

# Sikh and Indian Australians

## **TEACHER RESOURCE 4 - MUSLIM, HINDU AND SIKH BELIEFS**

### **1. Muslims**

**The religion is called Islam.**

**The place of worship is a mosque.**

**The holy writings are in the Quran (Koran)**

Muslims believe in:

1. One God (Allah)

There is one Unique God (Allah) who should be worshipped and obeyed.

2. Mala-eka (Angels)

Allah created unseen creatures such as Angels which are explained in the Quran and in the Sunnah (Teachings of the Prophet).

3. The Books of Allah

Allah gave divine information through His Prophets. The five main divine books are: 1) Abraham's Scrolls; 2) Psalms revealed to Prophet David; 3) The Torah revealed to Prophet Moses; 4) The Gospel revealed to Prophet Jesus; 5) The Quran revealed to Prophet Muhammad.

4. The Prophets of Allah

Allah sent Prophets to earth as messengers to guide humans. Prophets are not divine (gods) because there is only one God, Allah. They are all truthful men of religion chosen by Allah to provide models for correct behaviour and words.

5. The Day of Judgement

The life of this world will come to an end on one appointed day. This day will resurrect all the dead; Allah will judge each person. Allah will reward those who lead a righteous life and did good deeds by sending them to Paradise. Allah forgives many people but those who disobey His Command will be punished.

6. Destiny is directed by Allah

Since the whole universe is entirely under the control of Allah, then everything that is or that happens in the world, from the smallest to the greatest event, is governed by Allah. Muslims put their trust in Allah only.

**The Five Pillars of faith for all Muslims to perform:**

1. Daily confession of faith (*shahada*)

The *shahada* includes the two crucial beliefs that make a person a Muslim: "There is no god but God and Muhammad is the prophet of God."

## 2. Daily ritual prayer (*Salah*)

*Salat* (prayers) are performed five times a day: at dawn, midday, afternoon, sunset and evening. The person praying must always face in the direction of the Ka'ba shrine in Mecca. and wash the body before prayer. Friday midday prayer at the mosque is the most important prayer time.

## 3. Paying the alms tax (*zakat*)

The Koran states "Perform the prayer and give the alms." Muslims are required to provide charity to poor people.

## 4. Fasting during the month of Ramadan (*sawm*)

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic year. During Ramadan, all adult Muslims are forbidden to eat or drink during daylight hours.

## 5. Pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*)

At least once in their lifetime, each Muslim should make a pilgrimage to Mecca, Islam's sacred city. The pilgrimage should take place during the last month of the Islamic year to meet the requirements of the hajj.

For further details see:

<http://www.religionfacts.com/five-pillars-islam>

## 2. Hindus

**The religion is called Hinduism.**

**Hindus worship in temples and to icons in their own homes**

**The religious books of Hinduism are the Vedas, Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranas.**

What Hindus believe:

1. There is one true god, the supreme spirit, called Brahman. Brahman has many forms (avatars) and is present as the spirit of each person. There are three main aspects of Brahman: Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver and Shiva the destroyer.
2. There are a variety of gods and Hindus *puja* (worship) them through prayers (mantras), depicting images and diagrams of the universe.
3. The main religious texts are the Vedas which must be interpreted by Hindu priests (from the Brahmin caste).
4. Human lives constantly move through cycles of reincarnation. Life is governed by karma, that is, how Hindus create their destiny through what they think, say and how they act. Karma influences their next reincarnation.
5. There are four important aims: fulfilling one's purpose in life; creation of wealth; enjoyment and enlightenment, which involves freedom from the cycles of death and rebirth. During life a Hindu should seek these four goals.
6. That no one religion teaches the only path to salvation, and that religions are simply aspects of God and the universe.

Types of religious actions expected of all Hindus include:

*Nitya* - Daily offerings to the home shrine or deities.

*Naimittika* - Rituals performed at festivals held throughout the year in various provinces of India. Festivals include *Holi*, *Diwali* and *Ganesh Chaturthi*. Worship may involve fasting, offerings to gods, feasting, singing, marches or fairs.

*Kamyā* - These are optional rituals such as pilgrimage to the holy Ganges River.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/worship/worship.shtml>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/rs/god/hinduismrev1.shtml>

### 3. Sikhs

Sikhism emerged in the Punjab region (now part of India and Pakistan) around 1500AD and is a distinct religion and way of life differing markedly from Hinduism and Islam. Male Sikhs have the name Singh, which means lion, as their middle or last name. While female Sikhs use the name Kaur which means “princess”. The Punjabi meaning of the word Sikh is disciple. In 2011 there were 72,000 Sikhs living in Australia. Nine out of ten people who wear turbans in Australia are Sikhs.

**The religion is called Sikhism (Sikhi).**

**The place of worship is a temple called a Gurdwara.**

**The holy writings are in the Guru Granth Sahib.**

**What Sikhs believe:**

1. There is only one creator God, the One Force, and God is identified by truthfulness, pervasiveness and is timeless, fearless, without enmity, unborn and self-illuminated.
2. Sikhs connect with God through everyday life and aim to create a society that is open and progressive with organised struggle against injustice.
3. Sikhs follow three basic beliefs:
  - i. Introspective Living: They must be constantly aware of the ever present force of the Creator God.
  - ii. Truthful Living: They must earn their living in a just manner with integrity and honesty.
  - iii. Generous Living: Sikhs must share the rewards of life rather than just gathering wealth
4. The Guru Granth Sahib (the Sikh Scriptures) is comprised of divinely inspired writings by 10 Gurus and over 30 people from different religious traditions across South Asia. The scriptures contain the wisdom of the Gurus beginning with holy writings of Guru Nanak (1469 - 1539).

**Sikh identity:**

5. An initiated Sikh should follow the Five *Kakars* (the “5 Ks”) or articles of faith which are physical signs of Sikh identity:
  - *Kes*. Do not cut body hair.
  - *Kangha (Kungaa)*. Carry a wooden comb.
  - *Kara*. Wear an iron band around the wrist.
  - *Kucchayraa*. Wear special under shorts
  - *Kirpaan*. Carry a traditional dagger shaped object.

A turban (*dastar*) is worn to cover the uncut hair.

6. Every Sikh must be a representative of their faith.
7. Sikhs can worship anywhere, but their temple, the Gurdwara, is where Sikhs gather together for spiritual guidance. The Guru Granth Sahib is placed at the heart of worship. Visitors are invited to share worship and *langar*, a free meal prepared in special kitchens built for that purpose in the *Gurdwara*.
8. Shortly after death Sikhs must be cremated.

This information is adapted from “Sikhi Faith and Followers”

<http://www.australiansikhheritage.com/sikhi-faith-and-followers/>

“Turbans and Trust” is a 6 minute video which will assist in understanding the Sikh faith. See

<https://www.quora.com/Did-you-know-Sikhs-fought-alongside-ANZACs-in-WWI-WW2>