

Year Group: 4	Worldview: Sikhi
Strand:	Religious and Non-Religious World Views - Beliefs & Questions
Key Question:	How do Sikhs understand who God is?
Focus of study:	Qualities of God, Mool Mantra, Ik Onkar and symbolism for God
Background information for teachers:	
<p><u>What is Sikhi?</u></p> <p>The word 'Sikh' in the Punjabi language means 'disciple'. Sikhs are the disciples of God who follow the writings and teachings of the ten Sikh Gurus. The wisdom of these teachings in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib are practical and universal in their appeal to all mankind. The Sikh religion originates from the Indian sub-continent and has spread across the world. The founder is Guru Nanak, who founded it about 500 years ago, in a place called the Punjab. It was established by 10 human Gurus. They created and defined Sikhi through their words and actions.</p>	
<p><u>Who was Guru Nanak?</u></p> <p>The word "Guru" is a Sanskrit word meaning teacher, honoured person, religious person or saint. Sikhi though has a very specific definition of the word Guru. It means the descent of divine guidance to mankind provided through ten Enlightened Masters. This honour of being called a Sikh Guru applies only to the ten Gurus who founded the religion starting with Guru Nanak in 1469 and ending with Guru Gobind Singh in 1708; thereafter it refers to the Sikh Holy Scriptures - the Guru Granth Sahib. The divine spirit was passed from one Guru to the next. Sikhi rejects any form of idol worship including worship of pictures of the Gurus. Although some of the Gurus did pose for paintings, unfortunately none of these historical paintings have survived. Artists renditions are for inspirational purposes only and should not be regarded as objects of worship themselves.</p> <p>The founder of the Sikh religion, Guru Nanak was born on April 15, 1469 in the Western Punjab village of Talwandi. He was born to a simple Hindu family. Early one morning accompanied by Mardana, Guru Nanak went to the river Bain for his bath. After plunging into the river, Guru Nanak did not surface and it was reported that he must have drowned. The villagers searched everywhere, but there was no trace of him. Guru Nanak was in holy communion with God. The Lord God revealed himself to Guru Nanak and enlightened him. After three days Guru Nanak appeared at the same spot from where he had disappeared. He was no longer the same person he had been, there was a divine light in his eyes and his face was resplendent. He remained in a trance and said nothing. He gave up his job and distributed all of his belongings to the poor. When he finally broke his silence he uttered "There is no Hindu, no Muslim". Guru Nanak was thirty years old at this time in 1499. The next stage of his life began with extensive travels to spread the message of God. After having spent a lifetime of traveling abroad and setting up missions, an aged Guru Nanak returned home to Punjab. He institutionalized the common kitchen called langar in Sikhism. He died in 1539.</p> <p>For more information see https://www.sikhs.org/guru1.htm</p>	
<p><u>Do Sikhs believe in one God?</u></p> <p>Sikhs believe in one God who guides and protects them. He is referred to as Waheguru. He is described in gender free language in the Mool Mantra</p>	
<p><u>What do Sikhs believe about creation?</u></p> <p>God created the universe. Before the universe there was only God and it was because of the will of God that the universe was created. They believe in the oneness of creation and that Waheguru created the world and is part of the creation. God sustains the world and is responsible for everything in it. They believe they have a duty to protect and respect the world. There are no creation stories. Many believe the scientific theories like the big bang about creation.</p>	
<p><u>What sacred text do Sikhs have?</u></p> <p>The Sikh Holy book is called the Guru Granth Sahib, and is considered by most Sikhs to be the 11th Guru. It was first compiled by the 5th Guru and then added to by the 10th, after which time it has been copied so as to ensure that every copy has 1430 pages and the same words in the same places. It contains hymns of praise to God, written by the Gurus and some Hindu and Muslim teachers. Sri Guru Granth Sahib is unique in the world of religious scriptures because not only is it accorded the status of being the spiritual head of the Sikh religion, but besides the poetry of the Gurus, it also contains the writings of saints of other faiths whose thoughts were consistent with those of the Sikh Gurus. The prayers are designed to be sung, and are arranged according to the melody in which they are to be sung, by theme and by author. Copies of the book are kept in the Gurdwara, as the book has to be treated in certain ways. It is placed ceremonially in a bed overnight and got up in the morning and placed under the canopy in the centre of the prayer room during the day, where it is kept under cover when not being read. Anyone may read from the book, as all people are viewed as equals. The Guru Granth Sahib is at the centre of most Sikh festivals, called Gurpurbs, and particularly the Arkhand Path festivals where the entire</p>	

