

TEACHER'S GUIDE  
TO

INTRODUCTION  
TO  
BHAGAVAD-GITA

(DAMODAR CLASS)

# INTRODUCTION TO BHAGAVAD-GITA

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## **Introduction**

“Introduction to Bhagavad Gita” is a session that deals with the history of the Pandavas. It is not meant to be a study of the Mahabharat. That could be studied for an entire year or more. This booklet is limited to the important events which led up to the battle of Kurukshetra.

We speak often in our classes of Krishna and the Bhagavad Gita and the Battle of Kurukshetra. But for the new student, or student unfamiliar with the history of the Pandavas, these topics don't have much significance if they fail to understand the reasons behind the Bhagavad Gita being spoken (on a *battlefield*, yet!). This session will provide the background needed for children to go on to explore the teachings of Bhagavad Gita.

You may have a classroom filled with children who know these events well. Or you may have a class who has never heard of the Pandavas. You will likely have some of each. The way you teach your class should be determined from what the children already know. Students familiar with Mahabharat can absorb many more details and adventures. Young children and children new to the subject should learn the basics well. Don't complicate things by introducing too many characters and their relations to other characters. Limit the events to the ones that directly led to the war.

Teachers are requested to read corresponding sections of the Mahabharat for reference. The student booklets contain only the bare facts and you can certainly juice up the story by relating emotions, dialogue and thoughts that you'll learn from the lengthier version. I have used the edition by Kamala Subramaniam. Hridayananda Goswami's translation is not available at this writing, but that would be the preferred reference. You will find some appropriate excerpts from Hridayananda Goswami's translation in Back to Godhead beginning in the September/October 1993 issue.

This session is really one big, long story. That can get quite boring for the children if it is just read to them. In the teacher's guide you'll find different interactive ways to tell each week's story. The story itself is included in the guide to make it easier for teachers.

It is recommended that you tell the story in class the suggested way (unless you have a more fun idea) and then assign the same chapter to be read at home during the week. Students can read it by themselves or have it read to them. They should also answer the questions at the end of each chapter they read. This will serve as a good review and enable the children to remember the events more clearly. You may want to offer some sort of incentive (perhaps a sticker on the inside cover of their booklets) for those completing the reading and written homework.

Some of the stories use flannelboard figures. You can make an inexpensive “flannelboard” by covering a bulletin board with felt. On the back of the flannelboard figures, glue a small square of Velcro (hook part). The Velcro will stick to the felt. An alternative to this is to use blue tack and simply stick the figures on the wall.

# Chapter One

## **The History of the Kuru Dynasty**

*Teachers should read about the following events in the Mahabharat:*

- *the birth of Devavrata*
- *marriage of King Santanu to Satyawati*
- *births, deaths and marriages of Chitrangada and Vichitravirya*
- *births of Pandu, Dhritarashtra and Vidura*
- *marriage of Dhritarashtra to Gandhari; marriage of Pandu to Kunti and Madri*

1. Introduce the topic for the session by holding up a Bhagavad Gita and asking a volunteer to tell you what it is. Ask other questions about the book like, “Who is speaking in the Bhagavad Gita?” “Why is it an important book?” “How many of you have read some things from the Bhagavad Gita?” End with the question, “Where was the Bhagavad Gita spoken?” (On the battlefield of Kurukshetra.)

Tell the children that many people wonder why the Bhagavad Gita was spoken on a battlefield. Religion is generally thought of as teaching peace and love, yet we have *our* scripture spoken on a battlefield with Krishna telling Arjuna, “Fight!” In this session we’ll look at the reasons that led to the war.

Ask the children if war is good or bad. They will probably all say it’s bad. Ask them to tell you the reasons for their opinion. Tell them that we *do* usually think of war as being bad and we’ll see if we still have that opinion at the end of the session.

2. Introduce the verse for the session. It is the very first verse of the Bhagavad Gita (1.1):

*dhrtarastra uvaca  
dharma-ksetre kuru-ksetre  
samaveta yuyutsavah  
mama kah pandavas caiva  
kim akurvata sanjaya*

**Translation: Dhritarashtra said, O Sanjaya, after my sons and the sons of Pandu assembled in the place of pilgrimage at Kurukshetra, desiring to fight, what did they do?**

This should be written in advance on a large chart paper or chalkboard that can be seen by all the children. It is also in their booklets on Page 1. Teach it the same way we learn a Bhagavatam verse -- first having students repeat each word, then each line, as you lead. With younger children, it helps to point to each word as you chant, so they can gradually recognize the word and eventually read it on their own. Chant three or four times with them responding, then ask for volunteers to lead the chanting. As students lead, the rest of class still chants responsively. Students then repeat English translation after you.

Chanting of the sloka should be done at the beginning of each weekly lesson. It is an excellent way of getting the children settled in and their attention focused. By the end of the session, they should easily have mastered the verse having practiced this way.

3. We will use the figures on Worksheets 1 - 4 as visual aids (flannelboard figures) for this chapter. Color and cut them out in advance. Attach velcro on the back of each figure as recommended in the Introduction.

With the figures, we will introduce the characters and build a “family tree” on a flannelboard. Doing it in this manner will help the children *see* who is related. Using the figures, they can also retell the story to you. If you don’t have a flannelboard, the same activity can be done on the wall using blue tack to stick up the figures.

The story follows as it appears in the student booklets. The stories are shortened to avoid lengthiness and present only the basic facts. Feel free to add more details and descriptions. Fill in with dialogue whenever possible to make it more interesting and alive.

You’ll find suggestions in the story for placing the flannelboard figures to create a family tree. Feel free to move the figures about as you tell the story, using them to portray the actions of the characters.

### ***A. Devavrata***

**Once upon a time, the great King Santanu and his wife Ganga had a beautiful son born to them.** (Place the figure of Santanu on the flannelboard and place Ganga on the right of Santanu.) **His name was Devavrata.** (Place the figure of Bhishma above Ganga.) **Ganga was a heavenly being who had been cursed to take birth upon the earth for some time. After Devavrata was born, Ganga was free to return to the**

**heavenly planets and she took her baby son with her. (Remove the figures of Ganga and Bhishma and place them up high as if in the heavens.)**

**Devavrata stayed with her through his childhood years and was trained in all the ksatriya arts. His mother returned him to King Santanu when he was 16 years old and went back to her heavenly home. (Place Bhishma back above Santanu.) Devavrata was an extremely handsome boy, skillful and noble. He filled his lonely father's heart with a joy that King Santanu hadn't felt for many years. King Santanu was proud of this fine young man who would soon take his place as king of the world.**

**Father and son spent a few happy years together and King Santanu crowned Devavrata as the *yuvaraja*, or future king. The citizens were overjoyed. But fate cast a dark shadow upon these happy plans.**

**The king had been lonely since Ganga had left him for the heavens. Even the happiness of having his son with him couldn't fill the ache in his heart. One time while out hunting, he fell in love with a beautiful fisher girl. (Place Satyavati on the flannelboard.) He wanted to marry her, but the girl's father would only agree if in the future King Santanu would make the fisher girl's son the king. King Santanu couldn't disappoint his own qualified Devavrata this way and he left without taking the girl as his wife.**

**Devavrata soon noticed a change in his father. He seemed quiet and depressed. After inquiring from others, Devavrata discovered that the king was unhappy because he felt he could not marry the fisher girl. The faithful son set out for the forest to meet the girl's father. He demanded to know why the fisherman would not allow his daughter to marry the great king.**

**"Of course, I know it is a great honor for the king to desire my daughter as his wife," explained the fisherman. "But it has been predicted that the son of my daughter Satyavati will be a king. I asked the king to promise that he would grant this. That is what happened."**

**Devavrata couldn't stand the thought of his father not getting what he wanted. He said, "You want your grandson to be king after my**



**father? So be it. I renounce the kingdom. And I promise never to marry so that no sons of mine will ever claim the throne! I vow that I will not marry as long as I live.”**

(Cue students to shout, “Bhishma, Bhishma!” when you point to them. Let them practice a few times and warn them to pay attention.) **The vow he had taken was so serious and astonishing that the devas rained flowers on him from above. The word (Point to the students) “Bhishma! Bhishma!” resounded from the skies. (Point to the students) “Bhishma! Bhishma!” was heard from all quarters of the earth.**

**Devavrata, now known as Bhishma, took Satyavati into his chariot and rushed to the home of his father. He presented Satyavati to the king. (Place Satyavati on the left of the king.) When the king heard all that had happened, he was struck with grief. His wonderful son, so full of manliness and beauty, had taken a tremendous vow. Out of love and gratitude the king bestowed a boon upon Bhishma. Bhishma could die only when he wished. Death would have to wait for his word. In this way King Santanu hoped to make up for all that Bhishma would miss in life.**

### ***B. Heirs to the Kuru Dynasty***

**King Santanu and Satyavati spent happy years together. They had two sons named Chitrangada and Vichitravirya. (Place Chitrangada and Vichitravirya above Satyavati.) In the course of time the king passed away. Chitrangada and Vichitravirya were heirs to the throne but since they were too young to rule, Bhishma acted as the regent. Tragedy soon struck and Chitrangada was killed in a battle. (Lay Chitrangada on his side or place a strip of construction paper across him to show that he died.)**

**Vichitravirya was Satyavati’s only hope now. As Vichitravirya got older, Bhishma arranged his marriage. Two princesses, Ambika and Ambalika, were married to the young prince. (Place Ambika and Ambalika above Vichitravirya.) Fate struck again, however. Vichitravirya suffered from a deadly disease, and the best doctors could not save the young man from an early death. He died before having a son, and again there was no heir to the throne. (Lay him on his side or place a strip of construction paper over him.)**

