

Navratri: three family sessions

Three complete introductions, three family activities and space to reflect together. Choose English or Hindi and print only the pages you need.

English edition · Free family activity pack

1. Meet Durga: courage that protects
 2. Meet Lakshmi: prosperity and care
 3. Meet Saraswati: learning and the arts
-

Make room for a little time together

Choose one reading per sitting. Read aloud together, talk about the questions, then draw or write on its worksheet. Younger readers can tell their answers to a grown-up.

You need paper, a pencil and optional colours. Each reading includes a family activity; allow extra time for it. Answers to the open questions can differ. There is no score or certificate.

Print on A4 at actual size, or choose Fit for another paper size. Print only the pages you need. The text and worksheets work in black and white. Personal, family and classroom printing is welcome; retain the source notes and attribution. Third-party videos are not included.

Original readings and activities by SanatanJr. Traditions differ; source and family notes accompany each reading. Illustrations use AI-generated artwork. This is not an educator endorsement.

sanatanjr.com/en/collections/navratri-family-activities

Before we begin

Navratri celebrates the Divine Feminine over nine nights. Traditions vary: some honour nine forms of Durga, while others honour Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati in groups of three days. Our three sessions are not a universal observance schedule.

This pack offers original family activities alongside the sacred introductions: safe helping with Durga Maa, noticing shared care with Lakshmi Maa, and trying a learning experiment with Saraswati Maa. These activities do not replace worship or define the goddesses only as everyday values.

Choose one session at a time. Allow roughly 10–15 minutes, with extra time whenever needed. Keep paper and a pencil nearby; colours are optional. Draw, speak or ask a grown-up to write. You can stop and return another day.

Tradition and further reading

Navaratri · Hindu American Foundation
<https://www.hinduamerican.org/navaratri>

Explore Navratri traditions online

Meet Durga: courage that protects

Meet Durga Maa through her lion, many arms and a story of protection. Then make a three-step plan for helping someone safely.

6 minutes of reading · Take your time



Who is Durga Maa?

A lion, a steady face and many hands holding different objects: an image of Durga Maa gives us a lot to notice. Hindus worship her as a powerful form of Devi, the Goddess. In her well-known encounter with Mahishasura, her strength protects the world from a destructive ruler. This is a short introduction to that sacred image and its meaning, rather than a telling of every battle.

Devi means Goddess, and Maa is a loving way to say Mother. This guide begins with Durga Maa. The library also introduces Saraswati Maa and Lakshmi Maa, whose images open different conversations about learning and prosperity. Take time with each introduction rather than assuming that every name, picture and family custom has one identical explanation.

Strength that protects

The Devi Mahatmya celebrates Durga's victory over Mahisha, the buffalo demon. In this account, the gods cannot overcome him; their combined divine energy takes the form of the Goddess. They give her weapons, and she defeats him. The story honours the power of Devi. It also invites a question we can discuss together: what is strength being used to protect?

Her many arms make that divine power visible. A trident can recall Shiv Ji's gift, and a discus can recall Vishnu's. The lion is her mount. These are details of sacred art, not instructions for children to carry weapons or copy a fight. Begin by naming one thing you see; a grown-up can help you discover the story behind it.

Why do images and celebrations differ?

There is no single arm count for every Durga image. For example, a twelfth-century sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art has sixteen arms. Other artists show different forms. During Navratri, some communities honour nine forms of Durga; others honour Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. Ask which tradition a particular picture or celebration belongs to before deciding that another one is wrong.

A useful family question is, "What does our home or community do during Navratri?" Someone may remember a song, a gathering or a particular image. Listen to the example and name whose practice it is. Learning about your own family and respecting a different family's practice can happen together. Our Navratri guide offers a place to continue.

What can courage look like today?

Now imagine a small everyday scene. Two children are building with blocks when someone repeatedly knocks their work down. One child feels angry; the other becomes quiet. Our example is not an episode from scripture. It is a chance to think about a protective response: name what is happening, move away if necessary, and ask a trusted adult to help stop it.

