**Ganesha**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| *Read this account of how Genesha came into being and how he now has an elephant’s head. Then answer the questions that follow.* |
| **The Legend of Ganesha**  As written in the Puranas, Parvati, the wife of Shiva, was once interrupted while taking a bath. Wanting her privacy, she used her powers to create a handsome young man and told him, “You are Ganesha. You are my son. Be my doorkeeper and let no one into my house without my permission.!”  Soon after, Lord Shiva arrived. But the young man refused to let him pass. Insulted, Shiva beheaded the youth with his trident and entered the house. When Parvati found out she was furious and threatened to destroy the whole world. In order to pacify her, Shiva commanded his followers to bring him the first head that they could find. They returned with the head of an elephant and attached it to the body. Shiva then restored Ganesha to life and to this day he has the body of a man and head of an elephant.  Ganesha is always represented with a broken tusk. This happened when the sage Vyasa wished to dictate the epic poem, the Mahabharata. Ganesha agreed to be the scribe and write down the poem but he didn’t have any writing tools to use. So he broke off a tusk and used it to record the poem.  Ganesha is a popular god among all Hindus. He is known as the remover of obstacles and the god of success and prosperity because he is able to remove any problems in your way. Hindus commence a new undertaking with a prayer to Ganesha to remove obstructions that might stand in the way of their success. Ganesha is also shown with at least four arms and hands. This is a sign of the omnipotence of the god. |
| 1. Why is Ganesha a popular god? 2. What can you tell about Hinduism from this brief story? 3. In what ways do other religions show the power of their gods? 4. What would be some of the problems that you could have Ganesha help you with in your life? 5. What are your sources of help to deal with your problems? |