scripture is read over a 48 hour period. At a Sikh wedding, the couple bow before the book and between stanzas of the wedding hymn walk in a clockwise direction around the book on its canopy. At the naming ceremony for a child, the book is opened at random and the hymn on that page is read. The child's name is then chosen using the first letter of the first word of the hymn. Prayers from the Guru Granth Sahib are used daily in the Gurdwara and also in Sikh homes, though most Sikh families have a copy of the Dasam Granth (poetry written by Guru Gobind Singh and not included in the Guru Granth Sahib) or the sacred Nit Naym (a prayer book) at home rather than the Guru Granth Sahib itself. The opening prayer of the Guru Granth Sahib is recited daily and is known as the Mool Mantra. It sets out the key Sikh belief in one God and describes God's character as understood by those of Sikh faith.

The Mool Mantra is the Sikh statement of belief and is the basis of the whole of Sikhi and contains key beliefs about Waheguru. They memorise it and pray this every day.

The symbol Ik Onkar



This symbolises the oneness of God and the oneness of humanity. The symbol is seen in gurdwaras and Sikh homes to highlight the fact that it is the most important belief and should always be in the mind of Sikhs. It helps focus the mind on Waheguru when praying or meditating.

The Physical Articles of Faith

Kesh: Long unshorn hair. A symbol of spirituality. The Kesh reminds a Khalsa to behave like the Guru's. It is a mark of dedication and group consciousness, showing a Khalsa's acceptance of God's will.

Dastar: Turban. A symbol of royalty and dignity. Historically, the turban has been held in high esteem in eastern and middle eastern cultures. Guru Gobind Singh transformed this cultural symbol into a religious requirement so that the Khalsa would always have high self-esteem. It differentiates Sikhs from other religious followers who keep long hair, but wear caps or keep matted hair. The turban cannot be covered by any other head gear or replaced by a cap or hat. The turban is mandatory for Sikh men who consider themselves members of the Khalsa, and optional for Sikh women.

Kangha: Comb. A symbol of hygiene and discipline as opposed to the matted unkept hair of ascetics. A Khalsa is expected to regularly wash and comb their hair as a matter of self-discipline.

Kara: Steel bracelet. A symbol to remind the wearer of restraint in their actions and remembrance of God at all times.

Kachha: Drawers (boxer shorts). A symbol signifying self-control and chastity.

Kirpan: Ceremonial Sword. A symbol of dignity and the Sikh struggle against injustice. It is worn purely as a religious symbol and not as a weapon.

What qualities does God have for Sikhs?

Punjabi	English	Meaning
Ik Onkar	There is only one God.	God is One, though there are different paths to experiencing the one God.
Sat Naam	Truth is his name.	God's name is Truth. God is True. Naam can be compared to a jewel or treasure.
Karta Purkh	He is the Creator.	God caused the universe and everything in it to exist. God keeps the universe going - sustaining it.
Nir Bhau	He is without fear.	God has no rivals. God is sovereign. Nothing can harm or threaten God.
Nir Vair	He is without hate.	God loves creation and judges fairly.
Akaal Moorat	He is immortal, without form.	God is not tied down by time. God is beyond time. Time is God's servant, not God's master. God is neither male nor female.
Ajooni	He is beyond birth and death.	God was not born (unborn) and will not die.

