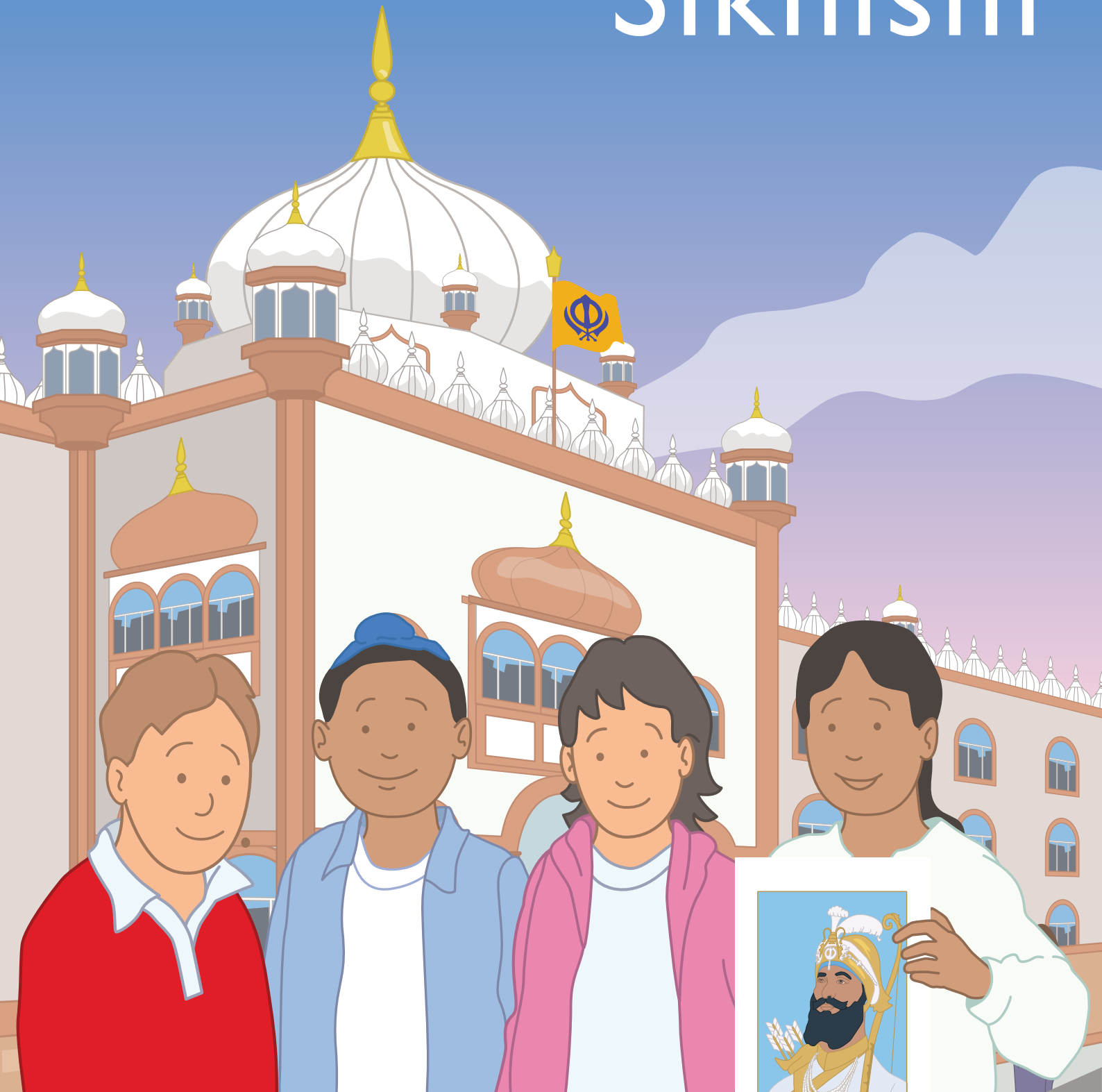


World Faiths Today Series

Exploring
Sikhism



Teachers' Handbook

World Faiths Today Series

Exploring Sikhism

Tania ap Siôn and Diane Drayson

Illustrated by Phillip Vernon



Bear Lands Publishing

In the World Faiths Today Series, Rees and Sara learn about the major world faiths in their own country. The seven stories in the series are:

- Exploring Islam
- Exploring Judaism
- Exploring the Parish Church
- Exploring the Orthodox Church
- Exploring Hinduism
- Exploring Buddhism
- Exploring Sikhism



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Exploring Sikhism

The story

Rees and Sara spend their holiday with two Sikh friends called Sanjit and Yasmin who introduce them to key beliefs and practices in Sikhism. The children explore a gurdwara and learn about God (Waheguru) in Sikhism and how their friends worship God. They celebrate the festival of Baisakhi and attend a Khalsa initiation ceremony which teaches them about belonging in a Sikh community. Rees and Sara are introduced to special teachers and guides, and they learn about how God guides Sikhs through these gurus. They investigate Sikh attitudes to the environment through a visit to a planetarium and a visit to a park. The children learn about how Sikhs practise serving others in a Sikh kitchen.

The basics

Sikhism is the youngest of the six major world faiths portrayed in this series. Sikhism emerged in the sixteenth century in the Punjab in response to the life and teachings of its founder, Guru Nanak. In the Punjab at this time tensions existed between the Hindu communities and the Muslim communities, and Guru Nanak was a Hindu. After a three-day mystical experience where Guru Nanak was in the presence of God, he uttered the famous words of his first teaching:

There is no Hindu and no Mussulman [Muslim], so whose path shall I follow? God is neither Hindu nor Mussulman and the path I shall follow is God's.

Guru Nanak rose above the sectarian divisions around him, and spent the rest of his life teaching the Sikh 'path' as it was revealed to him through his mystical experiences with God.

Today, around 90% of Sikhs reside in the Punjab (their traditional homeland), although Sikh communities are found increasingly in different countries around the world, with a large, established community in Britain.

Sikhs believe that:

- there is only one God who is creator of the Universe;
- God is present in creation and in every living thing;
- all living beings have a soul which is trapped in a continuous cycle of rebirth, which is determined by people's good and bad actions (karma); the ideal is liberation (mukti) of the soul from the cycle of rebirth to experience eternal union with God;
- liberation is possible if a person stops being self-centred (manmukh) and becomes God-centred (gurmukh) which means letting go of pride (haumai) and replacing it with humility (nimrata), but this can happen only through God bestowing grace (darshan);
- everyone is equal before God, and unfair divisions in society are wrong (for example, inequality on the basis of social group, race, or gender) because everyone has the same origins and possesses the divine spark (jot);
- God as supreme guru has always made God known to the world through teachers, including the ten Sikh gurus;
- the Sikh sacred scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, is an important medium through which God guides the Sikh community.

Sikhs practise:

- focusing on God in their lives through meditation on God's Name and congregational worship in the gurdwara;
- seva (service) to others;
- equality;
- membership of the Khalsa (to become full members of the Sikh community) where Sikhs wear the Five Ks and vow to adhere to a code of conduct.

Chapter I Visiting a gurdwara

Flag

The Sikh flag is called the Nishan Sahib. The symbol on the flag is called the Khanda, and it is the symbol most frequently associated with Sikhism. At its centre is a double-edged sword called a khanda and a circle called a chakar. On each side is a sword called a kirpan.

