

# Care along the Ramayana journey

Bharata, Shabari and Mainaka offer different kinds of care. Read their stories and explore each on paper.

English edition · Free family activity pack

1. Bharata and Rama's sandals
  2. Shabari welcomes Rama
  3. Hanuman and the helpful mountain
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## Make room for a little time together

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

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# Bharata and Rama's sandals

Bharata wants his brother to come home. When Rama chooses to remain in the forest, a pair of sandals helps Bharata understand the work entrusted to him.

4 minutes of reading · Take your time



## A difficult answer

Bharata had come to see Rama with a hope that mattered deeply to him: his elder brother would return to Ayodhya and rule. Rama was living in the forest, keeping the promise that had led to his exile. Bharata did not want the kingdom as a prize for himself. He wanted the person he believed should lead it to come home.

He spoke earnestly about the people waiting for Rama and about his own uncertainty. How could he manage such a large kingdom alone? The task seemed greater than he could carry. Bharata's love for his brother and his worry for Ayodhya were both present in that appeal.

Rama listened with affection. He believed Bharata had the understanding and training to govern well. He also reminded him that governing did not have to mean knowing every answer alone: wise ministers and advisers could help. But Rama would not abandon his father's promise. The answer Bharata had hoped for would not come that day.

## Something to carry home

Then Bharata asked Rama to place his feet on a pair of wooden sandals. These were padukas, sandals that would become a sign of Rama's authority. Rama stood on them and gave them to his brother. Bharata received them with reverence. They were small enough to carry, yet they represented a responsibility much larger than themselves.

The brothers said farewell with affection and sorrow. Bharata would take the sandals back, while Rama would remain in the forest until the exile was complete. The plan had changed, but Bharata's devotion had not ended. He now had to turn his love for his brother into care for the people who were still waiting.

After returning to Ayodhya, Bharata spoke with Vasishta and the elders about living at Nandigrama. They agreed. He travelled there with Shatrughna, accompanied by ministers and others. The sandals went with him. He was leaving the city for a simpler dwelling, but he was not putting aside the work of government.

## The work of waiting

At Nandigram, Bharata placed the padukas in the royal seat and honoured them beneath the state canopy. He explained that the kingdom had been entrusted to him on Rama's behalf. The sandals made that trust visible: he was caring for something he intended to return, not treating it as a possession to keep.

Bharata worked with his ministers, bringing matters of the kingdom before the sandals and then attending to them. The Ramayana describes even small affairs receiving this care. Waiting was not an empty stretch of time. There were people to serve and decisions to make while Rama was away.

The pair of sandals did not do Bharata's work for him. They reminded him why he was doing it. When the time came, he hoped to return them and the kingdom to Rama. Until then, devotion meant showing up for the responsibility in his hands, with the help of people he could trust.

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## For the grown-up

The brothers are sad to part, and Bharata worries about a large responsibility. The epic also contains a severe vow about Rama's return; this reading omits it. Children's responsibilities should be manageable, with a trusted adult available to help.

Original retelling of Valmiki Ramayana, Ayodhya Kanda 112 and 115. The padukas, Rama's advice to consult ministers, Bharata's residence at Nandigram and administration on Rama's behalf are drawn from these chapters. The severe fire vow is omitted. Everyday comparisons are editorial reflections; the sandals are honoured symbols, not speaking characters.

[Valmiki Ramayana · ayodhya 112](https://sanskritdocuments.org/sites/valmikiramayana/ayodhya/sarga112/ayodhya_112_prose.htm)

[https://sanskritdocuments.org/sites/valmikiramayana/ayodhya/sarga112/ayodhya\\_112\\_prose.htm](https://sanskritdocuments.org/sites/valmikiramayana/ayodhya/sarga112/ayodhya_112_prose.htm)

[Valmiki Ramayana · ayodhya 115](https://sanskritdocuments.org/sites/valmikiramayana/ayodhya/sarga115/ayodhya_115_prose.htm)

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<https://sanatanjr.com/en/stories/bharata-and-ramas-sandals>

# Talk, draw and try

## Bharata and Rama's sandals

### Wonder together

Why did Bharata need both a reminder of Rama and the help of ministers?

