

Ganesha*Father* – Lord Shiva*Mother* - Mata Parvati*Brother* - Lord Kartikeya (also known as Muruga or Skanda.)*Cosmic role* - Bestower of good fortune, remover of obstacles, the God of intellect and wisdom.*Vahan* – Mushak (mouse)*Astra* – Parasu (axe)

The name Ganesha is made up of **gana** (followers of Shiva) and **Isha** (lord). He was appointed as the leader of ganas by Lord Shiva. Another popular name for Ganesha is Ganapati which again means the leader of ganas.

Ganesha's worship has been tracked in history back to the early 4th to 5th centuries. Ganesha was widely worshipped by the traders as the principal deity in the 10th century. Ganesha's statues can be found in Hindu art of Java, Bali, Burma, Cambodia and Vietnam. Ganesha statues dating back to the 5th century have been found in Afghanistan. Ganesha is worshipped by Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists alike.

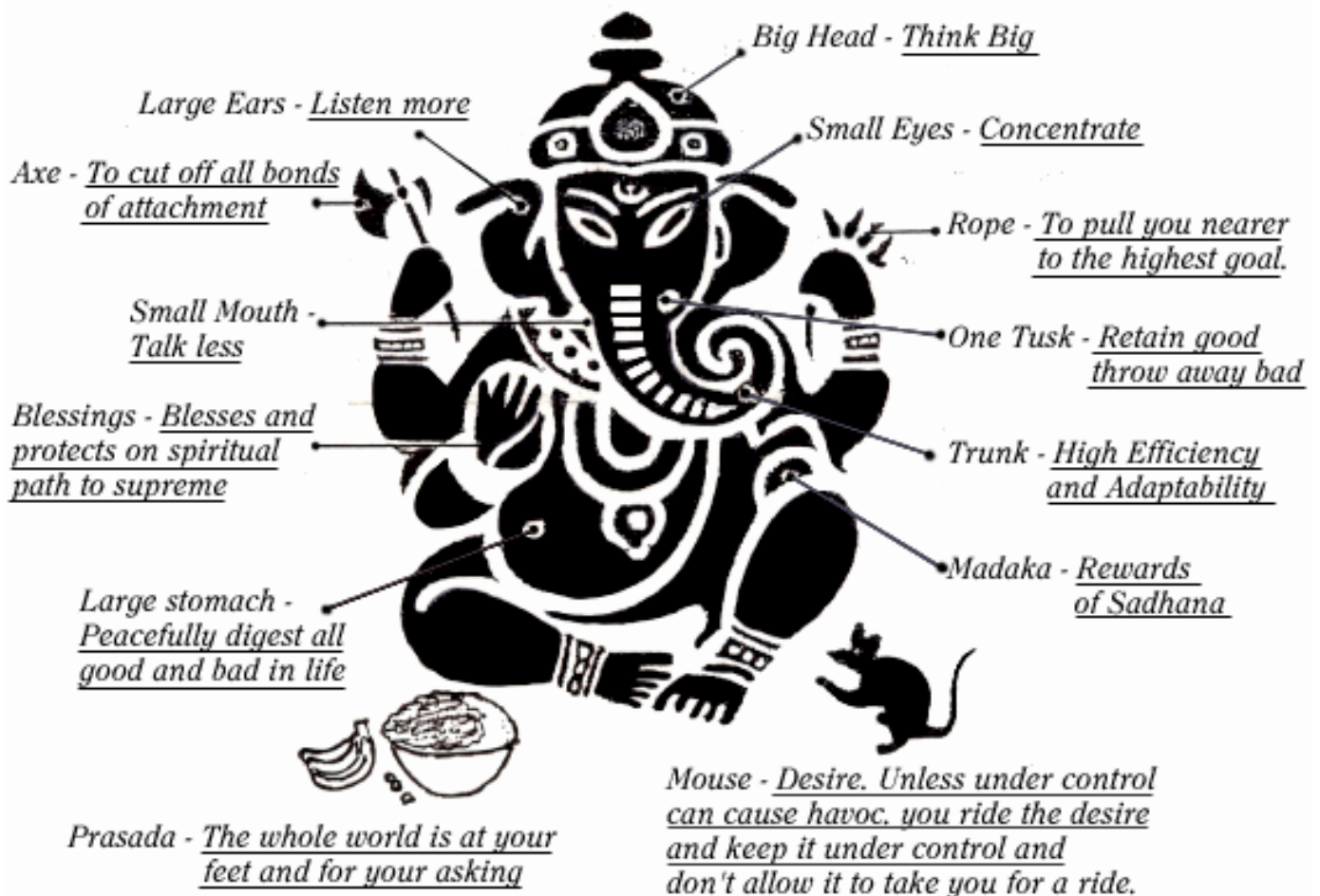
**Ganesh Chaturthi:**

Lord Ganesha is believed to bestow his presence on earth for all His devotees in the duration of this festival. It is the birthday of Ganesha. The festival is observed on the fourth day of the waxing moon period in the Hindu calendar month of Bhaadrapada (6th month of the year.) The festival lasts for 10 days, ending on Anant Chaturdashi. Devotees buy clay statues of Lord Ganesha and install them in their homes and in specially erected temporary structures outside their homes. For ten days Ganesha is worshipped. On the 11th day, the statue is taken through the streets in a procession accompanied by dancing, singing and fanfare to be immersed in the closest body of water. This symbolizes a see-off to the Ganesha who is on his way to Kailasha taking with Him the misfortunes of His deities. Everyone joins this procession shouting “Ganapati Bappa Mourya, Agle Baras Tu Jaldi Aa” (O lord Ganesha, come again early next year).

The main sweet dish during the festival is the modak which is a dumpling made from rice flour/wheat flour and stuffed with fresh or dry grated coconut, jiggery and dry fruits. The story goes that one day Lord Ganesha was invited for a feast and His devotees offered many laddoos and modak. Lord Ganesha decided to take a ride on his vahana and took off on the mouse. A snake happened to cross their path and caused the mouse to jump and Ganesha was thrown off His mount. All of Ganesha's sweets spilled to the ground. Ganesha being too intelligent to get angry about this took the serpent which had caused the accident and used it as a belt to keep his sweets together and remounted the mouse. Chandradev (moon god) saw the whole scene and laughed. Ganesha then cursed the Moon that it will vanish from the universe. Because of moon's absence, the whole world began to wane. The gods asked Lord Shiva to get Ganesha to change his mind. The moon also apologized for his misbehavior. Finally, Ganesha modified his curse saying that the moon would be invisible on only one day of a month and would be partially

seen on Ganesha Chaturthi. He also added that anyone who watches moon on Ganesha Chaturthi would be cursed with bad lunch. Even today, it is considered inauspicious to look at the moon on Ganesh Chaturthi.

Ganesha Symbolism



Draw a picture of Lord Ganesha OR his vahana, the mouse. On the next page I have provided a sample on how to draw Ganesha. I used Paint software and am sure that the kids will do better than what I could produce. I hope you enjoy this activity.



