

Lesson 1 - To understand that Guru Nanak was the founder of Sikhism

Spend 1-2 minutes to think about: What is a Guru? What does it mean?

'Guru' means 'teacher'

A guru is a teacher with special knowledge. For Sikhs, a guru is a messenger of God. Though Sikhs believe God is everywhere and in everybody, God's goodness shines out particularly brightly from the guru."

Look at the following video and create some short notes based on the beginnings of Sikhism:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/clips/zgyr87h>

An introduction into Sikhism:

Sikhism originated with Guru Nanak five centuries ago. Nanak came from a Hindu family. He grew up surrounded by Muslim neighbours. From an early age he showed a deeply spiritual character. He broke away from his family's traditions and belief systems, refusing to participate in empty rituals. Nanak married and entered business, but remained focused on God and meditation. Eventually Nanak became a wandering minstrel. He composed poetry in praise of one God, and set it to music. He rejected idolatry, and the worship of demigods. He spoke out against the caste system, teaching instead the equality of all humanity.

Read below or listen to the Loom video retelling the story of Guru Nanak

The story of Guru Nanak

Early one morning before the light of dawn, Tripta, the wife of Kalu Bedi, gave birth to a baby boy. The baby charmed the midwife who attended his delivery. The parents called an astrologer to predict his fortune. They named their son Nanak, after his older sister Nanaki. The family lived in the town of Nankana, which is now a part of Pakistan. When Nanak became old enough, his father gave him the job of watching cattle. Nanak would slip into deep meditative trances while the cattle grazed. He got into a lot of trouble a couple of times when the cattle wandered into the neighbours fields and ate up their crops. Nanak's father often became very upset with him, and scolded him severely for his laziness. Some villagers noticed very unusual things happening when Nanak meditated. They became convinced that Nanak must be a mystic or saint. One of the villagers, named Rai Bullar, noticed that Nanak tended to meditate at every opportunity. He became convinced that Nanak had a sincere character. He persuaded Nanak's father to put him in a class where he could receive an education in religious studies. Nanak learned very quickly, astounding his teacher with the spiritual nature of his school work. The teacher believed that Nanak wrote divinely inspired compositions.

When Nanak came of age, his father arranged for him to participate in the Hindu thread tying ceremony symbolizing man's connection with God. Nanak refused, objecting that the thread had no value because it would eventually wear out. He also rejected the Hindu caste system of Brahman hierarchy. Nanak criticised adoration, and the worship of demi-gods. As Nanak matured, his family arranged a marriage for him with a girl named Sulakhani. She bore him two sons. Nanak's father attempted to set him up in business as a merchant, so that he could support his family. He gave Nanak money and sent him to make purchases. Nanak spent all the money feeding homeless, and hungry, holy men that he met on the way. When he returned empty handed, his father became very angry and scolded him severely. Nanak insisted that doing good deeds for others had earned an excellent profit.

Nanak's father became increasingly frustrated with him. His sister, Nanaki, lived with her husband in a town called Sultanpur. They found Nanak a job working in a granary. Nanak left his wife and sons with his parents promising to send for them as soon as he could support them. Nanak did well in his new position. He treated everyone generously, and dealt with them fairly. Before long his family joined him, and they moved into a house of their own. Nanak became acquainted with a Muslim, named Mardana. They met every morning at a local river, where they meditated before going to work. The entire community expressed astonishment that men of different faiths could worship together.

One morning, Nanak went to meditate and bathe beside the Kali Bein, or Black River, with Mardana. Nanak walked into the river and disappeared beneath the water. When he did not show up for work, his employer discovered that he had never come back out from under the water. Everyone assumed that he had drowned except for his sister Nanaki. Three days passed and then, astounding everyone, Nanak emerged from the river alive saying, "Na koe Hindu, na koe Musalman - There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim." The amazed town's people agreed that Nanak must be a completely enlightened being and began to call him "Guru." Nanak immersed himself fully in meditation. He seldom spoke to anyone and quit his job. He gave away all of his personal belongings to the poor. He made living arrangements for his wife and sons, and then left town with his spiritual companion Mardana. They became wandering minstrels. Mardana played a stringed instrument called a rabab and accompanied Nanak, when he sang his poetic compositions. They travelled together preaching, and teaching, that there is only one God. There is no Hindu. There is no Muslim. There is only one brotherhood of humanity.

Task:

To **retell** the events of the story and **complete** 6 storyboard sections – **illustrate** the occurred events.

Extension: **Explain** and **illustrate** Guru Nanak's key teachings.

Extension Part Two:

If you would like to find out more facts about this amazing teacher, visit this website:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/sikhism/people/nanak.shtml>

There are many different versions to the story of Guru Nanak. In addition to the fact information above you can compare the story above to this video... Explain why you think they are different.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00w5lnd>