

## OVERVIEW OF CULTURE CLASS SYLLABUS

The HARI cultural classes focus on the diverse history, cultural traditions, and practices of India within a secular context. HARI cultural classes do not promote any one particular religious tradition. Rather, our goal is to provide a secular understanding that recognizes and respects the rich diversity that composes Indian culture.

We take a theme-based approach and each level has a particular focus. We have four broad levels for our culture class, which are based on the ages and grade-levels of the students. These levels are Himalaya, Nilgiri, Satpura, and Vindhya ranging from 5 years and up respectively.

Our **Himalaya** class focuses on Indian **geography** and the students are introduced to facts and figures related to India, the wildlife, the vegetation, the climatic zones, the political map, and the cultural geography of each of the four regions. At this level, there are a lot of hands-on activities such as coloring, drawing, story-telling, games and so on.

Our **Nilgiri** class focuses on the **visual and performing arts** of India. Students are introduced to the classical dance, music, and theatrical traditions of India. Additionally, they learn about the various visual art forms of India like miniature painting, temple sculptures, etc. Additionally, they explore our rich folk traditions. We also continue to use a hands-on approach where the children will listen to music, experiment with some art techniques, learn some dance movements, and make masks.

Our **Satpura** class focuses on the **history** of India. Students start with the Indus Valley Civilization and work their way through the struggles for an independent Indian state. This is a vast and complex topic and we believe that students need at least two years to get a basic grasp of the Indian history timeline and its significant events. The first year is taught at an introductory level and the second year goes into more detail about the significant periods of Indian history.

Our **Vindhya** class focuses on **poetry, philosophy and politics**. This class is intended for children who are over 13 years of age. The approach of this class is highly interactive and we encourage the students to create their own projects, engage in debates with each other and so on. At this level, students learn about the politics of India in terms of its governance structure, the biographies and writings of its leaders, and significant political events. Students are also introduced to Indian poetry and prose by Dr. Ram Gupta. Finally, students are introduced to Indian philosophy ranging from the vedas to contemporary thought such as Ghandhiji's ideas of a perfect state and Ambedkar's ideas related to social justice.

Given the demographic of our students there are very few students who stay on as students beyond 12 years of age. Consequently, we may or may not be able to complete the Vindhya syllabus in its entirety. The idea behind the Vindhya curriculum is to develop public speaking skills, analytical skills and a more in-depth understanding of Indian culture, thought and philosophy. We hope to incorporate guest speakers from our community that might have expertise in a particular area for this class.