Lord Ganesh:

Lord Ganesh is the elder son of Lord Shiva and Parvati. He is the lord of success and remover of obstacles. He is worshipped at the beginning of any prayer and auspicious occasion. He has the head of an elephant and has four arms. In one hand, he holds a rope to pull his devotees towards truth. In the other hand, he holds an axe to cut of the worldly and material bonds of his devotees. In the third hand, he holds ladoos to reward his devotees for their spiritual service and his fourth hand is always extended to bless his devotees.

We have a more popular story of how Lord Ganesh got his elephant head. Once Goddess Parvati, while bathing created a boy out of dirt of her body and assigned him the task of guarding the entrance to her bathroom. When Shiva, her husband returned home, he was surprised to find a stranger denying him access. Lord Shiva in a rage cut off Ganesh’s head. Parvati broke down in utter grief. Lord Shiva sent his ganas to fetch the head of the first sleeping being they found facing the north. The ganas brought back an elephant’s head which was then attached to the body of the boy. Lord Shiva restored his life and made him the leader of the ganas thus naming him Ganapati.

Names of Ganesh:

Vinayak: All knowing/knowledgeable.
Ganapati: Lord Shiva appointed him to be the leader of the Ganas (Lord Shiva’s soldiers).
Chaturbhuj: One who has four arms.
Gajanana: Elephant-faced God.
Ekdant – He who has only one tusk. Lord Ganesh broke his tusk to write the Mahabharat as Ved Vyas dictated the poem.

Ganesha’s Vahan (vehicle): Mouse (Mushika)
Ganesha’s Astra (weapon): Axe
Ganesha’s Mantra: Om Ganeshaya Namaha
Ganesha’s Brother: Kartikeya

In class we learned a new shloka; Before starting any work, pray to Lord Ganesh.

Shuklaambara Dharam Vishnum
Shashi Varnam Chatur Bhujam
Prasanna Vadanam Dhyaayet
Sarva Vighna Upashaanthaye

Meaning: We meditate on Lord Ganesha - who is clad in white (representing purity), who is all pervading (present everywhere), whose complexion is gray like that of ash (glowing with spiritual splendor), who has four arms, who has bright countenance (depicting inner calm and happiness) and who can destroy all obstacles (in our spiritual and worldly path).
Ganesha Symbolism

- **Big Head - Think Big**
- **Small Eyes - Concentrate**
- **Rope - To pull you nearer to the highest goal.**
- **One Tusk - Retain good throw away bad**
- **Trunk - High Efficiency and Adaptability**
- **Madaka - Rewards of Sadhana**

- **Axe - To cut off all bonds of attachment**
- **Small Mouth - Talk less**
- **Blessings - Blesses and protects on spiritual path to supreme**
- **Large stomach - Peacefully digest all good and bad in life**

- **Prasada - The whole world is at your feet and for your asking**
- **Mouse - Desire. Unless under control can cause havoc, you ride the desire and keep it under control and don’t allow it to take you for a ride.**