A Visit to the Gurdwara

Learning objective: To understand the key features and practices of a Sikh place of worship, the Gurdwara.

Read the text carefully and answer the questions below. Think about how the community shows respect and equality in the Gurdwara.

Ellie the elephant was invited to visit a Gurdwara, which is a place of worship for Sikhs. Before entering, she saw everyone taking off their shoes to show respect. Inside, she noticed that men and women were sitting together on the floor. This is because Sikhs believe in equality for everyone. In the main hall, a special book called the Guru Granth Sahib was placed on a raised platform under a canopy. It is treated with great care because it is the holy scripture of Sikhism. After the prayers, Ellie went to the Langar hall. This is a community kitchen where free vegetarian meals are served to anyone who is hungry, regardless of their background. Serving this food is called Seva, which means selfless service. Ellie felt very welcomed by the community. She learned that the Gurdwara is not just a place to pray, but a place where people help others and work together to look after their neighbours. It was a peaceful and kind experience that she would always remember.

Word bank: Gurdwara · Guru Granth Sahib · Langar · Seva · Equality

1. What do people do with their shoes before entering the Gurdwara and why? (2 marks)

2. What is the name of the community kitchen where free meals are served? (1 mark)

3. Why do you think it is important that people sit together on the floor in the main hall? (2 marks)

4. Based on the text, what does the word 'Seva' tell us about how Sikhs treat other people? (2 marks)

5. Why do you think the Gurdwara is described as a place that helps the community? Use evidence from the text to support your opinion. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a picture of the Langar hall, showing people sharing a meal together to represent the idea of community and service.

Extension challenge: Research the 'Five Ks' of Sikhism. Choose one of the Five Ks and write two sentences explaining why it is significant to a Sikh.