

*The Golden Thread of Truth Presents:*

# Interfaith Programs for Kids & Teens



## A Twelve Month Program Volume 2

Welcome to The Golden Thread of Truth Annual Curriculum, Volume 2! The intention of this material is to teach our children that all the world's religions support a consistent message about the truth of who we are. Stories from Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Native American traditions and contemporary authors support the same underlying messages and values. Love thy neighbor. You reap what you sow. We are stewards of the earth and each other. Treat others as you would like to be treated. Parents around the world, from all religious beliefs, cultures and lifestyles, teach these values to their children through timeless stories.

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## **Month #8: Sikhism: Sharing Universal Truths**

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# August 2016 - Sikhism; Sharing Universal Truths

## **Teacher notes: The 5 K's - Symbol of Khalsa - the brotherhood of Sikhs**

The 5 Ks taken together symbolize that the Sikh who wears them has dedicated themselves to a life of devotion and submission to the Guru. The 5 Ks are physical symbols worn by Sikhs who have been initiated into the Khalsa. Sikhs who have made a public commitment to the faith by going through a special baptism, known as the Amrit Ceremony, are called members of the Khalsa (the community of baptized Sikhs). They adopt five symbols. These symbols (the Five K's) are not only a means of showing the Sikh identity, but they also have spiritual meanings and are powerful symbols of the faith. Most Sikhs, through custom and culture, follow the traditions of the Khalsa.

## Week #1: Kesh and Turban: The Crown of Spirituality



**Main Message:** The Sikhs are an incredible, loving, inclusive, giving, generous, fun, family oriented group! Five hundred years ago the caste system in India was in full-swing and people had to succumb to the life and lack of equality, that was afforded them. The Sikh's came along and said, "All people are equal. No person sits above another". The key to their faith are the 5 Ks, Kesh, Kangha, Katchera, Kara and Kirpan. This lesson, we look at the Kesh - uncut hair and beard, as given by God, to sustain him or her in higher consciousness; and a turban, the crown of spirituality.

## **Readings:**

### **Lesson: Love All, Help All A Sikh Parable**

Guru Nanak was about sixteen. He loved everybody and liked to help everyone. He made friends with many boys of his age. Two of his friends were Bala and Mardana. Bala was a Hindu and Mardana was a Muslim. The three friends loved one another very much. They called one another Bhai (Brother). They always sang the Guru's hymns and played together. Mardana was a good singer and Guru loved him very much. But the Guru's father did not like the Guru's friend Mardana because he was a Muslim. He did not like to see Nanak playing with a Muslim boy. But the Guru always said, "There's no Hindu and no Muslim. We are all brothers."

The Guru's father was all the more angry with him because he always gave away his clothes, books, shoes and money to the poor boys. He even gave away his food to the hungry people. He always liked to listen to the wise men and saints. Sometimes he prayed to God with

his friends for long periods of time and was late for home. His sister, Nanaki was very kind to him but his father and mother were unhappy. They were thinking of finding some work for the Guru.

At last one day the Guru's father found work for the Guru. He gave him twenty rupees. It was a great sum of money in those days. He asked him to go to some city and do some trading. When we buy things for less money and sell them for more money we call it trade. The Guru agreed. His father was very happy. He thought that Nanak would learn the trade and become a rich man. He would have beautiful clothes, a good house, rich food to eat and a number of servants.

The Guru and his friends Bala and Mardana set out on their journey. They had to travel on foot. They went from village to village. In every village they asked the people to live like brothers. They asked them to think of God and help one another. After a few days they reached a jungle where they saw about twenty good men. They were saints who were praying to God. But almost all of them looked very thin and weak. The Guru and his friends stayed to talk with them. They prayed together and talked a lot. The Guru came to know that all the saints were hungry. They needed food but they had no money. The saints did not ask for food but the Guru did not like to see them hungry.



At once he put his hand in his pocket. He could feel the hard coins. He began to think about the hungry people and about trading.

He thought for some time. He remembered what he had told the villagers to do. "Help all, love all," he cried in a loud voice. His friends looked at him in surprise, but the Guru said, "Dear friends, what other trade can be better than helping these hungry men? Let us go and buy food with this money for our hungry brothers." So the three friends went back to the nearest town. They bought food and milk. Then they brought it to the jungle and served it to the hungry men. The saints enjoyed the food very much. They thanked the Guru a lot.

