



Beginning to learn about Sikh people:

- symbols
- stories
- sharing

YEAR GROUP: 1



Image from

<http://www.wifg.freereserve.co.uk/gurunanakgurdwara.htm>

Walsall RE Syllabus: Non-statutory exemplification

This unit is one of a series of examples written for schools in Walsall by consultants Lat Blaylock and Julia Diamond-Conway of RE Today Services. Contact Lat or Julia for support and guidance on this unit via email: lat@retoday.org.uk or julia@retoday.org.uk

Walsall SACRE RE Syllabus: Non-statutory exemplification

TITLE: Beginning to learn about Sikh people: symbols, stories and sharing

YEAR GROUP: 1

About this unit:

This unit enables pupils to begin to learn about the Sikhs. It is appropriate in different ways both for schools where many Sikh pupils learn, and for those where there are few or no pupils from Sikh families.

Using stories, symbols and the special manner in which Sikhs emphasise equality and shared life, the unit enables children to make progress in learning about Sikhism and to build some learning from Sikhism on the gathering of information. They will acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Sikh beliefs, experiences and practices, as well as reflecting on their own beliefs, values, perceptions and experiences in the light of their learning. The unit sets the foundations for developing positive attitudes of respect towards Sikhs and to other people who hold views and beliefs that are different from their own.

Where this unit fits in:

This unit will help teachers to implement the Walsall Agreed Syllabus for RE by providing them with well worked examples of teaching and learning about the Sikhs, focusing on some artefacts and their symbolism, a story and the questions that arise from it, and the theme of sharing exemplified in the langar kitchen. The unit anticipates a further study of Sikh religion and belief later in the RE course. While it is always excellent to make a visit to the Gurdwara, many schools reserve this experience for key stage two – either practice can be an inspiring experience.

Estimated teaching time for this unit: 8-10 hours. It is recognised that this unit may provide more teaching ideas than a class will cover in 8 hours. Teachers are invited to plan their own use of some of the learning ideas below, ensuring depth of learning rather than covering everything.

KEY STRANDS ADDRESSED BY THIS UNIT

- Beliefs, Values and Teaching
- Religious practices and ways of life
- Questions of Values and Commitments

Attitudes Focus: Pupils will explore attitudes of:

- **Respect for all** by developing a willingness to learn from Sikh story and symbol
- **Open mindedness** by engaging in positive discussion and exploration of who shares, why and when.

The unit will provide these opportunities:

- Pupils have opportunities to consider the concept of sharing and the way a story can make a difference to a person's behaviour
- From the study of Sikh objects and ideas, children can reflect on their own lives and thoughts

Background information for the teacher:

- The 2011 census shows that Sikh people make up 9.1% of the community in Walsall.
- Every Gurdwara has a langar (kitchen) at which food is served free to all who will eat with everyone else. No distinctions of caste, race, colour or age are applied: all share together. Sikhs consider it an honour to provide the food served in the langar, and all are welcome. School pupils are often most impressed by this generosity when they visit a Gurdwara. This unit focuses on the value Sikhs give to being generous and including everyone.
- The Gurdwara is the 'house of the Guru' because the presence of the sacred writings in the form of the Guru Granth Sahib live there. The text is honoured as a living Guru by the community – so for example the guru has a bed, and is installed there at night.

