Holi. When the day finally comes they gather together with family, friends, and neighbours for the festivities that celebrate friendship, forgiveness, and starting over. *Publisher: Beach Lane Books, ISBN: 978-1481420495*



Good Night India

Like a virtual tour for young children this book shows off many of India's most interesting tourist sites, animals, and traditions. Sites like the Himalayan Mountains, the Gold Temple, the Taj Mahal, and many other popular tourist sites as well as lions, tigers, and dolphins are featured in this small but informative book.

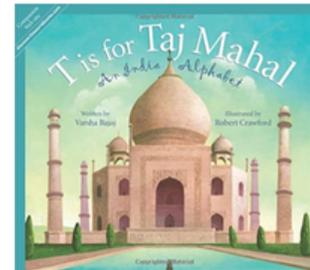
Publisher: Good Night Books, ISBN: 978-1602194779



T is for Taj Mahal

This book takes you on a tour of some of India's most famous things, all the way from A to Z. This book is even great for older children as it includes gorgeous pictures and longer explanations.

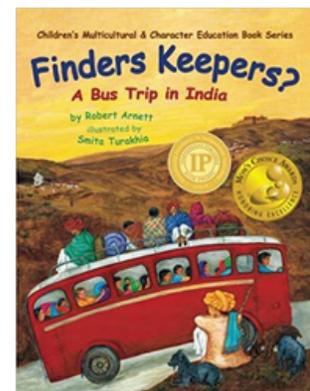
Publisher: Sleeping Bear Press, ISBN: 978-1585365043



Finders Keepers?

This beautifully illustrated book is based on a true story set in India. Readers get to experience this interesting and yet very common form of transportation in India. Along with colourful characters, readers learn about respect for other cultures, the values of honesty and doing the right thing.

Publisher: Good Night Books, ISBN: 978-1602194779



Dress Up

Younger children might enjoy playing dress-up as you study together. White or coloured sheeting material make great saris for girls or lungis for boys. Sheer, colourful scarves make great head coverings for women and turbans for the men. There are simple tutorials about how to wrap saris online.

You'll need:

- Lightweight scarves
- Long fabric
- Lightweight towels

Lungi

Wrap the lightweight towel or rectangle shaped fabric around the boys waists, tucking it in, similar to wrapping a towel around you. Reach from the bottom hem, and double the fabric back on itself, cutting the length in half. Tie or tuck in securely.

Sari

Using a long piece of fabric, wrap it around the waist of the child like a skirt, a few times, leaving enough fabric to drape over the left shoulder. After the "skirt" is wrapped around, it can be tucked in to tied to prevent slipping. (Traditionally the sari is tucked into a petticoat that is worn underneath a sari.) Safety pins can also be used to hold it in place.



Henna Craft

Henna is an artform that resembles tattooing the skin but is painted on using plant dye, typically from the henna tree. It is most frequently done on hands (both backs and palms of hands), arms and feet but can be done on face as well.

You'll need:

Paper
Pencils
Markers

- OR -

Rubber gloves
Permanant Marker

Have each child trace their hands on flesh coloured paper such as construction paper. Let the children design their own pattern (usually symmetrical) with a black or dark brown marker.

- OR -

Surgical gloves can also be used (this is great for older kids). The design can be drawn on the glove without being on the hand but it generally works better on. Children can work in pairs and draw designs on each others' hands. Permanent marker will be needed for this so they need to be careful not to get it on their clothes. For design inspiration, do an internet search for henna designs.



Block Printing

Block Printing is an artform that's said to have been used in South Asia for 2,000 years. An intricately carved wooden stamp is used on fabric or paper to create beautiful designs.

You'll need:

Paper or white fabric

Paint

Rubber stamps

OR

Cardboard

Scissors

OR

Potatoes

Pumpkin carving knives

If using rubber stamps to make a block printing design, dip the rubber stamp in paint and help the students make a design that repeats over the fabric. You can help them layer different colours on top, or colour the design when it's dry.

Older children can cut out cardboard shapes, and use them as stamps, dipping them in paint and pressing them on the paper. For capable older students, you can slice a large potato in half, and have the student carve a design on the inside of the potato, using it as a stamp.



Batik Craft

Batik is an artform using fabric, wax, and colourful dyes. Once the design has been chosen the artist paints the fabric with wax in the areas not being dyed. The wax prevents the dye from penetrating the fabric. The wax is removed after the dye dries and more wax is applied in other areas and more colours are added. It may take several days to complete one piece of batik.

