

## SIKH BELIEFS AND LIFESTYLE

AT1:

*Pupils will:*

- *Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principle religions represented in Great Britain and their associated beliefs, experiences and practices.*
- *Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of some of the influences of life experiences, beliefs, values and faith traditions upon individuals, communities, societies and cultures.*

AT2:

*Pupils will:*

- *Reflect on their own beliefs, values, perceptions and experiences in the light of their study of religion.*
- *Develop positive attitudes of respect towards other people who hold views and beliefs that are different from their own.*

*Pupils will be enabled to:*

- *Consider their own beliefs about God's character and understand Sikh beliefs and the teachings of the Gurus.*
- *Know and understand Sikh belief about symbols of identity and what they represent.*
- *Appreciate what Sikhism teaches about following God and the effect this has on their lifestyles and values.*
- *Know and understand the importance of Guru Granth Sahib to Sikhs.*

## **SESSION 1: Introduction – Sikh beliefs and symbols**

### **1. Discuss how Sikhs explain their ideas about God.**

- *Discuss any facts or information the children know about Sikhs and Sikhism.*
- *Discuss what the children's ideas are about God – what he looks like, sounds like, does etc*
- *Discuss how:*
  - *Sikhs believe in one God, who has no image or human form.*
  - *They believe that God is the creator and sustainer of the world.*
  - *Sikhs believe that God is truth.*
- *Look at the Ik Onkar symbol and discuss its meaning.*
- *Look at the Mool Mantar (first hymn composed by Guru Nanak). This is the basic statement of belief and it teaches Sikhs about the description of God.*
- *Look at the Khanda symbol and discuss its meaning.*

### **2. What do these Sikh symbols and words tell us about Sikhs?**

- *Discuss what the various symbols tell us about Sikhs and their beliefs.*

### **3. Draw own symbol to mean God – children to explain their symbols.**

### **4. Copy the Mool Mantar in best handwriting and decorate appropriately.**

### **5. Children write their own basic statements of their own beliefs.**

## **SESSION 2: Guru Nanak**

### **1. Discuss the sheet of information about Guru Nanak – the founder of Sikhism.**

- *Who was Guru Nanak?*
- *Why do you think Guru Nanak is important to the Sikhs?*
- *What do you think Guru Nanak's early life was like?*
- *What do you think happened to Guru Nanak during the three days that he disappeared?*
- *What do you think caused Guru Nanak to start teaching people about God?*
- *What were Guru Nanak's opinions about God and religion?*

### **2. Listen to the stories about Guru Nanak.**

- *What do you think these stories tell Sikh's about Guru Nanak?*

### **3. Cut out the boxes and glue them in the correct order in books.**

## **SESSION 3: Other Gurus and The Gurdwara**

### **1. Look at the pictures and information about the 10 Gurus.**

- *Why do you think the Gurus are important to Sikhs?*
- *What kinds of examples did the Gurus set for Sikhs?*
- *Why is Guru Gobind Singh important to the Sikhs and what did he do?*
- *What is the Guru Granth Sahib and how is it treated by Sikhs?*

### **2. Look at the information about a Gurdwara.**

- *How do Sikhs worship in a Gurdwara?*
- *What happens in the Langar and why?*
- *What Sikh values does the Langar represent?*

### **3. Choose some information from this session, to represent in writing and drawing.**

#### **SESSION 4: Sikh Values and Lifestyle**

##### **1. Read the information about Sikh Beliefs and Lifestyle.**

- *What do you think the Sikh sayings tell us about the values and lifestyle of a Sikh?*
- *Why do you think Sikh people live with some prohibitions?*
- *What prohibitions do you think you should try to live with and why?*
- *What are your values and how do you show what matters to you, through how you lead your life?*
- *Why are most Sikh's vegetarian?*
- *Why do you think Sikhs are not allowed to use tobacco, alcohol or harmful drugs?*

