

# Visiting a gurdwara

At the gurdwara you will have a chance to meet Sikhs and learn more about Sikhism.

**Q1.** What are three things that you could look for on the outside of the gurdwara?

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**Q2.** Look at the illustration on this page. Why does the boy have his head covered?

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**Q3.** What will you be asked to do as soon as you enter the gurdwara?

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**Q4.** Where will you sit inside the darbar? .....

**Q5.** What two things should you make sure you do in the darbar?

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**Q6.** What is it important to remember when eating in the langar?

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## Answers

1. **Flagpole and flag; words in Punjabi; domes; four doors or windows.**
2. **He is in the gurdwara.**
3. **Take your shoes off.**
4. **On the floor.**
5. **Show respect; be quiet; do not point your feet at the Guru Granth Sahib.**
6. **To remember that everyone is equal.**

## Lesson objectives

- ▶ To help children prepare for a visit to a gurdwara.
- ▶ To review some of the things children should look out for in the gurdwara.

## Lesson outcomes

- ▶ The children know some of the things they will see and do in the gurdwara.
- ▶ The children understand what behaviour is required in the gurdwara.

## Teaching notes

### Headcovering

*In some gurdwaras young children are not required to cover their heads, but it is generally mandatory for everyone except babies and infants. You may want to discuss appropriate head covering with the children before the visit, as well as the idea that, for non-Sikhs, covering the head is a sign of respect and does not have a religious meaning. Some gurdwaras do not permit visitors to wear the hijab (Sikhs do not allow women to be covered head to toe or even to have the entire head covered because they feel it is discriminatory) so if you have any Muslim students who wear the hijab, you will have to check with the gurdwara about this beforehand.*

*Appropriate head coverings include scarves or handkerchiefs of any colour for both girls and boys. Caps are generally not acceptable. Women and girls may simply drape the scarf over their head, boys and men should tie the handkerchief so that it doesn't fall off. Most gurdwaras will be able to supply head coverings.*

*Children will not be expected to worship, but they should observe the customs of respect (not pointing feet at the Guru, not turning your back on the Guru, and so on). Sikhs tend to be exceptionally open about sharing all aspects of worship.*

### Langar

*The langar is a part of worship only for Sikhs, for all others it is a way to experience the ideas of equality and sharing (and good food). Students will be expected to eat in the langar as a part of their visit and they should be reminded to consider the meaning of the langar while they eat – no fighting over who sits where. All food is vegetarian, so halal or kosher is not an issue. If any students have other dietary restrictions, the people in the langar can help. It is not polite to eat outside food in the langar, as it is a sign of inequality.*

## Complementary work

The children can investigate what it is like to visit a gurdwara in another country.

### Resources

See [www.sgpc.net/historical-gurdwaras/index\\_gurdwaras\\_in\\_india.asp](http://www.sgpc.net/historical-gurdwaras/index_gurdwaras_in_india.asp); <http://religions.iloveindia.com/sikh-shrines/>; [www.punjabilok.com/faith/sikh/faith\\_gurdwara\\_pakistan.htm](http://www.punjabilok.com/faith/sikh/faith_gurdwara_pakistan.htm) (also has gurdwara info and photos from around the world).