**In special cases like this, it was allowed that a noble brahman could father a son to carry on the lineage. It was decided that the great sage, Vyasadeva, would father a child to both Ambika and Ambalika. (Place Vyasadeva near Ambika and Ambalika.) Their sons could then rule the kingdom.**

**Vyasadeva was very dark and had a frightening appearance. When he met with Ambika, she was so scared that she closed her eyes and refused to look at him. As a result, she had a son but he was born blind. His name was Dhritarashtra. (Place Dhritarashtra above Ambika.)**

**Ambalika was just as petrified as Ambika about meeting Vyasadeva. When he came to visit her, Ambalika was pale with fright and dread. As a result, the child born to her was handsome and gentle but pale and white. His name was Pandu. (Place Pandu above Ambika, leaving space for other figures to be placed.)**

**Satyavati was disturbed and wanted a more qualified heir to be born. She requested Vyasadeva to visit Ambika again after Dhritarashtra was born. Ambika couldn't bear the thought of meeting the fearsome sage again and so she sent her maid instead. The maid was very kind to Vyasadeva and he was pleased with her. The next day Vyasadeva told Satyavati that a wise and good son would be born. "But the mother of this child is not your daughter-in-law," he revealed. "She sent her maid to me and this maid is lucky to be the mother of the best of my children." This wise child was named Vidura. (Place Vidura to the right of Pandu.)**

**Now there were three young children. Bhishma again had the task of bringing up the boys and ruling the kingdom until Pandu and Dhritarashtra were old enough. Bhishma acted as their father, teaching them all they would need to know as ksatriya princes.**

**Dhritarashtra had great strength; Pandu was especially skilled in archery; Vidura was the wisest. The three boys had their duties. Dhritarashtra was appointed the yuvaraja, Pandu was the commander of the army, and Vidura was trained to be the king's minister. Because he was blind, Dhritarashtra could not rule the kingdom. Pandu was ruling it in his name with Vidura assisting him.**

**As the years went by, Bhishma found himself concerned with the marriages of the two princes. Bhishma chose Gandhari for the wife of the blind Dhritarashtra. (Place Gandhari next to Dhritarashtra.) Gandhari was a noble woman and her next action proved it. She thought that she should not be better than her husband in anything. Therefore, she got a piece of silk and tied it around her eyes, refusing to see the world that her lord could not see.**

**In the Madra kingdom, a *swayamvara* was held for the princess Madri, who chose Pandu as her husband. Pandu's beauty and skill were greater than all other princes who sought her hand in marriage. (Madri can be placed next to Pandu on the left.)**

**Kunti, daughter of King Kuntibhoja, also held a *swayamvara* and chose Pandu for her husband. Bhishma made arrangements for the weddings and he was pleased with the wonderful brides who were to be the queens of the great Kuru dynasty. (Kunti can be placed next to Pandu on the right.)**

4. To quickly review the story and relationships, pass out the figures to the children in random order. Let them help you summarize by telling the correct names and placing the figures up as they were before.

Since some children may know the story quite well, allow them to fill in some details or other bits of the story that may not have been narrated.

5. Emphasize how the three brothers, Dhritarashtra, Pandu and Vidura, worked as a team. Dhritarashtra was oldest and therefore heir to the throne but he was blind. So Pandu ruled it in his name. But the wise Vidura advised Pandu what to do. They worked together and were not jealous of each other. Each used his talent in ruling the kingdom the best way possible.

Take a few moments here to talk about cooperation. Ask the students if they can give you some reasons why it is good to cooperate with each other (it's more peaceful, more things can get done, you make friends, it's fun to work together).

Ask if they can give you some experience from their own lives showing how they cooperated. Have they had any experiences where NOT cooperating caused problems?

6. Ask the children what might happen in the following situations if the people involved didn't cooperate:

- four children are working in a group making a clay statue of a dinosaur
- a truck full of firemen is rushing to put out a fire in an office building
- three cooks are planning a menu and cooking for a large wedding
- a class of 30 children is taking the bus to the zoo for a field trip

Emphasize that many times cooperation means that we can't do everything we want to do. We are willing to sacrifice and compromise so that things go smoothly. We cooperate to get our task done nicely. Again point out how Vidura, Pandu and Dhritarashtra cooperated to run the kingdom. They didn't fight about who should be king.

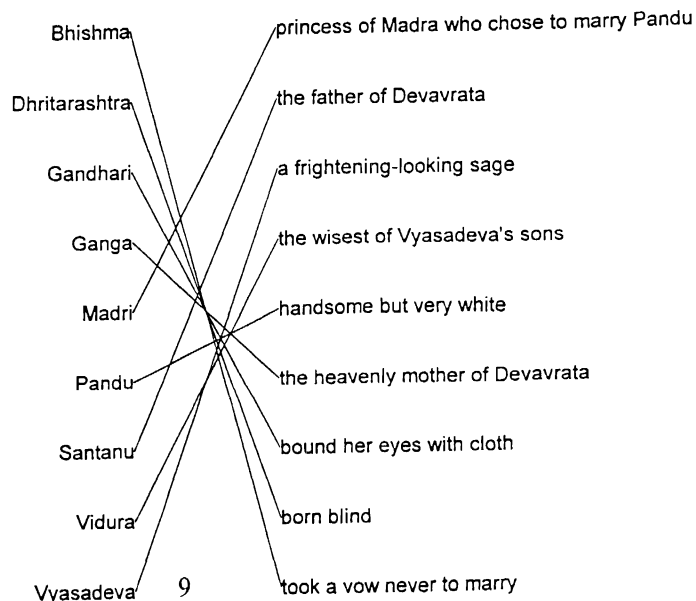
7. Ask the children to name some of the things Dhritarashtra could not do because he was blind. (Fight in battle, learn archery, read, many practical things.) Now have them imagine what a great sacrifice it was for Gandhari to become voluntarily blind. Think of all the things she would now be unable to do. This shows her humility and love for her husband.

8. Homework assignment: Tell the children that during the week they are to read Chapter One and complete the questions on Page 7. Since some of your class may be new readers, tell them that their parents can read the chapter to them and help them with the questions. Answers will be checked next week in class.

Ask them to make a special effort this week to cooperate at home and at school. See if they can make a difference in helping things run smoothly. Students can share their experiences next week.

Answers to Matching on Page 7:

### The Kuru Dynasty



## **Chapter Two**

### **The Birth of the Pandavas**

*Teachers should read about the following events in the Mahabharat:*

- *Kunti's boon and the birth of Karna*
- *Pandu's curse*
- *the birth of the Pandavas*
- *the birth of Duryodhana*

1. Chant the verse for the session.

2. Check the homework assignment (Page 7). This will also serve as a review. Children who did the homework can be given incentives at this time. This can be something as simple as a sticker on the inside of their book or a star next to their name on a chart. If you want to review any other points made last week, do so now.

Ask if anyone has any experience this past week to share about cooperation. Perhaps they can tell how they cooperated or how cooperation could have helped in a particular situation.

3. Ask the children where we left off last week. (The marriages of Pandu and Dhritarashtra.) Tell them now that we are going to go back in time. We are going to learn about something that happened to Kunti when she was a small girl, many years *before* she married Pandu.

This story is fairly short so it can just be told. If you can get the picture of Surya appearing before Kunti (Krishna Art Book or an old calendar), show it as you speak. The story as it appears in the student book follows:

#### **Kunti's Boon**

**When Kunti was a young girl, long before her marriage to Pandu, the great sage Durvasa Muni was pleased with her behavior and granted her a boon. He taught her a special incantation. He explained that when she recited it, any deva that she thought of would come to her.**

**One day while young Kunti was watching the sun rise and cast its golden hue over the land, she remembered the incantation. How**

wonderful it would be to see the sun god! She held her palms together and softly recited the incantation while thinking of the sun god, Surya.

The brilliant sun god appeared before her and smiled. Kunti was satisfied by simply seeing Surya before her, but his words shocked the girl. He said, “Perhaps you don’t know the power of your incantation. Whatever god you call will appear before you and embrace you. He will give you a son as beautiful as the god whom you have called.”

Kunti didn’t know what to do. She had no idea that this was what the incantation meant. She was very young. She was not married. What would her father think if she were to have a baby? What would the citizens think of her now? Such a shameful thing should never happen to her! She told the sun god to go away and leave her.

Surya reassured the poor, frightened Kunti. “It is all right, my child. After your child is born, everything will be as it was before and no one will ever know of this.”

Kunti accepted the deva’s words and had no more fear. When Surya was ready to depart, he told Kunti that her son would be born with a Kavacha and a Kundala (armor and earrings). He would be a great archer and a very generous man. His fame would spread throughout the world. Saying this, the sun god vanished from sight.

In due course of time, a son was born to Kunti. She didn’t know what to do with the boy. She was so ashamed that all she could think of was how to get rid of the child before anyone found out. She wrapped him up and placed him in a wooden box and carried it down to the river. Kunti set the box on the water and gave it a little push to send it downstream. Her heart was breaking as she watched her first-born sun float away, his Kavacha and Kundala gleaming in the light of the sun.

This experience was in Kunti’s past and the thought of her dear child that she had never known haunted her. Little did she know that the incantation that had caused her so much pain would soon be useful.

4. Ask the students if they know the name of this unfortunate baby. (Karna or Radheya.) Bring them back to the present and remind them that now Kunti

is older and married to Pandu. But she always thought of this first son of hers.

The rest of the story we will tell as a mural story.