- The khanda represents God's power separating truth and falsehood.
- The chakar represents the eternal God, who (like a circle) has no beginning or end.
- The two kirpans represent earthly power and spiritual power.

God

God is called by a number of different names in Sikhism. In the story book Waheguru is used, which means 'Wonderful Lord'. Waheguru is a popular title for God, and Waheguru contains the word 'guru' which can be linked to the belief that God is the supreme teacher, guide, and source of the teachings provided by the Ten Gurus (and the Guru Granth Sahib) in Sikhism.

The main beliefs about God in Sikhism include:

- God is without form and cannot be portrayed in any image (from the inception of Sikhism, the Hindu portrayal of God through image or murti was rejected);
- God is creator and sustainer of the universe;
- the universe came from God because God willed it, and one day it will return to God;
- God is present in God's creation;
- God reveals God through the gurus and in personal devotion.

In a gurdwara, pictures of the gurus and places of pilgrimage are normally kept away from the central platform on which the Guru Granth Sahib is placed to avoid the temptation to commit idolatry.

Guru Granth Sahib

In the story, Rees and Sara learn that Sikhs come together to worship God in a building called a gurdwara, and that 'gurdwara' means 'guru's house'. A guru provides access to the teachings of God. Guru Granth Sahib means 'Guide/Teacher' (Guru), 'Book' (Granth), and 'Master' (Sahib). It is also

referred to as the Adi Granth (Adi means 'First' in a chronological sense, and Granth means 'Book'). The Guru Granth Sahib is written in the Gurmukhi script which is a written form of Punjabi.

The Guru Granth Sahib is treated with great care and reverence, for example:

- heads must be covered in the book's presence;
- shoes must be removed;
- Sikhs bow before the book;
- during a service, the book sits on a special throne with a canopy covering it;
- during a reading, a chauri is waved over the book;
- when not in use, in the evening, the book is placed carefully in a bed in a separate room;
- when the book is moved, strict rules have to be met.

Few Sikhs have a copy of the Guru Granth Sahib in their homes because it requires so much care, though occasionally, to mark a special time, a Guru Granth Sahib may be installed in a Sikh's home for a short period. This makes the gurdwara and congregational worship particularly important in Sikhism because they provide access to the Guru Granth Sahib.

Officials working in the gurdwara are selected by the local congregation to serve the local community. However, these individuals should not be given any special privileges because of the Sikh belief in equality. In the story book, a male Sikh has been given the role of Granthi (keeper and reader of the Guru Granth Sahib), but a woman could also be selected to serve the community in this role.

Further information about how the Guru Granth Sahib is used and how it acts as a guru is found in chapter 3 of the story book and teachers' notes.

Congregational worship

Singing hymns (kirtan) is a popular way to worship and meditate on God in Sikhism. Many of these hymns come from the Guru Granth Sahib. The importance of singing can be traced back to the first guru, Guru Nanak, who was accompanied by a musician as he received revelations from God.

Activities

Visiting a gurdwara

Visit a gurdwara and identify the places mentioned in the story. How does it differ from the places in the book and how is it the same?

Flags

Look at flags for the different countries of Britain and explore their symbolism (or focus on your national flag).

Where do they see flags flying? (for example, official buildings, outside hotels, or at international sporting events)

Why do you think countries have flags? (for example, to unite people under a common banner, to show ownership, or to say something about your identity)

Other flags, such as the European flag, are broader in reference, and represent the drawing together of different nations committed to a set of agreed ideals and practices.

Sikhs have prominent flags outside their gurdwaras.

- What does the Sikh flag tell people about the building?
- What does the khanda on the Sikh flag tell people about Sikhism?

Complete the 'Make a Khanda' worksheet. (If pupils have a good knowledge of Sikh beliefs and practices, challenge them to consider how useful

the khanda is as a symbol for Sikhism.)

Pupils could also design a flag for their school. They will need to consider carefully what represents the school and be able to explain the thinking behind the design to the class.

Mix and match

Cut out the nine boxes on the 'Write a story' worksheet, and then cut each box into three sections: the heading; the information; and the picture. Mix up all the sections and place them in an envelope. Divide pupils into pairs or groups and give each pair or group an envelope. Pupils need to match heading, information, and picture correctly.

Do the task on the 'Write a story' worksheet (the story can easily be adapted to another genre such as a diary entry or newspaper article, if needed).

Alternatively, cut out the nine boxes on the 'Write a story worksheet' and organise them into three groups:

- cleanliness (being clean);
- service (seva) to others;
- the Guru Granth Sahib.

Working in pairs, ask pupils to place the three groups in order of importance, explaining the reasons behind their choices. There is no right answer to this question; the emphasis is on the ideas and quality of argument.

Chapter 2 Celebrating Baisakhi

The Khalsa

The story book outlines the historical origins of the Khalsa which date back to Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. The Khalsa means the 'Pure' signifying Sikhs who have undergone the special amrit initiation ceremony (sometimes this is called 'baptism').

Amrit/initiation ceremony

For the initiation ceremony to be valid, 5 Khalsa Sikhs have to be present as well as the Guru Granth Sahib. At the initiation ceremony, Sikhs promise to

wear the Five Ks as symbols of their faith. They also promise to adhere to a more demanding set of rules than non-Khalsa Sikhs.

Becoming a Khalsa Sikh is a real commitment to taking one's faith to the next level.

Baisakhi celebrations

The festival of Baisakhi falls on the first day of the month of Vaisakhi in the Sikh calendar (April-May). It marks the beginning of a new year. Traditions include:

- 'bathing' the Guru Granth Sahib with milk and water with special readings in the gurdwara;
- sharing karah prashad and eating a vegetarian meal as a community in the gurdwara;
- community processions.

In northern India, Baisakhi is also a harvest festival when God is thanked for the bountiful harvest.

The Five Ks

The Five Ks are a reminder of the commitment and faith displayed by the first 5 Sikhs initiated into the Khalsa in 1699. They also remind Khalsa Sikhs of key facets of their faith.

Kesh (uncut hair)

Both the physical world and the non-physical world

are special because both come from God, and they should be respected. Leaving all human hair uncut symbolises a Sikh's commitment to living according to God's will.

Kangha (comb)

Keeping hair clean and neat is also very important in Sikhism. The comb keeps the hair tidy under a turban.

Kirpan (sword)

The sword reminds Sikhs of their duty to defend truth and justice. As the story shows, in Sikh history, there were times when Sikhs needed to defend themselves against oppressors in physical terms. However, today, as Sunita Kaur emphasises, defending truth and justice takes other forms, and the sword is viewed as a powerful symbol rather than a weapon. Today, Khalsa Sikhs wear miniature swords which can take the form of jewellery or an emblem on the Kangha (comb).

Kachera (shorts)

The white shorts are often worn as undergarments today and they are a symbol of modesty.

Kara (bracelet)

The steel bracelet has no break or joint and it is worn on the right wrist. This reminds Sikhs to do only good with their hands (actions).

Although not one of the 5 Ks, for many, the turban is a distinctive part of Sikhism. Turbans come in a variety of colours. Traditionally, turbans were worn by those who were held in high regard in society, and turbans keep long hair tidy. Wearing a turban is a clear statement of a person's commitment to God.