##### **2. Choose one of the sayings to present in your neatest handwriting and decorate appropriately.**

#### **SESSION 5: Sikh Symbols and Identity**

##### **1. Look at the information about the 5 K's.**

- *Why do you think some Sikh's wear the 5 K's?*
- *What symbols do you wear, or use?*
- *What symbol could you invent to show your identity or your allegiance to a particular group which you belong to?*

##### **2. Draw a picture of a Sikh, wearing the 5 K's. Label the items and explain why each item is important to Sikhs.**

#### **SESSION 6: A Time to Reflect – What have we learnt?**

##### **1. Discuss the topic of Sikh Beliefs and Lifestyle.**

- *What do you think you have learnt from studying Sikh beliefs and lifestyle?*
- *How does what you have learnt, relate to your own way of life?*
- *How has your knowledge and understanding about different beliefs and religions, been developed?*
- *How do you think belonging to a Sikh family, influences a person's life?*
- *What aspects of Sikh beliefs and lifestyle could you incorporate into your life and why?*

##### **2. Summarise your learning about Sikh Beliefs and Lifestyle, using writing and pictures.**



## The Ik Onkar symbol.

Ik Onkar means 'one'.

It stresses the unity or oneness of God.

ਪ ਫ ਬ ਭ ਮ ਪ ਫ ਬ ਭ ਮ

## Mool Mantar

There is only One God.

Truth is His Name.

He is the Creator.

He is without fear.

He is without hate.

He is timeless and without form.

He is beyond birth and death.

The enlightened one.

He can be known by the Guru's Grace.

*The Mool Mantar is a basic prayer, composed by Siri Guru Nanak Dev ji.  
It is the key prayer of Sikhs which sums up the basic concepts of the Sikh Religion.*



The **Khanda** is the emblem of the Sikh faith, symbolizing the four pillars of Sikh belief. It consists of four symbolic weapons:

- In the centre, there is a double edged sword, called a **Khanda**, from which the symbol gets its name. The Khanda represents knowledge of divinity and the creative power of God.
- Surrounding the khanda is a circular quoit, called a **Chakkar**. This is a medieval weapon which symbolizes the unity of God.
- On either side there are crossed daggers, or kirpans, called Piri and Miri (after the personal weapons of Guru Hargobind), symbolizing spiritual and temporal (earthly) power in balance.



Sikhs at the Golden Temple.



Sikhs working in the Langar.



A Langar in a Gurdwara.



## The Five K's

Guru Gobind Singh told the original brotherhood (*Khalsa*) to wear five symbolic items of dress. Each item begins with the letter 'K' in Punjabi, so they are known as the Five K's.

Many Sikhs today, whether or not they are members of the *Khalsa*, wear the Five K's, as a sign of belonging to the Sikh community.

Turbans, which are associated with the Sikh faith, are not one of the Five K's, but are worn, mainly by men, to keep their long hair neat and tidy. Young boys sometimes cover their hair with a small cloth called a *patka*.



### **KESH - uncut hair**

This shows a Sikh's obedience to God's will by interfering as little as possible with nature.



### **KANGHA - wooden comb**

Long hair must be kept neat and tidy. Sikhs wear the comb in their hair, which is often covered, for example by a turban.



### **KARA - steel bracelet**

The circle represents eternity and the steel symbolises strength and purity. It is also a reminder to fight only for God.



### **KACHERA - white shorts**

These are worn under the clothes. These symbolise purity and modesty.



### **KIRPAN - a symbolic short sword**

It reminds Sikhs that they must fight for the truth and defend the weak and oppressed.

## Sikh values and lifestyle.

### Sikhs value:

- Sharing (*vand chakna*) and service to others (*sewa*) and they show this by helping out in the *langar* - the kitchen attached to the *Gurdwara*, serving free food to anyone who comes.
- Earning one's living by honest means (*Kirat karma*).
- Acceptance of God's will (*hukam*).
- Equality of gender, race and creed.

