

# This is Your Heritage...

## Stories from the South Gloucestershire Indian Community

### School Resources – HERITAGE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING YOU

The video clips, discussions and activities are appropriate for **Key Stage 2**. You will find National Curriculum, PSHE and RE links in the overview sheet.

Watch the video with the children. You are prompted to pause between each section.  
[Heritage and the Importance of Being You](#) (duration 5 mins 30 seconds)

If you don't have access to a video player, you can read the transcript below with the children. The children can work in pairs, or groups, or as a whole class.

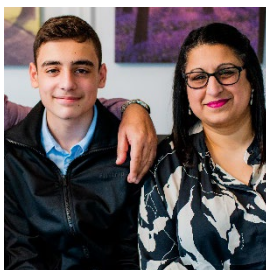
Pause the video between each short clip. You can ask focus questions before or after the film. There is an activity connected to each section.

#### **Materials needed for the activities.**

Baby naming books or access to research on internet.

Paper and pencils for hands drawing activity.

Check the linked Diwali activities for further materials.



**DEVIN AND SARIKA MORRISON**, Bradley Stoke

Devin: I'm Devin Morrison, Sarika is my mum and Shiv is my grandad.

Sarika: When I was pregnant, my husband and I had picked a girl's name, but we couldn't agree on the boy's name and we wanted something that was meaningful, so my husband and I were reading through baby books, and we wanted something that meant something for both cultures. So, my husband found the name Devin. The end of it is spelt differently, but Devin means, is the Irish for poet but it's the Indian word for God.

My favourite things are when there is a Haven, my dad will help with a food in the kitchen. This is his sous chef. So, he will go and help make the chapatis and help make the food. They all know him in the temple as Shiv's son, and then I'll come along to help as well. And I can stand very proudly and have our generations there.

*(Interviewer: Sarika, Irish or Indian? What do you connect more with?)*

Sarika: I would say Indian actually, very, very much so. I think because of the strong cultural connection we had. I always say I'm proud to be Indian, proud to be Hindi. I can't get away from the Northern Irish because clearly my accent is very strong. But actually, that brings a lot of conversations up because my accent doesn't match, it's very, very different to how I look.

*(Interviewer: What does your heart relate to more, your mum's culture or your dad's culture, or both?)*

Devin: Both. Because I've visited both of the countries, I've seen my relatives on both sides.

### **FOCUS QUESTIONS**

1. What were the different meanings for Devin's name?
2. Why did his mum and dad think it was important to have a name from both of their cultures?
3. What did the interviewer mean when she asked Devin 'what does your heart relate to more, your mum or you dad's culture?

### **VOCABULARY**

Havan – A fire ritual performed on special occasions by a Hindu priest.

Sous Chef – Second chef in a kitchen.

Chapati – Flat bread originating from India.

### **FURTHER DISCUSSION AND RELATED ACTIVITIES**

**Names** For this you will need internet access or a baby naming book. Devin's heritage is Irish and Indian. His mum, Sarika, explains that the name Devin means 'Poet' in Irish and 'God' in Hindi. Ask the children to find out what their name means. Perhaps they can find out why they were named this.

**Letter to a penfriend** They could imagine they have a penfriend in India. This is the first time they have written to them; they need to tell them all about themselves, what they like to do, who they live with, about their name and all the things that make them, them.



### **MARIA COELHO** - Winterbourne

Maria: I had quite a difficult childhood because of my heritage. I wasn't Asian, I wasn't black, I wasn't white. So, what was I?

For the last 20 years, we've run a theatre company. It's very small scale, it's just the two of us. It's called 'Same Same, But Different Theatre Company'. For me, the most important show we do is the Rajasthani puppet show, the Epic Indian Theatre.

When my daughter was in nursery in Fishponds no one was doing anything to celebrate Diwali. I said, 'Well, I'll come in and do it. Then I'll bring some puppets and I'll tell the story of a Diwali.'

So, I started to do that and then it just evolved. My mum offered me my dad's suitcase that he migrated from India with. She also offered me a saree because although she was white British, she had quite a few sarees. She'd been taught how to put them on, and she would go to events in a saree. She had this one saree that was blue, which I use as a sea in the story. It's the story of Ram and Sita. It's about being different. It's about people judging you by the way that you look, not by the skills that you have and the qualities that you bring.

### **FOCUS QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS**

1. Maria says she 'wasn't black, she wasn't white, so what was she?'. From the film, what was her parents' heritage?
2. What did Maria start to do to explain her Indian heritage?
3. Maria says the story of Ram and Sita is about 'people judging you by the way that you look, not by the skills that you have and the qualities that you bring.' Ask the children to list all the different qualities and skills that people might have (i.e.: kindness, hardworking, strong, energetic).

