**RE – Sikhism – lesson 1**

For the next 6 weeks we will be learning about Sikhism. Sikhism was founded around 500 years ago in the Punjab region of India and Pakistan and is now the 5th largest religion in the world.

We are going to start by learning how the religion began, and about the first leader, Guru Nanak. Read the following information about Guru Nanak, and then complete the tasks.

*Guru Nanak was the first Sikh Guru, he came from a small town called Talwandi in India, about 40 miles from Lahore (now in Pakistan), 500 years ago. Sikh traditions teach that his birth and early years were marked with many events that showed he was special.*

*As Nanak grew and became a man he thought about God all of the time. He was thought of as a dreamer and was not interested in working. One day his father gave him 20 Rupees and told him to go to the city, buy something and then re-sell it to make a profit. When he arrived in the city he saw some monks who looked pale and ill. They told Nanak they had not eaten for 3 days. Nanak bought food for the monks and took it back to them.*

*When his Father found out he was very angry, but Nanak told him that feeding the hungry was a better way to spend the money. Nanak’s sister could see how angry her father was and asked if Nanak could live with her and her husband instead. Nanak’s father agreed.*

*Nanak’s first job was as a shopkeeper at Sultanpur. He would often explain his ideas about how to love and follow God to people who gathered in the village. Some began to call him a ‘Guru’, which means ‘teacher’.*

*One morning, when Nanak was 30 years old, he got up before dawn and went to the river to bathe and say his prayers; but he disappeared and all that was left were his clothes. The villagers searched everywhere for him, but could not find him and thought he had died.*

*Three days later, Nanak suddenly appeared and remained silent for a whole day. When he spoke, he said that he had been with God and had been told to tell the people how they could also become closer to God. He said that all people were equal in God’s eyes, “There is only God’s path and I shall follow God’s path.”*

*From that point onwards, Nanak’s life changed and he travelled around different parts of India, teaching God’s message. The people who listened to him were known as ‘Sikhs’, a word which means ‘learner’. Nanak became known as Guru Nanak, God’s teacher.*

*Guru Nanak spent twenty years making four long journeys and sharing his messages. He finally settled on the banks of the River Ravi (pictured below), where people would gather and pray together. In the evening, everyone would cook and eat together, no matter if they were rich or poor.*

*One day, near the end of his life, Guru Nanak called a disciple to him, whose name was Lahna. He placed five coins and a coconut in front of him, these were a symbol of respect. Guru Nanak said “From today, you are the Guru of the Sikhs and I name you Angad (meaning part of my body).” The people were amazed and all the followers were told to follow him now.*

*Days later, Guru Nanak died and his body was covered with a sheet. After his death, the Hindu and Muslim people argued about who should arrange the funeral service. The Hindus wanted him cremated, but the Muslims wanted him buried. A wise man appeared and told them to look under the sheet. They did as he said and discovered there was no body, just a few flowers. They realised that Nanak himself ,was telling them not to argue. The flowers and the sheet were split into two halves, so the Hindus cremated their half whilst the Muslims buried theirs.*

*Today, each year, people remember and celebrate the life of Guru Nanak. There are processions through the street and firework displays. In the Sikh temples called Gurdwaras, the Sikh holy book (the ‘Guru Granth Sahib’), is read from beginning to end. Candles are lit in the Gurdwara and in homes, shops and offices. In the Punjab in India, where the Sikh religion began, children are given new clothes and have the day off school to join in the celebrations.*

*Sikhism is based upon the teachings of Guru Nanak and the 9 Gurus who followed him. Some of the main teachings are:*

* *Keep God in your heart and mind at all times*
* *Live honestly and work hard*
* *Treat everyone equally*
* *Be generous to those less fortunate than yourself*
* *Always speak the truth*

Task 1: Can you put the following statements in the correct order. (You can cut out and stick them on some paper, or if online, you can drag the text boxes).

If you want more information, you can watch the following videos:

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twkJ1pc5BvU>

Nanak was given 20 Rupees by his father, but he gave it away to some poor people as he thought they needed the money more than he did.

Nanak was a thoughtful boy who often thought about God. As a child he had several strange or special things happen to him.

After he died, Muslims and Hindus both honoured his death according to their traditions.

Nanak often shared his ideas about God and love and people began to call him ‘Guru’ which means teacher

Before he died, Guru Nanak passed on his leadership of Sikhs to a disciple called Lahna.

When he was 30, Nanak disappeared near a river and was presumed to have died. He reappeared 3 days later and was inspired to travel around India teaching God’s message.

Guru Nanak was born in a small town called Talwandi approximately 500 years ago.

Nanak made his father angry so he went to live with his sister and her husband.

Task 2:

Look at the teachings of Guru Nanak that are listed on the previous page. **In your opinion**, which is the most important? Can you explain why? Give examples or evidence to support your answer if possible. It might help to discuss your opinion with someone else.

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