Now the Guru had no money in his pocket. He could not trade without money. So he and his friends went back to their village. The Guru's father was very happy to see his son back. He thought Nanak had made a lot of money by trade. He called him to his side and asked, "Did you do any trade?"

"Yes father, I did the best trade I could," replied Nanak.

"How much money did you earn?" asked his father.

"Not a penny," answered the Guru.

His father was very angry and surprised at these words.

"Don't be a fool. Tell me, what did you do with the money?" said his father, red with anger.

"I spent the money to feed twenty hungry men. What other trade can be better than this, dear father?" said the Guru.

The Guru's father was so angry that he slapped the Guru very hard. The Guru only said, "Father, you don't know what God wants me to do." Once again the Guru's father was left thinking about his son.

## Questions and Answers

Craft/Activity:

## Advanced Material for 4th and 5th Grade

A few other things to note about the Sikh faith :

1. 500 years ago their Holy book dedicated a full section to gender equality. (At a time when a husband died, his wife had to join him on the pyre and die as well...)
2. They believe in freedom of religion and honor all Spiritual Path's (This is why they are so misunderstood. They don't proselytize (evangelize).)
3. They believe that women can conduct Holy services and are 100% equal to men.
4. They believe that the Divine lives at the center of every human being.
5. They believe that service is the Highest form of experiencing the Divine (they feed 6.5 million people each day in a meal called the Langar (rhymes with 'hunger').)
6. They believe that to experience God, we must all support each other.
7. The turban which both men and women wear if they choose, is an outward symbol that they will take care of those in need.

The Kesh or unshorn long hair is an indispensable part of the human body as created by Vaheguru that is the mainstay of the 'Jivan Jaach' and the Rehni that was prescribed by Guru Gobind Singh Sahib by which a Sikh is clearly and quickly identified, Kesh. The kanga, another requisite of faith is usually tucked behind the "Rishi Knot" and tied under the turban. The uncut long head hair and the beard in the case of men forms the main kakar for the Sikhs.

You may view how a turban is tied in this YouTube video:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7\\_0SVtE2Sg0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_0SVtE2Sg0)



## Tween & Teen Activity

The Sikh Turban is a symbol of Peace and Safe Harbor. The Kesh or unshorn long hair is an indispensable part of the human body as created by Vaheguru that is the mainstay of the 'Jivan Jaach' and the Rehni that was prescribed by Guru Gobind Singh Sahib by which a Sikh is clearly and quickly identified, Kesh. The kanga, another requisite of faith is usually tucked behind the "Rishi Knot" and tied under the turban. The uncut long head hair and the beard in the case of men forms the main kakar for the Sikhs.

Rev. Shannon O'Hurley at Mile Hi Church shared a short video about the meaning of the Turban.

You may view it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iEjBUm5IGkU>



[Rev. Shannon O'Hurley's video has gotten almost 200,000 views in 3 days.](#)

Questions: (example answers from Christopher, 12 years old)

Q1. How do you feel when you see a man wearing a turban?

Example answer: I don't really see them that often

Q2. What do you think a turban means?

Example answer: That they are really religious

Q3. What religion are the turban wearers?

Muslims? No, Sikhs

Q4. How do you think people interpret a turban?

Example answer: Maybe in negative ways like they are racist?

## Week #2: Kangha: Cleanliness and Discipline

Teacher Notes: The 5 Ks taken together symbolise that the Sikh who wears them has dedicated themselves to a life of devotion and submission to the Guru. The 5 Ks are 5 physical symbols worn by Sikhs who have been initiated into the Khalsa.



**Main Message:** The Kangha is a wooden comb to properly groom the hair as a symbol of cleanliness. The wooden comb is used to keep the hair clean and tidy. Cleanliness was one of the things emphasized by Guru Gobind Singh when he formed the Khalsa. Sikhs wash their hair very early every morning, then comb it, and wind it into a topknot. The kangha is placed in the topknot which is then covered with a turban. **The Kangha represents discipline in all aspects of life.**

### Readings:

#### Lesson: A New Way of Teaching

Once Guru Nanak went to Hardwar. Hardwar is town in India. It is on the bank of river Ganges and is a sacred place for Hindus There was a big fair. Many people were bathing in the river They were splashing water towards the rising sun. They thought that their forefathers lived on the sun.