Activities

Festivals across religious traditions

Work on a calendar or book of festivals from all religions. This would need to be a loose-leaf folder, or pages joined together with treasury tags so that pages can be added as needed in chronological order.

Talk about the importance of organising material well so that people can quickly find the information they need. With the pupils, decide on a useful structure for the book, for example, section headings could include stories, how the festival is celebrated today, recipes, and so on.

Symbols of belonging

Choose a uniform with which you are familiar (either one you wear yourself or have seen someone else wearing). Examples could include: school uniform, brownie/cub uniform, football kit, martial arts suit (for example, karate/judo).

Think carefully about the different parts of the uniform and their purpose (most will have both practical and symbolic purposes).

Make a list of the 'good' and 'bad' experiences of wearing a uniform.

Complete the worksheet 'Dress Amrit Singh', exploring the symbolism of the 5 Ks (these also have both practical and symbolic purposes – in Sikh history, the uniform was practical in times

of battle, defending the rights of the oppressed; today, the 5 Ks simply retain their symbolic significance). What might be the 'good' and 'bad' experiences of Sikhs wearing the 5 Ks?

This activity can be extended to explore symbols of belonging in dress codes of different religious traditions (for example, Christian monastic orders/priests, Buddhist monks/nuns, Muslims on Hajj, and Jews in a synagogue).

Defending fairness and justice for all

Sikhs believe in the importance of defending the basic human rights of all people, whether or not they are Sikhs. They believe in fairness and justice for all.

Injustice and unfairness exist everywhere in the world, but individuals and organisations exist who also believe in defending basic human rights. Research the work of Amnesty International which focuses specifically on these concerns (www.amnesty.org.uk).

There are many reasons why people are concerned with the fight against unfairness in the world – some are explicitly influenced by religious beliefs and philosophies while others are not. In the story book, the Sikh belief in freedom and justice is explored.

Chapter 3 Leaders

Gurus in Sikhism

God is the supreme Guru (teacher/guide). God is self-revealing and leads humans towards enlightenment and liberation. However, God works through chosen individuals who reveal God's Word (Shabad) in the world. Sikhs believe that God's Word has been revealed to selected individuals throughout history, but the Ten Gurus are of particular significance to them. The Ten Gurus are as follows.

- Guru Nanak (1469-1539)
- Guru Angad (1504-1552)
- Guru Amar Das (1479-1574)
- Guru Ram Das (1534-1581)
- Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606)
- Guru Hargobind (1595-1644)
- Guru Har Rai (1630-1661)
- Guru Har Krishan (1656-1664)
- Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-1675)
- Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708)

Sikhs believe that the Ten Gurus were already fully enlightened and liberated before they were reborn as gurus. They were chosen by God to re-enter the cycle of rebirth as gurus, and their lives are viewed as perfect and unaffected by the consequences of karma. The gurus were both spiritual and temporal leaders in their Sikh communities: they offered spiritual guidance as well as solving disputes and making decisions within the Sikh community.

The Ten Gurus are greatly respected, but never worshipped; their role is to point back to God and to teach God's Word.

Teachings

In the story, Rees and Sara learn that the gurus lead Sikhs to God, which is the most important journey of all. On this journey, Sikhs learn to put God and not themselves at the centre of their lives. This is helped by key Sikh practices such as reciting God's name (Nam Simran), serving others (seva), and living in a supportive Sikh community (sangat) which

encourages humility and God-centredness.

Sikhism teaches that it is possible to go only so far relying on one's own efforts. Only when God bestows grace on a person will the ideal of God-centredness be fully realised. Who receives grace is decided by God, and is bestowed according to God's own reasons. A person may need more time or another rebirth, perhaps. However, a person does have the choice of accepting God's grace or rejecting it.

The bestowing of grace enables a person to become a Jivan mukt – one who lives as one with God. At death, karma has no effect so the soul does not re-enter the cycle of rebirth. This is the Sikh ideal.

Guru Granth Sahib

Before his death, Guru Gobind Singh appointed the Guru Granth Sahib (a sacred book) as the next leader and guide for the Sikh community. The book is treated with the same respect as a human guru (see chapter 1) and it performs a similar role: it points back to God and reveals God's Word as it was uttered by the preceding gurus. Like a human guru, the Guru Granth Sahib also performs a role in the everyday life of the community when it is consulted for guidance and decision-making.

At significant moments in a community or individual's life, the Guru Granth Sahib is consulted. The book is opened at random and a reading is taken from the top left-hand page. The meaning of the text is considered and applied to the relevant issue. This is called hukam (God's guidance or command).

Traditionally, when Sikhs name their children, the Guru Granth Sahib is also consulted, following a similar process. However, on this occasion, the first letter of the first word provides the initial for the child's name.

The importance of the Guru Granth Sahib is illustrated by its presence at all ceremonies.

Activities

Goals in life

This activity supports and develops the worksheets 'Make a picture frame' and 'Guides in life'.

In Sikhism, the goal in life is to journey towards God, Waheguru, and to become one with Waheguru. The practices described in the story book play a part in helping Sikhs reach their goal. Sikhs are helped on this journey by Waheguru's work through the Ten Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib. They are also helped by living in a supportive Sikh community (sangat).

Having goals in life is very important. Goals give meaning and direction to our lives, which can help to make us happier, more fulfilled people.

- What is one of your goals in life?
- What steps do you need to take to get there?
- Who could help on your journey to your goal?

Draw a step-ladder with a picture of yourself at the bottom of the ladder and one of your goals at the top. On the rungs of the ladder write the steps you need to take to reach your goal. Beside the picture of yourself, write down those who could help you to reach your goal.

Share some of the pupils' ladders with the class. Select different types of goal to present to the class – for example, some goals are more short term while others are more long term, and some are more practical while others are more abstract. One type of goal is not better than another, just different because people are different. It is helpful though for pupils to be aware of and consider a wide range of possible goals.

As a class, constructively help to develop two parts of the ladders presented: the steps that need to be taken and those who could help in the journey towards the goal.

As a teacher, you could also choose to share one of your goals with the class, the steps you need to take to achieve the goal, and the people who could help you on your journey. Teaching point: having goals and working to achieve them is a part of the whole journey of life.

Create a timeline

Create a timeline to show the chronological order of the Ten Gurus. Place the timeline within an outline drawing of an open Guru Granth Sahib. This illustrates pictorially that the Guru Granth Sahib is the guide for Sikhs today and it contains Waheguru's word as it was uttered by the Ten Gurus. (It is important to be aware that the Guru Granth Sahib also contains some material written by non-Sikhs, but this activity focuses on the line of Sikh gurus specifically.)

To extend this activity, use books or the internet to research further the lives of the Ten Gurus. A number of the Ten Gurus are famous for various historical developments in Sikhism such as founding Sikhism, developing the script used in the Guru Granth Sahib, compiling the Guru Granth Sahib, and creating the Khalsa. Identify the contributions of various gurus and add them to the time line. The BBC Religion and Ethics site (www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/sikhism) is a useful source of information.

Chapter 4 Caring for the world

When Rees and Sara visit the planetarium and view the wonders of the universe, they begin to ask questions about its origins and the significance of human life. Their friends, Sanjit and Yasmin, share with them some Sikh answers to these questions.

