

## Focus plan for Knowledge and understanding of the world

(Goals for Cultures and beliefs.) Activity - Mendhi hands Date -

### Learning intention

To begin to understand other cultures.

### Resources

Globe or maps, pictures of mendhi decorations, paper, pencils, brown crayons or pencils, scissors.

### How the activity will be carried out

In a group, talk about special occasions and how we prepare for them. Explain how women and girls of the Indian culture decorate their hands and sometimes their feet as well with mendhi patterns on special occasions as part of looking their best. Find the country on the globe/map. Show the pictures and allow the children to pass them around so they can observe them closely. Explain that henna paste, made from the dried leaves of the mendhi bush, is painted on the hands and feet, left to dry for several hours, then washed off to leave a brown-gold pattern. This will last for a long time and will be a pleasant reminder of the good times during the festivities.

Tell the story of the mendhi bush which gave its leaves to a young girl called Rekha on her wedding day, because it had no flowers to give her like other trees and bushes. Ever since then brides have decorated their hands and feet elaborately for this special day. When the children have examined the pictures and examples of typical patterns, explain you are going to make your own. Help children to draw around their hand and cut out the shape. They can then use the brown crayon to decorate the shape, copying a traditional pattern if they wish. Display the mendhi hands prominently.

### Questions to ask/Language to use

How do we dress up for special occasions? New, shiny, smart, special, rings, necklaces, decorate, skin, hands, feet, mendhi, henna, paste, patterns, swirls, spots, wavy, dry, wash, stain, long-lasting, draw, cut.

### Differentiation (Birth to Three)

Provide pre-cut hand shapes to decorate, or cut around child's own drawn hand for them

Learn 'The Mendhi Tree' action rhyme - see booklist.

### Extension

Invite children to make pairs of hands, to create a 'circle of friends' display.

If you have a parent or carer who is able to show real examples of mendhi patterns or demonstrate the technique, invite them to visit. (Obtain permission before you allow any children to try being decorated, though!)

### Evaluation