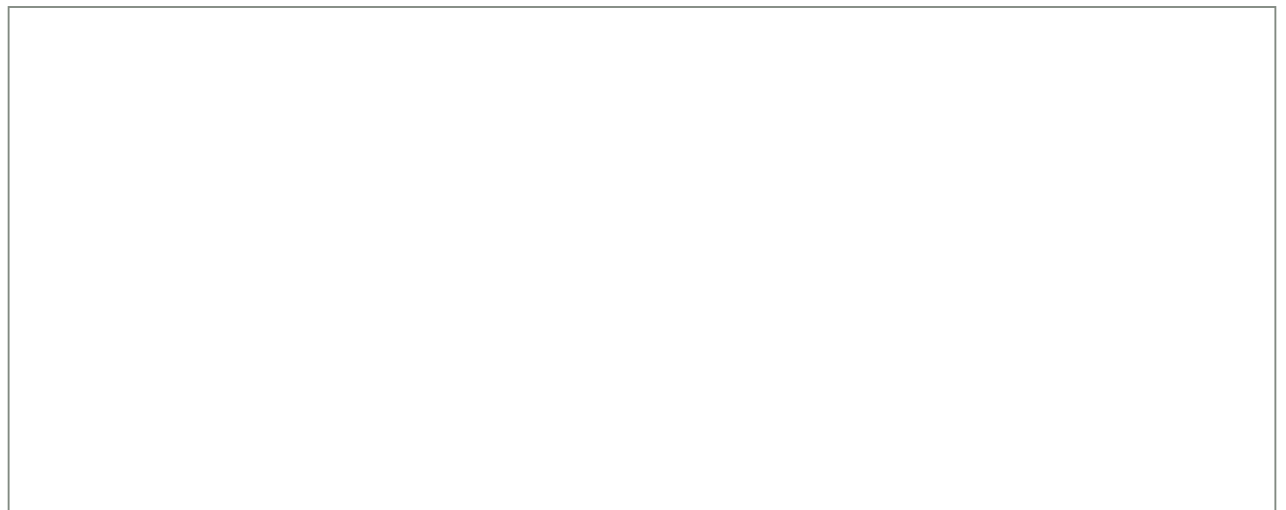
What is the difference between caring for a shared thing and treating it as only yours?

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### Make it your own

Invent a reminder for a small responsibility you share at home. Draw it here. Who can help you carry out the task? The reminder does not do the work for you.



### Care for something shared · 5 minutes

Choose a shared game, book or art box. Make a small care card together.

1. Write or draw where the item belongs when it is not being used.
2. Agree on one useful care task and who can help with it.
3. Choose a time to check it together. Change the plan if it is too difficult.

# Shabari welcomes Rama

Shabari has been waiting to welcome Rama. When he arrives, her forest home offers more than food: it offers a meeting filled with respect.

3 minutes of reading · Take your time



## The visitors arrive

Rama and Lakshmana travelled through the forest towards the country around Lake Pampa. Their search for Sita had brought them far from home. Among the trees they came to Shabari's hermitage, a place connected with the teachers she had served and loved. For the travellers it was a place to visit. For Shabari, their arrival was the fulfilment of a long-held hope.

Before leaving this world, her teachers had told her that Rama would come with Lakshmana and that she should welcome them. She had remembered their words. Now the brothers were before her. Shabari rose, greeted them with deep reverence and offered the water and forest food she had prepared for her guests.

## A welcome in both directions

Rama did not treat the welcome as only something to receive. He asked Shabari about her own well-being and spiritual practice. Was she finding peace? Were the difficulties in her practice being overcome? The guest made time for the person who had welcomed him. Shabari's life and effort mattered in their conversation.

She told Rama how much this meeting meant to her and remembered the promise of her teachers. She had gathered fruits and other forest food from the region of Pampa for his arrival. The offerings came from the place she knew and from her own attentive preparation. Her joy was in the meeting itself, not in showing that she could arrange a grand feast.

## A place full of memories

Rama had heard about the hermitage and asked to see it. Shabari became his guide. She showed the places where her teachers had worshipped and lived. The Ramayana describes marvels that remained there: flowers that had not faded and signs of the teachers' spiritual practice. To Shabari, the woodland held their presence in its memories.

Imagine showing a visitor a familiar room and explaining why one small object matters to you. Shabari's tour offered much more than a view of trees. It let her guests understand the place through someone who cared for it. Rama and Lakshmana listened as she shared what she knew.

Our reading pauses here, at the end of that welcome and visit. Shabari had received the brothers with devotion, and they had given their attention in return. The forest home became a place where host and guests could honour one another. Food, questions and listening each had a part in the meeting.

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## For the grown-up

This reading follows the forest welcome in Valmiki's account. The familiar tasted-berries scene appears in other tellings and is not narrated here. The chapter later describes Shabari's departure from life; we stop before that passage. Children can practise hosting with familiar people at home.

Original, deliberately bounded retelling of Valmiki Ramayana, Aranya Kanda 74: Shabari's greeting, Rama's enquiries, her teachers' words and the hermitage tour. The later departure-from-life passage is omitted. Tasted berries are not in this Valmiki chapter. Our room-and-object comparison is a family reflection, not an event in the epic; the linked translation's wider commentary is not our editorial position.