Guru Nanak went into the river too. He began to splash water to the other side. This was something strange for the people. They gathered round him and thought that he was a fool. The people laughed at him and asked, "Are you mad? Why are you splashing water towards the West when all the other people are throwing it towards the East?"

The Guru did not listen to them. He went on splashing the water.

An old man came to the Guru angrily. He held the Guru by the arm and said, "Don't you know which side the water is to be thrown?"

The Guru smiled and asked, "May I know why all these people are throwing the water to that side?"

"Well, they are sending the water to their forefathers on the sun. So they are throwing the water towards the East," said the old man, "Only you are foolish enough to throw water towards the West."





"Do you know how far away their forefathers live?" asked the Guru.

"Millions of miles away on the sun," was the old man's reply.

"Well," said the Guru. "My farm is at Kartarpur in the West. It did not rain this year and my crops are thirsty. I am sending the water to my crops." Saying this, the Guru began to throw water again.

The people laughed at him and said, "Your farm is in the Punjab. How can this water reach there?"

"If my water cannot travel three hundred miles from here and reach my farm," said the Guru in surprise, "How can your water reach millions of miles to the Sun?"

The old man could not find any answer. Some of the people agreed with the Guru and they said, "He is right. It is really useless to throw water to the sun if it cannot reach there."

The people came to understand their ignorance. They stopped throwing the water and listened to Guru Nanak. The Guru taught them the true way of life. He told them to serve living people and not think of the dead who have left us forever.

Q1. Why does the lighthouse still know it is important?

A1. The boats still need his light for guidance.

Q2. How is the lighthouse persistent?

A2. His light always shines girding all home.

Q3. Why is the little red lighthouse proud?

A3. Because he is helping others.

## Craft: Comb

# Advanced Material for 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade:

Why groom?

Why would we want to bathe at all? I would argue that bathing is more a natural desire rather than a societal requirement. We see animals all over the animal kingdom take measures which may not be defined as a bath, but is a desire for self care.

1. An elephant fills his trunk and covers his back with water
2. A duck shakes off the water after emerging from a pond.
3. The alligator moves from land to water, maintaining the direct body temperature.

All show the importance of nurturing our body for our highest wellness.

So, how does this unfold in those you see around you?

1. Those who seem unkempt and unclean are said to have 'let themselves go'.
2. As you feel better about yourself, you take better care of your body.
3. Most people express their internal feelings through their physical appearance

The Sikhs have it right ... taking care of your body is a spiritual act.

When you groom and wash, you are not only washing your body but your spirit.

Many religions have hot springs (Native American), and Saunas (nederlands) as an important societal compete of caring for their bodies.

## Tween & Teen Activity

Taking care of one's self as an aspect of respect for our selves and the body we inhabit is a routine that would help everyone. People have alluded to this connection through the years

We have heard the terms:

Cleanliness is next to Godliness (year) Meaning - to be godly is to be clean Or you cannot be godly if you are not clean

You are of the planet but not in it (year)

a guru saying - meaning our real selves are on a different plane but our bodies are here

Your body is the spaceship traveling you through time and space

Again, the body is the container for our journey - the true journey is for our inner selves

The body regenerates itself completely every 10 years - See last comment. as proof that your body is not who you actually are, notice that the body has not permanence - there is nothing that stays from the beginning of your life to the end - your entire physical self is continually regenerating. However, we as a conscious being do not regenerate, we grow. and we continue to grow even as our body might start to shrink.

The part of you that has memories, and feels emotions and is on automatic pilot with a beating heart - all these things that happen without your attention, they show the separation of the body and our conscious thought. Just think, if our mind's entire job through our lives was to keep the body functioning. What if we had to always think 'breath,' heart pump, move this bone and muscle and put foot forward (to walk), etc., we would have no time for the expansion of our consciousness. We learn lessons. We experience joy. we experience pain. We have our 5 senses to enjoy the world around us. The world we are IN. But this is not the world we are OF. We are of a world of energy, not physical body. The energy is directed to observe our surroundings. To take stock of the people and circumstances on this planet. And form our own ideas of what is best for us . And then think of what is best for others.