5. Distribute sheets of paper and markers. Give each child one of these subjects to draw:

- 2 deer (1 male and 1 female)
- a forest with beautiful gardens (several children can work on this)
- Yudhishthira (write the name at the bottom of the people figures)
- Arjuna
- Bhima
- Nakula
- Sahadeva
- Duryodhana

Give the children a few minutes to draw their pictures. Then collect the pictures and put them in a line on the floor along the wall. Have tape or blue tack nearby. Have the children sit on the floor with you as you tell the story. As each new part of the story is introduced, have the children who drew pictures of that part of the story tape their pictures to the wall.

Some of the characters that were made last week for the family tree (Pandu, Kunti, Madri and Gandhari) can be used again this week. Allow volunteers to tape these pictures to the wall as they are introduced.

The story follows. Add details and dialogue to enrich the basic story.

### ***B. The Pandavas are Born***

**Pandu and his two queens, Madri and Kunti, enjoyed spending time in the forest.** (Pause while the pictures of Pandu, Kunti and Madri are put up.) **Here on the southern slopes of the Himalayas, Pandu had many happy days with his wives. He enjoyed hunting there, also.**

**One time Pandu was hunting and spied two deer.** (Pause to let the children who drew the two deer put their pictures up.) **The deer seemed only to notice each other and take no heed of the hunter. Pandu aimed his arrow at the male deer and shot it. The deer immediately fell down to the ground. The deer and its mate were actually a rishi and his wife who had changed themselves into deer. They did this so they could show their love for each other freely without the restraints that humans have.**

The dying deer spoke to the king in a human voice, “How could you have done such a sinful thing? I am a rishi and this is my wife. While embracing her in love, I was shot with your sharp arrow and I feel myself dying. This act will cost you your life. When you approach your wife to embrace her in love, you will die just as I.” With these words cursing Pandu, the rishi died and his wife died along with him.

Pandu was a changed man now. He had no hope of having sons now and decided to retire to the forest and live like a rishi. Kunti and Madri gave away all their jewels and costly silk garments and followed their husband to the forest of Satasringa. (Pause while the picture of the forest is placed up and the appropriate figures moved to it.) Once again, Bhishma found himself needed to rule the kingdom.

Pandu, Madri and Kunti spent several years in the forest quite happily. But Pandu wanted sons. He knew that he could not father the children himself or he would die. After seeing her husband so worried, Kunti took pity on him and told him about the boon she had received from Durvasa Muni. They decided that Kunti should recite the incantation and call Dharma who would give Kunti a religious and worthy son.

In the beautiful gardens of Satasringa, Kunti invoked the Lord of Dharma and months later gave birth to a son born of Dharma. This child was named Yudhisthira and he would be famed throughout the world for his righteousness. (Pause while Yudhisthira is placed on the wall.) Pandu was so happy.

A year later he asked Kunti to bear him another son. This time he wanted Vayu, god of the wind, to be the father. Kunti recited the incantation and Vayu appeared to her. A beautiful, strong son was born to her. This child was named Bhima and would be known for his power and affection. (Pause while the child who drew Bhima places him on the wall. Now Pandu had two sons but he wasn’t satisfied. He asked Kunti to bear another, this time with Indra as the father. She agreed and Indra gave her a son named Arjuna. He was destined to be the conqueror of the entire world. A voice from the heavens proclaimed, “This son is the other half of Vishnu. He is Nara. Krishna, the son of Vasudeva, is Narayana. Because of these two, the earth will be cleansed of all the poisons caused from the evil kings.” (Pause while the child who drew Arjuna places it on the wall.)

More sons were wanted by Pandu and it was decided that Madri should bear them. Kunti taught the incantation to Madri who called the



**Ashvini Kumars, the heavenly twins. They gave Madri two sons who were named Nakula and Sahadeva. They would be the most handsome men in the world. They would be famed for their devotion, bravery and wisdom. (Pause while Nakula and Sahadeva are placed on the wall.)**

**The rishis in the forest became the teachers of the young princes. They were trained in the art of weaponry and became skillful fighters.**

### ***C. Dhritarashtra's Family***

**Gandhari was blessed to have 100 sons. (Place the figure of Gandhari on the wall in a separate area.) This happened in quite an extraordinary way, however. When Kunti was pregnant with Yudhisthira, Gandhari was also pregnant. Yudhisthira was born, but a year later Gandhari had still not had her baby. She became jealous that Kunti had an older son and she was angry about being pregnant for two years.**

**Gandhari struck her abdomen with her fist and she gave birth to a lump of flesh as a result. (You can use a lump of dough or Playdoh to demonstrate this. Start with a big lump and as you speak break off small pieces and pretend to place them in bowls, etc.) Vyasadeva advised her to divide the lump into 100 pieces. Each piece was placed in a bowl of ghee, covered and carefully guarded. He gave instructions to Gandhari on when to open the bowls. Gandhari followed his directions carefully and eventually her first child, named Duryodhana, took birth. (Pause while the picture of Duryodhana is placed on the wall.)**

**Duryodhana was born on the same day that Bhima was born. Dhritarashtra was a proud father but he wished that his son could have been the heir to the Kuru throne. He called Vidura and consulted him. "I hear Pandu has one son that is older than mine. I'm afraid that he will become heir to the throne instead of my son. Something else is upsetting me. When Duryodhana was born there were many bad omens. I don't understand the reason for this."**

**Vidura warned the blind king, "My brother, these omens mean that your son will cause the destruction of the whole world."**

**Dhritarashtra was alarmed and wanted to know how to avoid the catastrophe. Vidura advised him to put his son to death. That was the only way. "For the protection of the entire world, this one child should be killed," the wise Vidura cautioned.**

**Poor Dhritarashtra couldn't follow Vidura's advice. Duryodhana was his first-born son. The king soon became the father of one hundred more sons and one daughter. He forgot all his worries and buried himself in the joys of fatherhood.**

6. Check the children's comprehension on what you have just taught by asking a few questions. They should know the basic events and all the names mentioned today.

7. Teach the children a little song to easily remember the names of the five Pandavas. Have it written on the chalkboard or on a poster on the wall. This jingle can be sung to the tune of "Old MacDonald had a Farm." Sing it a few times with the children until they know it well.

*Mother Kunti had five sons,  
Hari, hari-bol.  
They were called the Pandavas,  
Hari, hari-bol.  
Yudhisthira, Arjuna  
Bhim, Nakula and Sahadeva.  
Mother Kunti had five sons,  
Hari, hari-bol.*

8. Using the appropriate flannelboard figures show the children how a king passes on his kingdom to his sons. Take the figures of Dhritarashtra and Pandu. Ask students to tell you which children belong to whom. (Duryodhana, his 100 brothers and the 5 Pandavas.) Put them in order from oldest to youngest. Yudhisthira will be first, then Bhima and Duryodhana, etc.

Show them in this way that Yudhisthira was the oldest of the Kuru sons and was therefore next in line to be king. Who was second? Duryodhana and Bhima. Dhritarashtra was disappointed that his son was not the eldest. Duryodhana grew up being jealous of the Pandavas just like his father was.

9. Homework assignment: Tell the children that during the week they are to read Chapter Two and complete the questions on Page 13. Since some of your class may be new readers, tell them that their parents can read the chapter to them and help them with the questions. Answers will be checked next week in class. There is also a crossword puzzle on Page 14 that serves as a review. Answers are on Page 45 of this booklet.

## Chapter Three

### ***The Pandavas Move to Hastinapura***

*Teachers should read about the following events in Mahabharat:*

- *the death of Pandu*
- *Duryodhana's plots to kill the Pandavas (poisoning Bhima, the house of lac)*
- *the marriage of Draupadi to the five Pandavas*
- *the meeting of Krishna and Balaram with the Pandavas*

1. Chant the verse for the session.

2. Check the homework assignment (Page 13). This will also serve as a review. Children who did the homework can be given incentives at this time. This can be something as simple as a sticker on the inside of their book or a star next to their name on a chart. If you want to review any other points made last week, do so now.

3. The story for this lesson can be acted out by the students. Help them along with cues and suggested dialogue. The students can use one or two simple props to define each character. They can also carry the appropriate flannelboard figure to show who they are. One child can easily fill in more than one role this way.

The story follows as it appears in the children's booklets. Once again, add dialogue and details to add to the excitement. Pause often to let the children act out as much as possible. The following characters appear:

Pandu (have a girl be Pandu so you won't have a boy and girl embracing in the beginning of the story)

Madri

Kunti

Yudhisthira

Arjuna

Bhima

Duryodhana

Vidura

Draupadi

### ***A. The Death of Pandu***

The sons of Pandu were now in their teens. They had spent their time happily in Satasringa with their parents. One day Kunti took her boys to visit a nearby ashram. Madri stayed behind with Pandu.

Pandu looked upon his wife, who looked enchantingly beautiful. He was overcome with love for her and wanted to embrace her. Forgetting all about the curse, he approached her. Madri ran away like a frightened deer but Pandu caught her and held her in his arms. Although Madri cried and tried to warn him, he embraced her tightly to him, and in the next instant he fell down dead.

Kunti heard the cries of Madri and rushed to the spot with the boys. Their grief was pitiful to see as they gathered around their dead father. The rishis took the children away and tried to console them. Madri and Kunti, both numb with the loss of their lord, thought about what should be done now.

Madri insisted that she should enter the funeral fire and die along with her husband. She asked Kunti to stay behind and guard all five children. The rishis agreed that this was the right thing to do. As Yudhishthira lit the fire, his eyes streaming with tears, Madri placed herself in the funeral fire, her face reflecting the peace and joy she felt within.