[Valmiki Ramayana · aranya 74](https://sanskritdocuments.org/sites/valmikiramayan/aranya/sarga74/aranya_74_prose.htm)

[https://sanskritdocuments.org/sites/valmikiramayan/aranya/sarga74/aranya\\_74\\_prose.htm](https://sanskritdocuments.org/sites/valmikiramayan/aranya/sarga74/aranya_74_prose.htm)

<https://sanatanjr.com/en/stories/shabari-welcomes-rama>

# Talk, draw and try

**Shabari welcomes Rama**

## Wonder together

What did Rama give to this meeting, even though he was the guest?

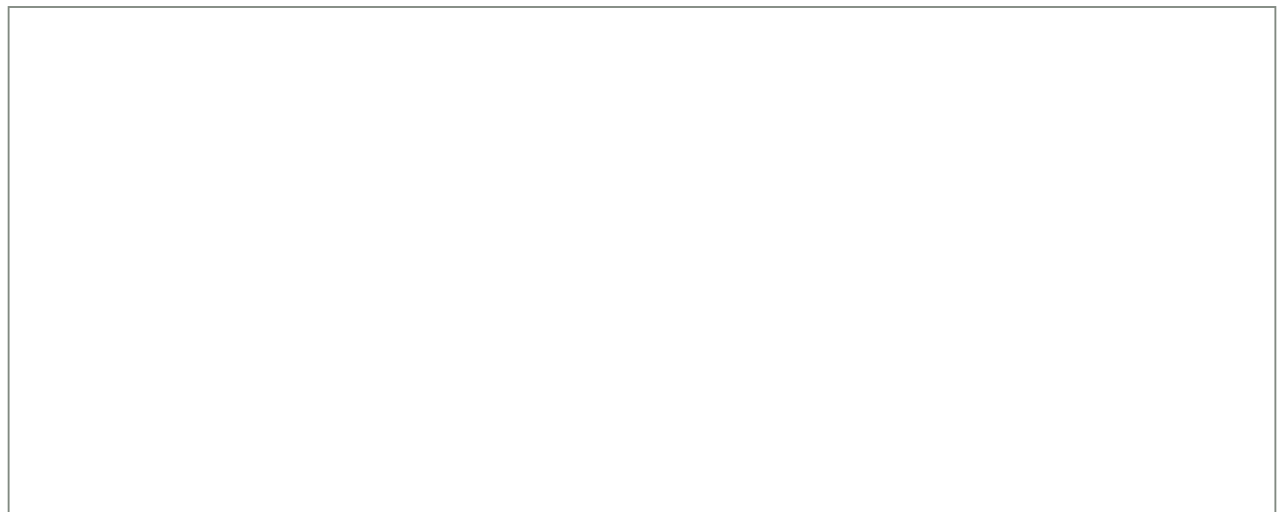
Which familiar place or object would you like to show a visitor, and why?

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## Make it your own

Make a welcome plan for an imaginary guest. Draw where they could sit, what you could ask, and how you would listen to what they need.



## Be a thoughtful host · 5 minutes

Invite someone at home to a pretend visit. No special food or purchases are needed.

1. Offer a comfortable place and ask what would help them feel at ease.
2. Show one object you care about and explain its story.
3. Swap roles. As the guest, ask a question and listen to the answer.

# Hanuman and the helpful mountain

A golden mountain rises from the sea in Hanuman's path. Is it an obstacle—or an unexpected offer of kindness?

3 minutes of reading · Take your time



## Something rises from the sea

Hanuman was travelling across the ocean to search for Sita in Lanka. Below him lay a great stretch of water; ahead lay the task he had promised to attempt. The ocean wished to help someone working for Rama. It called on Mainaka, a mountain hidden beneath its waters, to rise and offer the traveller a place to rest.

Mainaka rose through the sea. His golden peaks appeared in Hanuman's path, carrying trees and creepers high above the water. From the air, the sudden mountain looked like something blocking the way. Hanuman did not yet know why it had appeared. He pushed against it with his chest, treating it as an obstacle to his journey.

But Mainaka had not come to stop the search. He took a human form upon his peak and spoke warmly to Hanuman. Here was a place where he could pause, eat fruit and rest before continuing. The ocean had asked Mainaka to help, and the mountain had a reason of his own to offer hospitality.

## A kindness remembered

Long ago, Mainaka explained, mountains had wings. They travelled through the sky, and living beings feared that the great mountains might fall upon them. Indra began taking away those wings. When Mainaka was in danger, Vayu, the wind god, carried him to safety in the ocean, preserving his wings.

Now Vayu's son was passing overhead. Mainaka remembered what the father had done and wished to show kindness to the son. An old act of protection had become a new invitation. Hanuman was not simply being offered a convenient rock to stand on. He was being welcomed by someone who remembered help with gratitude.