Vocabulary + concepts	Resources
In this unit, pupils will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to: Specific religions: Sikhism • Sikh • Guru • Gurdwara • Guru Granth Sahib • Langar The language of shared human experience: • Sharing • Generosity • Selfish • Unkind	Teachers might use: On the web: Web: ▪ The BBC's clip bank is a major source for short RE films that can be accessed online and shown free: http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/zxnygk7 ▪ The BBC also offers lots of information and material on its main religion site: www.bbc.co.uk/religion ▪ The best gateway for RE sites is: www.reonline.org.uk ▪ You can find and use searchable sacred texts from many religions at: www.ishwar.com ▪ The websites of REToday and NATRE are useful places for pupils and teachers to see examples of work. www.retoday.org.uk and www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts • Three Website entry points for Sikhism: ○ http://sikhresources.com/ ○ www.sikhnet.com ○ www.sikhs.org DVD / Video / visual • This places of worship resource in the 'specials' section of REonline is a useful tool. The films include visits to places of worship in the UK to hear what believers say about their faith and the importance of worship. (http://www.reonline.org.uk/places-of-worship/) • Pathways of Belief (BBC) • Photo Stories: Sikhism 6-8s (RE Today) Books: • Kanwalit Kaur Singh, Keystones: Sikh Gurdwara, A&C Black, ISBN 0-7136-4834-1, • Developing Primary RE: Faith Stories, Symbols of Faith, Special Times, Words of Wisdom, Stories about God (RE Today). • Opening Up Community (RE Today) • Exploring a Theme in RE: Founders and Leaders(RE Today) • Share a Story With ... Including a Sikh story for 4-7s and support materials (RE Today) • The Milk and the Jasmine Flower and other stories by Anita Ganeri • Prayer and Worship: Sikh by Anita Ganeri Artefacts might include: • Ik Onkar symbol ('there is only one God') • Copy of the Mool Mantar. • Pictures, images of Guru Nanak and other Gurus. • Photographs / video of the gurdwara. • The 5Ks (Kesh – uncut hair, Kangha – comb, Kara – wrist band, Kachera – short trousers, Kirpan – sword) • Places of Worship Photo packs (Folens)

Contributions to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.**Pupils can develop:**

- **Spiritually** by learning about and reflecting on a story, some artefacts and some values that are at the heart of Sikh practice.
- **Morally** by considering how religious stories and values lead to particular actions.
- **Socially** by considering values in association to the langar and linked to religious stories.
- **Culturally** by encountering people and resources from Sikh ways of life.
- Opportunities for development of **British Values** arise from considering values in Sikhism and their own values.

EXPECTATIONS: At the end of this unit:**All pupils will be able to:**

- Name symbols they are aware of or know about in their daily lives
- Hear and listen attentively to a story about a Guru
- Talk about values in response to a Sikh story
- Talk about some things that happen in a Gurdwara

Many pupils will be able to:

- Name some Sikh artefacts and symbols
- Identify and recall a Sikh story
- Talk about being generous and meeting generous people
- Talk about why Sikhs like to share and why they like to share

Some pupils will be able to:

- Retell the story of Dunni Chand and the needle
- Identify a good reason to share
- Recognise what the 5Ks are, why some Sikh children wear them and why they are important to them.
- Respond sensitively to the ideas of being generous, being equal and being fair

Assessment suggestions

A formal assessment of each pupil is neither required nor desirable for every RE unit. Continuing use of assessment for learning methods is best.

Teachers can assess this work by setting a learning task towards the end of the unit. The task aims to elicit engaged and reflective responses to the material studied throughout the unit across the ability range.

Make a table of objects as reminders to pupils. Put out the Sikh artefacts and photos that you have used, examples of the work done by pupils, some sweets, a lego model of a kitchen for all. Have a 'remembering' conversation: What can be learned from the Sikhs? How does it relate to pupils' own ways of life? How are pupils developing their own understanding of beliefs and religion?