What were Kunti and her five sons to do now? The residents of Satasringa decided that it would be best for them to return to Hastinapura. There, Bhishma and their uncle Dhritarashtra could care for them. So the rishis, with Kunti and the five sons of Pandu, set off for the beautiful city of Hastinapura. What was to become of them no one knew.

### ***B. The Pandavas in Danger***

In Hastinapura the Pandavas lived in the lifestyle of the princes they were. They were the pride and joy of Grandfather Bhishma, who was like a father to them. Bhishma appointed Kripa and later Drona to educate all of the boys in the ksatriya arts. Arjuna quickly became a favorite of Drona's because of his devotion and love of archery. Young

**Arjuna's goal was to be the best archer in the world and Drona was sure he could do it.**

**The Pandavas were very popular in the kingdom. Their respectful natures, good looks and delightful manners were impossible to resist. But young Duryodhana felt no love in his heart for the Pandavas.**

**Bhima was an energetic and wild boy. He liked teasing the other boys and defeating them in all sorts of games. It was all in fun but Duryodhana soon tired of it and became angry and jealous of Bhima's strength. Duryodhana hated his cousin and began to think of ways to get revenge.**

**Duryodhana became so maddened by his envy that he tried to kill Bhima. He tried to drown him and poison him but Bhima was not hurt. Vidura and the others knew that it was Duryodhana who tried to murder his cousin so they were all on guard.**

**Years later Duryodhana hatched a plot to destroy Queen Kunti and her five sons. He reasoned that he would then be the heir to the throne rather than the elder Yudhisthira. Duryodhana had his father Dhritarashtra send them away to a distant city called Varanavat, where he had a house built especially for them. Duryodhana had the house made of lac and ghee and other things that burn easily. His plan was to start a fire when they were sleeping in the house and kill them all.**

**Vidura was able to warn them about this plot, so when the house was set afire the Pandavas and Kunti escaped through underground tunnels that had been dug. They thought that Duryodhana would surely come after them if he knew they were alive, so the five brothers and their mother disguised themselves as poor, simple brahmins. They got whatever they needed by begging alms and sharing what they received. In this way, they lived in the forest until the time was right for them to come out of hiding.**

### ***C. Draupadi Weds the Pandavas***

**While they were in disguise, they heard that a *swyamvara* was being held for a beautiful princess named Draupadi, the daughter of King Drupada. Whoever wished to claim her as his wife must first pass**

a very difficult test of archery. Draupadi's father had really wanted his daughter to marry Arjuna and he knew that this challenge would lure Arjuna to his kingdom.

The Pandavas decided to attend the *swayamvara* and came in their disguises as brahmans. They sat amongst hundreds of kings hoping to win Draupadi's hand in marriage. Krishna and Balaram, who were cousins of the Pandavas, were also there to watch the event. They recognized their cousins even though they were in disguise.

King after king came forward to show their skills but they were not even able string the bow. Suddenly Arjuna, whom all thought was a gentle brahman, stepped forward and strung the bow easily. He sent his arrows whizzing through the air and felled the target, which no one had come close to doing before. The whole assembly was astounded as Draupadi garlanded him as her husband and followed him out of the *swayamvara* hall.

The Pandavas went home with Draupadi following them. When they reached the house they went inside calling jokingly to their mother, "Mother, we have brought our alms!"

Kunti did not see them come in and replied in her usual way, "You can all share what alms you have brought home." When she saw the lovely Draupadi standing beside Arjuna and realized that Draupadi was what they meant by "alms" she was horrified. She had never spoken a lie and had never done anything wrong. But it was not proper for a woman to have more than one husband. How could they all share Draupadi?

It was finally decided that Draupadi *would* be the husband of all five Pandavas. They all loved her already. She had previously received a boon that she would have five husbands. The great sage Vyasadeva confirmed that this was the proper thing to do in this circumstance.

At this time, Krishna and His brother Balaram went to the house where the Pandavas were staying. The cousins had never met although they had heard much about each other. Immediately a strong friendship grew between Krishna and the Pandavas. All eyes were shining with

love. Krishna blessed His aunt Kunti and her sons and warned them to be careful of the sons of Dhritarashtra. He and Balaram then left to return to Their own camp.

The Pandavas soon went to King Drupada, who was satisfied with his daughter's marriage. The Pandavas now felt that with King Drupada's support and Krishna's help it was safe for them to come out of hiding.

News soon reached Hastinapura that the Pandavas were alive and well. This was a terrible discovery for the Kauravas. Thinking that the Pandavas were dead, Duryodhana had already thought of himself as the ruler of the entire kingdom. He didn't want to give up that position to Yudhisthira.

Duryodhana and his army challenged the Pandavas to a battle but it was short and decisive. Arjuna, Bhima and their brothers showed their superior strength and conquered their cousins. The Kauravas were no match for the Pandavas and Duryodhana returned to Hastinapura with his army. His mind was fixed on finding a way of defeating his cousins once and for all.

4. Ask a few questions after telling the story to make sure the children followed the chain of events.

5. Write the following words on separate index cards: Sad, Happy, Lonely, Jealous, Scared, Surprised, and Worried. Have the children sit in a circle with the index cards face down in the middle. Ask one volunteer to turn over the first card, read it and show it to the others. Children tell of a time when one of the characters in the story we just acted out felt this emotion. When several children have answered, another volunteer can draw the next card.

Some possible answers:

- **Sad** -- Kunti, Madri and the Pandavas when Pandu died; citizens when they thought the Pandavas died in the fire, many kings when they failed to win Draupadi's hand.
- **Happy** -- Draupadi and Arjuna when he won her hand; Vidura when it was discovered the Pandavas didn't die in the fire; Madri as she died with her husband; Duryodhana when he thought the Pandavas were dead.

- **Lonely** -- Kunti, Madri and the Pandavas after the death of Pandu; the Pandavas while in hiding.
- **Jealous** -- Duryodhana
- **Scared** -- Kunti and her sons when they learned of the plot to burn them; the Pandavas as they escaped from the fire; Duryodhana after he was defeated by the Pandavas.
- **Surprised** -- Duryodhana when learning that the Pandavas were alive; Kunti when her sons brought home Draupadi; the kings when Arjuna, in disguise as a brahmana, shot the target at the *swayamvara*.
- **Worried** -- Kunti as she thought of raising her children alone; Kunti when she said that the Pandavas should share Draupadi.

6. Take a few moments now to discuss jealousy. What makes people jealous? (Someone may have more power, more money, more beauty and we become jealous.) Ask the students what are some things that make them jealous. Share some of your feelings and thoughts too.

Explain that because of this one quality of jealousy, or envy, many sins (and many crimes) are committed. Duryodhana's story shows that. His jealousy drove him to do unspeakable acts. Even as a young boy he was trying to kill his cousins.

You can tell the students that if they are feeling jealous of someone, they can take help from Krishna. They can remember that Krishna loves them and Krishna is giving them whatever they need. If they are not rich, or beautiful or famous, it may be because it would not be good for them. There are a lot of problems that go along with being rich, beautiful and famous.

Ask the students for some other suggestions of what to do or think if they are feeling jealous of someone. Tell them *not* to do what Duryodhana did! Instead they can pray to Krishna to help them to stop feeling jealous; they can be thankful for what they have, etc.

7. Homework assignment: Tell the children that during the week they are to read Chapter Three and complete the questions on Page 21. Remind them that their parents can read the chapter to them and help them with the questions. Answers will be checked next week in class.

If you have class time left, they can do the Secret Messages activity on Page 20 or it can also be assigned for homework.



## **Chapter Four**

### **Indraprastha**

*Teachers should read about the following events in Mahabharat:*

- *the land of Kandavaprastha*
- *Yudhisthira's Rajasuya and the killing of Sisupala*
- *When Draupadi laughed at Duryodhana in the hall of Maya*
- *the gambling match*
- *Draupadi's insult and the oaths that followed*
- *the second gambling match and the banishment of the Pandavas*

1. Chant the verse for the session.

2. Check the homework assignment (Page 21). This will also serve as a review. Children who did the homework can be given incentives at this time. This can be something as simple as a sticker on the inside of their book or a star next to their name on a chart. If you want to review any other points made last week, do so now.

3. A story warm-up:

Tell the children that before you tell today's story you want to have a short arm-wrestling match. Ask for two volunteers to arm-wrestle each other. Right before you start tell one of the volunteers that someone will wrestle in his place but he will be declared the winner or loser instead of the substitute. (The substitute should be someone who is obviously bigger and a lot stronger than the other volunteer. It could be you, but better yet, get a man who looks strong and powerful to step in for this part of the class and arm wrestle. He should make it look easy as he defeats the child.)

Have a few matches. When the substitute wrestler wins, call out the name of the child he is replacing, saying, "\_\_\_\_\_ wins!" Encourage the other child to keep trying. When the child has lost five or six times stop the activity.

Ask the children:

- *How many of you thought this was a fair match?*
- *What wasn't fair about it?*
- *How did you feel when \_\_\_\_\_ (the substitute) kept winning?*

- *(to the child who wrestled) How did you feel when I announced that \_\_\_ (the substitute) was going to arm-wrestle you in place of your classmate? How did you feel when you kept losing?*

Explain that in today's story a similar situation happened to the Pandavas. As students listen to the story, ask them to imagine how the Pandavas felt.

4. Ask the children where we left off last week (the Pandavas come out of hiding). Tell the children that you will need them to help you tell the story today. Divide the class into two groups. Write the following chant on the chalkboard:

**“Shame, shame, shame!**

**Stop this evil game, game, game!”**

Group One should practice chanting (shouting) this in unison. They should sound like they are really mad.