Hanuman listened. He appreciated Mainaka's affection and regarded the welcome as already received. Yet the day was passing, and he had promised to carry out his task. He could not stay for the rest and food being offered. He explained this without treating the kindness as a nuisance.

## **Thank you, and onward**

Then Hanuman touched the mountain with his hand. It was a brief gesture of acknowledgement, followed by a smile as he rose into the sky again. The meeting ended without a meal or a long visit. Mainaka's offer still mattered, and Hanuman's answer had made his appreciation clear.

The ocean and Mainaka watched him continue with goodwill. The mountain remained behind while the search for Sita carried Hanuman onward. His journey would bring other encounters, but this one had revealed a friend where he had first seen an obstruction. An offer can be kindly meant even when the answer must be no.

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## **For the grown-up**

The story includes winged mountains, a brief collision and a remembered threat from Indra. These are epic events, not a model for children's journeys. Ordinary bodies need food, rest and breaks; saying no to an offer does not mean ignoring your needs or refusing all help.

Original retelling of the Mainaka encounter in Valmiki Ramayana, Sundara Kanda 1. We include the ocean's request, Hanuman's initial misunderstanding, Mainaka's account of Vayu's help, and the grateful departure. The later Surasa and Simhika encounters are separate episodes. No fixed modern distance is inferred from the epic's yojanas.

[Valmiki Ramayana · sundara 1](https://sanskritdocuments.org/sites/valmikiramayan/sundara/sarga1/sundara_1_prose.htm)

[https://sanskritdocuments.org/sites/valmikiramayan/sundara/sarga1/sundara\\_1\\_prose.htm](https://sanskritdocuments.org/sites/valmikiramayan/sundara/sarga1/sundara_1_prose.htm)

<https://sanatanjr.com/en/stories/hanuman-and-mainaka>

# Talk, draw and try

## Hanuman and the helpful mountain

### Wonder together

What did Hanuman learn about the mountain after his first impression?

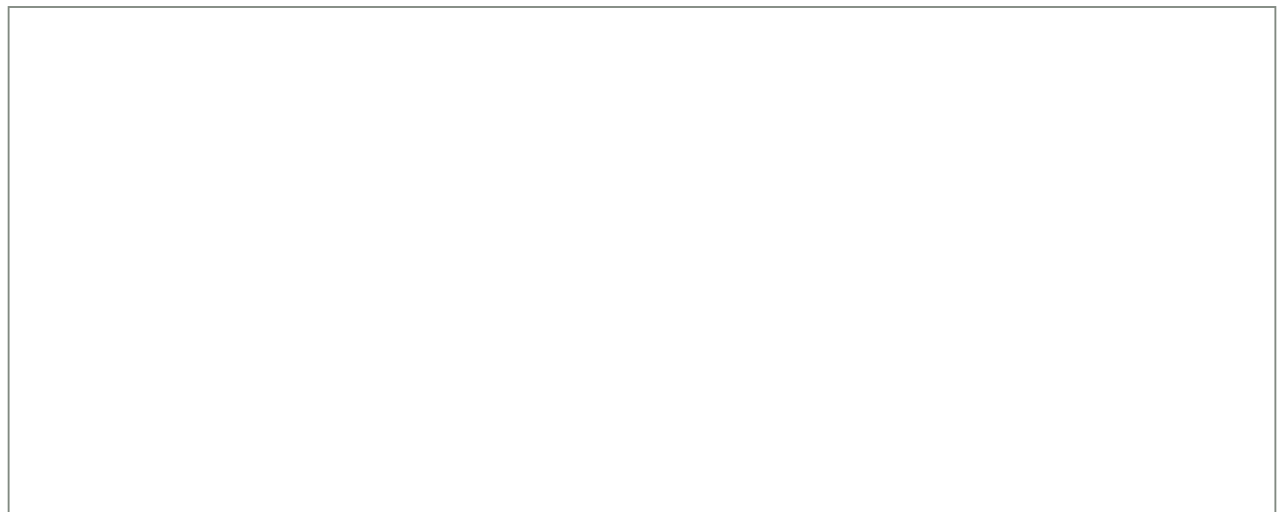
Which words could thank someone for an invitation you cannot accept?

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### Make it your own

Draw two speech bubbles: a kind invitation and a thankful reply that says “not now”. Practise both parts with a grown-up, without pressuring anyone to agree.



### Practise a kind answer · 5 minutes

With someone at home, take turns offering a pretend invitation to a game or story.

1. The host makes an offer without insisting on a yes.
2. The guest says thank you and gives a clear answer. They may suggest another time.
3. Swap roles. Talk about what made both people feel respected.

# Bring the stories together

Bharata accepts responsibility, Shabari welcomes guests, and Mainaka offers rest. Compare the offers without choosing a “best” helper. What can a caring reply sound like when you must say no?

## 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 story whenever you like.

Read in either language and find selected companion videos online:

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