Courage can sound like, 'Please stop. We are still using those.' It can also mean standing beside the child who is upset and going together to a grown-up. You do not have to win an argument or face a frightening situation alone. A helpful action should make people safer, rather than begin a new fight.

Help includes listening

After the problem has stopped, care can continue. Ask whether the children would like help rebuilding or would prefer a different activity. Listening to their answer matters. In the plan below, choose one action you could actually take and one person who could help. The aim is to turn a thoughtful idea into something useful.

Helping does not mean deciding everything for the other person. You can ask, "Would you like me to sit with you, help rebuild, or find a grown-up?" They may want something different from your first idea. If someone is being hurt, involve a trusted adult; a child does not have to solve the whole problem or keep it secret.

Make a safe helping plan

For the activity, use our imaginary block-building problem. Name what happened, draw a safe first step and practise a sentence for asking an adult for help. The free sheet below keeps these ideas together. You may speak while a grown-up writes, and you can change a plan that does not feel useful. No one has to share a private experience.

After meeting Durga Maa, read about Navratri or explore ahimsa, the effort to avoid harm. You can also meet Saraswati Maa and ask what patient learning looks like. These are connections for another family session. A small conversation, a clear question and one caring action are enough for today.

For the grown-up

The sacred account includes a demon's defeat and death; our introduction leaves out graphic battle details. The linked museum references contain battle imagery. Preview any companion video together. The everyday example is for discussion, not a request to confront someone who is hurting you.

The sacred-story outline follows LACMA's account of the Devi Mahatmya tradition; the sixteen-arm example comes from the Met's object record. HAF explains differing Navratri observances. The playground example, questions and helping plan are original SanatanJr additions, not verses or a complete account of Durga's forms.

[LACMA · Durga and the Devi Mahatmya tradition \(battle imagery\)](https://collections.lacma.org/object/27899)

<https://collections.lacma.org/object/27899>

[The Met · Sixteen-armed Durga, 12th century \(battle imagery\)](https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/38583)

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/38583>

[Hindu American Foundation · Navaratri traditions](https://www.hinduamerican.org/navaratri)

<https://www.hinduamerican.org/navaratri>

<https://sanatanjr.com/en/learn/meet-durga>

Talk, draw and try

Meet Durga: courage that protects

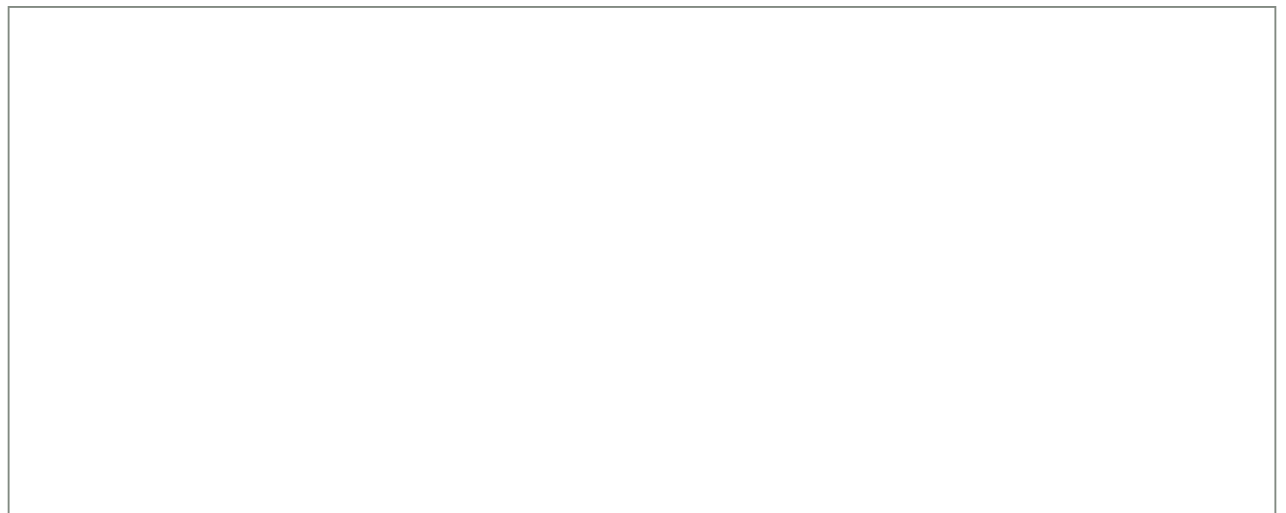
Wonder together

Choose one detail in Durga Maa's image. What do you see, and what would you like to know about it?