Write the chant for Group Two on the chalkboard:

**“Sakuni Wins!”**

Have each group practice chanting loudly in unison as you point to them. Instruct the children to pay attention to the story since you will be pointing at one group or the other throughout. Now tell the story as follows, pausing to point at each group when noted. Be dramatic!

### ***A. The Pandava's Gain a Kingdom***

**Back in Hastinapura the Kuru elders were deciding what should be done. They held a conference. Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Vidura, Dhritarashtra and others were there. They thought that the time had come for the Pandavas to be treated fairly. They urged Dhritarashtra to divide his kingdom with the Pandavas and save his reputation. He agreed and Vidura went to the kingdom of Drupada to bring back the Pandavas. Krishna and Balaram were also there and They accompanied the Pandavas, Kunti and Vidura back to Hastinapura.**

**An official reception was held and King Dhritarashtra received them warmly. He explained that the Pandavas were entitled to the kingdom also since their father Pandu had helped rule it. The blind king divided the kingdom between Yudhisthira and Duryodhana, making Yudhisthira the lord of the land called Khandavaprastha.**

Khandavaprastha *was* half of the kingdom but the land was like a desert. The land was a wasteland where nothing would grow and no animals could live. This was Yudhisthira's share of the kingdom. But Yudhisthira didn't mind; he was tired of all the quarreling. When they looked over the wasteland, Krishna called Lord Indra. He asked him to send the rains to make the land fertile and green again. They renamed the land Indraprastha and work soon began on the city. It was like magic and the area was soon transformed into a beautiful place.

Yudhisthira wanted to perform a great sacrifice called the Rajasuya. Kings were invited from all over the world and they arrived bringing gifts and wealth to honor Yudhisthira. Krishna came as a special guest of honor. It was during this Rajasuya that Sisupala insulted Krishna. Krishna was forced to kill him on the spot. What had begun to be a celebrated ceremony turned sour as the killing of Sisupala spoiled everyone's happiness.

Duryodhana's unhappiness was the greatest of all. When he saw his hated cousins with great wealth and many citizens, prospering in the beautiful city that was once a wasteland, his envy doubled. He could not sleep due to thinking of ways to destroy these rivals.

### ***B. The Gambling Match***

Duryodhana had an evil uncle named Sakuni who always helped Duryodhana in his schemes to hurt the Pandavas. Now Sakuni approached Duryodhana with an idea.

“King Yudhisthira is indeed a righteous person. He is Dharma personified. Yet he has one weakness: gambling. I know of a way that you can recover all that the Pandavas have. Let us invite the Pandavas here for a game of dice.” Duryodhana was delighted.

Dhritarashtra agreed with the plan. Due to his selfish love for his son, he no longer cared about being fair to his good nephews. He sent Vidura to bring the Pandavas back to the kingdom of Hastinapura. Vidura didn't like the idea and said (*Point to Group One*). The Pandavas were told that a new hall had been constructed near Hastinapura and

they were invited to see it. The king wanted them to come and enjoy some games of dice.

Yudhisthira was dismayed at the invitation. He guessed that the game of dice was planned for an evil purpose. His brothers didn't want him to go and thought, *(Point to Group One)*. But he felt he must obey his uncle Dhritarashtra's command to come. Yudhisthira left for Hastinapura with his brothers, followed by Kunti and Draupadi.

The Pandavas were surprised at the pleasant way the Kauravas welcomed them. They toured the new hall, appreciating its architecture and beauty. That was soon forgotten as Sakuni invited them to sit down for a game of dice.

Yudhisthira tried in many ways to avoid playing but Duryodhana and Sakuni wouldn't take no for an answer. Duryodhana challenged Yudhisthira but had Sakuni play on Duryodhana's behalf. This was unfair and the other members of the assembly argued, *(Point to Group One)*. Yudhisthira gave in to fate and played the game. Jewels were wagered. The dice was tossed. *(Point to Group Two)* was heard. Precious gems and stones were wagered. *(Point to Group Two)* was heard again. Gold coins by the thousands were wagered. *(Point to Group Two)* Yudhisthira lost again. His horses, his wealth, his chariots, his army, his slaves, his treasury -- all was being swallowed up by the evil Sakuni. *(Point to Group Two)* was heard over and over again.

Vidura pleaded with the blind king, *(Point to Group One)*. Dhritarashtra would not listen. Yudhisthira had now lost all his worldly wealth. Sakuni said, "You have nothing now. If you still think you have something to bet, wager that. If you win, you can have back all that you have lost and Duryodhana's riches as well."

Yudhisthira had lost all good sense and sat silent for a moment. He said, "I have something to wager. This handsome brother of mine, Nakula, will be my wager." The elders who were present were shocked. Wager his brother? "No, no!" they said, *(Point to Group One)*. But the dice rolled again and the shout rang out, *(Point to Group Two)*. Yudhisthira lost. Now he bet Arjuna. *(Point to Group Two)* Now Bhima

**was the wager. (*Point to Group Two*) He next wagered himself (*Point to Group Two*) and lost. The five brothers were now the slaves of Duryodhana.**

**Sakuni said, “You still have Draupadi. You have not lost her yet.”**

**Arjuna and Bhima could barely keep from killing Duryodhana and Sakuni but they did so out of respect for Yudhisthira. This was too much. The others in the assembly could not believe it. (*Point to Group One*) Yudhisthira, his senses out of control, wagered Draupadi and lost her. Now there was nothing left.**

**The entire assembly was stunned. Duryodhana commanded that Draupadi be brought to the hall. She was now a slave and should be sent to the servants’ quarters. Dushasan, Duryodhana’s brother, went to her room and laughingly told her all that had happened. She was horrified and angrily hurried towards Gandhari’s room. Dushasan grabbed her by the hair and forcibly dragged her in front of the assembly. She appeared before the elders with her dress wet with tears and crumpled from the rough handling of Dushasan.**

**Draupadi stood in that great court as Dushasan and Duryodhana insulted her and called her names. They told her repeatedly that she was their slave and should now choose a new husband. She cried for help from the others but only Vikarna, a wise and good son of King Dhritarashtra, spoke up for her. Bhishma was silent. Drona was silent. Kripa was silent.**

**As a final insult, Duryodhana ordered that the clothes of the Pandavas and Draupadi should be taken off and surrendered to him. The Pandavas removed their upper cloths and laid them in a heap. The cruel Dushasan took hold of the top of Draupadi’s sari and began pulling it off.**

**Draupadi was frantic as she realized that no one could help her. She looked at each of her five husbands but they hung their heads in shame. No one stepped forward to stop this greatly sinful act.**

**Draupadi remembered that surrender to the Lord is the only thing that can help. She folded her palms together and fixed her mind on Lord Krishna, begging Him to save her. She closed her eyes and did not try to stop Dushasan anymore.**

**Then a miracle happened. As Dushasan pulled her sari and the stunned audience looked on, her clothes got longer and longer. Dushasan pulled with both hands and still the cloth grew. A heap of cloth was at his side as Dushasan angrily ripped at her clothes. Finally, exhausted, he gave up and sat down.**

**Bhima, Arjuna, Sahadeva and Nakula were enraged. Their eyes flashed fire and they took terrible oaths, vowing to kill the sinful relatives of Dhritarashtra. The blind and weak-hearted king realized later how serious the situation was. He was frightened about the future and the wrath of the Pandavas.**

**He later called Draupadi to him and asked her to forgive Duryodhana's behavior. He offered her two boons. She first asked that Yudhishthira be freed. Her second request was that the other four brothers be freed. She didn't care about their wealth; she only wanted that her husbands would not be slaves of such a sinner as Duryodhana.**

**Dhritarashtra granted her this and as they took leave of Hastinapura, he was overcome by a feeling of generosity. He told the Pandavas to go back to Indraprastha and take back all that they had lost in the gambling match. "Just forget about today, as you would a bad dream. Think kindly of my sons and forget their sins. Go in peace to your home," he told them.**

**Duryodhana was furious when he heard what his father had done. After fulfilling his life's dream of conquering his cousins, Dhritarashtra gave everything back to them. Duryodhana would not allow this to happen. He insisted that one more game of dice must be played. This time the winner gets to rule the entire kingdom. The loser must live in the forest for twelve years and must live the thirteenth year in disguise.**

**Gandhari pleaded with her son to stop his immoral plot. She said, (*Point to Group One*). She wished now that she had taken Vidura's**

**advice and destroyed Duryodhana when he was born. But King Dhritarashtra was like a puppet in the hands of his son. He could not refuse him and so another game of dice was set.**

**So the Pandavas returned to the same hall, the same dice, the same Sakuni. Yudhishthira sat and listened as Sakuni told the conditions of the game. “The winner will be the lord of the land of the Kurus. The loser will have to spend twelve years in the forest. One year more must be spent in disguise. If he is recognized during that year in disguise, the loser must spend another twelve years in the forest.”**

**Sakuni took the dice in his hands. They rolled on the floor. The cry (*Point to Group Two*) was heard by all. The Pandavas were the losers doomed to spend the next thirteen years in the forest.**

5. Allow a few minutes for discussion and questions after the story. Let children who are familiar with the story tell of other parts they remember. Have the children tell you the ways that the Kauravas insulted the Pandavas and list them on the chalkboard.

6. Take a few moments now to talk about fairness. Children of this age have a strong sense of justice. Ask them if they have any experiences to share of someone being unfair to them. How did they feel? What do they think would have been the proper treatment?

Ask them to think quietly for a moment and remember a time when they were unfair to someone else. What made them act that way? How did they feel afterwards?