You'll need:

- Cotton fabric
- Pencils
- Tape
- Liquid school glue
- Paint brushes
- Fabric paint, fabric dye or markers

Allow each child to draw their design on a piece of white cotton fabric with a pencil (taping it to the table with paper underneath helps). Using a paint brush and white school glue, have the child paint over the areas they do not want painted (these will remain white). Allow the glue to dry. Once the glue has dried the children can paint the fabric with fabric dye, acrylic paints, or permanent markers. Once all the colour has been applied and it is dry, peel the glue off (it may need to be washed off if it doesn't peel off easily.)

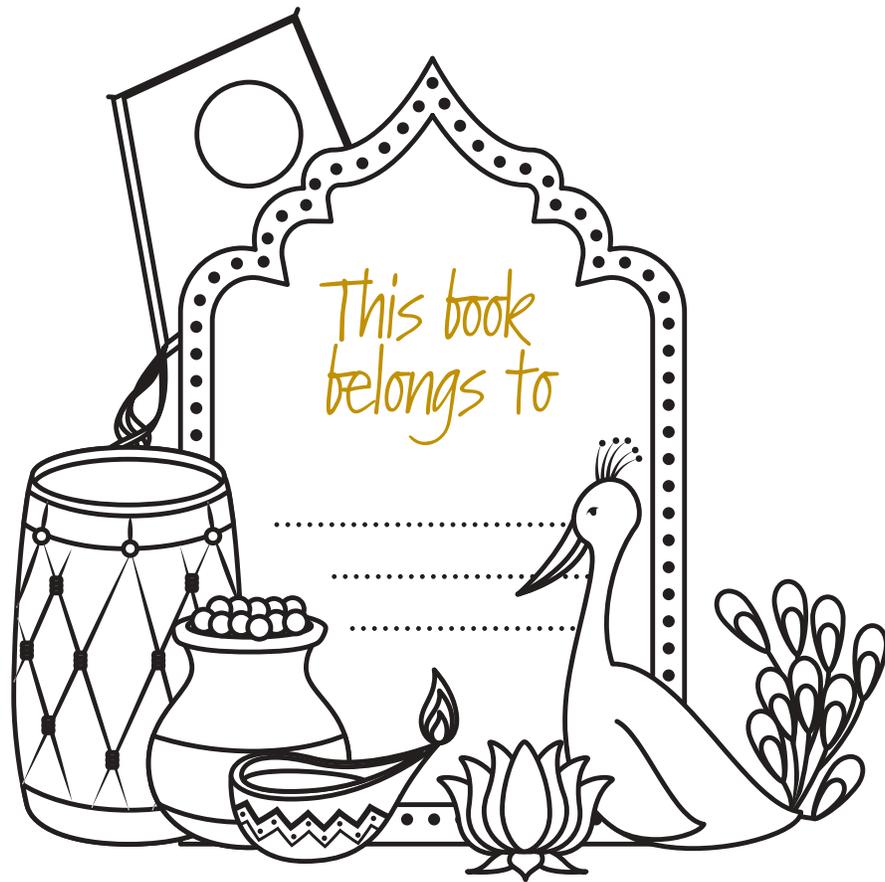




South Asia

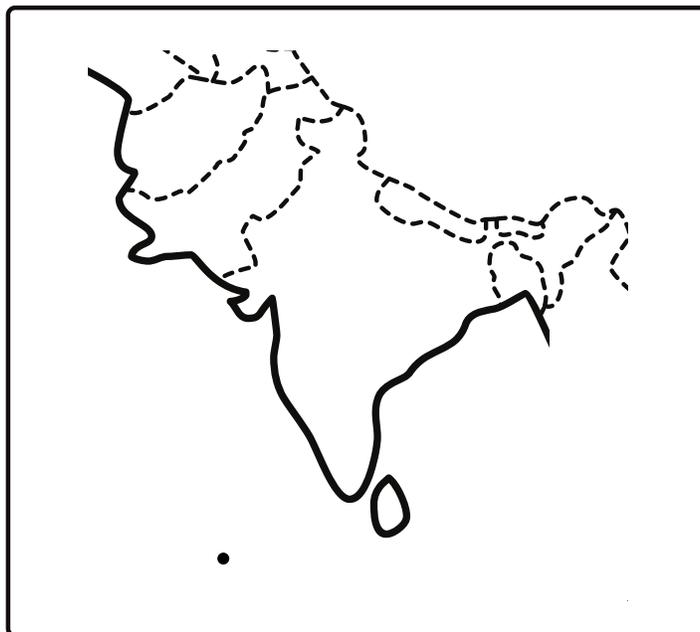
Culture Kit Student Pages

SIM



Find South Asia

Locate South Asia on the world map, then locate and colour Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh.