Sikh beliefs about creation

According to the teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib, before creation there was nothing apart from God. There were no divisions, just the one eternal God. Then, God willed the universe into being, and the universe came from God – the galaxies, solar systems, and worlds. With creation, divisions appeared – for example, divisions relating to race, social status, and gender. These divisions have led to suffering because they have been used to justify unfair and unjust behaviour.

However, Sikhism teaches that the divisions are illusionary and are based on ignorance. When ignorance is replaced with enlightenment, the real unity of creation is recognised – all living things have God within them, and this unites them. All living things also have an ultimate common goal – living according to God's will (being God-centred) and becoming one with God. The Guru Granth Sahib teaches that just as the universe was created from God, so it will return to God.

The role of human beings

A human rebirth is very special, because human beings are able to make conscious decisions and become God-centred. Human beings are able to understand the interconnectedness of the universe and their own position within it.

Different religious traditions are often described as having either negative or positive views on living in this world. Negative views are often marked by escapist ideals, where worldly things are seen as a hindrance to attaining a spiritual ideal which lies outside the world. Positive views often see living in

the world as an integral part of realising a spiritual ideal which is very much connected to the world. Sikhism has a positive view of the world because everything has come from God and everything will return to God. The path to liberation of the soul and unity with God can happen only through living in the world.

Belief in practice

These beliefs mean that correct relationships with other people and nature are central to Sikh practice. For example, the following practices are promoted:

- a simple lifestyle with careful use of resources;
- sharing resources and service to others without discrimination in the gurdwara and in the community;
- hard work and an ethical means of earning a living;
- giving generously to charity.

Also, there are many examples online of Sikhs being involved in environmental projects and charities, such as those explored by the children in the story, for example, Khalsa Aid (www.khalsaaaid.org/).

Interconnectedness of action

In Sikhism living things are also connected to one another through their actions and the effect that their actions have on others. In the story, this is illustrated by a stone being thrown into a lake (an action) and one ripple leading to another, then another. Positive actions have positive effects on ourselves, others, and the environment. Negative actions have negative effects on ourselves, others, and the environment. Each action has very wide-ranging effects if it is fully mapped out. In this respect, Sikhism has much in common with both Hinduism and Buddhism.

Understanding the essential unity and purpose of all living things as well as understanding the powerful knock-on effect of all actions, provides the belief system which underpins Sikh practice.

Activities

How I wonder what you are

In the story book, the children visit a planetarium where they marvel at the wonders of the universe. As a homework activity, ask pupils to spend at least 15 minutes outside (or looking out of a window) watching the sky on a clear night. To keep parents happy, do this activity when night falls early.

Ask pupils to think about and record responses to the following questions:

- What different things can you see?
- What do you feel as you watch the night sky?
- Are there any questions that you would like answered, as you watch the night sky?

Back in school, invite pupils to feed back some of their responses. Link the activity to the story book – when Rees and Sara were in the planetarium, they saw many different things which produced both feelings and questions. There are different ways of answering those questions, and their friends, Sanjit and Yasmin, provide answers from a Sikh perspective. These answers give meaning and purpose to their lives.

What we do affects others

Think about the ripples created by the stone thrown into the lake. Select an action such as dropping a piece of plastic on the ground. Together draw up a concept map or spider diagram of different possible effects, such as an animal choking on it, someone else having to pick it up, becoming water-logged after rain and dirtying the shoes of someone who steps on it. Discuss the variety of possible harmful or annoying effects from one simple action. (Some

computer software automatically creates concept maps and would be a useful tool in this activity.)

Next look at a positive action such as inviting a newcomer to play with you and map all the possible results of it, such as making a new friend for yourself, making another person happy, learning new games, being invited to a birthday party. Encourage the children to be creative and to think outside of everyday answers.

Work in small groups to think of other actions, both positive and negative, and to map all possible results.

Each group could feed back one action and its results to the class. Examine the actions in terms of the Sikh belief that the world is special and we should look after it.

Reflect on current practice

Often schools set up programmes, such as recycling paper, and continue to carry them through without educating new pupils as to the reason why. It can be helpful from time to time to consider our practices, think of why we do them, and reaffirm our actions.

Walk around the school looking for the many good things that you do. Also take note of where your practice could be improved, such as better positions for waste paper baskets or recycling boxes. Make a list of all your good practices and discuss the reasons for them. Be sure that you know the reasons for your commitment.

Chapter 5 The Sikh kitchen

Vegetarianism

Many, but not all, Sikhs are vegetarian, although there is no obligation to be vegetarian in Sikhism. Eating meat or not is left to personal choice. Vegetarian and non-vegetarian Sikhs will each have their own arguments to support their position. Whatever stance is taken on eating meat, a number of basic attitudes to food are promoted. For example, moderation should be practised in all things and the waste of resources is discouraged. Also, zealotry for a particular type of diet should be avoided because people can become attached to external rituals at the expense of developing inner qualities.

However, in the langar (the kitchen), only vegetarian food is made and served. This is because the langar must be able to provide food for everyone, and vegetarian food meets all needs.

The langar

An important part of every gurdwara is the langar (kitchen and dining area) which provides free food to all, without discrimination. The langar can be traced back to the first guru, Guru Nanak. Right from the beginning of Sikhism, inequalities within traditional

Indian society were condemned. The Hindu Caste system can be explored further in chapter 3 of the teachers' notes for *Exploring Hinduism*.

Sitting together and sharing food together is an effective way of putting into practice Sikh beliefs about equality.

The langar is also an important place for Sikhs to practise seva (service). As the story book illustrates, members of the Sikh community take turns doing jobs in the gurdwara, for example, cleaning, cooking, and washing up. Again, this reinforces the Sikh belief in equality because no one's status in society prevents service to others. God is present in every living thing.

Practising seva (service) to others is also a way of worshipping God. Focusing on the needs of others, rather than the self, trains a person to become less self-centred (manmukh) and more God-centred (gurmukh). Becoming God-centred is an essential part in the Sikh spiritual journey leading to union with God.

Activities

Practising equality

In the lesson directly before a religious education lesson, inform the class that you would like to conduct an experiment and you want their views on the experiment after it has been conducted.

Randomly divide pupils into groups and organise the desks to create clear segregation between the groups. Each group is given a different colour or shape to represent the group. Members of each group are given a sticker with the relevant label on it to stick on their school uniforms. The groups have to follow some basic rules. Different groups must not:

- talk to one another in the class room;
- share things with other groups (such as pencils, rubbers, rulers etc.).

Continue with the lesson, keeping to these rules. Towards the end of the lesson, inform pupils that you would like to extend this experiment to two other areas, and different groups should not:

- play together at break times;
- sit next to one another at lunch time.

In the RE lesson, which should follow directly after this lesson, read chapter 5 from the *Exploring Sikhism* story book. Ask pupils to feed back their views on the divisions created in their class. Link this to the divisions cited in the story book and the Sikh belief in equality for all. Sikhs show equality in their religious practices by taking it in turns to do basic jobs in the gurdwara, eating together, and sharing karah prashad together.

Put the desks and pupils back in their original places, removing their labels. Make some karah prashad (following the worksheet 'Make karah prashad') and share it among the class.

NB colours or shapes are used because they do not reinforce any conventional stereotype and the activity intentionally takes place over a short period of time.