In the block-building example, which action could make the children safer? Who could help?

Make it your own

Draw three panels for an imaginary problem, such as two children wanting the same toy: what you notice, a safe step, and a trusted adult who could help.



Draw a helping plan · 5 minutes

Fold a sheet into three panels. Use the block-building example or a made-up playground problem; no one has to share a personal experience.

1. In the first panel, draw the problem. Name who needs help without calling anyone a bad person.
2. In the second, draw a safe first step: stop using the blocks, move beside a friend, or ask an adult to come.
3. In the third, name a trusted grown-up and practise one sentence for asking for help. Let a grown-up write while you draw if you prefer.

Meet Lakshmi: prosperity and care

Meet Lakshmi Maa through the lotus, prosperity and welcome. Notice everyday support and make a care map with room for gratitude and sharing.

6 minutes of reading · Take your time



Who is Lakshmi Maa?

When you hear the word wealth, you might picture coins. Lakshmi Maa is worshipped as the Goddess of prosperity and good fortune. In Hindu devotion, prosperity can be understood in material and spiritual ways. This guide begins with her sacred image, then asks an everyday family question: what helps a home flourish?

Keep the sacred meaning and the family activity connected but distinct. Lakshmi Maa is a deity whom people honour in worship, not simply another name for household objects. Our care map is an original way to notice support in daily life after learning about her. It cannot measure anyone's blessings, wealth or spiritual life.

A sacred image and its connections

Lakshmi is closely associated with Vishnu. In the Ramayana tradition described by the University of Michigan Library, Sita is understood as Lakshmi's avatar, just as Shri Ram is Vishnu's. That gives us a connection between an image we see in worship and people we meet in a sacred story. Different texts and communities explore the Goddess in different ways.

Look for a lotus in her image. It may be a flower she holds or the seat beneath her. You may also see a pair of elephants. The lotus is a familiar sign of beauty; HAF also explains it as an image of spiritual growth amid difficult surroundings. These are symbolic readings of an artwork, not a way to predict what will happen to a person.

Look carefully, learn a tradition

Before interpreting a picture, describe one thing you can actually see: a lotus, a hand or an elephant. Then compare your observation with the source or explanation beside the image. If an object is absent in another picture, that alone does not make the picture wrong. Artists and devotional traditions can emphasise different details.

At Diwali, many families welcome Lakshmi through worship, lights and preparations at home. Some Navratri observances also honour her. A visit can include time with relatives and friends. Ask a family member which part they remember most: a prayer, a carefully prepared space, a shared meal or someone arriving at the door.

What makes a welcome possible?

Welcoming someone need not mean buying something. With a grown-up, you could clear a comfortable place to sit or ask whether the visitor would like water. Listen before making an offer and respect a refusal. These are our everyday examples of care, not rules about how a family must perform Lakshmi puja.

Now look at one ordinary meal. Ingredients, utensils and a place to sit matter. So do the person who cooked, the time someone spent washing up and the knowledge of how the food was made. Our family exercise calls attention to these different kinds of support. Some involve money, while others involve work, skill and relationships.

Map what we can care for

Caring for what we have might mean returning a shared book, checking before using the last sheet of paper or asking whether someone needs help with a task. Sharing begins with listening: what would actually be useful? Give only what you have permission to give. A thoughtful offer of time can matter as much as an object.

Make the map specific enough to use. If the centre is a reading corner, a book is one branch, the person who reads aloud is another and the time you share is a third. Ask what would help keep that corner welcoming. Returning a book with care may be a more useful contribution than offering an object nobody needs.