This is the others part of the story

## Week #3: Kangha: Purity

### Teacher Notes:

The Five Ks are the five items of dress and physical appearance (a sort of uniform) given to Sikhs by Guru Gobind Singh when he gathered together the first members of the Khalsa on Baisakhi day in 1699. Gobind Singh was the tenth Sikh guru or spiritual teacher.



**Main Message:** Kachera/Kaccha undershorts/undergarment which resemble boxer shorts are one of the five Sikh articles of faith. Given as gifts of love by Guru Gobind Singh at the Baisakhi Amrit Sanchar in 1699 they are worn by all Sikhs, initiated into the Khalsa. Both males and females Sikhs wear the same type of kachera. This was one of five articles of faith, collectively called Kakars that form the external visible symbols to clearly and outwardly display one's commitment and dedication to the order (Hukam) of the tenth master.

### A Journey to Mecca

Guru Nanak now set out to Mecca in Arabia. Mecca is the holy place of the Muslims. The Guru travelled to Surat, a small seaport near Bombay. From there, Guru Nanak and Mardana went to Arabia in a ship. After a few weeks they reached Mecca. There is a very big Mosque in Mecca. Guru Nanak and Mardana were very tired after long travels. They went to the mosque and lay down to take rest. Guru Nanak's feet were towards the Kaaba in the mosque. The Kaaba is a room in the middle of the mosque and is called, 'The house of God (Allah).'

A man named Rukandin was the priest of the Kaaba. He came out and saw Guru Nanak's feet towards the Kaaba. He was very angry. He at once shouted. "Don't you know this is the house of God, you fool? Why are you lying with your feet towards the Kaaba?"

Guru Nanak woke up. He said, "O sir, I'm sorry I didn't know it. I was tired so I just lay down and fell asleep.

Could you turn my legs to the side in which there's no God?"

Rukandin at once caught hold of his legs and dragged them to the other side. He saw that the Kaaba still stood before Guru Nanak's feet. Then he gave another pull but to his great surprise, he saw the Kaaba again towards the Guru's feet. He was so upset that he could not speak.

Guru Nanak said, "Rukandin. God does not live in one place. He lives everywhere." Saying this, Guru Nanak and Mardana started singing hymns. A crowd of people gathered around them. They called Guru Nanak, 'Baba Nanak'. 'Baba' means an old and wise man.



After a few days they went to Medina and Baghdad. At Baghdad a Muslim saint Behlol met the Guru. They had a long talk and became friends. Behlol asked Baba Nanak, "What is your idea of God?"

Guru Nanak replied, "There is one God. He is True. He makes everything. He is not afraid of anyone. He is not born. He never dies. He is self-made. We need only think of Him and pray to Him."

Behlol liked the Guru's teaching very much. He travelled a lot and told the people about this idea of Guru. After some time Guru Nanak and Mardana came back to the Punjab.

Tween

The idea of Purity is an idea of creation. We are constantly creating new things in our life and we believe that how we think about our creations affects its outcome.

For example:

Farmer #1 - If a farmer looks at his field and thinks - Look at that. That soil looks all used up. I don't see any nutrients, or water source or potential for a healthy crop. Well its all I got so I'll plant.

And Farmer #2 looks out over the same size field with the same conditions for nutrients and water. But this farmer exclaims "Look! An incredible opportunity to grow something! The creat something, with my own two hands that will feed my family all winter. How grateful I am to have this land that is mine to use and create.

It has been proved that Farmer #2 will grow bigger crops.

Why?

Some believe it is because farmer #1 didn't try as hard because he already felt despondent. So he may not have bought seeds that were as high quality (why waste the money?) or was lackadaisical about watering.

Or, some believe that there is an invisible force that reacts to your thoughts - that what you think is what you create.

And some believe that it is just perception. That Farmer #2 actually yielded the same crops as farmer #1 did, but he was so grateful that he looked upon the bounty with honor and pride instead of with disgust - so he perceived it as a gift - not a measly outcome.

