

What do Hindus celebrate?

Today we will be...

Finding out about special occasions in a Hindu childhood.

NEXT

Do you have a baby brother or sister?



How did you celebrate when they were born?

BACK

NEXT

In Hinduism, there are lots of celebrations for a child. The first celebration happens before the child is even born and then there are celebrations at different times right up until the child becomes a teenager.

These special celebrations for children are called **samskaras**. There are 16 samskaras altogether.



BACK

NEXT

The first 3 samskaras happen before the child is born when prayers are prayed for the new baby and its mother. The father parts the mother's hair and puts a special red mixture on her head.



BACK

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An important samskara is the naming ceremony. This usually happens when the baby is 12 days old. The name is carefully chosen and the father whispers it into the baby's ear. Friends and family come to the baby's house to eat special sweets and sing songs.



BACK

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Another important celebration for a baby is when they first have solid food instead of just milk. Special food is offered to God and is put through a sacred fire. This is then fed to the baby so that their first food is blessed by God.



BACK

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When a child has a full head of hair, a samskar is performed so that all their hair is cut off. First, four small bits of hair are cut from each side of the child's head, then the head is completely shaved.



BACK

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When the child is old enough, another samskara will be celebrated for the beginning of the child's education. This is usually when the child is 4 or 5 years old. Lots of families will give their child a chalkboard or a tray of plain rice and help them to spell out the alphabet or the name of their favourite god.



BACK

NEXT

The last samskar for a child is the thread ceremony. This is more for boys than for girls and is a ceremony that shows that the boy has become a man. One part of the ceremony involves a special thread being put over the boy's shoulders. The boy will then wear a thread like this under his clothes for the rest of his life.



BACK

NEXT

What
special occasions do
you celebrate as you
grow up?



BACK

NEXT