Gratitude without a bargain

Families have different resources, and fewer possessions do not make anyone less deserving of respect. Worship and generous actions are not a bargain that guarantees riches. On your care map, include something you receive and one small way you can help care for it. End by thanking a person for a specific contribution you noticed.

You can say a specific thank-you without keeping a debt. "Thank you for reading slowly so I could follow" notices a real contribution. The person does not owe you a gift in return. Later, revisit the map and ask what needs care now; the useful next step may change from one day to another.

For the grown-up

Use an ordinary shared activity, not household income or a comparison of possessions. Children need not disclose money worries or give anything away. The care map is a learning activity; it does not measure a family's prosperity or devotion.

HAF supplies the prosperity, lotus and festival context; the University of Michigan Library explains Lakshmi's connection with Sita and her imagery. Household examples and the care map are original SanatanJr suggestions. This introduction is not a complete Lakshmi birth narrative, a puja manual or a promise of wealth.

Hindu American Foundation · Lakshmi: Goddess of Prosperity

<https://www.hinduamerican.org/blog/lakshmi>

University of Michigan Library · Lakshmi in The Career of Rama

<https://apps.lib.umich.edu/online-exhibits/exhibits/show/the-career-of-rama/divine-power/lakshmi>

Hindu American Foundation · Navaratri traditions

<https://www.hinduamerican.org/navaratri>

<https://sanatanjr.com/en/learn/meet-lakshmi>

Talk, draw and try

Meet Lakshmi: prosperity and care

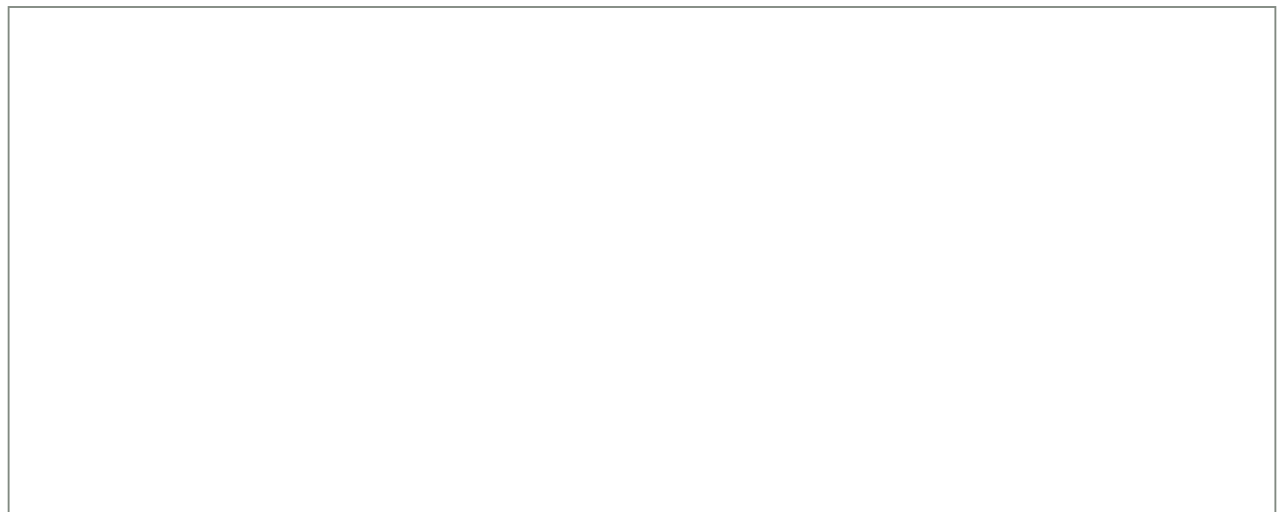
Wonder together

What helped make a meal or a family reading possible besides the things that were bought?

Before sharing an object or offering help, what could you ask the other person?

Make it your own

Draw a shared reading corner. Label a thing, some time and a helper that make it possible. Add one care task you could offer with permission.



