



## RE Unit for Year 3 / 4

### What is it like to be a Sikh? Sikh beliefs and ways of living

Sandwell SACRE

Support for the Agreed Syllabus



This unit is one of a series of examples written for Sandwell SACRE and teachers of RE by consultant Lat Blaylock of RE Today Services. Contact Lat for support and guidance on the syllabus via email: [lat@retoday.org.uk](mailto:lat@retoday.org.uk)



## **UNIT TITLE: What is it like to be a Sikh? Sikh beliefs and ways of living**

### **YEAR GROUP: 3 / 4**

#### **ABOUT THIS UNIT:**

This unit offers teachers the chance to introduce pupils aged 7-9 to the Sikh religion in a clear and straightforward way, taking account of the history, current practice and beliefs of the Sikhs in Britain today. It provides for pupils to learn from some Sikh stories, ideas and concepts and to develop their own appreciation of Sikh religion.

**Estimated time for this unit: 10-12 hours**

#### **Where this unit fits in:**

This unit is a core opportunity for pupils to learn about Sikh life and faith, one of Sandwell's major religious communities. It builds upon work done in Key Stage One by providing the chance for concise and comprehensive teaching about one tradition over a term. It also builds on children's experiences of listening to religious stories and finding meaning from them.

#### **Key strands addressed by this unit:**

- Religious beliefs, teachings and sources
- Religious practices and ways of living
- Questions of identity, diversity and belonging
- Questions of meaning, purpose and truth
- Questions of values and commitments

**ATTITUDES FOCUS:** The unit provides opportunities for the development of these attitudes:

- Recognising what it means to be committed and showing some commitment to others
- Treating others with care and with fairness
- Showing respect to others
- Showing awareness of what matters to themselves, developing their self- understanding

#### **Contributions to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils( links directly to framework)**

The unit enables pupils to develop:

- **Spiritually** by discussing and reflecting on key questions of meaning that are at the heart of Sikh traditions and practices.
- **Socially** by engaging thoughtfully with the mixed religious communities in Sandwell
- **Culturally** by encountering people, literature, arts and resources from local Sikh cultures.

<p><b>Prior learning</b> It is helpful if pupils have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Some knowledge of religious festivals and celebrations</b></li> <li>▪ <b>The opportunity to discuss differences, including differences of belief about God and human life</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Vocabulary</b> In this unit, pupils will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• religion in general, eg belief, scripture, festival, celebration, worship, symbol</li> <li>▪ <b>Sikh faith in particular:</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Guru</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Gurdwara</b></li> <li>▪ <b>5 Ks</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Guru Granth Sahib</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Golden Temple</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Khalsa</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Mool Mantar</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Resources</b> <b>On the web:</b> Website entry points for Sikhism <a href="http://www.sikhnet.com">www.sikhnet.com</a> (some excellent story-videos here) <a href="http://www.sikhs.org">www.sikhs.org</a></p> <p>For features of the Gurdwara and other information about Sikhism, see, eg, Kanwalit Kaur Singh, <i>Keystones: Sikh Gurdwara</i>, A&amp;C Black, ISBN 0-7136-4834-1, or Chris Richards, 1996, <i>Living Religions: Sikhism</i>, Nelson Thornes, ISBN 0-17-428055-6.</p> <p><b>Books from RE Today:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Developing Primary RE: Faith Stories, Symbols of Faith, Special Times, Words of Wisdom, Stories about God.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Exploring a Theme in RE: Founders and Leaders</i></li> <li>▪ <i>A Pictorial Guide: Sikhism</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Artefacts</b> might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ik Onkar symbol ('there is only one God')</li> <li>◆ Copy of the Mool Mantar.</li> <li>◆ Pictures, images of Guru Nanak and other Gurus.</li> <li>◆ Photographs/ video of the gurdwara.</li> <li>◆ Some translated extracts of texts from the Guru Granth Sahib.</li> <li>◆ The 5Ks (Kesh – uncut hair, Kangha – comb, Kara – wrist band, Kachera – short trousers, Kirpan – sword)</li> </ul>
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**EXPECTATIONS****At the end of this unit:**

Nearly all pupils will be able to... (L2)

- use some religious words (like Guru or vision) to retell a Sikh story
- show awareness of Sikh festivals celebrations and beliefs
- identify some of the features of the celebrations in the home and in the community
- ask and respond to questions about their own and others' experiences about good triumphing over evil and about times of celebration.