Here are some more Sikh sayings:

*God is the fish and the fisherman, the water and the net,  
the float of the net and the bait within it.*

Guru Nanak

*Let no-one be proud of their birth. Know that we are all born from the same clay.*

Guru Nanak

*He who sings His praises and does good actions will merge into Him.*

Guru Amar Das

*A life devoid of love is a flower blooming in the wilderness,  
with nobody to enjoy its fragrance.*

Guru Granth Sahib

*As you sow, so shall you reap. This body is the result of your actions.*

Guru Arjan Dev

*God is One and eternal.*

*He is to be found in all things and is the sustainer of all things.*

*He is creator and to be found in creation.*

*He is without fear or enmity.*

*He is timeless and beyond birth and death.*

*He is known through God's grace.*

The Mul Mantra, or statement of Sikh beliefs, that begins the Guru Granth Sahib.

### Sikh Lifestyle

Sikhs try to live their lives with certain prohibitions:

- Sikhs do not eat meat that has been ritually slaughtered. In fact, most Sikhs are vegetarians.
- Sikhs do not use tobacco, alcohol or harmful drugs.

## Sikh Temples

- Most Sikhs go to the temple to worship.
- A Sikh temple is called a *gurdwara*, which means "door to the Guru".
- Sikhs can also worship at home, if they have a copy of the *Guru Granth Sahib*.
- The *gurdwara* is an important meeting place for the Sikh community.
- It contains meeting rooms for discussion, and classrooms where Sikh children can learn about their history and faith.
- Children living outside the Punjab can also learn to speak Punjabi at the *gurdwara*.
- Many *gurdwaras* are open all day and night to people of all religions.
- They also provide a meal and a place to sleep for anyone who needs it.
- Every *gurdwara* has a dining room called a *langar*.
- As well as providing food for those in need, Sikhs always serve a meal after worship.
- Food, money toward the cost of the meal, is given by people attending the worship.
- Both men and women prepare the meal and vegetarian food is served so that people of all religions can eat together.



- Most *gurdwaras* have the Sikh flag, called the *Nishan Sahib* flying outside the building.
- It is an orange cloth with the *Khanda* symbol in the middle.
- The flagpole is also covered with an orange cloth.
- Sikhs show the *Nishan Sahib* great respect. This is because it represents the unity of Sikhs across the world.



## The Ten Gurus

Guru Nanak was the first of ten Sikh Gurus or leaders.

He was followed by nine other men who each made their own individual contribution to the establishment of Sikhism.

Angad Dev	1504 - 1552	Promoted the Punjabi language, making it available to common people.
Amar Das	1479 - 1574	Established the langar, the kitchen in the gurwara (Sikh Temple), which provides poor people with a source of food.
Ram Das	1534 - 1581	Built the Pool of Immortality and founded the city of Amritsar.
Arjan Dev	1563 - 1606	Compiled the <i>Guru Granth Sahib</i> (the Sikh holy scriptures) and built the Harimandir, the Golden Temple in Amritsar.
Har Gobind	1595 - 1644	Fought against invaders.
Har Raj	1630 - 1661	Advocated twice-daily meetings.
Har Krishnan	1656 - 1664	Sometimes known as the 'boy Guru', he cared for the sick, risking his life during a smallpox plague.
Tegh Bahadur	1621 - 1675	Fought against religious fanaticism and was eventually martyred for his beliefs.
Gobind Singh	1666 - 1708	Established the Khalsa (a group of loyal Sikhs who were prepared to resist oppression and defend their faith by the sword if necessary) and proclaimed that the holy scriptures, the <i>Guru Granth Sahib</i> , would replace the living Gurus as the spiritual guide of the faith.

## Stories about Guru Nanak

*Guru Nanak is not worshipped by Sikhs, but is honoured and respected by them. He is regarded as an exceptional human being and many stories about him reinforce this view by emphasising his unique qualities and status. Here are some examples.*

As a young boy, Guru Nanak fell asleep in the sun while tending some cattle. A poisonous snake came out of the fields and stood near to Nanak with its hood sheltering the boy's head from the burning sun, but it did not hurt him.