Point out to them that many times we may want something *so badly* that we treat others unfairly to get it. We may want to win a game so badly that we make up unfair rules. We may want that extra slice of cake so badly that we try to cheat our sister or brother out of it.

Ask the students what Duryodhana wanted so badly that made him treat the Pandavas unfairly. (He wanted to be the ruler of the kingdom.) Show them how that one strong desire, along with his jealousy, caused him to be so unjust. Even with so many of his relatives telling him the right thing to do, he couldn't listen.

Impress on the students that we should always treat others fairly -- the way we would want to be treated. We must not let our desires allow us to be unfair in our dealings. If we are ever in the situation where we are accused of

being unfair, we should stop and think of how we would like to be treated if we were the other person.

7. Homework assignment: Tell the children that during the week they are to read Chapter Four and complete the questions on Page 28. Remind them that their parents can read the chapter to them and help them with the questions. Answers will be checked next week in class.

There is also a Word Search puzzle on Page 29 they can do for fun.



## **Chapter Five**

### **Life in Exile**

*Teachers should read about the following events in the Mahabharat:*

- *The banishment of the Pandavas*
- *Arjuna's visit to Indrakila and his obtainment of the astras*
- *The Pandavas in Virata*
- *Virata's cows stolen by Duryodhana*

1. Chant the verse for the session.

2. Check the homework assignment (Page 28). This will also serve as a review. Children who did the homework can be given incentives at this time. This can be something as simple as a sticker on the inside of their book or a star next to their name on a chart. If you want to review any other points made last week, do so now.

3. A story warm-up:

Encourage the children to use their imaginations for this activity. Tell them that something has happened to them and they have to go into hiding for awhile. No one must recognize them. Where would they go? How would they disguise themselves? Let volunteers share their thoughts. Perhaps they can even demonstrate how they would disguise their voices and the way they would walk.

4. You will need six volunteers to help in telling today's story. They will be the five Pandavas and Draupadi and will tell the class what their new identities will be.

Assign the first volunteer the 4th paragraph on Page 31. He should highlight Yudhisthira's words and practice reading them. He will speak those words when you come to that part in the story.

Assign the following five paragraphs to the other five children (one per child). Each should highlight his words and practice reading for a few minutes. Help student with the pronunciation of names.

Have the six volunteers sit in the front facing the class as you begin the story. Instruct them to stand up and say their part when you give the word.

5. The story as it appears in the student booklet follows. Add details and dialogue to make it more interesting and dramatic. The section about the Kauravas stealing the cows of Virata is quite exciting when you read the whole story. It would be a good idea to elaborate on that.

### ***A. The Pandavas Set Out for the Forest***

The Pandavas dressed themselves in tree bark and deerskin and left Hastinapura. The citizens felt as if their very lives were ebbing away. Kunti's grief was unbearable. The five brothers, along with their queen, traveled quickly away from the city that had been the home of disappointments.

While the Pandavas were in exile, they had the company of saintly rishis and sages who dwelt in the forest. Together they moved to different areas, trying to make their lives as pleasant as possible. But happiness was impossible. Bhima's anger seethed as he recalled the many ways they had been insulted and the awful way that Draupadi had been treated. Arjuna longed for the day that he could hold a bow and arrow in his hands and aim his deadly arrows at the Kauravas. All were simply waiting for the thirteen years to end. Then the time would be right for WAR. The Kauravas would have to pay for their greatly sinful actions.

The Pandavas had many adventures during their exile. During this time, Arjuna traveled to the abode of Indra in the heavenly planets and stayed for a few years. There he learned the art of fighting. He received many divine *astras* (mantra weapons) from various demigods. These *astras* would help him be victorious in the battle that was sure to come. He also became expert in singing, dancing and playing musical instruments. These skills would be useful to him in his year of disguise.

Duryodhana kept his spies busy watching the Pandavas. Thirteen years had seemed like a long time but the time was approaching when the Pandava's exile would be over. Dhritarashtra and his son felt their that peaceful days would soon be finished.

### ***B. The Final Year of Exile***

**It was now time for the thirteenth year -- the year to be lived in disguise. This was a very important time, for if they were discovered, another twelve years would have to be spent in the forest. The brothers and their queen made plans for the year in hiding.**

**The city of Virata was chosen to be their living place. The king was a noble and generous man. It was thought that they could escape detection in Virata.**

**What would their occupations be for that year? They would be recognized immediately if they went as ksatriyas. (The child playing Yudhisthira speaks the following words.) “I will be a companion and advisor to the king,” declared Yudhisthira. “My name will be Kanka and I will tell the king I know the Vedas well. I will wear garlands of Tulasi and chant japa all the time.”**

**(The child playing Bhima speaks.) “And I will be the chief cook in the king’s kitchen,” said Bhima. He was a talented cook and he also liked to eat, so this was a good job for him. “Since I am good in wrestling, I will be in charge of the king’s gym. I can train all the young boys to wrestle. I will be named Valala.”**

**Arjuna had plans on using the skills he learned in the heavens to help him with his disguise. (The child playing Arjuna speaks.) “I will wear my hair long and cover my chest and broad shoulders with a blouse like women wear. I will train the women in the king’s court to sing and dance. I will call myself Brihannala and I will be the music teacher.”**

**Nakula was expert in training horses. (The child playing Nakula speaks.) “Taking charge of the king’s horses will be my duty,” said Nakula. “I have a special way of communicating with horses. It seems that they understand my words and are happy to obey me. I will be called Damagranthi and the stables will be in my care.”**

**Sahadeva was equally good with cows. (The child playing Sahadeva speaks.) “I will be called Tantripala and I will show the king how good I am at handling cows and bulls,” he claimed. “When I take care of the king’s cows they will give more milk than ever before.”**

**Draupadi had plans to show the queen how talented she was at decorating women. (The child playing Draupadi speaks.) “I can dress hair in many different ways. I can make flower garlands that are very beautiful and I can show her how to perfume herself wonderfully. I know she will let me stay with her and I will name myself Sairandhri,” she said.**

**They had all dreaded this year of hiding but it turned out to be one of their most pleasant years. The king and queen were good and righteous and treated the Pandavas lovingly, although they knew not who they were.**

### ***C. Duryodhana’s Challenge***

**Duryodhana’s hope was that his cousins would be discovered in this final year and he could banish them for another twelve years. His spies could not find a trace of the Pandavas and some thought them to be dead. Near the end of the year, Duryodhana figured out that they must be in the city of Virata. He made a plan to go with his army and capture the king’s cows. He was sure the Pandavas would come to help the king recover his cows and thus be discovered.**

**Duryodhana was defeated in his attempt. Arjuna fought him and his army single-handedly and beat them all. This was humiliating for the proud son of Dhritarashtra. He claimed that since Arjuna was detected the Pandavas must return to the forest. His claim was wrong, however. The time of exile was over long before the battle over Virata’s cows was fought. The Pandava’s were free again.**

**Now the powerful sons of Pandu turned their thoughts to other matters. It was time to get back what was rightfully theirs. Duryodhana had taken everything in a cheating dice game. They had been wronged and insulted. The time came to put an end to his sinful ways.**

**The king of Virata gave them the city called Upaplavya. Yudhishthira sent for his friends and well-wishers from other kingdoms. Krishna and Balaram were among the first visitors. When they met with the Pandavas in Upaplavya their talks centered around what should happen to right the wrongs that occurred.**

**Drupada, Draupadi's father, planned to send his family priest to speak to Duryodhana, Bhishma and Dhritarashtra. He was to ask them to be fair and give Yudhisthira half of the kingdom. This was the only way a deadly war could be avoided. In the meantime, Yudhisthira would begin gathering kings and warriors to fight on his side. He must strengthen his army and be ready for war. The Pandavas knew there wasn't much hope of Duryodhana sharing the kingdom.**

6. Allow a few minutes for questions and discussion. Stress how Yudhisthira tried to avoid war at any cost. He had given Duryodhana plenty of chances to be fair. Now it seemed that war was necessary.

Explain to the children that most wars are not necessary. But in this case it was a war for religious reasons. Duryodhana and Dhritarashtra were acting in very irreligious ways. If the kings are allowed to get away with that, then their citizens will do the same. Sin will spread and people will be cheated and mistreated. This king must be a righteous ruler.

Ask how many of them are beginning to think that sometimes war is good. See if they have changed their opinions.

7. Review quickly the disguises that the Pandavas chose. Ask the children to choose two Pandavas. On Page 34 they can draw them as they would look in their disguises.

8. For homework ask the children to read Chapter Five. There are no homework questions but there is a Crossword Puzzle on Page 35 they may do. They will probably need help with the puzzle. Answers are on Page 45 of this booklet.

## **Chapter Six**

### ***Preparing for the Battle***

*Teachers should read about the following events in the Mahabharat:*

- *Arjuna and Duryodhana in Dwarka*
- *Duryodhana's reply (via Sanjaya) to Yudhisthira's request for peace*
- *Yudhisthira's request for five villages and Duryodhana's reply*
- *Krishna's peace mission to Hastinapura; showing His visvarupa*
- *Positioning the armies on the battlefield*
- *Chapter One of Bhagavad Gita*

1. Chant the verse for the session.
  
2. Acknowledge all the children who did the assigned reading homework during the week.
  
3. A review game:  
    Seat all the children in a circle. Have an object to pass around. Choose something that relates to this session (a bow, a helmet or one of the flannelboard figures). Have each child recite one word of the Hare Krishna mantra and pass the object to the next child. When the mantra has been completed, the child left holding the object must name one of the characters that we have learned about and tell something about him. They can tell about his character, his relations or one of the events the character was involved in. When finished, pass the object around again while each child chants. Continue in this way until most children have participated. They may name a character that has already been mentioned as long as they tell something different about him.
  