### **VOCABULARY**

**Diwali** – A Festival of Light in Indian religions.

**Saree** – A long length of woven fabric arranged over the body as a robe with one end tied to the waist while the other end rests over one shoulder.

### **ACTIVITIES**

**The Story of Diwali.** Working on projects around Diwali, the Festival of Light, could last a whole session and there are many online brilliant resources already created. You can show the children a film



about the story of Ram and Sita, the puppet show Maria talks about, here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pp59n0So-XE>

Diwali art related activities can be found here <https://www.activityvillage.co.uk/the-story-of-diwali>

Maria says she uses her mum's saree to represent the sea in the puppet show. If you have puppets or dolls and a dressing box with scarves in the classroom, you could suggest to the children that they turn blue fabric or paper into a sea and build a bridge so Sita can be rescued from the island where she is imprisoned.

The children could also make simple paper Diwali lanterns using coloured card. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJBB4-oahok>



**ALKA MEHTA-GRAHAM** – Emersons Green

**Before the film begins,** explain that Alka's family were of Indian descent, born in Kenya, which is in East Africa. A very long time ago, in 17th century, India and then parts of East Africa were under British Colonial rule. Many people from India went to live and work in Africa.

'My parents were of Indian descent, from India, Gujarat, actually both parents were born in Kenya, and my grandfather was born in Kenya as well. They had to make a decision on whether to become British citizens and live in Britain or to stay in Kenya and they chose to come to Britain. I was born in 1970 and I was born in Upton Park in East London.

For me it was quite sort of a double life, I would say. So, you had one life which was a very Asian life at home, you know, with your Asian background and your culture, your religions, and your community, and then at school there was another Alka, which was very much trying to integrate with the British way of life. I felt as if I didn't belong to Britain, I didn't belong to Africa, I didn't belong to India, so where did I belong? You know, when I went to India, I was in shock, because the people in India were not holding on to their culture and their background and their heritage. And they were allowed to do the things that I was doing. And I just sat there in complete astonishment and I'm so glad I found that out, because what actually happened is I turned around and I said, you might not belong anywhere, but you do belong because you are just you, just be you.

God has not made all fingers the same, you know, and you know, all these different shades of people is a very positive thing, is a very, very positive thing.

## FOCUS QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

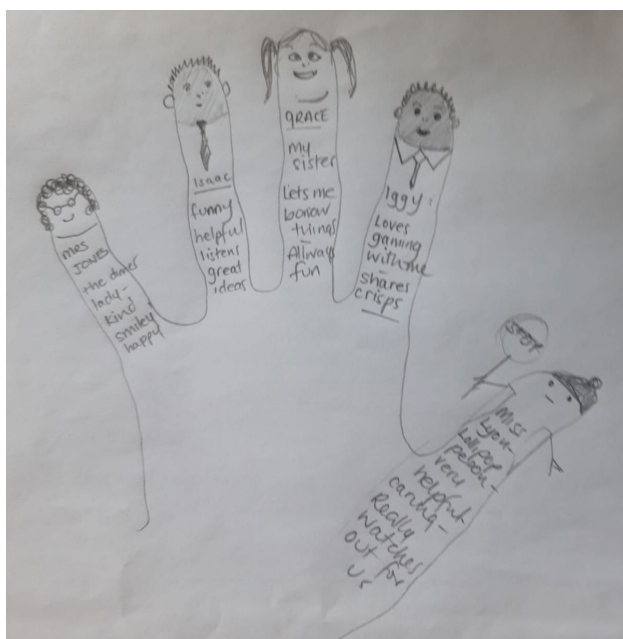
**At the end, you could ask the children,**

1. Alka's parents were born in Kenya. Alka was born in London. Why does she say she had a sort of double life?
2. Alka visited India, why did she find it surprising?

## VOCABULARY

**Culture** – The ideas, customs and ways that people behave of a particular people or society.

**Integrate** – To mix with and join society or a group of people, often changing to suit their way of life, habits, and customs.



### Different Fingers on One Hand

In the film Alka says "God has not made all fingers the same, you know, all these different shades of people is a very positive thing." Discuss with the children what they think Alka meant by that. Suggest that on everyone's hands they have different fingers and each one has its own usefulness and beauty. Ask the children to draw around their one hands or to help each other to draw around each other's hands. Then ask them to think about people they

feel really positive about (it could be friends, family, a person who works at the school). Decide on five people and draw a face on each finger and a list of all the things they think is positive about the person.



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