Keywords

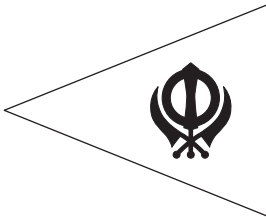
Baisakhi	Sikh festival, marking the beginning of the new year and the founding of the Khalsa	Kara	one of the Five Ks: bracelet
chauri	fan waved over the Guru Granth Sahib as a sign of respect	karma	action: there is positive action (karma) and negative action (karma)
Five Ks	the five symbols displayed by an initiated Sikh, each starting with K	Kaur	a title given to all Sikh females, meaning 'princess'
granthi	a person who looks after and reads from the Guru Granth Sahib	Kesh	one of the Five Ks: uncut hair
gurdwara	Sikh place of worship, which houses the Guru Granth Sahib	Khalsa	community of Sikhs who have undergone the initiation ceremony
gurmukh	the ideal of being God-centred	khanda	main symbol associated with Sikhism
guru	religious teacher and guide	Kirpan	one of the Five Ks: sword
Guru Granth Sahib	most important sacred book in Sikhism, also known as the Adi Granth	kirtan	singing hymns to worship God
hukam	God's guidance or command which comes from interpretation of the Guru Granth Sahib	langar	kitchen and dining area in a gurdwara
Kachera	one of the Five Ks: white shorts	manmukh	self-centred (in opposition to the ideal of being God-centred or gurmukh)
Kangha	one of the Five Ks: comb for keeping uncut hair tidy	Nam Simran	reciting God's name
		seva	serving others
		Singh	a title given to all Sikh males, meaning 'lion'
		Waheguru	one of the Sikh names for God, meaning 'Wonderful Lord'

Write a story

Imagine you have visited a gurdwara with a Sikh friend. Write a story about it, giving details of all the places you visited and the things you saw there. The pictures and descriptions below will help you.

flag

The Nishan Sahib (flag) flies over the gurdwara. It is a triangle of yellow cloth with a khanda.



shoe rack

As a sign of respect, dirty shoes are left near the entrance to the gurdwara.



wash room

Before worship, people wash their hands and cover their heads with scarves or caps.



ragis

Musicians sit on a low stage next to the takht. They might play tabla (= drums) and the baja (= harmonium).



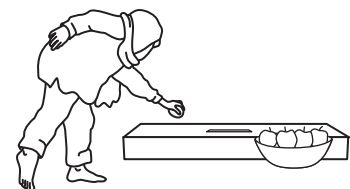
takht (= throne)

The Guru Granth Sahib rests on a special platform, covered by a canopy. People bow or kneel in front of it when they enter the worship hall.



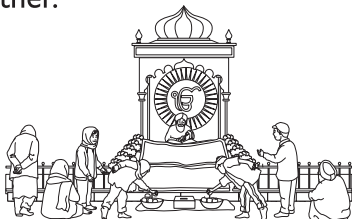
golak

In front of the takht is a long box on which people place offerings of food or money.



diwan hall

The worship hall may be decorated with tinsel or small lights. People sit on the carpet to learn and worship. Men and boys sit on one side; women and girls sit on the other.



kitchen & dining room

Sikhs take turns to prepare food and serve it to visitors to the gurdwara. They all eat together to show they are equal.



canopied bed

At the end of the day the Guru Granth Sahib is put to rest in a special room in a canopied bed. It is shown the same respect as a human guru would receive.



Make a Khanda

The Khanda is the Sikh emblem. Its name comes from the double-edged sword at its centre. It is found inside and outside of the gurdwara. It may be a picture on the flag or a model made out of brass or a wooden plaque. It is made from three separate symbols which teach the Sikh belief in God.

1. The **Khanda** is a special double-edged sword. It stands for God's power.
2. The **Chakra** is a circle with no beginning or end, just as Sikhs believe that there is one God with no beginning or end.
3. The **Kirpans** are two swords, to show both spiritual and earthly power. They remind the Sikhs that sometimes they need to fight for what is right.

You will need

pencil
construction card
glue

compass or template
cutting knife or scissors
foil

What to do

1. Draw the three separate parts of the Khanda on construction card. Use a compass or template to form the circle.
2. Cut out the sections and cover them with foil.
3. Glue the three sections together. (Most glues will not hold foil together well, so before gluing, you will need to remove small sections of foil where the parts touch. Glue straight onto the cardboard.)



Baisakhi Day

Read this story and fill in the missing words.

Sikhism was _____ in about the year 1500 by Guru Nanak. Although he was brought up as a Hindu, he had a close Muslim friend and so he _____ a lot about both religions. The Hindus and Muslims constantly _____ about religion, and Nanak wished there was a simpler way to worship God. When he was about 30, he had a special experience that caused him to _____ that God is everywhere and in every human heart, not just in special religious actions. He began to teach this.

Sikhs did not have an easy time. In the year 1699, two hundred years after Sikhism had been started, the Sikhs had been _____ for over forty years because the Emperor of India did not _____ their beliefs. Some Sikhs had been executed. Other Sikhs had begun to hide their beliefs. One man believed that it was time for Sikhs to _____ courage and to be proud of their faith, even to _____ for it if that was necessary.

When the Sikhs came together to _____ the festival of Baisakhi Day, Guru Gobind Singh stood up and asked 'Will anyone here die for me? Who will prove their faith and _____ me their head?' The crowd was silent, frightened at the thought. Finally one brave Sikh _____ forward and was taken into the tent. A few minutes later Guru Gobind Singh walked out of the tent alone, his sword dripping with blood. He _____ for more Sikhs ready to die for their faith. One by one, four more men walked into the tent. After each entrance the guru walked out with a dripping sword.

Many Sikhs left, horrified, _____ their guru had gone mad. Those who stayed _____, amazed, as the five Sikhs walked out of the tent dressed in pure white. They were alive! It had been a test of their courage and commitment to their faith. These five men _____ the first members of the Khalsa. They _____ a special uniform so that everyone would know they were Sikhs. They would be prepared to offer their lives to defend freedom and justice for all.

Since that day Sikhs no longer _____ their faith. Men and women still _____ the Khalsa and wear the special uniform, the five Ks, to proudly show that they are Sikhs and are prepared to _____ for their faith. Baisakhi Day is a special time to _____ this.



Words to use

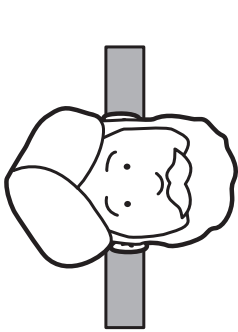
accept	argued	asked	became	believe
celebrate	die	fight	hide	join
learnt	offer	remember	show	started
stepped	suffering	thinking	watched	wore

Dress Amrit Singh

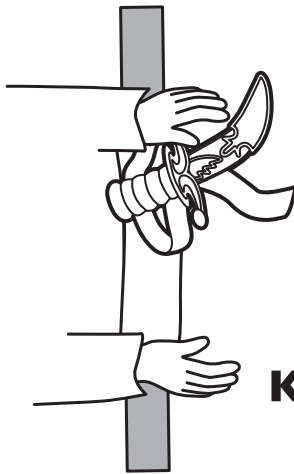
Amrit Singh is a warrior of the Panj Pyare. On Baisakhi Day in each town or village, five men dress up in a special uniform to remind the people of the first five members of the Khalsa, who were prepared to give their lives for their guru.