Guru Nanak accidentally allowed his cattle to wander into a neighbour's field, where they damaged the crops. However, when the neighbour arrived to inspect the damage, none could be found.

Years later, as a great teacher, Guru Nanak visited the home of Duni Chand, a rich and proud merchant. He gave the merchant a needle as a gift, asking him to return it to him in the next world.

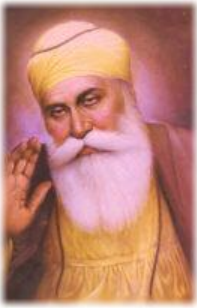
Duni Chand was initially confused by Nanak's gesture. After much thought he realised that nothing material could be taken into the next world. He saw the worthlessness of material goods and subsequently gave up all his possessions to the poor.

## The Guru Granth Sahib

- The last living Guru, Gobind Singh, decided not to select a person to succeed him as Guru.
- He felt that this would go against the principles of equality that he had tried to promote through the Khalsa (the group of loyal Sikhs who were prepared to resist oppression and defend their faith, by the sword if necessary).
- Instead, he said that the Sikh scriptures were to be the Guru that would guide all future followers of the Sikh religion.
- The Sikh scriptures are gathered together in a book called the *Adi Granth*.
- Guru Gobind Singh named it the *Guru Granth Sahib* to show its high status.
- Sikhs treat the book with the utmost respect, but they do not worship it.
- The scriptures are made up mainly of hymns, written by the Gurus, expressing their beliefs.
- The *Guru Granth Sahib* also contains the writings of people from other faiths, including Muslims and Hindus.
- This is unusual for the main holy book of a religion and shows the respect that Sikhs give to other faiths.
- The *Guru Granth Sahib* is fanned during readings as a sign of respect. When it is not in use, the book is covered with silk cloths.



# The Ten Gurus



Guru Nanak Dev  
*The first Guru.*



Guru Angad Dev  
*The second Guru.*



Guru Amar Das  
*The third Guru.*



Guru Ram Das  
*The fourth Guru.*



Guru Har Gobind  
*The sixth Guru.*



Guru Arjan Dev  
*The fifth Guru.*



Guru Har Raj  
*The seventh Guru.*



Guru Har Krishnan  
*The eighth Guru.*



Guru Tegh Bahadur  
*The ninth Guru.*



Guru Gobind Singh  
*The tenth Guru.*

## Guru Nanak

Nanak died in 1539. One legend describes a disagreement among his followers after his death. His followers with a Hindu background wanted to cremate (burn) his body according to their custom. His Muslim followers wanted his body to be buried.

When the time came to dispose of the body, Nanak's followers found that it had vanished into thin air and only the covering sheet remained.

Nanak's parents were Hindus but Nanak grew up among both Hindus and Muslims.

The Guru spent his last years in the Punjabi town of Kartarpur. Many people came to visit him and learn from his wisdom. From this point on, those who lived as his followers, or disciples, were known as Sikhs. In Kartarpur they formed a community that was friendly to everyone and opened a kitchen to feed the poor and needy.

When Nanak was 30 years old, he disappeared for three days and everyone thought that he had drowned.

When he returned, his first words were "There is neither Hindu nor Muslim, so whose path shall I follow? I shall follow God's path.

By this he meant that the truth of all religions was the same. He believed that the outward differences between religions were unimportant to God.

Nanak was born in 1469 in the village of Talwandi, near Lahore, in the Punjab.

Guru Nanak believed that what God had told him was a new message that did not follow on from either Islamic or Hindu teachings. He spent the rest of his life as a teacher, sharing this message. He is said to have made a point of journeying to teach in both Hindu and Muslim holy places.

*Read the boxes that tell you about the life of Guru Nanak.  
Cut them out and glue them in the correct order in your books.*