

KS3 Unit 3.3 Sikhism Lesson 1 Introduction

Context:

It is unlikely that students will have studied Sikhism before and so there is a need to establish prior knowledge at the outset. Moreover, there is often a great degree of ignorance about the religion. Sikhs are sometimes confused with being members of another religion. During the Gulf war Sikh Gurdwaras were attacked because people confused them with Mosques! Reference is sometimes made to the '3 great monotheistic religions', when in fact there are 4; Sikhism is a monotheistic religion but is often omitted.

Overview:

The TACS model of enquiry has been used throughout this scheme of work, which is explained in the text. This has made designing a clear developmental scheme difficult, but some key concepts are taught to ensure depth of understanding. Obviously teachers need to adjust the length of the module to their circumstances.

I have also created the scenario that students are designing a guide to non-Sikhs to a Gurdwara. It is important to explain to students that they need to get this right and introduce the idea of making drafts and having them critiqued. They need to ensure information is accurate and engage readers. Moreover, this is not simply a guide to a building, the goal is to introduce visitors to the Sikh faith and so students will need to be clear about beliefs and core concepts which underpin the religion. Without this the non-Sikhs visit to the Gurdwara will be little more than a bizarre curiosity.

Colleagues are encouraged to make this project as real as possible, perhaps arranging a visit to a Gurdwara to present their guides, especially if classes have not been able to visit a Gurdwara as part of their research. Alternatively invite a Sikh in to school to choose the best guide.

Essential core:

It is possible for students to cover all the assessment objectives, depending on time allocated. However it is essential that students cover the following in their project:

- To know that the term Guru means 'someone who leads you from darkness' and is essential to find God.
- To know that the Guru Granth Sahib contains the teachings of human Gurus.
- Understand Sikh beliefs are found in the Mul Mantra, which was written by Guru Nanak and is the opening section of the Japji, which is the morning prayer and is at the beginning of the Japji. The key belief found in the Mul Mantra; namely:
 - God is Supreme Truth
 - God is Ultimately Reality
 - God is the creator of all things
 - God is known through the teachings of the Gurus
- To know the key features of the life of Guru Nanak; namely:
 - The environment into which Nanak was born (Punjab, Religious environment, childhood stories demonstrating virtuous behaviour)
 - His conversion experience and mission to teach prayer, do works of charity and live in a pure way (sewa)
 - His teachings on equality and why this was a challenging message in India.
 - The setting up of Kartarpur, the setting up of the langar.

Resources: Resources are identified in each lesson but there is a purpose built Gurdwara in Swindon which is extremely welcoming to schools. There is also the option to 'ask a faith member' facility on RE Online which could be useful. A key resource is the website <http://www.sikhs.org>. Another useful website is: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/sikhism/index.shtml>

A really useful text book is "This is RE 2"

- For the first lesson: sheet “When Ed met Ajit”
- TASC wheels which are available on the internet.
- Blooms Taxonomy aid memoire sheets

INTRODUCTION:

Explain to pupils that we have been asked to produce a visitor’s guide to a Gurdwara, which is a place of worship for Sikhs. Obviously because it is designed to be used actually at the building we need to make sure the information is accurate; but we also have to make sure that visitors who may have no previous knowledge of Sikhism understand key Sikh beliefs and values. The best

To help us work through the project we are going to use a model of enquiry called TASC: Which means ‘Thinking Actively in a Social Context’. This will guide us and make sure we follow the right steps to do an excellent job.

The guides will be judged by a member of the faith, who will decide which one to use.

Pupils can either work on this individually or in pairs.

BUILD UP:

According to the TASC model of enquiry the first thing we need to do is “Gather and Organise” and to ask the question: ‘What do I know about this?’

This means asking the questions:

- What do I know about this?
- Where have I met this before?
- What information do I have?
- How much do I understand?
- What questions can I ask?

TASK:

To help us do this we are going to put ourselves in the place of someone who is visiting a Gurdwara for the first time without any prior knowledge. Read through “When Ed met Ajit”.

The story puts the pupils in the position of Ed, a pupil who has been absent from school during the study of Sikhism. He returns just in time to attend the visit to a Gurdwara. The story is an account of what he sees, but does not understand.

- (a) Pupils to design questions with Talk Partners they think Ed needs to ask. Perhaps the best 5/8 they can think of. Pupils should then ‘snowball’ – join another pair and share their questions. The goal is to choose the ‘best’ 5/8.
- (b) As a class make a list of the best questions. Can these questions be broken down into different categories?
- (c) Discuss if anyone knew the answers to any of these questions. Where did they find out about Sikhism?
- (d) Can these questions be broken down into different categories? For example some are about beliefs, some are about practices, the building, some are about important people (gurus) etc...Should we use 3 or 4 categories to ensure we are covering key ideas? Which should we use?

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:

At this stage the formative assessment will be in the form of the quality of questions asked. Some pupils will ask very simplistic questions. They need to be encouraged to reflect on 'bigger questions', hence the need to filter the questions through the snowballing and class lists. But if the project is centred around the questions they generate they begin to take ownership of the project.

Plenary and homework

According to the TASC model we next need to be sure what the task is:

- Identify what the task is:
 - What are my goals? (eg What format do I want to use? Eg You tube, PPT, Booklet etc)
 - What are the obstacles? (eg where to find accurate information?)
 - What do I need to know? (eg Is there key information I need to include? How much detail do I need to go into? What are the characteristic of a guide guide?)
 - What do I need to do this? (eg On what criteria will the guide be assessed?)

The task is to create a visitor's guide for non-Sikhs to a Gurdwara, but we need to spend some time considering the questions above before we start to ensure we are clear about exactly what we need to do and the problems we might face.

Differentiation:

It is possible to achieve some differentiation when asking question if scaffolded with Bloom's Taxonomy. Following the reading of 'When Ed met Ajit' students could be asked to use Bloom's to ask more complex questions. So instead of simply information questions, students could be encourage to ask 'HOTS' questions eg:

- What would be the effect on a Sikh community if they did not have a Gurdwara?
- What is the most important part of a Gurdwara?
- What sorts of things happen in a Gurdwara?