What to do

1. Photocopy this page on thin card.
2. Colour Amrit, his clothes and the five Ks. Cut them out.
3. Dress Amrit as a warrior of the Panj Pyare.
4. Bend the support on the dotted lines to make him stand up.



Kesh

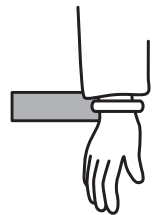
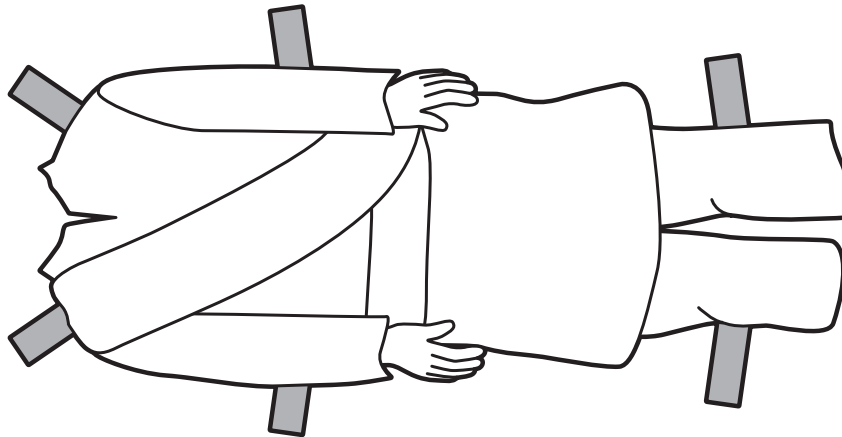


Kirpan

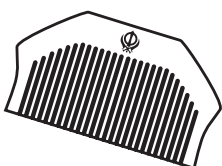


Kachera

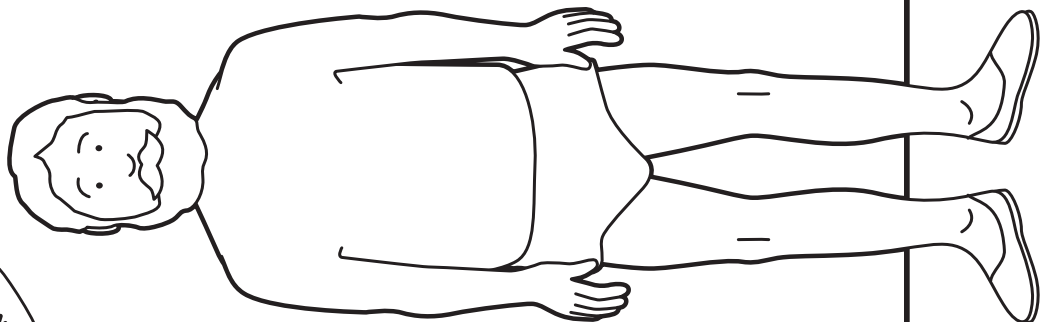
Colour the robes and turban bright yellow.
Colour the sashes blue.



Kara



Kangha



Make a picture frame

Sikhs consider the ten gurus to be very important to them as their guides in life. Often they display pictures of the gurus in the gurdwara or in their homes.

Who is important to you? Who do you look to as a guide to how to live? Find a photo or draw a picture of that person and display it in a special picture frame.

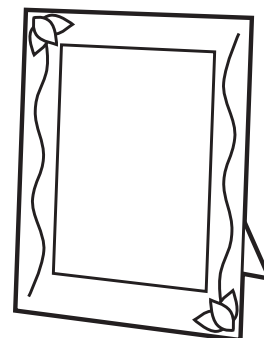
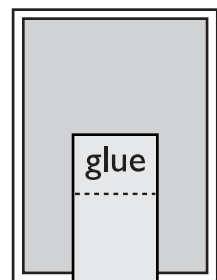
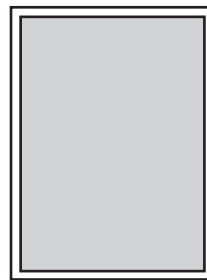
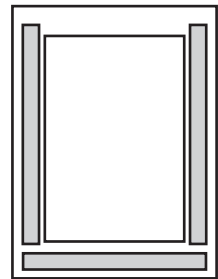
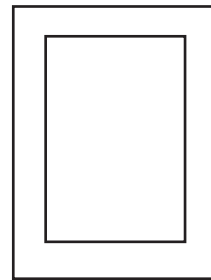
You will need

construction card
craft knife
decoration

scissors
glue

What to do

1. Cut out a frame from cardboard. Choose a size and shape to match your picture. The opening needs to be slightly smaller than your picture.
2. Glue strips of card to three sides on the back of the frame. These are spacers to allow room for your picture to fit. One side is left open for inserting the picture.
3. Cut a piece of card for the back of the frame. Glue this to the three spacers. (If your frame shows signs of warping from the glue, leave it to dry overnight in a plastic bag underneath heavy books.)
4. Make a stand for the frame. Cut out a rectangle of heavy card. Fold it one-third of the way down. Glue this fold to the back of the frame.
5. Decorate the frame. You could paint it or cover it with strips of foil. For a 2-D effect, decorate it with strips of foil of a different colour after your base colour is on. For a 3-D effect, dip string in PVA glue and arrange it decoratively on the frame, or glue on pasta shapes before painting. (If you want the frame spray-painted with gold or silver, it is best for an adult to do this outside, because of the fumes.)



Guides in life

Sikhs have gurus who guide them on their journey towards God, Waheguru. Ten gurus are human guides. The last guru is a book guide called the Guru Granth Sahib. Whenever Sikhs need help and guidance on how to live, they ask the Guru Granth Sahib.

We have many guides in life, too. Read what the children below say about their guides in life. Cut out the boxes and arrange them in order of importance to you. Discuss your choice in a small group. Complete the empty box with information about your own guide in life.

Ryan's guide in life is a pop star.

My favourite pop star has an exciting life. He has a great voice and lots of money. All the clothes, cars and parties must be fun!



Catrin's guide in life is a friend who is very ill.

My friend is very brave. She is always smiling and happy. She shows me that people can be brave even when things are difficult.



Peter's guide in life is a club leader.

My karate club leader is always doing sponsored bike rides and marathons to raise money for different charities. He uses his skills to help other people.



Gareth's guide in life is a religious leader in his place of worship.

My vicar helps me to understand God better and how to live my life in a way that makes God happy.



Sara's guide in life is a family member.

My grandmother always has time for me. She tells me stories and listens to me. She is very wise because she has been alive for a long time.



Caron's guide in life is a teacher.

My teacher knows a lot about all kinds of subjects. She can answer almost every difficult question. If she does not know the answer, she knows where to look to find it.



Tomos' guide in life is a sports star.

My favourite sports star practises hard to be one of the best in his sport. It must feel good to win a medal in a competition!



My guide in life is _____

Care for the world

Why?

Sikhs believe that it is important to look after the world because it belongs to Waheguru. Discuss with your friends why you think it is important to look after the world. Write four reasons below.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

How?

Sanjit and Yasmin mentioned many ways that Sikhs care for the world. Write these below and add in any other ways that you can think of.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What can you do?