Most pupils will be able to... (L3)

- use a developing religious vocabulary to make links between Sikh ways of life and their own ways of life and the beliefs that are expressed through them
- recognise the similarities and differences between Sikh beliefs and ways of life and their own
- describe some of the features of Sikh worship and celebrations in the home and in the community
- identify stories, celebrations and events that influence them and make links between aspects of their own experiences and others, asking questions about celebrations and the reasons for them.

Some pupils might be able to ... (L4)

- show understanding of Sikh celebrations, stories, beliefs and symbols.
- describe some similarities and differences between Sikh ways of life and other ways of life
- apply what they have learned about Sikhism to some of their own ideas about God, worship, values or celebration, asking questions about the impact of religion and belief for individuals and communities.

**ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS**

This work can be assessed through tasks such as these:

- ◆ Pupils choose and retell one of the stories they have heard about the Gurus explaining what the story teaches Sikhs about their religion and what they can learn from it. (AT1, level 2).
- ◆ Pupils can identify what the 5Ks are, why some Sikh children wear them and why they are important to them. (AT1, level 2).
- ◆ Pupils write an explanation of what Sikhism teaches about how Sikhs should behave towards each other. Pupils can explain where the teaching comes from and provide examples of the behaviour being put into practice in the lives of Sikhs. (AT1, level 3).
- ◆ Pupils can explain how the values Sikhs hold are revealed in their lifestyles. Discuss what is prohibited in the life of a Sikh and discuss what prohibitions they themselves should have in their own lifestyles and why. (AT2, level 3).

Key questions	LEARNING OBJECTIVES Pupils should learn:	TEACHING ACTIVITIES	LEARNING OUTCOMES Pupils should be able to say "I can..."	Points to note Links
<p><b>What do we know about the Sikhs?</b></p>	<p>To describe some Sikh beliefs and practices</p> <p>To make links to their own ideas</p> <p>To think about ideas to do with God for themselves.</p>	<p><b>What do we know about Sikhs and their religion?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are many Sikhs and Gurdwaras here in Sandwell. Plan a visit if you can during the teaching of this unit. The Agreed Syllabus for RE has a large contacts list.</li> </ul> <p><b>Beliefs about God</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is difficult to talk about what God is like, because the temptation is to talk about what god <i>looks</i> like, which is a problem for many religious believers. So, this starting point avoids that.</li> <li>Ask pupils to come up with words they might use to describe God. Record these, using some of the pupils who are writers, or using a TA. Talk about what some of the words mean. Who believes God is like this – do pupils know? Are there any technical words used (e.g. creator, all-powerful).</li> <li>Tell pupils that not everyone who believes in God agrees what God is like, and that you are going to think about what Sikhs believe God is like.</li> <li>Read the Mool Mantar, the first hymn composed by Guru Nanak, which gives a statement of the core beliefs about God for Sikhs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>There is only One God</i></li> <li><i>His Name is Truth</i></li> <li><i>The Creator</i></li> <li><i>Without Fear</i></li> <li><i>Without Hatred</i></li> <li><i>Timeless</i></li> <li><i>Unborn and self-existent</i></li> <li><i>Known by the grace of the Guru</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <div data-bbox="1162 778 1532 927" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <p><b>Note the extensive activities to do with the Mool Mantar in Unit 2.3 Y3/4 Belief about God</b></p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which of these words match the ones your pupils have already talked about; which ones are different (e.g. Christians believe Jesus is God in human form – whereas Sikhs do not believe God has a human form). Which words are not covered by this Sikh text – and so you don't know about yet? You might use a Venn diagram: two circles – one for pupil words, one for Sikh beliefs from the Mool mantar; with the words in common in the overlap.</li> <li>Show pupils the Ik Onkar symbol and explain its meaning. How does this help Sikhs to think about God? Why is it better to use a symbol than to draw images?</li> <li>Ask pupils to consider and develop a basic statement of their own beliefs. Can they sum them up in 27 words? These do not have to be about God, but could be about the world, themselves, their families and their hopes.</li> </ul>	<p>I can...</p> <p>L2 Recognise the Sikh symbol for God and say one thing Sikhs believe about God Talk about different beliefs about God, including their own ideas (whether or not they believe in God)</p> <p>L3 Identify two things that people believe about God and name three beliefs that Sikhs have about God</p> <p>L4 Say two things that are similar about Sikh ideas of God and other people's beliefs (e.g. Christians) and one thing that is different Make a link between Sikh beliefs and their own.</p>	<p>If you arrange a visit, focus it carefully on some aspects of the unit, rather than 'doing a general tour'.</p> <p><b>Note the activities to do with the Mool Mantar in Unit 2.3 Y3/4 Belief about God</b></p>

