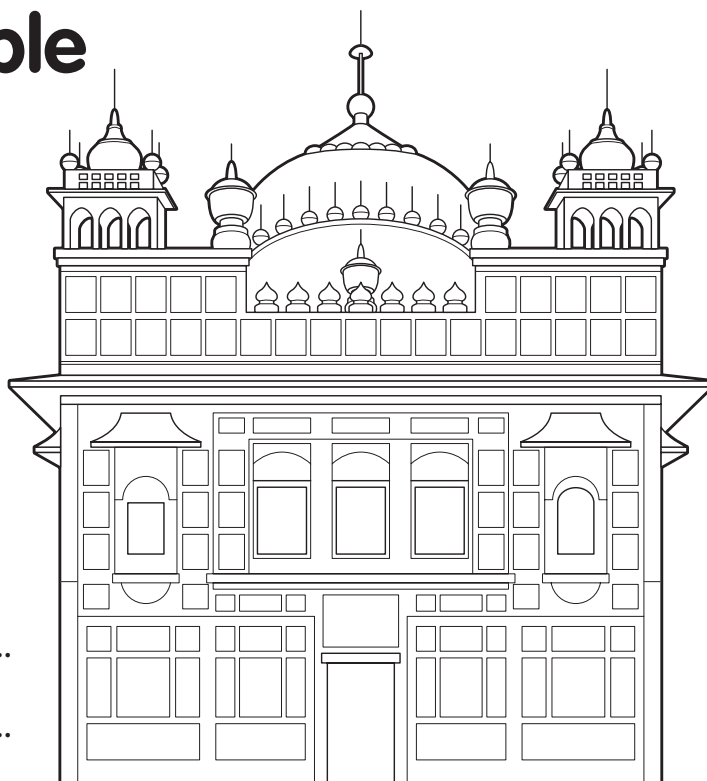


The Golden Temple

The most important gurdwara is in India. It is The Golden Temple at Amritsar.



Q1. What are two other names for The Golden Temple?

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Q2. What features does The Golden Temple have that most other Sikh gurdwaras also have?

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Q3. What is one unique feature of The Golden Temple?

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Q4. What happened at the site of the Dukh Bhanjani Ber shrine?

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Q5. What happened at the site of the shrine of Baba Deep Singh?

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Q6. What are the white buildings that surround the temple?

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Answers

1. Harimandir Sahib; Darbar Sahib.
2. Domes, doors on all four sides, Sikh flag, khanda symbols.
3. It is built in a lake.
4. A crippled child was healed after bathing in the lake.
5. A famous warrior died while fighting to protect others.
6. Dormitories and langars.

Lesson objectives

- ▶ To study The Golden Temple in detail.
- ▶ To show some features of The Golden Temple.

Lesson outcomes

- ▶ The children can describe some of the features of The Golden Temple.
- ▶ The children understand the importance of The Golden Temple to Sikhs.

Teaching notes

The site of The Golden Temple was originally a small lake situated in a forest. The name of the lake (and now the city surrounding it), Amritsar, means "pool of ambrosial nectar" and its water was thought to have healing properties. The lake was considered sacred from ancient times, and mystics and religious leaders, like the Buddha and Guru Nanak, came to the lake to meditate.

Guru Ram Das (the fourth guru) purchased the lake and the surrounding area in 1577 and the foundation stone for the first gurdwara on the site was laid in 1588 (the stone was laid

by a Muslim Sufi). The fifth guru, Guru Arjan Dev, enlarged the lake and completed the building of the temple. The first version of the Guru Granth Sahib was placed in the temple in 1604. By this time, a flourishing city had grown up around the temple.

The temple has been destroyed and rebuilt several times. The temple as it exists today was built in 1764, but additions were made throughout its history. The copper sheets covered in gold which give the temple its name were not laid on the temple until the early 19th century. The entire temple, inside and out, is decorated in jewels, murals, paintings, mirrors, ivory inlay, embossed copper, and stone.

The main darbar building (which sits in the lake) is surrounded by the temple complex, which is a huge collection of buildings and includes langars, dormitories for visitors, and the Akal Takht (Sikh Parliament) where the Guru is kept at night.

Complementary work

The children could look at pictures of The Golden Temple and other important Sikh temples around the world. They could compare the architecture of Sikh temples in India with those in western countries, and find the temples on a map.

Resources

See www.sikhnet.com/GoldenTemple; www.sikh.org/golden/; www.maboli.com/nahal/gallery.html; www.sikhphotos.com; <http://punjab-state.com/photos/amritsar/index.php>.