Teen

## Week #4: Kara: a bonding to Truth

Teacher's Notes: The Five Ks are the five items of dress and physical appearance (a sort of uniform) given to Sikhs by Guru Gobind Singh when he gathered together the first members of the Khalsa on Baisakhi day in 1699. Gobind Singh was the tenth Sikh guru or spiritual teacher



### **Main Message:**

Kara - a steel circle, worn on the wrist, signifying bondage to Truth and freedom from every other entanglement.

## Readings

### **Lesson: Guru Nanak and Prayer**

Guru Nanak was a grown up man now, and he had begun to travel and teach. He walked everywhere on foot with his friends and wherever they went, they sang. His friends were Mardana, who was a Muslim, and Bala, who was a Hindu. Those were the two main religions in India during that time. People wondered, "Well, his friends are odd, one is a Hindu and one is a Muslim, but he looks a little different. Is he a Hindu? Is he a Muslim? What is he?" They asked Guru Nanak, "Are you a Hindu or are you a Muslim?" He told them, "Well, you know there is no Hindu and there is no Muslim." They said, "What?! What?! What do You mean by that?"

Someone went and told the Governor of the town, "This man Nanak, he says there are no Muslims!!" The Governor was alarmed when he heard this. He thought, "Well he can say what he wants about the Hindus, but he can't say there's no Muslims because I am a Muslim." So, he said, "Go and bring Nanak here!" The messenger said, "Okay, I'll get him, and I'll bring him here." He was going to go over to Guru Nanak and be very forceful and say, "Hey, you must come with me. The Governor wants to see you right now!" When the messenger got to Guru Nanak though, his mind suddenly changed. He saw how beautiful and saintly the Guru was and he was very polite and said "Sir, the Governor would like to see you. Would you please come with me?"

So Guru Nanak went to the royal court of the Governor and the Governor asked him, "Why did You say there's no Muslim and there's no Hindu? What are you talking about?" Nanak said, "Well, you have forgotten. You have forgotten that if you can't see God in ALL, you can't see God at all. You have your rules about this and that and the other, but the same light is inside of everyone." The Governor said, "Well, alright, maybe you're right about that. But if you don't think that you're a Muslim or a Hindu, all of us here are going to say our Muslim prayers, will you pray with us?" Nanak said, "Yes, I would love to. If you will lead the prayers, I will pray with you."

So they began their prayers. They put down their prayer rugs and they all got on their knees and started bowing, but Guru Nanak stayed standing up. Instead of getting on his knees and bowing, he stood up with his eyes open. They were continuing their prayers and the Guru was just looking around. That made the Governor very mad, and after-wards, he said, "What were you doing? You weren't praying at all! We were all bowing and doing the proper prayers. You look like a saintly person but you didn't keep your word! You said you were going to pray with us but you didn't. You weren't doing anything!"

The Guru said, "Well, I said I would pray with you if you would lead it, but you weren't leading the prayer at all." He turned to the Quazi, who was the Muslim priest, and said, "You were thinking about the new little baby horse, the foal, that was just born at your farm. You were worried it might fall in the well in the courtyard." The Qazi thought, "That's right, that was what was I was thinking." The Guru turned to the Governor and said, "And you were thinking about all the horses you are going to sell and how much money you are going to make when you sell them. The Governor thought, "Oh wow, that's amazing! He's right, that's true, I was thinking about that." They realized how even though they were bowing and looking as though they were praying, they really weren't praying and that even though Nanak wasn't bowing he was really praying... for them! Then they asked him, "Well how can we really pray?" Nanak said, "You have to calm your mind, and you have to pray from inside your heart, not from your mind, and you have to let the Light of God shine into your heart."

## Advanced Material for 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade:

What you

### Tween & Teen Activity

fortunate is the boy or girl who learns early that the Law of the universe does not know 'negative from positive' or 'a truth' from 'a lie.' it knows only to obey the attitude or feeling and returns to the individual experiences according to the command made by the attitude, whatever that may be. Unfortunately, a boy or girl cannot cultivate a sullen, rebellious attitude at home or at school and then cut it off short at the point where he seeks employment or at the place where he wishes to become successful and to make a name for himself. One cannot deceive the Law. It obeys the attitude that is most constantly maintained - the consciousness.