4. Ask where we left off last week (with the Pandavas coming out of hiding and requesting Duryodhana to be fair). We will finish the story this week, taking us right up to the beginning of the battle. Ask for three volunteers to help act out part of the story. They will be Krishna, Arjuna and Duryodhana. With your guidance, have the volunteers act out the first part of the story (noted below) that follows.

### ***A. Hopes for Peace***

As Drupada's messenger traveled to Hastinapura, Yudhisthira lost no time in sending messengers to other regions asking for help and support in the upcoming war. Duryodhana began gathering support from others for his army.

*(Act out)* Arjuna left for Dwarka to ask for Krishna's help. Duryodhana heard of this and, using his fastest horses, rushed to Dwarka to see Krishna first. Arjuna arrived a bit later than his cousin and found him sitting outside Krishna's room. Duryodhana smiled at Arjuna and said, "Oh, it seems that we had the same idea in coming to visit Krishna. Well, I have come first so it is only right that Krishna should help me."

Arjuna said, "It doesn't matter who came first or last. We will have to wait and see who Krishna supports. I am not worried."

They went into the room where Krishna was sleeping. Duryodhana proudly went to the head of Krishna's bed, thinking that when the Lord awoke Krishna would look up and see him first. Arjuna went humbly to the foot of the bed. He stood at the feet of Krishna with his eyes closed and his hands folded in prayer.

Krishna woke up and saw Arjuna at his feet. He smiled but then noticed that someone else was in the room. He saw Duryodhana and received him affectionately also. Duryodhana told him the reason for his coming; he wanted Krishna to fight on his side in the battle. Arjuna said that he came also to ask that Krishna fights on *his* side.

Duryodhana insisted that since he arrived first, it was Krishna's duty to help him. Krishna replied, "You arrived first, but when I woke up I saw Arjuna first. I think the best thing is that I help you both. Arjuna may choose first. I have a fierce and terrible army made of thousands of warriors as strong as Myself. That is one choice. The other choice is Me. Just Me. I won't fight or carry a single weapon. Arjuna, think carefully before you choose."

Arjuna fell at Krishna's feet with tears in his eyes. "You, my Lord, I want You. I don't want anything else in the world."

Duryodhana was thrilled to get Krishna's huge army. He thought that the Pandavas were as good as dead now that he had such powerful help. He thanked Krishna and left. *(End of the acting out)*

Duryodhana soon saw Balaram and told him of the arrangement. Balaram loved Duryodhana and wanted to support him. But now that He heard that Krishna was fighting with the Pandavas he told Duryodhana that he could not side with him. Balaram would not fight with His dear brother. Rather than take part in the battle, Balaram went on a pilgrimage to holy places throughout India.

Drupada's messenger had no luck in convincing Duryodhana to share his kingdom with the Pandavas. Dhritarashtra, Bhishma, Drona and the others tried to reason with Duryodhana but his hatred of the Pandavas was too strong. He wanted to be king of the world and he was ready to fight for it. King Dhritarashtra was blinded with love for his son. Although he knew it was wrong, he supported Duryodhana in his cheating and greedy ways.

Yudhisthira still wanted peace. As a last resort he sent Krishna to Hastinapura to speak with Duryodhana and the elders. Krishna spoke strongly to them. His words clearly showed that they would lose everything if they did not make friends with the Pandavas. Duryodhana's selfishness would cause the destruction of the world. Gandhari was brought to the court and pleaded with her son to stop his sinful actions against his cousins. But Duryodhana would listen to no one.

### ***B. Krishna Shows His Visvarupa Form***

Duryodhana, Sakuni and Dushasana plotted to capture Krishna. If the Pandavas didn't have Krishna, surely they wouldn't dare to fight. As they came towards Krishna in the hall, the Lord smiled at them and their foolishness. "I am sorry for you and your crazy thoughts. You think I am alone and you can capture Me?"

As Krishna spoke, his form began to glow like millions of suns. The devas appeared out of His body and the Pandavas, Balaram and many other heroes also emerged and were seen standing by His side.



Krishna now had many arms, all holding terribly fierce weapons. Flames were leaping out of His eyes and nose. Heavenly music was heard and flowers rained down from above. Bhishma, Drona, Vidura and the great rishis stood in amazement, seeing the *visvarupa* form of the Lord. Miraculously, Dhritarashtra gained his sight and could see this fearsome form of Krishna. He was frightened and prayed to Krishna to take away this vision. Krishna resumed His original form and left the palace.

Even this was not enough to change Duryodhana's mind. "Let the preparations for war begin at once!" he cried. "I cannot eat or sleep until this war begins!"

### ***C. Krishna Speaks The Bhagavad Gita***

Each army was made of several *akshauhinis*. One *akshauhini* consisted of 21,870 chariots, 21,870 elephants, 65,610 horses and 109,350 footmen. Yudhishthira claimed seven *akshauhinis* in his army and Duryodhana's army consisted of eleven *akshauhinis*. Each army made its way to the battlefield called Kurukshetra. Bhishma was the commander of the Kauravas and Dhrishtadyumna, Draupadi's brother, was the commander of the Pandava's army. Arjuna was made the chief fighter with Krishna as his charioteer.

All of the great warriors gazed at the opposing armies and were thrilled to think of the strength assembled there. Excitement broiled in their blood as conchshells and battle cries resounded in the air.

An abrupt silence fell about the battlefield as each ksatriya thought of the battle ready to begin. Yudhishthira suddenly removed his armor, dropped his weapons and walked with bare feet towards the enemy camp. Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva were bewildered but they followed him. What was their brother doing -- surrendering? Yudhishthira made his way to Grandfather Bhishma and fell at his feet. He said, "My dear grandfather, war is now certain. We must fight with you. Please bless us that we will be victorious."

Bhishma was pleased with Yudhishthira's action and said, "My child, victory is yours. You have Krishna on your side. I have been

supported by Duryodhana and it is my duty to fight for him. But my love and blessings will always be with you.”

Yudhisthira and his brothers went to their teachers, Drona and Kripa, and received their blessings. Then they returned to their camp. Yudhisthira’s army knew now that the war was to start at any moment and that the Pandavas would win.

Arjuna’s chariot came to the front. On top of his swift chariot the flag of Hanuman fluttered in the breeze. He asked Krishna to drive him right in the middle of the two armies. Arjuna wished to see the heroes who he would be fighting -- the heroes who sided with Duryodhana.

Krishna placed his chariot right where Arjuna directed: in front of Bhishma, Drona and the others. Seeing all those who were so dear to him, Arjuna was overcome by a sudden feeling of compassion. He really didn’t want to kill these friends, relatives and teachers. Arjuna felt faint with grief. He laid down his Gandiva bow and his arrows. His eyes filled with tears and his heart felt as heavy as a stone.

Because of Arjuna’s grief, because he was unwilling to fight, Krishna spoke transcendental words of wisdom to him. The instructions He spoke are instructions for all of us. The words Krishna said to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra before the war are known as the “Bhagavad Gita” or “the song of God.” The Bhagavad Gita is revered throughout the world as a great scripture. It is special among scriptures because it was spoken directly by Krishna.

Arjuna listened carefully to the Lord. He asked Krishna many questions. When Krishna was finished speaking the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna no longer felt confused. He knew what his duty was and he was ready to do it with Krishna’s help. Like Arjuna, we will also go on to study what Krishna said in the Bhagavad Gita. Now we know *why* and *where* these important words were spoken.

5. Allow a few minutes for additional discussion. Ask questions to be sure the students understood the main points.

There may be questions about Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and others who loved the Pandavas. Why were they fighting on the opposite side? Some of

them had certain obligations to King Dhritarashtra and Duryodhana since they lived in his palace and were maintained by him. Many did not agree with Duryodhana's actions but felt they were obliged to fight on his side.

It should be understood by the children that Duryodhana was actually a popular king. He took care of his citizens well and ran the kingdom nicely. Many loved him and wanted to fight for him. He had the one fault of being envious of his cousins. He was not an evil and cruel king, otherwise. Yet his envy was so strong that it caused a war in which millions were killed.

6. Discuss the choice that Krishna gave Arjuna and Duryodhana. One could have His army, one could have only Him. Why was Arjuna wise to choose Krishna? Let this lead to a discussion that if we have Krishna on our side, He will certainly help us. But, like Arjuna, we must have faith and love for the Lord. Arjuna's love was so strong that he didn't hesitate when he had to choose. He immediately chose Krishna. We should also "choose" Krishna by following his instructions (acting properly) and worshipping Him.

6. Let the children get a better idea of how many people were involved in the battle by doing some math calculations. You'll need a calculator that can handle large numbers.

Have them look in their booklets on Page 38 where it tells what an akshauhini consists of. Multiply out the size of Duryodhana's army -- 11 x 21,870 chariots, 11 x 65,610 horses, etc. Write the totals on the board. Do the same for the Pandava's army. Remind them that upon each horse, in each chariot and on each elephant there will be one or more warriors. The numbers are astronomical! Most of the children in this age group won't even be able to *read* numbers that large.

7. Emphasize again that this was a war that Krishna wanted to be fought. That alone makes it a religious war. It was necessary to cleanse the earth of the evil kings and establish a righteous ruler.

Even though Arjuna had wanted war for so long, he was now overcome with compassionate feelings towards those he was supposed to kill. Krishna's words to Arjuna are known as the Bhagavad Gita. The children should learn that "Bhagavad Gita" literally means "song of God."