Design a Flag

No matter where we are from, if we follow Jesus we are citizens of heaven! Design a flag to represent the Kingdom of Heaven. Make a colour key showing what each colour represents. Write a description of the meaning of all the elements you choose and name your flag.



Colour Key

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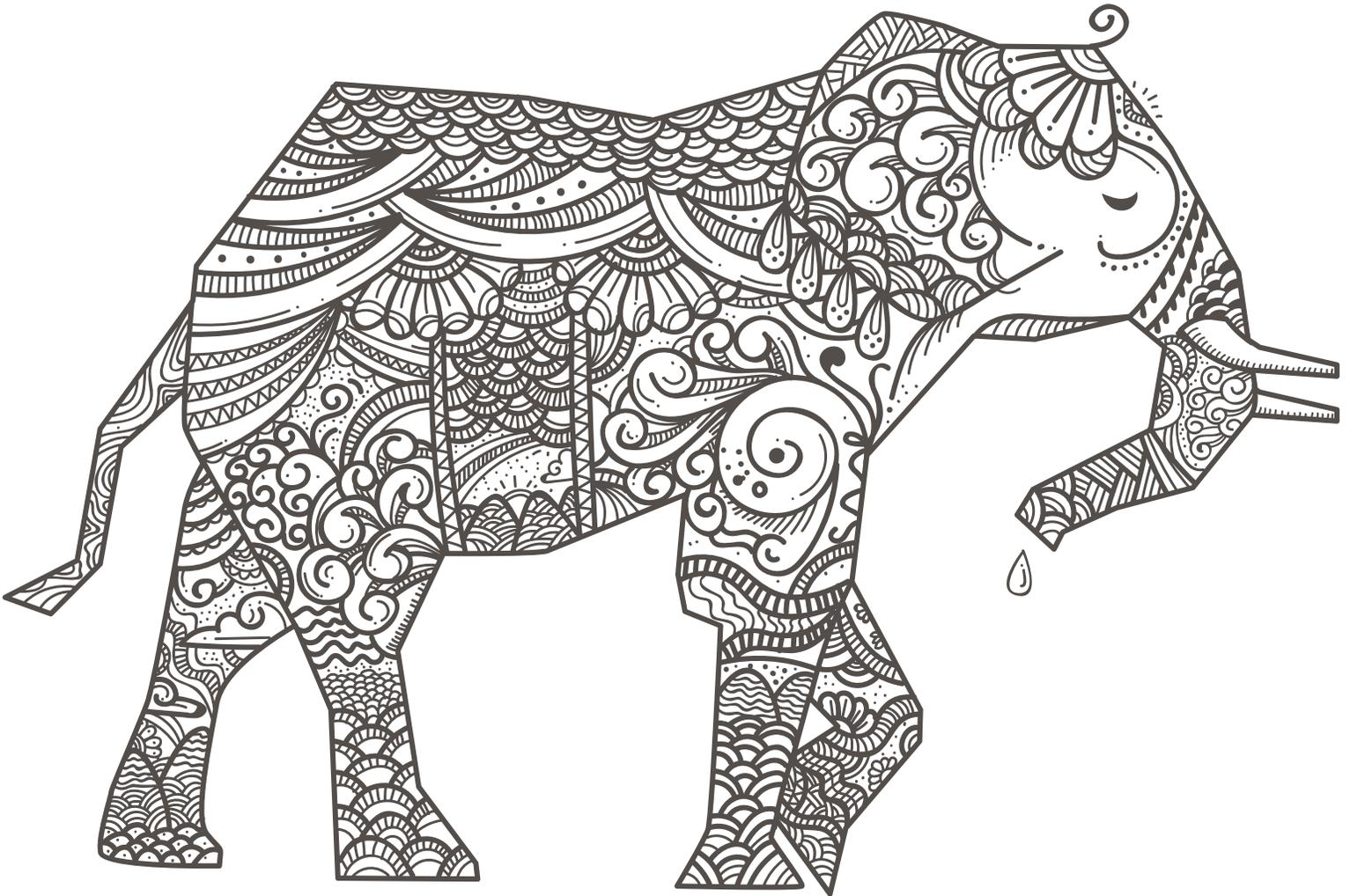