<p><b>What can we learn about the Ten Gurus who began the Sikh religion?</b></p>	<p>To appreciate what Sikhism teaches about following God and the effect this has on Sikh lifestyles and values.</p> <p>To consider their own beliefs about God's character and understand Sikh belief and the teachings of the Gurus.</p> <p>To make links to their own experience and ideas</p>	<p><b>Why are The Ten Gurus so important in the Sikh religion?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach pupils about Guru Nanak (founder of Sikhism), the first Guru, finding out about his upbringing, and hearing some stories from his early life. Tell the story of his call, when he disappeared for 3 days whilst bathing. Discuss what pupils think happened to him. Talk about questions like these: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What was Guru Nanak's early life like?</li> <li>○ What happened to Guru Nanak that caused him to start teaching people about God?</li> <li>○ What did Guru Nanak do and what did he teach people about God?</li> <li>○ Tell pupils about his journey and his teaching about God.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• After Guru Nanak travelled to tell people about God, he settled and founded the town of Kartarpur. Imagine what it would be like to live in a town where everyone worked hard to follow the teachings of the Guru. Ask pupils to imagine that they are interviewing a Sikh from the town in Guru Nanak's day. What questions might they ask? What answers might be given? (e.g. Why have you moved to Kartarpur? In what ways is it different from other towns? What difference does it make having Guru Nanak living in your town? What kinds of people live in Kartarpur? Why? How do you put Sikh teachings into practice?)</li> <li>• Talk about people who inspire your pupils. What is different about Guru Nanak and the pupils' examples? What is the same? (e.g. For Sikhs, Guru Nanak had a message from God, so there might be some pupils with their own faith who recognise this special quality in the Guru; charisma, ability to inspire, generosity, compassion – these are qualities many people may possess)</li> </ul> <p>Pupils should learn about stories of some of the other Gurus, remembering that the Gurus are not gods but more like saints – special people who served God and inspired others: for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guru Arjan (the fifth guru) who compiled the Adi Granth (holy book), built the Golden Temple, and was the first Sikh martyr.</li> <li>• Guru Har Gobind (the sixth Guru) who is remembered at the Sikh festival of Divali for helping to have prisoners released.</li> <li>• Guru Tegh Bahadur (the ninth Guru) who was martyred for the principle of religious tolerance. Talk about martyrdom and ask pupils to consider what causes they think are worth living or dying for, and why.</li> <li>• Pupils learn about Guru Gobind Singh (the tenth Guru), and how he founded the Khalsa in 1699, the 'community of the pure' to which all initiated Sikhs belong at Baisakhi. Ask them to think about what their response might have been if they had been followers of the Guru at Baisakhi. An annual festival to mark this founding is celebrated. They consider: Is there anything you think is worth living for or dying for? What is it?</li> </ul>	<p>L2 Recall the story of Guru Nanak's disappearance by the river Recall the story of Vaisakhi/Baisakhi in 1699 Talk about the an important moment in my life and say why it was important</p> <p>L3 Say why Guru Nanak's disappearance and Guru Gobind Singh's setting up of the Khalsa are so important to Sikhs today Ask some thoughtful questions about whether someone can meet God, and whether it is important to fight for what you believe in.</p> <p>L4 Describe the qualities the Gurus shared, and describe their different contributions to the Sikh faith Make links between the commitment shown by the Gurus and their followers, and the things that I am committed to.</p>	<p>The resources section above offers some web-based starting points for this.</p>
