

# Celebrating the Hindu festival of Puri Rath Yatra

**Type of activity:** Exploring faith - Hinduism

**Who is it for?** All the family

**What do I need?**

- Cardboard packaging, lollypop sticks, any other craft things you have
- Jam jar lids or milk bottle lids
- Glue
- Coloured paper and tissue paper or paint
- Curiosity, creativity and open-mindedness

## Introduction

On 23 June, Hindus celebrate the festival of **Puri Rath Yatra**. It is a celebration of equality and integration and is held in Puri in the state of Odisha, India. You can find out more about Hinduism here on this BBC Bitesize video (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zh86n39/articles/zmpp92p>).



As part of Ratha Yatra, deities are taken out of Jagannath Temple and placed in a ratha (which are huge chariots - look at the photos and see how small the people are!) and then a procession begins. The deities that are taken out are Lord Jagannath, his elder brother Lord Balabhadra and younger sister Devi Subhadra, along with Sudarshan.



Then Gajapati Maharaja, the king of Puri, undertakes the holy cleaning of the chariots (Chhera Pahanra). Finally, the devotees pull the chariots up to the Gundicha Temple, which is also known as the birthplace of the Lords, where they stay for two weeks.



## Here's how to...create your own chariot

Take a look at the different photos we have here of the chariots that carry the deities. Look at the colours and decoration used for each one. Also look at how big they are - it must take many months to make them! They are drawn along sometimes by people and sometimes by animals so they have wheels underneath!

Now you are going to design your own chariot on a piece of white paper, using these photos as a guide.

Make your ratha out of cardboard packaging, using the milk bottle lids or jam jar lids as wheels, and lollypop sticks for pillars and then decorate it with your coloured paper or paint. You can stick decorations on to your chariot, and make them look as glorious as you can.

If you have Lego or another construction toy, you could use this to make your ratha instead of cardboard!

### **What now?**

Visit these webpages to find out a little bit more about:

- Jagannath <https://kids.kiddle.co/Jagannath>
- Puri Rath Yatra - the story behind the fesitval <https://www.pitara.com/non-fiction-for-kids/features-for-kids/ratha-yatra/>
- How preschoolers celebrate this festival <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okphzio-QI8>