Draw your family care map · 5 minutes

Draw a meal, a reading corner or another shared activity in the centre of a sheet. Add branches with pictures or words; a grown-up can help write.

1. On one branch, add a useful thing. On another, add someone's time or skill. On a third, add a person who helps.
2. Choose one branch and decide how to care for it: put a book back, take a turn setting the table, or ask what help is wanted.
3. Do the small agreed task with permission. Tell someone exactly what contribution you appreciated; keep the map for your next family conversation.

Meet Saraswati: learning and the arts

Meet Saraswati Maa through her symbols and celebrations. Practise a small creative idea, listen to a partner and record what you discover.

6 minutes of reading · Take your time



Who is Saraswati Maa?

Think of something you are learning: a new word, a rhythm, a drawing or how to explain an idea. Hindus honour Saraswati Maa as the Goddess of knowledge, learning, music and the arts. A school lesson and a creative afternoon can both give a family a starting point for learning about her.

Begin with one question: what would you like to understand or make? A child who enjoys stories may choose a word, while someone else chooses a tune or a shape. Saraswati Maa's connection with learning makes room for that conversation. Nobody has to arrive with a finished skill before joining in.

Notice a symbol, ask a question

Look for the veena, a stringed musical instrument, in her image. It points to music and the arts. A book represents knowledge; prayer beads, called a japa mala, can represent concentration and discipline. In HAF's explanation, the instrument also invites us to think about harmony. Start with these few details instead of trying to memorise every symbol at once.

An image is a good place to ask how we know something. You can see strings on an instrument; learning that it is a veena may require a caption or a knowledgeable person. Name the source of that explanation. Another artist may choose a different pose or arrangement, so look carefully before expecting every image to match.

Learning and celebrations

Vasant Panchami is one celebration dedicated to Saraswati. You may also hear it called Basant Panchami. In many celebrations, people wear or display yellow, and schools hold prayers connected with learning. Some Navratri traditions also honour Saraswati. A family's way of marking these occasions can differ from a neighbour's; ask what the day means to them.

A celebration can also open a conversation about who helps us learn. Ask a relative about a teacher, a library book or a song they remember. Record whose memory it is. Learning about one family's Vasant Panchami or Navratri does not tell us how every Hindu family celebrates; keep space for another answer.

Listen and create together

Here is our own way to explore that idea. Imagine two people clapping a rhythm together. If both race ahead without listening, they may lose the pattern. When one slows down and leaves space for the other, they can find a shared beat. Listening changes what they make together. This is a learning example, not a story about how the Goddess created music.

For example, draw a line of three circles and ask a partner to notice the pattern. You might change their size or spacing on your next attempt. If you choose a rhythm instead, you can tap softly, point to marks on paper or let someone else make the sound. These are different ways to take part in the same shared practice.

When practice feels difficult

A difficult first attempt is still an attempt. Perhaps your line wobbles, a word is unfamiliar or your rhythm comes out differently from the one you heard. Choose one small part to try again. You can ask for an example, take a break or use a different way of practising. Learning does not have to become a contest with the person beside you.

Families may pray for Saraswati Maa's blessings as they begin studying or making art. Prayer can be part of that family's devotional life; a test result does not measure a child's devotion or worth. Questions, practice and support from others still have a place. Tell a grown-up when you need something explained in another way.

Keep a small learning record

For today, make something small enough to finish: a three-beat rhythm, a drawn pattern or one carefully chosen word. Share it with someone who will listen. Ask them to notice one detail, then exchange roles. Finish by naming what you enjoyed discovering, not by deciding whose work was best.

The worksheet is a record of an experiment, not a report card. Draw or describe the first attempt, name one useful suggestion and notice what happens when you try again. "I still need help" is a useful observation too. Keep the sheet if you would like to return to the idea; there is no need to repeat it until it is perfect.

For the grown-up

Let children choose speaking, drawing, listening or gentle tapping. The activity needs no musical instrument and is not an exam. The Hindi companion is a devotional song, not an English explanation or a pronunciation lesson; its automatic captions can mishear words.