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<p><b>Why do the Sikhs treat their holy scriptures like a living guru?</b></p>	<p>Know and understand the importance of the Guru Granth Sahib to Sikhs.</p> <p>Make links to their own experience and ideas</p>	<p><b>The Guru Granth Sahib and the Gurdwara</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use photographs and/or video to introduce pupils to the Gurdwara (Guru's house – Sikh place of worship).</li> <li>▪ Learn about the Guru Granth Sahib (the scriptures of Sikhism, the 'living Guru') and how it is looked after and treated in the Gurdwara, when it is read. Find out about how worship is carried out in the Gurdwara, involving hymns and prayers and reading from the Guru Granth Sahib.</li> <li>▪ Pupils should show that they can handle questions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What is the Guru Granth Sahib? How is the Guru Granth Sahib treated? What do you think it means to Sikhs? How do Sikhs worship in the Gurdwara?</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Discuss what books and words are special to pupils, why, and what specifically they have learnt from them.</li> <li>▪ What is similar and what is different between the books/words that are special to pupils and those that are special to Sikhs? What is the difference between "inspiring" and "enjoyable", and "holy"?</li> </ul>	<p>L3 Name the Sikh holy book and the Sikh place of worship, saying three ways in which Sikhs treat their holy book and three things Sikhs do in their place of worship</p> <p>L4 Make links between words/books that matter to me, and those that matter to Sikhs, explaining the difference between a special book and a holy one</p>	
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<p><b>What difference to daily life does Sikh belief and teaching make?</b></p>	<p>Know and understand Sikh belief about symbols of identity and what they represent.</p> <p>Make links to their own experience and ideas</p>	<p><b>Sikh values and lifestyle</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teach pupils about Sikh values of sharing (vand chhakna) and service (sewa) to others, represented by the langar (kitchen attached to the Gurdwara, serving free food to anyone who comes). Consider its importance for Sikhs. What does it mean to eat together?</li> <li>▪ Show some pictures of a grand banquet (e.g. the Lord's Mayor's Banquet in the City of London <a href="http://tinyurl.com/7txuntm">http://tinyurl.com/7txuntm</a> ) and compare with pictures of Sikhs eating in the Langar. What are the similarities and differences? Where would pupils feel most comfortable/uncomfortable? Why? Why is it a good thing for people to share the preparation, serving and clearing up at a meal? When do pupils do this?</li> <li>▪ Explore other Sikh values such as earning one's living by honest means (Kirat karna), acceptance of God's will (hukam) and equality of gender, race and creed.</li> <li>▪ Values are things that we think are important or valuable (e.g. love, sharing, generosity, equality, friendship, learning). But we show if these things are really important by how we act. Ask pupils to come up with a list of values that people might think are important. Ask them to suggest some ways in which people could demonstrate these in their own lives. What is the difference between <i>saying</i> something is important and actually <i>doing</i> something about it? Explore what values pupils have, why they hold them, and how they show them in their own lifestyles.</li> <li>▪ Teach pupils about Sikh prohibitions in lifestyle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not eating meat that has been ritually slaughtered; most Sikhs are vegetarians.</li> <li>▪ Not using tobacco, alcohol or harmful drugs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Discuss: Why are most Sikhs vegetarian? Why do you think Sikhs are not allowed to use tobacco, alcohol or harmful drugs? (links to PSHE, SEAL)</li> <li>▪ Discuss what prohibitions pupils think they themselves should have in their own lifestyles, and why.</li> </ul>	<p>L3 Identify three ways in which Sikhs behave that shows what is important to them Talk about how I show what is important to me</p> <p>L4 Say what is most important to Sikhs and explain how this is revealed through the Sikh way of life, giving examples Make links between Sikh ways of living and how my own attitudes and behaviour show what matters to me</p>	