Give children an image to cut out: they might choose open hands, or an outline of the kara bracelet, or an outline of the world or some other image for sharing. On the front, ask them to write or draw 3 very important things they know and would like to say about Sikhism now they are at the end of their work about this religion. On the back, ask them to draw the most generous person they know, and tell the class about their picture.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHING AND LEARNING Practical classroom suggestions	LEARNING OUTCOMES	POINTS TO NOTE
What objects are special for Sikh people? (This work might take up two sessions)			
Pupils will learn: To handle and ask questions about some Sikh artefacts To think and talk about the meanings of holy objects from Sikh life To know and understand Sikh belief about symbols of identity and what they represent.	What objects are important in Sikh ways of life? - Use either artefacts or photographs for this lesson. Artefacts are worth displaying carefully and with a sense of occasion. You might use a feely bag to generate curiosity for those artefacts that are appropriate to be placed inside. - Plan the work and discussion so that these questions are addressed: - What symbols do Sikhs use and wear? What do they mean? - What is the Ik Onkar and the Khanda? Where do you find these symbols? - What are the 5Ks, and why do some Sikhs wear them? Examples of how to do this include: - Look at a Kara, the wrist bracelet made of steel worn by Sikhs. It symbolises the unending one-ness of God, and the strength or firmness of belief in God - Observe an Ik Onkar being slowly removed from a wrapping. Discuss its physical attributes and consider what it might be. Some should be able to relate that they have seen it during previous work. - Discuss how reflecting on God during the day reminds Sikhs of how they should act in order to acquire 'godly' characteristics e.g. being charitable, loving, treating others fairly. - Explore what the Khanda, the Sikh Symbol means, and look at the kind of flags that display the Khanda at the Gurdwara. What objects mean a lot to me? - Introduce pupils more thoroughly to the 5Ks worn by Khalsa Sikhs: Kesh (uncut hair), Kangha (comb), Kara (a steel wrist band), Kachera (short trousers), Kirpan (sword) - Discuss with pupils which symbols they wear and use, and what symbols they are aware of in the community. These might be religious symbols, school badges, football emblems, Rainbow/Beaver badges etc. What do these symbols mean? Why are they important? How could they be respected? - What symbol can children invent to show their own identity and belonging?	Pupils can: All pupils can name at least one symbol they are aware of or know from their daily lives Many pupils can name some Sikh artefacts and / or symbols Some pupils can suggest a meaning to an artefact	Using a Persona Doll in this lesson, to explore how Sikh children use and value the 5ks is very powerful

What stories do Sikh people love to remember? (This could be taught in one or two lessons)			
To listen to and talk about stories of the gurus from Sikh faith To think about how a story can express a value, such as generosity or sharing.	What stories of Guru Nanak and the other Gurus are told by Sikhs? What are the stories really about? 2 Gurus to focus on with this age group when teaching stories about Gurus in Sikhism are Guru Nanak and Guru Har Gobind: Guru Nanak 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. Tell pupils about his journey and his teaching about God. Guru Har Gobind (the sixth Guru) Guru Har Gobind is remembered at the Sikh festival of Divali for helping to have prisoners released. Teach pupils this story: Guru Har Gobind was in jail, and the king gave him release. He petitioned for the release of other prisoners, and the king promised that he could take free with him all those who held his cloak. All night long they stitched a huge cloak, so that the whole prison could hold on. The next morning the Guru led all the prisoners to freedom. Draw simple values like serving others and being kind from the stories you choose. Ask pupils to give the stories new titles that include values words. Compare the titles different pupils choose and draw out the different values they recognise. Circle time, hot seating, persona dolls and drama are all useful strategies to explore stories of the Gurus. If you have time, pupils could also hear and work with stories of some of the other Gurus, for example: ▪ Guru Arjan (the fifth guru) who compiled the Adi Granth (holy book) and built the Golden Temple. ▪ Guru Gobind Singh (the tenth Guru), and how he founded the Khalsa at Baisakhi. The Khalsa is the 'community of the pure' to which all initiated Sikhs belong. An annual festival to mark this founding is celebrated.	All pupils can listen attentively to at least one story about a Guru Many pupils can identify and recall a Sikh story Some pupils can retell a Sikh story and talk sensitively about the values that can be found in Sikh stories	This part of the unit works best if two stories are well told and explored. This can be linked successfully to pupils' work in English and their skills in this subject. Too many stories covered in too little time can mean that the depth of exploration is lost.

What can we learn from the story of Dunni Chand and the needle? What does the story mean? How can we explore the story?