Saibhang	He is self-illuminated (self-existent).	God is not dependent upon anything. God just is.
Gur Parsaad	He is realised (made known) by the kindness of the true Guru.	A person cannot get to God by their own efforts. God has to open their eyes first. God offers this knowledge freely, by grace, so that someone who dedicates their life to learning and understanding God through the teachings of the Gurus can come to know God.

Key words Pronunciation Guide:

Waheguru : wah-hey-guru.
 Sat Naam: s-uh-t-n-aa-m
 Granth Sahib: Gr-anth Si – ub
 Guru: Goo - roo
 Gurdwara: Gur – dwaa - ruh
 Sikh: Sik

Prior learning:	<p><u>God and Qualities of God</u> <u>Reception</u> Who are Christians and what do they believe? *This will teach the concept of a God and the quality of caring for people as believed by Christians.</p> <p><u>Year 1</u> Why do most Christians call God ‘Creator’? *This will add the quality of creator to God as believed by Christians. What do different Jew believe about God? *This will teach that there is one God, he is a creator and he sets rules for life as believed by Jews.</p> <p><u>Year 2</u> How do Christians find out what God is like? *This will add the qualities of God being loving, kind, just, Lord, King and Creator.</p> <p><u>Year 3</u> What do Muslims believe about God and where did Islam Start? *This will teach that there is one God called Allah and Muhammad was his prophet. It will teach the 99 names and so qualities of Allah as believed by Muslims.</p> <p><u>Year 4</u> Who do Christians believe Jesus is? *This teaches that Jesus is one part of the Trinity as believed by Christians.</p>
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Building Blocks:	Sikhs believe in one God (Waheguru) who is true and eternal (outside of time). Name qualities of God. All people are equal. Their actions are important and they should lead to a good life. There is Guru Nanak and 9 th subsequent Gurus. Guru Granth Sahib is the sacred text.
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Outcomes:	That the one God for Sikhi is called Waheguru, which means wonderous enlightener. They will be able to describe characteristics of Waheguru and thus draw conclusions about qualities of the one God. The sacred text is Guru Granth Sahib and does not contain stories, but a collection of lessons from the 10 gurus as well as Sikhi, Hindu and Muslim saints. These are often sung. There is an important mantra Mool Mantra which is memorised and prayed daily. This explains the qualities of god. Know about the symbols that are used for god and artefacts that helps Sikhs understand the qualities of god.
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Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.reonline.org.uk
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- <https://www.sikhnet.com/> - stories
- Online scripture www.srigranth.org
- <https://www.sikhs.org/topics.htm>
- Beliefs about god - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/znnmtv4/revision/1>
- RE Today publication
- BBC bitesize
- BBC Teach – class clips

Engagement

What symbols are there for God and what do they tell followers about the qualities of God?

Display various symbols (picture and/or artefacts) for God from a variety of faiths without telling them what they are. Get the pupils to explore the symbols. They could do this silently adding post-it note thoughts to the symbols or in pairs and small groups discussing the symbols. There could be key questions near the symbols to structure the comments / thoughts. After this, discuss the pupil's initial thoughts and questions they may have. Explain to the children how they all represent God in different faiths.

Possible symbols to use:

Christianity: cross, crucifix, alpha, omega, dove, holy trinity symbol, fish

Islam: star and crescent, Allah in Arabic

Judaism: Star of David, Menorah

Hinduism: salt water, pomegranate, incense stick, Murtis, om (sound and symbol) and lotus flower.

Sikhi: Ik Onkar, Khanda, 5K

Possible Key questions:

Did you recognise any of the symbols? From where?

What do you think the symbols represent? Why?

Could you group the symbols together? For what reason?

Are some symbols more similar than others? Why?

Who uses the symbols? For what reason?

What do they symbols mean?

Could there be a way to link all the symbols together?

What is a symbol? Why do people use symbols?

Do any link with a particular faith or religion?

Possible follow up activities:

Get the pupils to sort the symbols into the different faiths. Can they discuss what they might mean? What they are used for?

You could get the pupils to create a list of words or a wordle to describe God, drawing their ideas from the symbols and their representations of God.

The pupils could create their own symbol for God and explain their reasons for it. What aspect of God does it represent?

