

Smita script_ Primary

I was born and brought up in India by Hindu family. I grew up mainly with my grandparents and parents. Would you like to know a little bit about being a Hindu? First, we greet someone with our hands folded and we say *Namaste*, it means *welcome and have a good day*. In English we say *good morning, good afternoon or good evening*, it means the same but by folding our hands and bowing our heads. The beauty about it is it does not change according to time of day. You can also use it to greet people older than you. For example, you are children, you are in school and you want to greet the teacher. Instead of standing up and saying *good morning*, you can fold your hands and say *namaste*, it means the same thing.

Would you like to know a bit about the Hindu religion? Like I said earlier, I was born in India and grew up in a family with my parents and grandparents. They thought that if this little girl grew up with a Hindu faith it will be really good for the family. My grandfather wanted to instill the Hindu qualities in me from a young age. What he used to say to me was that before we leave the house we say 'God, be with me' and fold our hands and go to school. Before dinner we do the same and we thank God for being with us the whole day. That is how my faith journey started and before I knew it became a part and parcel of my life.

My second home is called '*temple*' in the English and you probably know the meaning of the word. In Hindu we call it *mandir* and it brings together our community. Now I have lived in this country for nearly 44 years and still looking forward to living here for longer. When I first came here I only spoke a bit of English, this might be a challenge some of you are facing now. In this difficult time I needed my religion the most. I am Hindu but if you are not part of any religion, it is not the end of the world. Religion is just a bonus on the side, but it gives you strength or invisible force to go through life. For example, most of you carry phones because your parents think they put you in a safe reach. If your phone does not have a screen protector, you can break or scratch the screen. Once you have a protector screen and a cover, your phone is safe. It is the same with religion. If you are not religious, just be thankful for the day. This will be your cover, your protection. Just like your phone's protective screen.

I am sure all of you are good children and you help your parents at home and your friends at school. That caring part shows that you do something good for others, it comes back written into you and it comes written as a bonus. This is the best part of you all.

Now fold your hands together up to your chest, bow your head slightly and say *namaste*. Enjoy your day and hopefully after COVID-19 is finished, you can come visit me in my second home – my temple.