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<p><b>What are the most important symbols that Sikhs use to identify themselves ?</b></p>	<p>Explore and discover the symbols of Sikh identity and belonging</p> <p>Make links to their own experience and ideas</p>	<p><b>What are the main Sikh symbols? How do these symbols show Sikh identity and belonging?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pupils learn about symbols which indicate Sikh belief, and investigate their meaning:</li> <li>▪ Ik Onkar, there is only one God;</li> <li>▪ Khanda, the Sikh symbol</li> <li>▪ Introduce pupils to the 5Ks worn by Khalsa Sikhs – Kesh (uncut hair), kangha (comb), kara (a steel wrist band), Kachera (short trousers), kirpan (sword).</li> <li>▪ Explore what each represents and why it is worn.</li> <li>▪ Pupils share what symbols they wear and use, and what symbols they are aware of in the community. What do these symbols represent? Why are they important? How could they be respected?</li> <li>▪ Pupils design symbols of their own identity or belonging and explain meanings.</li> <li>▪ Talk about whether you could be a Khalsa Sikh and keep it hidden from other people. Some people might prefer to keep their beliefs quiet and hidden. Why do many Sikh people think that you should be open and bold about showing your commitments? Are there things that pupils think you should be open and bold about? Is commitment to a football team or a pop band, or to Scouts or Brownies, something to be open about or to keep quiet? What is the same and what is different between these and religious commitments?</li> <li>▪ How does belonging to a Sikh family influence life?</li> <li>▪ What groups do pupils belong to, and what are their roles?</li> </ul>	<p>L2 Recognise important symbols for Sikhs and say what they are Talk about how some objects are special to me and show something about what is important to me</p> <p>L3 Identify the five Ks and describe how these are important to Sikhs Talk about how my clothes and belongings show what is important to me</p>	
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<p><b>What can we learn from Sikh beliefs and ways of life?</b></p>	<p>Identify or describe the impact of being a Sikh in Sandwell in varied ways.</p> <p>Make links and applications to their own experience and ideas</p>	<p><b>Learning from Sikhism</b></p> <p>Teachers might use circle time as the unit ends to facilitate informed discussion about questions like these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What have we learned from Sikh belief and lifestyle?</li> <li>▪ How do Sikh ideas and stories relate to pupils' own ways of life?</li> <li>▪ How are pupils developing their own understanding of beliefs and religion?</li> <li>▪ Why do many Sikh people now live in the West Midlands or other parts of the England?</li> <li>▪ What have we learned about one of Sandwell's Sikh centres and Gurdwaras</li> <li>▪ How Sikhs in our area celebrate Baisakhi or Guru Nanak's Birthday;</li> <li>▪ What do Sikhs teach and believe about fairness and respect? What might this mean for us? What might it mean for Sandwell?</li> </ul> <p>Pupils might consider putting on an awards ceremony to demonstrate their understanding. The idea is to choose the most important value (e.g. equality, service, sharing, honesty, accepting God's will, etc). Groups of pupils can take a value each, show when Sikhs put this value in to practice, and prepare a short speech to say why this is the most important value for Sikhs and most important for pupils in Sandwell. They present their argument for their value to the rest of the class, and at the end the class have to vote for the most important for Sikhs and for Sandwell. Is there something pupils and your school should do, having chosen this particular value from Sikhism?</p>	<p>L3 Use a developing religious vocabulary to make links between Sikh ways of life and my own ways of life and the beliefs that are expressed through them</p> <p>L4 Describe some similarities and differences between Sikh ways of life and other ways of life Apply what I have learned about Sikhism to some of my own ideas about God, worship, values or celebration, asking questions about the impact of religion and belief for individuals and communities</p>	
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