To explore a story in depth and respond to it thoughtfully To retell a story with drama in a group To develop their own ideas about values from a Sikh story.	What is the meaning of the story of Dunni Chand? The story: Guru Nanak was a travelling teacher. He visited Lahore, where there lived a banker called Dunni Chand, well known for being greedy. His beautiful palace shone with gold, marble and precious jewels. Dunni Chand learnt that Guru Nanak was visiting. He rushed to invite the Guru to a special feast: it would make him look very important to have a famous guest. Guru Nanak accepted the invitation. It was a wonderful occasion. When everyone had finished, Dunni Chand turned to Guru Nanak: ‘I am a wealthy man, I can help you. What do you want me to do?’ Guru Nanak sat and thought. Fumbling in his pocket, he drew out a tiny sewing needle. ‘Something you can do for me,’ he replied, holding up the needle. ‘I want you to keep this needle very safe and give it back when we meet in the next world.’ Dunni Chand felt very important. The Guru had given him a very special task. He took the needle and showed it to his wife, explaining what the Guru had told him. To his surprise, she burst into laughter. ‘How are you going to do that?’ she asked. He thought and thought, then ran back to the Guru asking ‘How can I take this needle with me when I die?’ ‘If you cannot take a tiny needle with you when you die, how are you going to take all your riches?’ asked the Guru. For the first time in his life Dunni Chand felt ashamed. He realised he had been greedy. He and his wife decided to use their wealth to help the poor. Activities: ▪ Tell the story in an exciting way, giving the children a way of joining in. ▪ Ask the pupils in groups to develop a drama about the story. They might make a scene of the story, and then another scene in which Dunni Chand puts his plan into action, and is generous. ▪ Make lists of all the things the children can think of that show generosity. What could rich Dunni Chand do with his wealth? ▪ If appropriate, talk about the idea of the ‘next life’. Sikhs believe that when the body dies, there is another life. Thinking about this is what made Dunni Chand change this life.	All pupils can talk about being kind in response to the story Many pupils can recall the story and talk about what sort of person Dunni Chand was in the story Some pupils can retell the story in drama and respond with lots of ideas of their own about how to be generous	Many religions have stories about being generous. Pupils often understand these ideas perfectly well, but like adults, that doesn’t make it easy for them to be generous. The Sikh belief in reincarnation might come up here – and it is good to talk about it, but not necessary to teach it in depth.
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Why is there a kitchen in a Sikh holy building? Who is welcome in the kitchen?

(This could be taught in one or two lessons)

Pupils learn to think about the meaning of the Sikh langar, a free and equal kitchen, for themselves.	At the Gurdwara, why is there a kitchen? - Use photographs or video clips to teach pupils about the Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred writings of the Sikhs. The Guru Granth Sahib is treated as a living Guru. A ‘gurdwara’ is the ‘Guru’s house.’ - Ask pupils: How is the Guru Granth Sahib treated? What do you think it means to Sikhs? How do Sikhs worship in the Gurdwara? Why does a Gurdwara need a kitchen? - Ask pupils what is essential to a holy building. They may know about mosques, churches or mandirs. None of these buildings has to have a kitchen, but every Gurdwara needs a langar. Why? - Explore what happens in the langar: anyone can eat free meals there. What Sikh values does the langar represent? Talk about being generous and being treated generously with the pupils. What examples of generous behaviour have they seen in the films, real life or Sikh stories? Talk about being equal in the langar. - Ask some pupils to make a lego or playmobil model of a langar and get all pupils to make a figure to sit down in the kitchen together. Are we good at sharing and being generous? A dilemma about sweets - Try this: give two pupils a bag of ‘safe in school’ sweets. Emphasise that the sweets are theirs to do what they want to with. Ask the rest of the class in small groups to decide what should happen to the sweets. - Take feedback – pupils should give all the reasons they can think of (can they think of 4 or 5?). Do pupils think their group should have the sweets? Do they think everyone should share the sweets equally? Do they think the two pupils who have been given the sweets should keep them? Do they think only certain pupils should get the sweets? Do they have another solution? After listening to the feedback, the two with the sweets say what they are going to do. - Ask the class what advice the Sikh faith would give about the sweets. Talk about why the guru might say that sharing equally is the best thing to do. Ask pupils to remind you how Sikhs show generosity and equality in the langar – they are showing important values here through their actions. Discuss with the class times when they show their values through how they lead their lives.	All pupils can explore what happens in the gurdwara using photos or video clips and know that a gurdwara is a special place. Many pupils can talk about being generous and the feelings that go with it. They can talk about some of the things that happen in a langar kitchen. Some pupils can say what happens in a langar kitchen and why. They can respond to the idea of being generous by speaking thoughtfully about a dilemma	If some pupils make a model of the langar, then all pupils join in, this models the way Sikh sharing happens. Can children see the similarity? This dilemma needs a well-managed classroom environment, but it needs to be real as well. Choose two ‘unlikely’ pupils to make the decision about the sweets – share or keep? Fair or biased? The activity will make the learning real.
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What values do Sikhs think are more important than money? Why? What values make people happy?