What do they think God should be like?

What symbols are there for the Sikhi God and what do they teach Sikhi about the qualities of God

Then, focus on the symbols that are used in the Sikhi faith only. Did they know any already? The Ik Onkar is the only symbol that relates to God. It is a symbol present in their homes and Gurdwaras. It represents 'One supreme reality'. It helps them focus on God when praying and meditating.

Enquire and Explore

Who is the Sikhi God?

Could start by showing an image of the Holy Trinity and discussing what the symbol represents (the three parts of the Christian God). Can the pupils name the different parts? What do they know about the three parts? What are their roles? What are their characteristics? What are their qualities?

God the Father – creator, protector, powerful, wise, destroyer

God the Son (Jesus) – guide, teacher, human-like

God the Holy Spirit – everywhere, kind, powerful, messenger

Then go on to explain that Sikhi also believe that there is one God. This is at the beginning of their scripture - can you find out what Sikhs believe about their God. Share the Mool Mantra to find out the qualities of Waheguru.

Activity about the physical articles of faith

Show the pupils a range of Sikh artefacts.

Focus on the Sikh Kara. Ask pupils to suggest why a Sikh might wear the Kara: what might it mean and symbolise? What might it communicate about the nature of God? For those who need more support, ask what a circle could represent about God? Explain that the kara is a bangle, usually made from iron or steel and worn on the right wrist. The steel is a symbol of strength, and the circular shape is a symbol of unity and eternity - a circle has no beginning and no end. This reflects the Sikh view of God who is eternal and infinite. The circular shape also stands for unity between Sikhs and between Sikhs and God. It is another representation of Sikh belief in one God, a symbol of God having no beginning or end. It keeps a Sikh focused and close to God.

Look at different styles of Kara available online for Sikhs to buy, with the choice of sacred text from the Guru Granth Sahib engraved on them. Ask them to report back to the class on the type of karas available to Sikhs and to work together to design their own style, based on what they have seen. [Remind pupils of the need to consider websites thoughtfully: what is this website trying to say or do? Who put the material up there and why?] In role, encourage them to write a sales pitch to a Sikh customer. Their report should include how the bracelet will make a Sikh feel closer to God and what it will remind them about the nature of God. [Pupils could also produce packaging and a card to be sold with the bracelet.]

What do stories teach Sikhi about the qualities of God?

Note the sacred text does not contain stories – why might this be?

Discuss with the pupils stories they know that teach a lesson or moral. Could discuss non-religious stories such as fables (Aesop Fables – The tortoise and the Hare) and/or religious stories such as parables (Jesus’ parables – The Good Samaritan)

Move onto Sikhi stories and how they teach Sikhs about God.

Possible follow up activities:

Get the pupils to explore stories about the Gurus. They could read the stories and highlight parts that show a quality of God. They could act out the stories to the class and then discuss the quality of God it depicts. They could have written versions of the stories to compare with each other. They could discuss which stories show the quality best and why?

Possible stories:

<https://www.sikhnet.com/stories> good website to find stories.

Possible follow up activities:

* Create a booklet for Sikh child explain some of the virtues of God.

Evaluate

How do Sikhi understand who God is?

Get the pupils to reflect on all they have learnt about the Sikhi God and their qualities:

- How many ways can you name how Sikhi understand God?
- Which ways do you think are more important or less important?

Reflect and communicate

What is my view about God?

Get the pupils to reflect on their own view about God:

- Does it matter that different people have a different view of God? How does your view of God affect other people? Does it matter if you think that there is no God? How would this idea change things for yourself and others?
- Do symbols help you understand God? In what ways?

Assessment opportunities:

- *Create a poster / fact file about the Sikhi God.
- *Write a reflection about the how Sikhs know God.
- *Write all, most, some Sikhi believe... statements about the Sikhi God.
- *Create a diamond 9 about the best ways Sikhi know God.
- *Create a wordle to describe the qualities of the Sikhi God.
- *What questions, about God, might you ask a guru if they were alive today?

Notes