HAF's Saraswati symbolism and festival introductions provide the religious context. The shared rhythm, practice suggestions and learning studio are original SanatanJr activities. They illustrate a family conversation about learning, not a prescribed form of worship or a promise of academic results.

Hindu American Foundation · Symbolism of Saraswati

<https://www.hinduamerican.org/hinduism-in-depth/saraswati-symbolism>

Hindu American Foundation · Vasant Panchami

<https://www.hinduamerican.org/vasant-panchami>

Hindu American Foundation · Navaratri traditions

<https://www.hinduamerican.org/navaratri>

<https://sanatanjr.com/en/learn/meet-saraswati>

Talk, draw and try

Meet Saraswati: learning and the arts

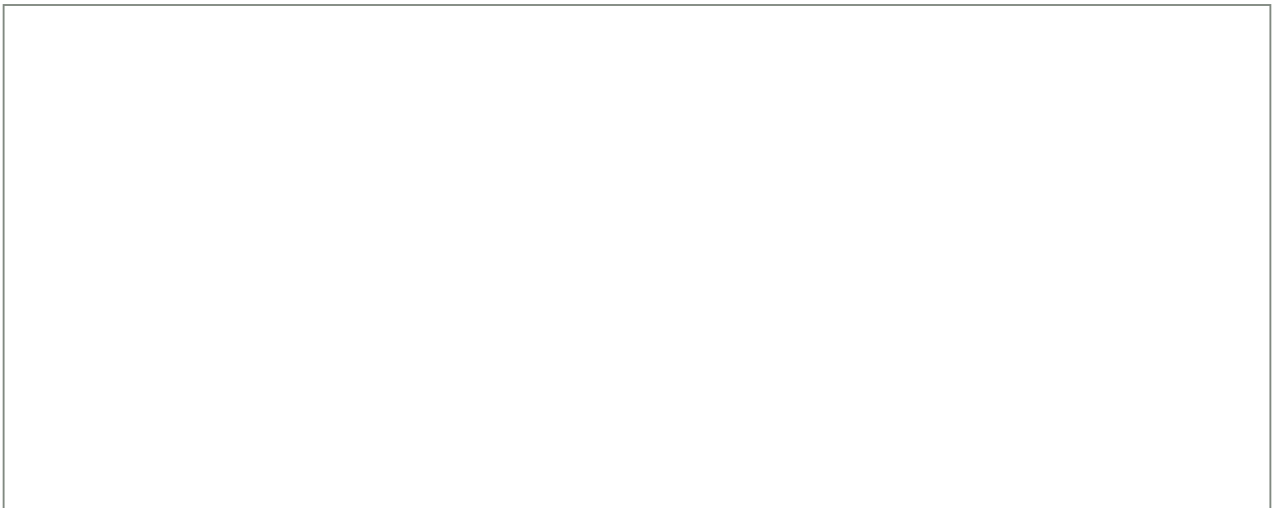
Wonder together

Which interests you most today: a word, a picture or a rhythm? What would you like to try?

When something is difficult to learn, what kind of help makes a difference for you?

Make it your own

Make a pattern with three marks. Ask your partner what they notice, then make a second version. Keep both versions and describe one change you tried.



A tiny learning studio · 5 minutes

Choose paper and a pencil, or simply use your voice or hands. Work with a grown-up or another willing family member.

1. Choose one thing: draw a repeating pattern, say a new word, or tap a three-beat rhythm. Try it once.
2. Ask your partner for one helpful observation. Listen, then try again at a pace that feels comfortable.
3. Exchange roles. Each person finishes the sentence 'Today I noticed...' Keep the paper, or remember the rhythm, for another day.

Bring the readings together

Look back at the three activities. Who could help safely? What supported your shared activity? What changed when you practised? Choose one small idea to bring into your day, without ranking people or expecting a reward.



One thing to carry into our day

Choose one small idea to try together. You may change your mind or ask for help. Return to a favourite reading whenever you like.

Read in either language and find selected companion videos online:

sanatanjr.com/en/collections/navratri-family-activities