

This summary is not intended to cover all the aspects of the religion in question. It is impossible to reflect the different perspectives even within one religion. The summary here is a guide, offering background knowledge to point the teacher in the right direction as to the beliefs underpinning the particular enquiry. The summaries must not be taken as the beliefs of ALL members of the particular religion.

Year 3 Summer 2 Sikhism - What is the best way for a Sikh to show commitment to God?



This enquiry investigates different Sikh practices so that children can debate and rank them according to which they feel show the most commitment.

The 5K's

These are physical signs to yourself, others and the world that you are a member of the Khalsa
They are

- Kesh... Uncut hair, for this reason a turban is worn
- Kirpan, dagger –It is worn only as a symbol of readiness to tackle evil and not as a weapon
- Kara, bangle or bracelet - A symbol to remind the wearer of restraint in their actions and to remember God at all times
- Kangha, comb - A Khalsa is expected to regularly wash and comb their hair as a matter of hygiene and self-discipline
- Kacchera, shorts - A symbol of self-control and chastity.

Amrit Ceremony

The Amrit ceremony involves the drinking of Amrit (sugar water stirred with a dagger) in the presence of 5 Khalsa Sikhs as well as the Guru Granth Sahib.

The novice is instructed in the following;

- You shall never remove any hair from any part of thy body
- You shall not use tobacco, alcohol or any other intoxicants
- You shall not eat the meat of an animal slaughtered the Muslim way
- You shall not commit adultery.

The novice is required to wear the physical symbols of a Khalsa at all times (known as the 5K's) as well as follow the Khalsa Code of Conduct

The Gurdwara

A Gurdwara is the place where Sikhs come together for congregational worship. The literal meaning of the word Gurdwara is 'the residence of the Guru', or 'the door that leads to the Guru' however Sikhs believe that God is everywhere.

Worship in the Gurdwara

Any Sikh can lead the prayers and recite the scriptures to the congregation during a service. Each Gurdwara has a *Granthi* (reader/keeper of the Guru Granth Sahib) who organises the services and does the readings. The Granthi must be able to read Gurmukhi (the language of the Guru Granth Sahib) and must be properly trained in looking after the holy book. They are expected to be a full member of the Sikh Khalsa.

Services include the following features

- singing hymns – some of these were written by the Gurus and are often accompanied by instruments. This hymn-singing is called *Kirtan* and is an essential part of Sikh worship.
- A sermon – usually referencing Sikh history or stories
- Prayers
- Readings from the Guru Granth Sahib – these are often chosen randomly on the day

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After the service, food is offered to the congregation. This consists of *Parshad* and a more substantial meal in the Langar.

The Guru Granth Sahib

The tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh said that there would be no other living Gurus after him so Sikhs should look to their holy scriptures for guidance instead. The **Guru Granth Sahib** is treated as the living Guru of the Sikhs

The Guru Granth Sahib contains poetry which is often set to music.

The Guru Granth Sahib is kept under a special canopy in the Gurdwara and when is not used is covered up, it is also kept in a separate bedroom overnight.

Sikhs take off their shoes in the presence of the holy scriptures making sure they never turn their back on them.

At every festival, the scriptures are read continuously from beginning to end, which takes about 48 hours.

As the scriptures are being read, the reader or an attendant will occasionally wave a ceremonial whisk called a **chauri** over the scriptures. This is a sign of respect for living Guru or teacher.

Mool Mantar

Sikhs believe that Waheguru's (God) nature is expressed in the Mool Mantar. The Mool Mantar is the opening text of the Guru Granth Sahib. The first line of the Mool Mantar is "Ik Onkar", which means "There is only one God". This symbolises the oneness of God and the oneness of humanity (the belief that everyone is equal). The symbol meaning "Ik Onkar" is seen in Gurdwaras and Sikh homes.

Optional Additional Texts which could be utilised:
GGs Ang 62 - Focus your love upon the One who created and adorned your body and mind.
GGs Ang 249 - He is All-powerful, the Embodiment of compassion. He is the Master of each and every heart; He is the Support of the breath of life. He is the Giver of the breath of life, of mind, body and soul. He is Infinite, Inaccessible and Unfathomable.
GGs Ang 273- To the God-conscious being, I make my life a sacrifice.
GGs Ang 588 - Fruitful is the entire life of those, who hunger for the Name of the Lord in their minds.