Flag Description

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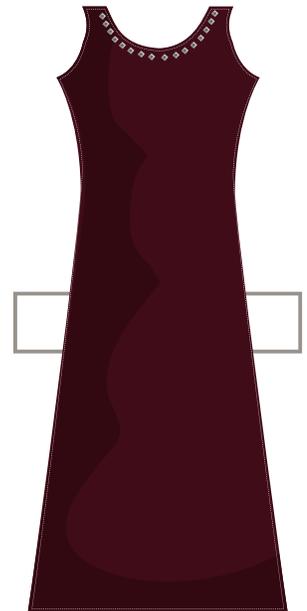
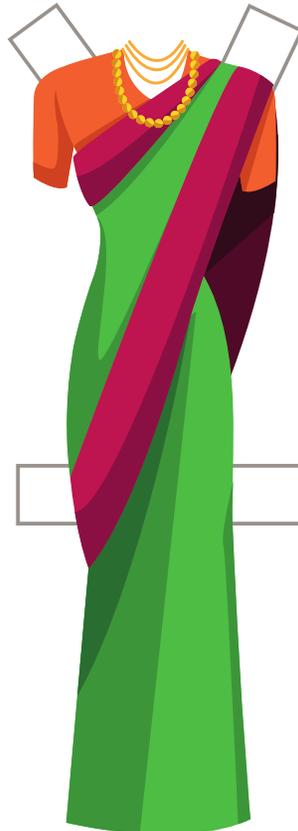
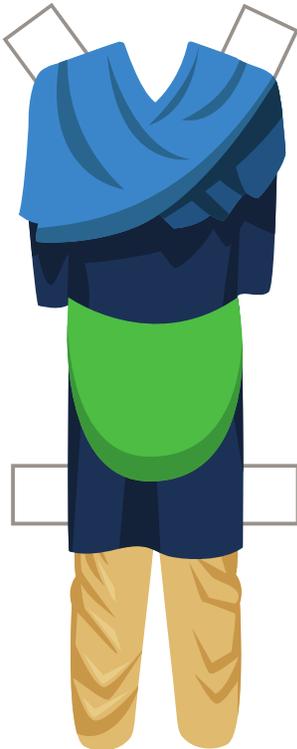
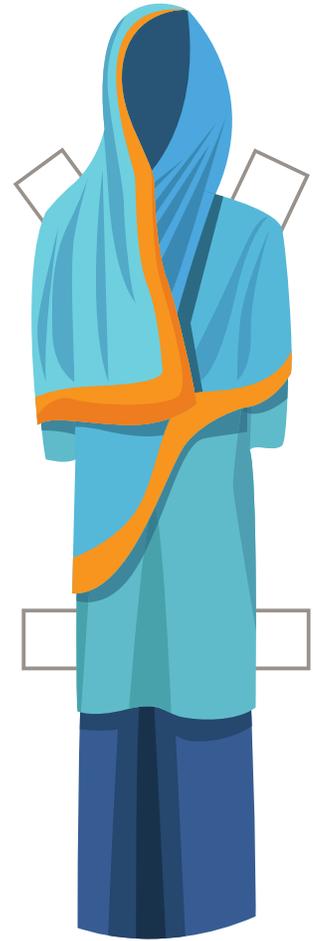
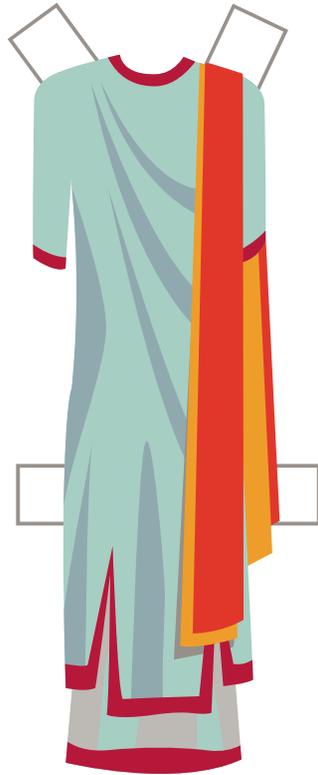
South Asia is well known for its Asian Elephants and for the beautiful artwork that Henna artists create in many countries. Colour this elephant to add your own creative touch.