8. Write the following names on index cards: Bhishma, Drishtadyumna, Drona, Bhima, Kripa, Dushasan, Sakuni, Arjuna, Krishna, Balaram, Drupada,

the king of Virata, Duryodhana, Yudhishthira, Nakula, Sahadeva. Pass them out to the children. They may have more than one card.

Divide the flannelboard into two sides. Put a heading at the top of one side "The Kauravas," and the other side "The Pandavas." Let the children call out the name they have on their index cards and come up and place them on the side they fought for. Students familiar with the story can also add other names to each side.

9. Conclusion of this session: The history of the Pandavas brings us up to the Battle of Kurukshetra. Krishna's instructions to Arjuna are of utmost importance to the whole world. Now that we know why the battle needed to be fought we will learn (in an upcoming session) what some of Krishna's instructions were.

10. The children should read Chapter Six during the week or have their parents read it to them. The Check for Understanding questions should also be completed.

11. Tell the children that there will be a quiz next week about the events we have studied. Review the test prior to class and inform the children of some of the things they will be expected to know. Encourage them to study by reading their homework questions over during the week.

#### Answers to Word Scramble on Page 41:

What's in an akshauhini?

APSTNHELE	elephants
HISTORAC	chariots
OTNOEMF	footmen
SSERHO	horses

## **Lesson Seven**

### **Quiz**

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. You may take a few minutes to review the answers to last week's homework. Allow time for any other questions the children may have.
3. Distribute copies of the tests and allow sufficient time for the students to complete their work. Go over the different sections of the test, explaining what to do on each section.

Have coloring pages, crayons and books available. Children who finish early may do one of these activities quietly until the others are done.

4. Answers to the test:

#### **True or False**

1. F
2. T
3. F
4. F
5. T
6. T
7. T
8. F
9. F
10. T

**Multiple Choice:** 1. b; 2. c; 3. a; 4. b; 5. c.

#### **Answer the following questions**

Answers will vary but accept all plausible responses.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Introduction to Bhagavad-gita Quiz

**True or False -- Write a "T" on the line if the statement is true.  
Write an "F" on the line if the statement is false.**

1. \_\_\_\_ Bhishma was married and had five children.
2. \_\_\_\_ King Dhritarashtra was blind.
3. \_\_\_\_ Dwarka was the city ruled by Duryodhana.
4. \_\_\_\_ Bhima and Duryodhana loved each other dearly.
5. \_\_\_\_ The Pandavas had to spend thirteen years in the forest.
6. \_\_\_\_ Arjuna was very good in archery.
7. \_\_\_\_ Dushasana insulted Draupadi and called her names.
8. \_\_\_\_ Yudhisthira won the gambling match with Sakuni.
9. \_\_\_\_ Duryodhana wanted to share the kingdom with the Pandavas.
10. \_\_\_\_ Krishna drove the chariot for Arjuna in the battle.

**Multiple Choice -- Circle the letter of the correct answer.**

1. "Bhagavad Gita" means \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) "words on the battlefield"
  - b) "song of God"
  - c) "God's war cry"
2. The war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas was fought in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) Hastinapura
  - b) Dwarka
  - c) Kurukshetra

3. King Dhritarashtra was jealous of the Pandavas because \_\_\_\_\_.
- a) they would inherit the kingdom instead of his son
  - b) they were stronger and more handsome than his sons
  - c) the Pandavas were disrespectful to him
4. Draupadi went into the year of hiding disguised as \_\_\_\_\_.
- a) a cook in the king's kitchen
  - b) the queen's assistant
  - c) a maid in the king's court
5. Two things you will find in an *akshauhini* are \_\_\_\_\_.
- a) tanks and machine guns
  - b) camels and fierce monkeys
  - c) elephants and chariots

**Answer the following questions:**

1. Write the names of the five Pandavas (just do your best for the spelling).

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2. Do you think the battle that was fought between the Pandavas and Duryodhana was right or wrong? Tell why you think that way.

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3. If you could be like one of the five Pandavas, who would you be like? Why?

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Answers for Crossword Puzzles on Page 7 and Page 41 of the student booklet:

Who's who review



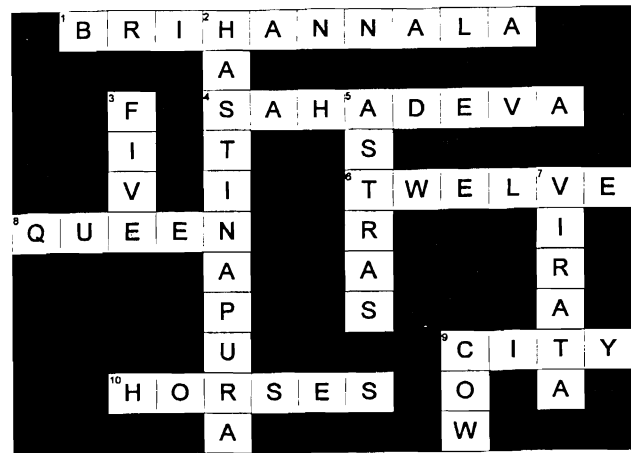
ACROSS

5. the wife of Dhritarashtra
8. a fisher girl; Santanu's wife
9. Ambika's blind son
11. Vayu's son born of Kunti
12. father of Bhishma
15. one of the wives of Pandu
16. mother of the five Pandavas
17. Ambalika's pale son

DOWN

1. the oldest of the five Pandavas
2. another name for Bhishma
3. the wise son of Vyasadeva
4. the father of Draupadi
6. wife of all five Pandavas
7. a sage in this form cursed Pandu
10. the heavenly mother of Bhishma
13. Indra's son born of Kunti
14. Sahadeva's twin

Life in Exile



ACROSS

1. Arjuna's disguise name
4. the Pandava good at handling cows
6. the number of years to be spent in the forest (not including the year of disguise)
8. the wife of a king
9. another word for town
10. animals that Nakula liked to train

DOWN

2. the city of Duryodhana
3. There were \_\_\_\_\_ Pandavas.
5. mantra weapons
7. city chosen for the Pandavas' year of disguise
9. animal who gives milk





SANTANU



GANGA



SATYAVATI



BHISMA



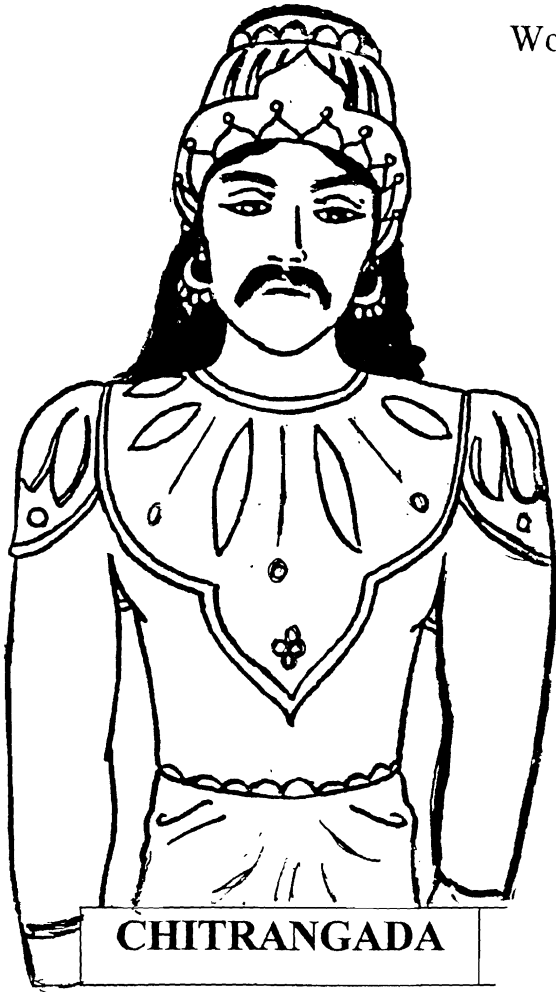
**DHRITARASHTRA**



**GANDHARI**



**VIDURA**



CHITRANGADA



VICHITRAVIRYA



AMBIKA



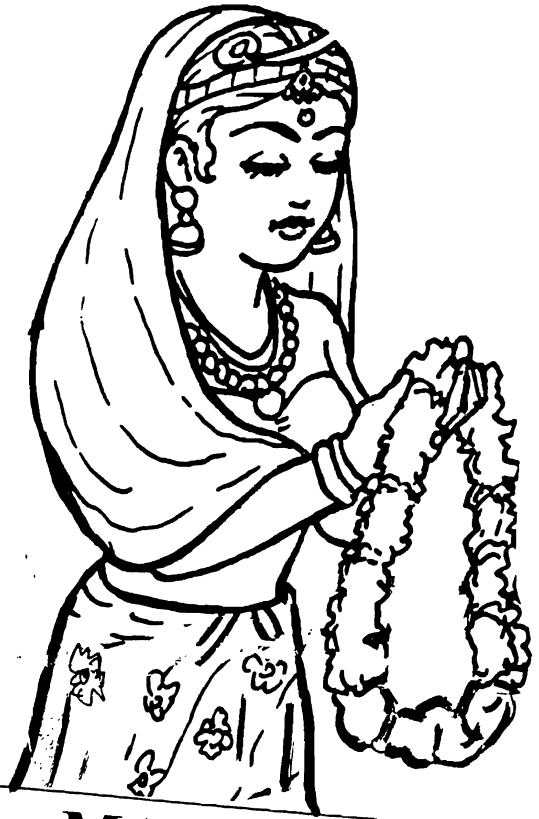
AMBALIKA



KUNTI



**PANDU**



**MADRI**



**VYASDEV**