

YEAR 6 HISTORY: Learning sequence 1

Sikh and Indian Australians

TEACHER RESOURCE 1 - WHAT SIKHS BELIEVE



The Sikh temple (Gurdwara) in Canning Vale M. Southee

Sikhism emerged in the Punjab region (now part of India and Pakistan) around 1500 AD and is a distinct religion and way of life differing markedly from Hinduism and Islam. In 2011 there were 72,000 Sikhs living in Australia. Nine out of ten people who wear turbans in Australia are Sikhs. Male Sikhs have the name *Singh*, meaning lion, as their middle or last name. While female Sikhs use the name *Kaur* which means “princess”. The Punjabi meaning of the word Sikh is disciple.

The religion is called Sikhism (Sikhi).

The place of worship is a temple called a Gurdwara.

The holy writings are in the Guru Granth Sahib.

What Sikhs believe:

1. There is only one creator God, the One Force, and God is identified by truthfulness, pervasiveness and is timeless, fearless, without enmity, unborn and self-illuminated.
2. Sikhs connect with God through everyday life and aim to create a society that strives for equality, dignity for all individuals and persistent struggle against injustice.
3. Sikhs follow three essential beliefs:
 - i. Introspective Living: They must be constantly aware of the ever present force of the Creator God.
 - ii. Truthful Living: They must earn their living in a just manner with integrity and honesty.
 - iii. Generous Living: Sikhs must share the rewards of life rather than just gathering wealth.
4. The Guru Granth Sahib (the Sikh Scriptures) is comprised of divinely inspired writings by 10 Gurus and over 30 people from different religious traditions across South Asia. The scriptures contain the wisdom of the Gurus beginning with holy writings of Guru Nanak (1469 -1539).

Sikh identity:

5. An initiated Sikh should follow the Five Kakars (the “5 Ks”) or articles of faith which are physical signs of Sikh identity:
 - Kes. Do not cut body hair.
 - Kangha (Kungaa). Carry a wooden comb.
 - Kara. Wear an iron band around the wrist.
 - Kucchayraa. Wear special under shorts
 - Kirpaan. Carry a traditional dagger shaped object.A turban (dastar) is worn to cover the uncut hair.
6. Every Sikh must be a representative of their faith.
7. Sikhs can worship anywhere, but their temple, the Gurdwara, is where Sikhs gather together for spiritual guidance. The Guru Granth Sahib is placed at the heart of worship. Visitors are invited to share worship and langar, a free meal prepared in special kitchens built for that purpose in the Gurdwara.
8. Shortly after death Sikhs must be cremated.

This information is adapted from “Sikhi Faith and Followers”

<http://www.australiansikhheritage.com/sikhi-faith-and-followers/>

“Turbans and Trust” is a 6 minute video which will assist in understanding the Sikh faith. See

<https://www.quora.com/Did-you-know-Sikhs-fought-alongside-ANZACs-in-WWI-WW2>