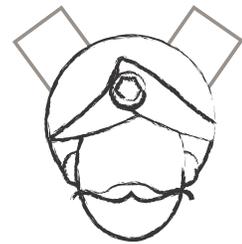
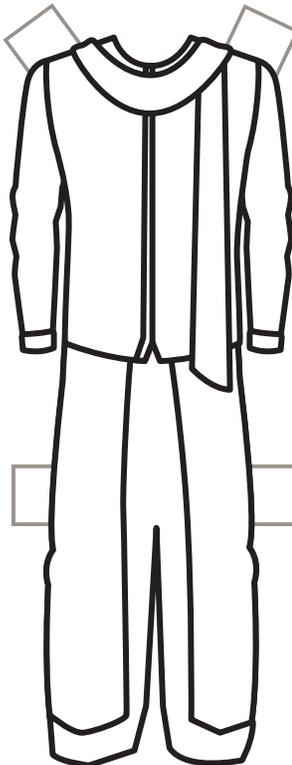
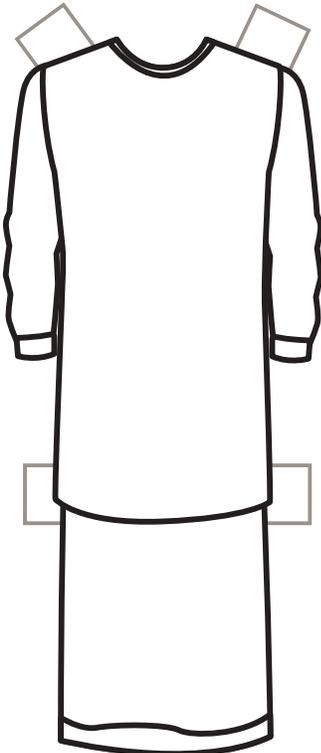
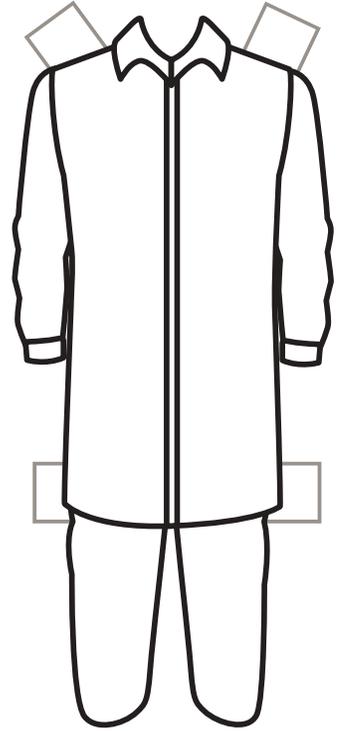
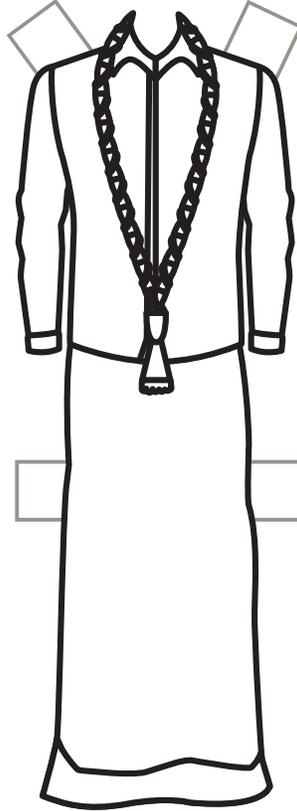
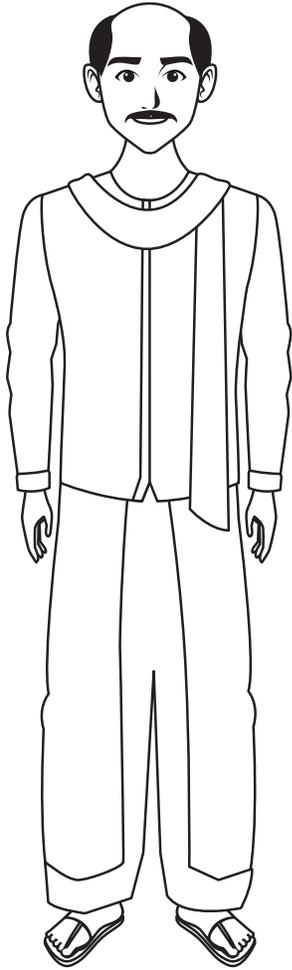
Paper Dolls