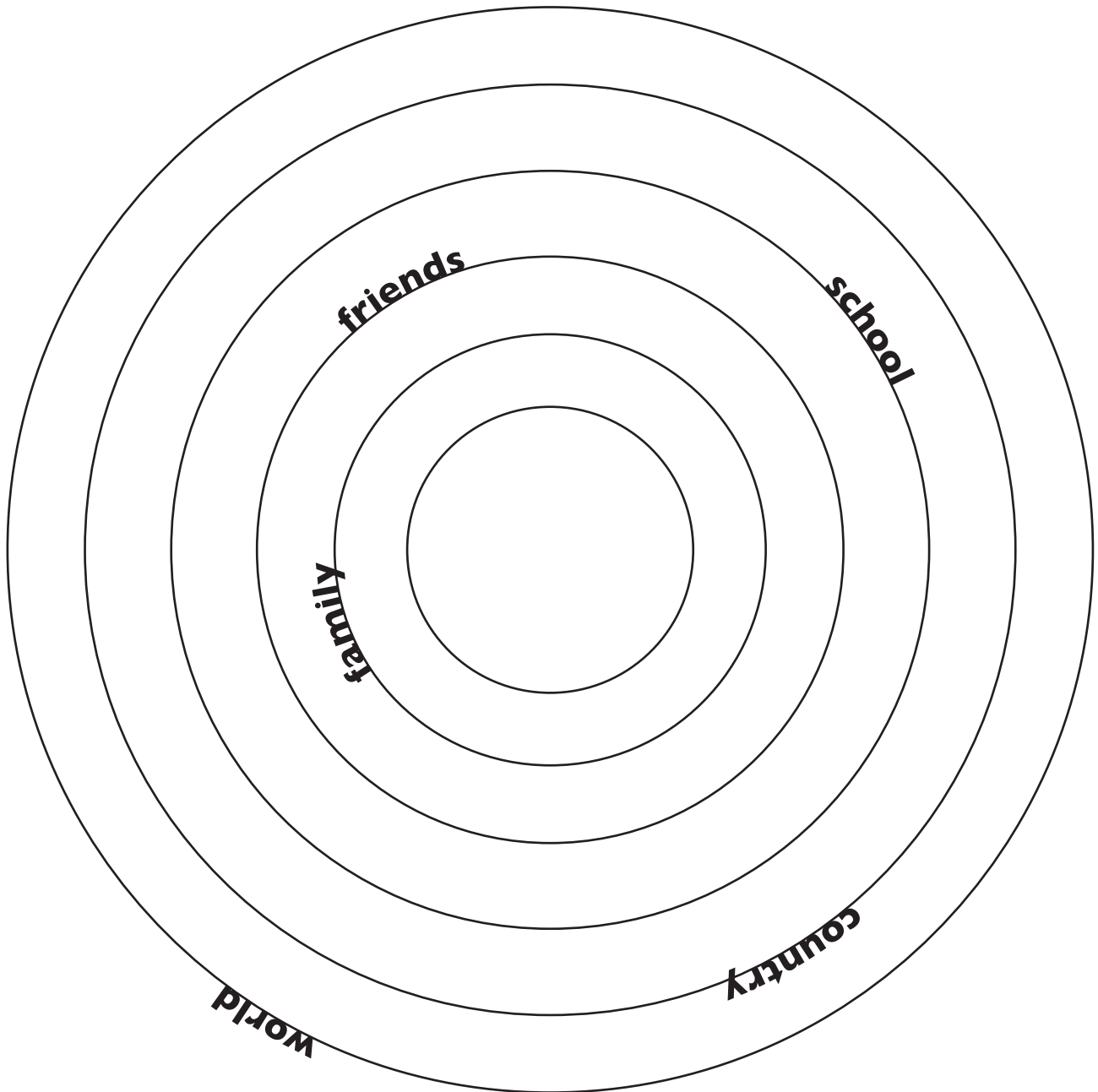
1. Choose one way of caring for the world.
2. Design and make a poster about it.
3. Display your poster around the school or at home.
4. Plan how to do it. You may need to discuss it with your family or talk to your friends about doing what the poster says.



Ripples in the world



If we throw a stone into a lake we make circles of ripples that spread outwards. Everything we do is like this. Our actions affect the people around us. Our actions affect the world we live in.

Draw yourself in the smallest circle. Write or draw on the ripples the things you can do to make a difference for good to the people or places mentioned.



Write a poem

The Guru Granth Sahib (the holy book of the Sikhs) contains many hymns or poems written by the gurus. Here is one poem from the Guru Granth Sahib about the wonders of the world that God created.

	<p>Humans, trees, holy places Coasts, clouds, fields Islands, continents, universes Spheres and solar systems Life-forms - egg-born, womb-born, earth-born, sweat-born Only God knows their existence In oceans, mountains, everywhere Nanak says God created them And God takes care of them all.</p>	
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What to do

1. Write your own poem about the wonders of this world. Use this page to begin your first draft.
2. Copy your poem onto best paper and decorate it with a border of things you have written about.

My poem - *first draft*

Make karah prashad

Karah prashad means holy sweet. This is shared with everyone at the end of Sikh services. It is a sign that all are equal.

You will need

1 cup sugar

1 cup semolina

1 cup unsalted butter

½ cup water

What to do

1. Melt the butter in a saucepan over a low heat.
2. Add the semolina, stirring carefully. Keep stirring while it cooks for a few minutes until it is golden brown.
3. Mix in the sugar and water. Keep stirring it over a low heat until it is thick.
4. Leave it to cool.
5. Share it with other people. Remember that karah prashad is a sweet to share, not to eat alone.

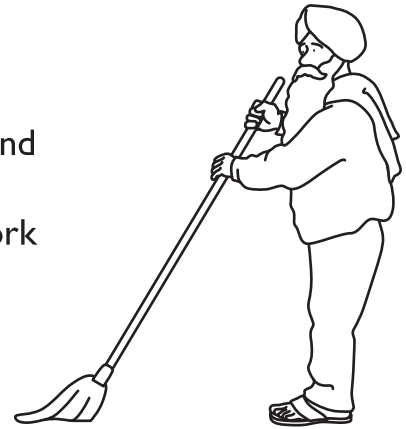


Plan a role play

Imagine the visit of Rees and Sara, or two other children, to the kitchen and dining room of a gurdwara. What would they see? What would people be doing? Set up a role play of the scene.

One way to start

1. Work out all the jobs that are needed in the kitchen and dining room to keep it running.
2. Give these jobs to children in your group or class. Work out the actions needed. Other children can act out eating in the dining room.
3. Decide which part of the classroom or hall will be which part of the kitchen and dining room.
4. Plan your role play, perhaps with 'Aled and Sian' asking people what they are doing and why they are doing it.



Our play

roles

actors

location

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

My dictionary

You will meet many new words in *Exploring Sikhism*. Some of these will be English words and some will be Punjabi words. Keep a record of them, along with their meanings.

gurdwara the place where Sikhs go to learn about Waheguru and to worship; it means 'Guru's door'

Waheguru the Sikh name for God; it means 'Wonderful Lord'

guru teacher and guide; a guru teaches about Waheguru and shows how Waheguru wants people to live

Write an article

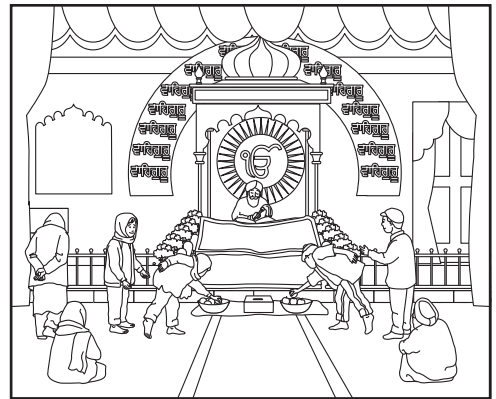
Use the computer to write your own article about the Sikh gurdwara. Include headings, borders and pictures. These reminders will help you in your planning.

