

Living the Sikh Way: Principles of Seva and Equality

Learning objective: To understand the core values of Sikhism, including equality, service to others, and the importance of the Gurdwara.

Read the text carefully and answer the questions below. Use full sentences where appropriate.

Sikhism is a faith founded in the Punjab region of India over five centuries ago. At its heart, Sikhs believe in one God and the importance of equality for all people, regardless of gender, background, or social status. A central practice in Sikh life is 'Seva', which means selfless service to others. This is best exemplified in the 'Langar', a communal kitchen found at every Gurdwara (a Sikh place of worship). In the Langar, volunteers prepare and serve free, vegetarian meals to anyone who enters, demonstrating that everyone is treated as an equal guest. When entering a Gurdwara, visitors remove their shoes and cover their heads to show respect. Inside, the Guru Granth Sahib—the central religious scripture—is treated with the utmost reverence. For a Sikh, daily life is guided by the values of honesty, hard work, and generosity. By engaging in Seva, Sikhs aim to remove ego and focus on helping their neighbours. This commitment to community creates a spirit of unity that resonates across the globe, encouraging individuals to live humbly and serve humanity with compassion.

Word bank: Sikhism · Gurdwara · Seva · Langar · Equality · Community · Guru

1. What is the name of the communal kitchen found in a Gurdwara, and what type of food is served there? (2 marks)

2. Identify two actions that visitors must take when entering a Gurdwara to show respect. (2 marks)

3. Explain why the practice of Langar is a significant way to demonstrate the Sikh belief in equality. (3 marks)

4. What might happen if a community stopped practising the concept of 'Seva'? Discuss the potential impact on society. (3 marks)

5. Justify why treating the Guru Granth Sahib with high reverence is essential for the Sikh faith. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene inside a Gurdwara depicting a Langar meal, showing people from _____ different walks of life sitting together on the floor eating, to represent the value of equality.



Extension challenge: Compare and contrast the concept of 'Seva' with charitable acts in other religions or secular organisations. Write a short paragraph explaining how these acts of kindness contribute to a more cohesive society. How would you design a 'Seva' project for your own school community?