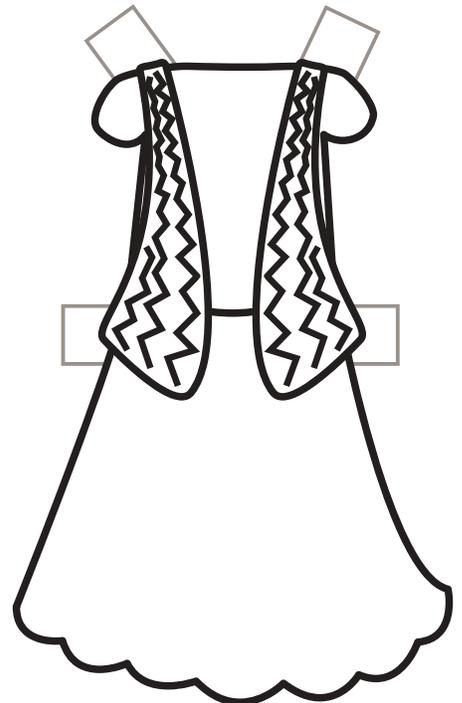
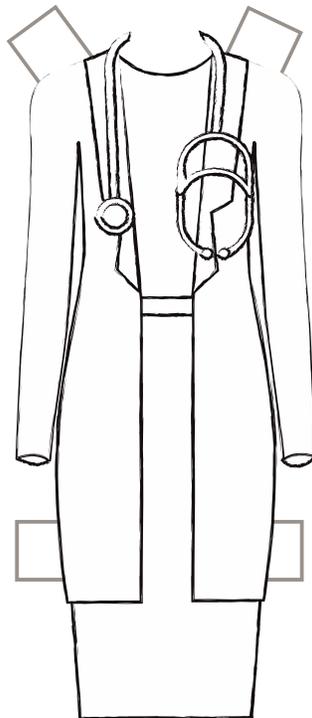
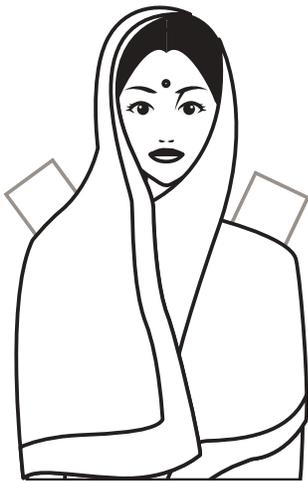
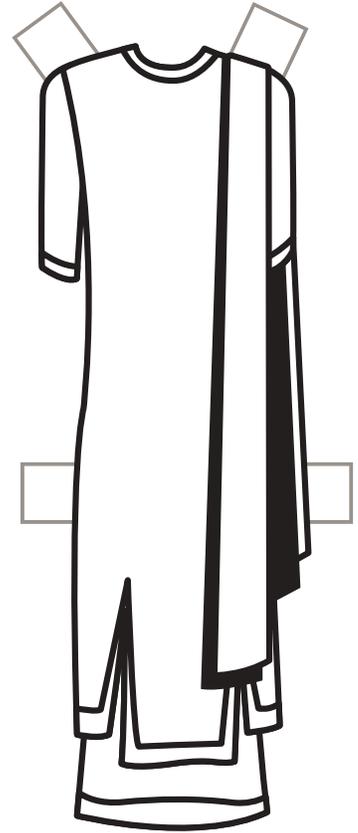
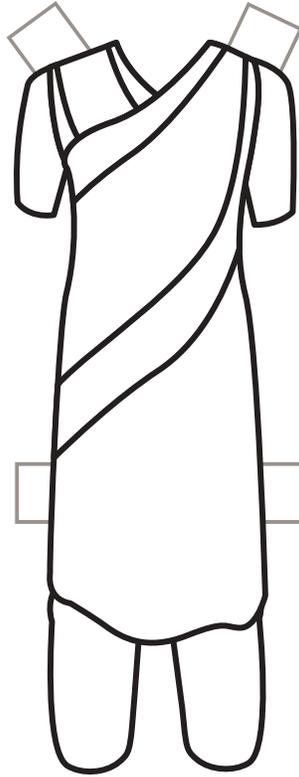
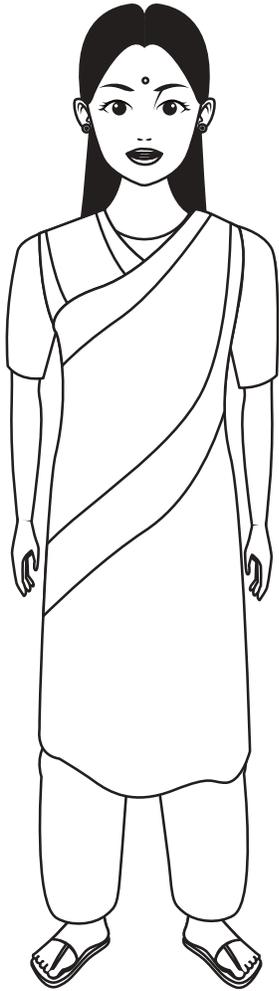
Paper Dolls