# Week #5: Kirpan: Defending the Truth

## Main Message:

Kirpan - the sword, with which the Khalsa is committed to righteously defend the fine line of the Truth



## A Promise to the Guru

When Guru Nanak was traveling, he came to a village where a robber lived. The robber's name was Bhoomi Daku. No one liked him because he was a thief. When he saw Guru Nanak, he respectfully pleaded, "Guru ji will you honor me by coming to my house so I can serve you?" Guru ji took mercy on the thief and said "OK, but before I come to your house, you have to make me four promises. The first promise is: YOU WON'T STEAL FROM POOR PEOPLE. They don't have much so that's not fair. The second promise is that from now on: YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO SPEAK THE TRUTH. The third promise is: IF YOU GO TO SOMEONE'S HOUSE AND EAT FROM THEIR HOUSE, YOU WILL NOT STEAL FROM THEM. The fourth promise is: YOU WILL NEVER PUT THE BLAME ON SOMEONE ELSE. If you make all these promises, then I will come to your house."

Bhoomi Daku promised, "I swear I will keep all four of these promises." So Guru Nanak went to his house and they enjoyed a nice evening together. Bhoomi Daku felt very happy and blessed to have such a wise and spiritual soul grace his house.

Later Bhoomi Daku went out, as usual, to go steal from people. Since he couldn't steal from the poor, he decided to go and steal from the king's house. When he got to the king's house there were bodyguards blocking the way in. He tried to sneak in when they weren't looking but a bodyguard caught him and said, "Who are you and why are you here." Bhoomi Daku remembered his promise to tell the truth. So he told the body guard, "Well sir, my name is Bhoomi Daku and I have come here to steal from the king." The body guard started laughing, "What a ridiculous joke! I bet you're a friend of the king. Come on in sir." What a surprise, it worked! He told the truth and got right in.

Bhoomi Daku walked into the king's house. He thought to himself, "How great Guru Nanak is! Because of his promises I'm now near the most wonderful riches I have ever seen!" He saw all kinds of jewelry and treasures, which he proceeded to put in his bags. As he kept stealing he smelled something very, very good. It smelled like chocolate cake! He walked into the kitchen and opened the oven and there it was - a beautiful, delicious cake. Chocolate cake was his very favorite food! He could not help reaching out and taking a piece of the cake. It tasted so good! But right as he tasted the first bite he remembered his promise to the Guru. If he eats from someone's house, he can not steal from them. So he dropped his bags right there and he sneaked out of the palace.

In the morning, the king noticed some of the cake missing, and he saw the bag of treasure lying on the ground. "Someone has been here! Find out who it is and bring him to me!" So the king's men went to the town and started asking people about it, but no one knew

anything. After a while the guards got annoyed and started beating people. The people cried out, "We have done nothing wrong!" But the guards kept beating the people. When Bhoomi Daku heard the people crying out, he remembered his fourth promise to the Guru.

So he ran out and said . "Stop, stop! Don't beat them, they are innocent. I am the robber, punish me instead!" So they brought him to the king. Bhoomi Daku explained everything to the king, but the king was confused and asked, "I heard that no one suspected you. Why did you confess?" "Sir, the fourth promise I made to the Guru was that I wouldn't put blame on others for what I do. These people were taking the blame for me, so I had to keep my promise." The king was impressed. "You must have a great Guru because you have kept all these promises you made to him. I am impressed with your Guru, I'm not going to punish you. You are free to go." Then Bhoomi Daku asked the king, "But what about those poor people who were beaten for no reason?"

The king decided to throw a big party and invite everyone. During the party, Bhoomi Daku stood up in front of everyone. He announced to everyone, "I don't know where Guru Nanak is now but I kept the four promises I made to him. I now make a fifth promise: I WILL NEVER STEAL AGAIN, AND I WILL FOLLOW THE TEACHINGS OF THE GURU." The people were happy to hear him say this. The king, Bhoomi Daku and all the people in the village ate chocolate cake together and they lived very happily from that day on.

Craft:

Advanced Material for 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade:

Tween & Teen Activity