Appreciate what Sikhism teaches about following God and the effect this has on Sikh lifestyles and values.	What is special about Sikh values and ways of life? ▪ Remind 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? ▪ Explore other Sikh values such as acceptance of God's will (hukam). ▪ Explore what values pupils have, why they hold them, and how they manifest them in their own lifestyles. This can be done very simply to start off with by sitting the pupils in a circle and the teacher in the middle. The teacher can have large flashcards with 3 values on laid out in a horizontal line (the flashcards can have text or pictures on to show the values). Ask the pupils to choose the most important value of the three – they can place this flashcard above the other 2 to show the importance of this value (if a general consensus cannot be reached, different children can take it in turns to move their most important value to the top). After discussing how the most important value(s) makes a difference to pupils' actions and lives, this activity can be repeated using 3 different values. ▪ Ask pupils to make a page of values, with two sides to it. On one side, the words that Sikhs value, and that they value. On the other side, the opposites to all these words. They can illustrate the words – perhaps copied from a word bank – with cartoons, showing what happens when people behave like this. Which side of the page leads to more happiness? Why? Share the work in circle time.	All pupils can identify some values Many pupils can notice some Sikh values and some of their own values Some pupils can talk sensitively about the values that can be found in Sikhism, linking them to Sikh stories and symbols	The terminology in this lesson is hard for many pupils, but those from Sikh backgrounds may find it easy! Their family culture may give them rich learning here, and it is good for the school to affirm this in RE
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What did you notice? What did you learn? What can you remember about the Sikhs?

Engage with the ideas and learning in this unit for themselves by reflecting on stories, sharing and symbols.	Learning from Sikhs: what have we noticed? - At the end of the unit, make a table of objects as reminders to pupils. Put out the artefacts, the work done, some sweets, a lego model of a kitchen for all. Have a ‘remembering’ conversation: What can be learned from the Sikhs? How does it relate to pupils’ own ways of life? How are pupils developing their own understanding of beliefs and religion? What stories did they hear and like? What was their favourite thing? Cut out hand, cut out kara. - Give children an image to cut out: they might choose open hands, or an outline of the kara bracelet, or an outline of the world or some other image for sharing. On the front, ask them to write or draw 3 very important things they know and would like to say about Sikhism now they are at the end of their work about this religion. On the back, ask them to draw the most generous person they know, and tell the class about their picture. As children are cutting the image and using both sides of it, 180gsm card may be a better option for this activity than paper. - Display the things pupils have made and refer back to them in future RE.	All pupils can identify something about Sikhism or Sikh values to include on their image. Many pupils can recall 3 things linked with Sikhism and talk about them. (Sikh values can be included here) Some pupils can clearly talk about at least 3 things linked with Sikhism, showing an ability to retell stories and understand meanings of stories and symbols. They can recognise and talk about Sikh values	Choice is important in this final activity: children may well observe that Sikh generosity is like other kinds of generosity. No one has a monopoly on sharing!
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