Colour Your Own Paper Dolls

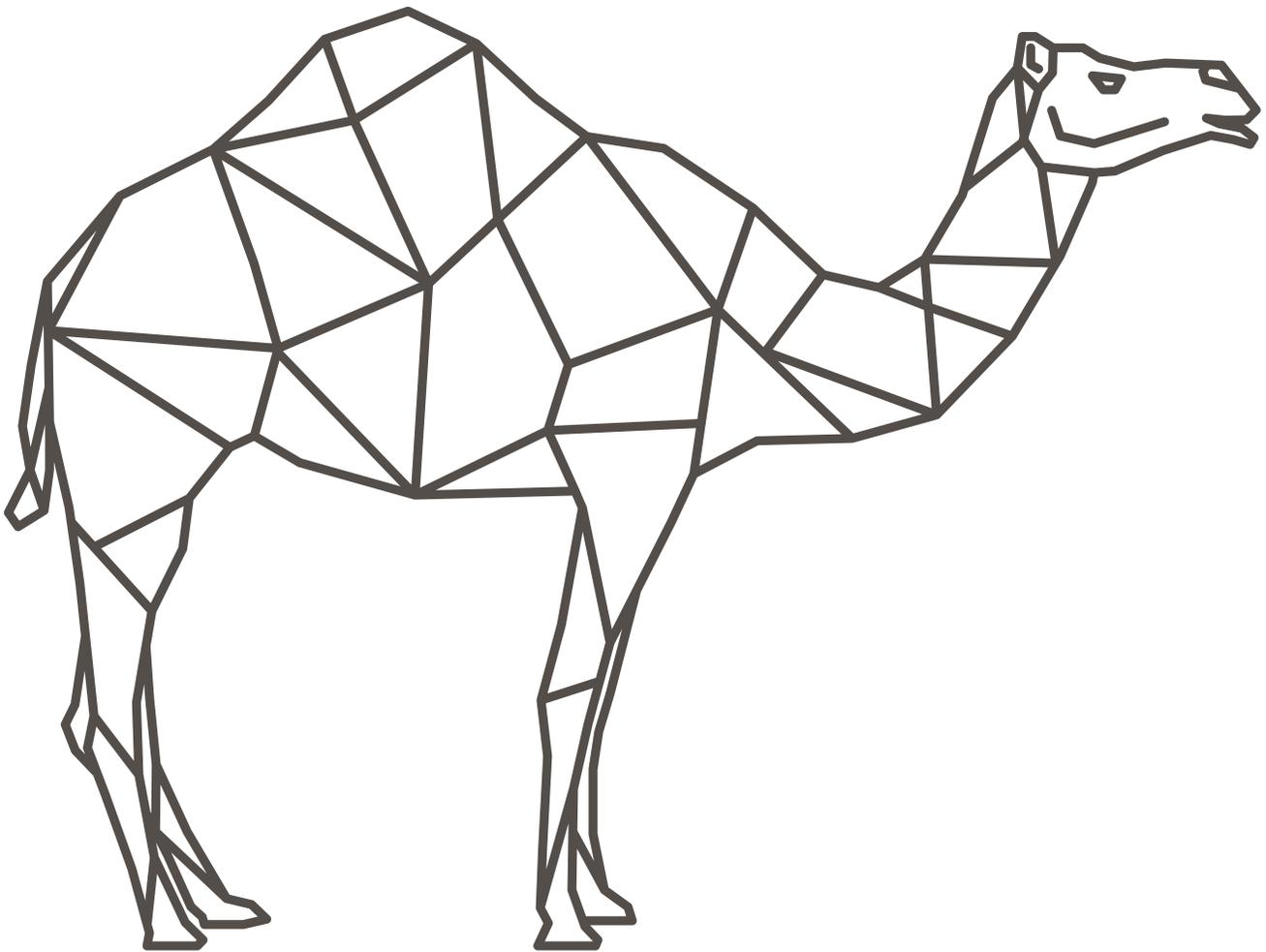


Colour Your Own Paper Dolls



Make a Mosaic

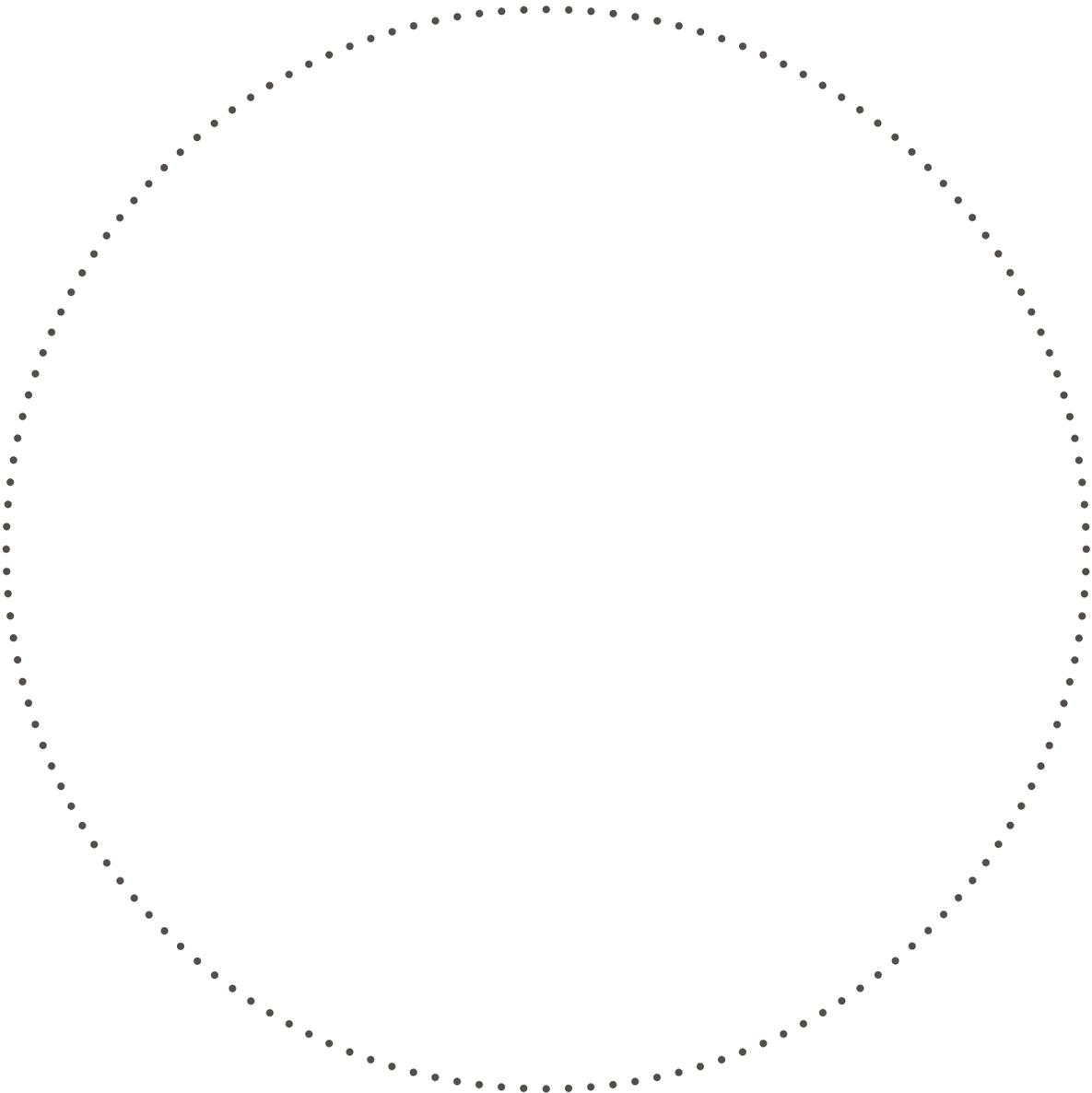
South Asia is full of beautiful diversity. Make a mosaic picture, filled with vibrant colours. You could also draw a different pattern in each space to add more variety to your unique creation.





Design a Mandala

In the ancient language Sanskrit, mandala means circle. In India, mandalas are used in making henna designs and for decoration. In Hinduism and Buddhism mandalas can represent the universe. Design a mandala that represents something you love.



Be the Change

Gandhi is famous for starting a peaceful revolution that led to India being an independent country. Write about a change you want to see in the world, and how you could start to make that change in your own life now. How might that affect the people around you, and the rest of the world?

*Be the change you want to see in the world.
-Gandhi*



A large, irregularly shaped white area with a torn top edge, containing horizontal lines for writing. The lines are arranged in two main sections: the top section has four lines, and the bottom section has six lines.

