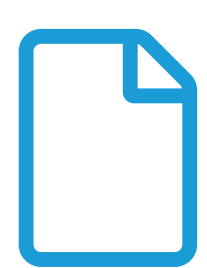
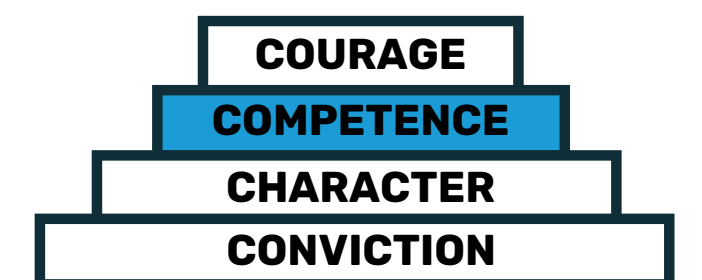




WORLDVIEWS: WORLD RELIGIONS

Lesson 1: Hinduism



Lesson Introduction

The world's third largest religion, and the basis for two of the other four in the big five, Hinduism is worth spending some time understanding. The last census had Hinduism as the fastest growing religion in Australia. If you don't know a Hindu believer now, chances are you may meet one soon.



Big Picture

Hinduism is the belief that behind everything in existence is the great spirit, Brahman - an impersonal, ultimate reality to which we must reunite by escaping the endless cycle of rebirth.



Key Truths

- Hinduism is an ancient religion that arose in a collectivist, Eastern worldview.
- The problem in Hinduism is our painful bondage to our cyclical, physical, individual existence.
- At its core, Hinduism believes behind everything in existence, is the great spirit, Brahman - an impersonal, ultimate reality.
- Hinduism is the means to escape the endless cycle of rebirth (Samsara) and achieve oneness in Brahman, becoming what we once were - like a spark returning to the flame. This is true existence - (called *Moksha*).
- The means of escape this cycle seek to deal with the impact of Karma - the fruit of our actions - good or bad - that attach to our soul trapping us in the physical realm.



Key Truths (cont)

- There are three main ways of observing Hinduism:
 - Dharma - The laws and duties associated with your caste (position in society). These actions must be performed with detachment, with no particular outcome in mind.
 - Asceticism - A life of strict self-denial and devotion on the Vedas (scriptures).
 - Devotion - A life lived in service of one of the many manifestations of Brahman, such as Vishnu or Siva.



Explore Worldview

Enter	What is their mission?	We need to escape this endless cycle of rebirth and become one with Brahman - the univesal, impersonal spirit.
	Who are the bad guys?	Our actions attach karma to our souls which traps us in this painful, physical existence.
	Who are the good guys?	We need to escape this endless cycle of rebirth and become one with Brahman - the univesal, impersonal spirit.
	Why attractive?	Hinduism provides a clear picture of where I stand in the universe, karma explains existence of evil, and there are a number of different paths to achieve Moksha or freedom from rebirth
Challenge	What's missing?	Karma is an oppressive idea that keeps us from loving people - they are getting their just deserts after all. Doing good is a duty, absent of compassion.
	What's clashing?	Samsara (rebirth) is axiomatic and foundational to Hinduism, but it is unverifiable. If untrue, Hinduism is false, meaningless and cruel. Which path should I take? How do I know it works?
Fulfill	How is Jesus the answer?	In Jesus, God has spoken in time and space, we can know him and relate to him. Wouldn't he be worth listening to? The good news of Jesus brings all people together and enables us to love anyone and everyone.



Application

The point of growing our understanding of Hinduism, is to enter their worldview, help them find a point of challenge, and to suggest how Jesus is the answer to their deepest yearning. And to seek an opportunity to invite them to meet Jesus in the pages of the Bible.

So, what questions could you ask a Hindu to explore their worldview?



Prayer

Pray for a deeper understanding of Hinduism so we can go deeper with our Hindu friends and colleagues.

Pray for an opportunity to share Jesus with a Hindu friend or colleague.

Remember

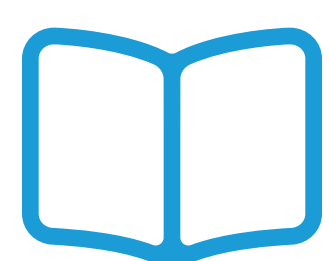
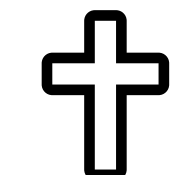
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Further Reading

A Spectators Guide to World Religions by John Dickson

The Heart of Hinduism website - hinduism.iskcon.org