The gurdwara

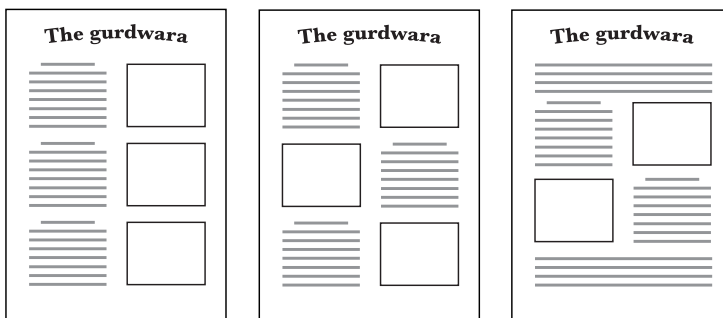
Begin with your heading. Experiment to find the style you like best. Try WordArt or look at different fonts on the computer. Do you want it bold, italic, centred, coloured, large or small? Try out different combinations.

Diwan hall

Plan your article. You might find it easier to write about three or four different parts of the gurdwara, with a heading for each. You could choose the wash room, the diwan hall, the kitchen and the bed for the Guru Granth Sahib.



Think about the layout of your article. You could have it all across the page or you could choose to put part of it in two columns. Do you want each section of writing to have a picture next to it or underneath it? Experiment with different layouts.



Your article will look best with a combination of writing and pictures. Find a picture in Clip Art or on the internet, or draw your own and scan it into your computer.

You might want to add some important information or a comment that you want to stand out. Put it in a border. You could give the address of the gurdwara closest to your home, or write how many gurdwaras there are in Wales or in the United Kingdom. If you know someone who worships at a gurdwara, ask for a personal comment. Find some interesting information to make your article more personal or more exciting.

Find the places

Find the places that Aled and Sian visited in the story.

Aunty Hafwen lives in the
She lives at (2 , 8).



Sanjit and Yasmin live in the
They live at (__ , __).



The gurdwara is the
It is at (__ , __).



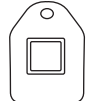
The cinema is the
It is at (__ , __).



The planetarium is the
It is at (__ , __).



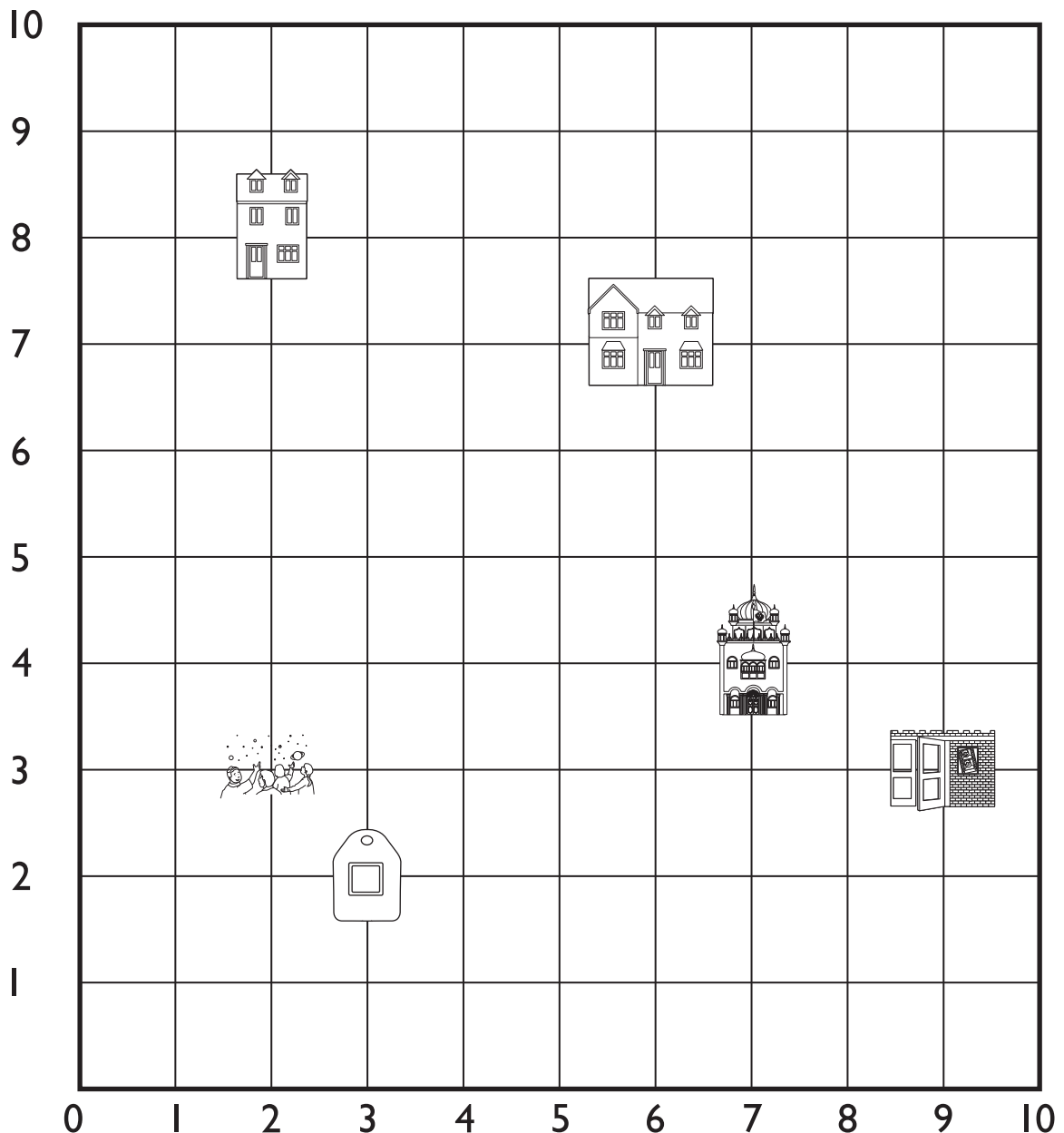
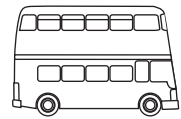
The bottle and paper bank is the
It is at (__ , __).



Draw the park.
It is at (5 , 9).



Draw the bus to send them home.
It is at (9 , 1).



World Faiths Today

teachers' handbook

The teachers' handbook is part of the *World Faiths Today Series*, which includes seven story books for 8- to 11-year-old learners. In the series, both learners and teachers are invited to join two children called Rees and Sara who are learning more about their friends from religious traditions:

- Anglican Church
- Buddhism
- Eastern Orthodox Church
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Judaism
- Sikhism

The teachers' handbook provides:

- In-depth background information about the seven religious traditions
- Classroom activities
- Photocopiable worksheets
- Keywords



Bear Lands Publishing

