

Grade: 5

Lesson Number: 21

Unit Name: Sikh Personalities

Course: Virṣā

Title: Bhāī Gurdās (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ)

Standards

Standard 7: The Gurū-Prophet Period: Nānaks I-V

- Students describe the history and times of the Gurūs until the death of Gurū Arjan, including famous Sikh personages.
 - *Students learn the major events and importance of creating institutions by the groundwork laid by the first five Sikh Gurūs. In addition to the Gurūs, students will be introduced to famous Sikh personages such as Bhāī Gurdās, Bhāī Mardānā, Mātā Khīvī, the Bhaṭṭs, Bhāī Buḍḍhā, and others). Activities should include lessons related to the Gurūs, for example Gurū Aṅgad's establishment of wrestling Akhāṛās.*

Objectives

1. Children learn about the achievements of Bhāī Gurdās.

Prerequisites

- Lessons on Gurū Nānak to Gurū Arjan (lesson numbers 16-20)

Materials

- Attached article
- Dry/Erase board
- Markers
- Article: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhai_Gurdas

Advanced Preparation

- Teacher should be familiar with life of Bhāī Gurdās.

Engagement (15-20 minutes)

- Review Gurū Nānak's to Gurū Arjan's thoughts and ideology being the same as highlighted in the previous five classes.
- Let children do the talking and give you specific examples to show that the ideology/thought amongst all the Gurūs was the same.
- Discuss Gurū Nānak's revolutionary thought process. Let children come up with their thoughts and ideas and understanding and verbalize them. Let them challenge each other. Help them along in this process.
- The ask students the questions what were the Gurū's Sikhs like? Who were they?
- Brainstorm and write children's thoughts on the board.

Exploration (35 minutes)

- Tell children that over the next few weeks they will learn about some Sikh personalities who lived during the time of the Gurūs.
- On this particular day you want to discuss one of Gurū Nānak's Sikh who had the honor of being with four Gurūs. He was the scribe of the Ādi Granth.
- Hopefully they will know that it is Bhāī Gurdās.
- Discuss with them the attached article, highlighting the following
 - Bhāī Gurdās came into the guardianship of Gurū Amardās because he lost his parents when he was 12.
 - He was educated and learnt many different languages.
 - He became very close to Gurū Rāmdās and Gurū Arjan Sāhib.
 - He was a scholar and a great poet.
 - Gurū Arjan Sahib asked him to be the scribe as he was compiling the Ādi Granth.
 - He was appointed the Second Granthī of the Ādi Granth.
 - He was asked by Gurū Arjan Sāhib if he would want to make a particular contribution of his work to the Ādi Granth and in humility he replied no.
 - The collection of Bhāī Gurdās's works is seen as the key to the Gurū Granth Sahib.

Explanation/Extension (5-10 minutes)

- Ask children to think about Bhāī Gurdās's life and write a story for children in Kindergarten and Grade 1 highlighting his life as a Sikh.
- Tell them that they will also learn about other Sikh personalities and that they will write a story for Kindergarteners that may choose to get printed into a book for the younger children in the school.

Evaluation (On-going)

- The story that the children write about Bhāī Gurdās for the Kindergartners and 1st graders should show you children's understanding of material.

Teacher Resources

The Scribe of the Revelation – Bhāī Gurdās

In order to authenticate and canonize the revelations of the Sikh Gurūs, Gurū Arjan, the fifth Nānak, embarked on the monumental task of compiling the writings of his predecessor Gurūs and of writers of other faiths whose revelations were in tune with Sikh theology. These writings were recorded in a single volume which came to be known as the *Ādī Gurū Granth*. The vast material that was collected, assembled and authenticated was dictated by Gurū Arjan to his scribe-elect and Sikh disciple *par excellence*, Bhāī Gurdās.



Bhāī Gurdās (1546-1636 CE) was a contemporary of four Gurūs, a scholarly administrator in their court-congregations, a poet, a philosopher, a community leader and a Sikh social activist. His personal experience with the lives of the Gurūs was immense as was his devotion to the Sikh way. Bhāī Gurdās was not only the author of great literary works in Sikh theology, philosophy and mysticism; he was also a key contributor to major projects during the building of the Sikh community.

Through his writings and discourses to Sikh congregations, Bhāī Gurdās was responsible for helping to eliminate the threat of the psuedo-Gurūship that was started by the jealous Prithī Cand, the elder brother of Gurū Arjan.

After the martyrdom of Gurū Arjan, it was Bhāī Gurdās along with Bābā Buḍḍhā who assured the Sikh congregation that the 11 year old Hargobind was the genuine Gurū-elect and would lead the Sikhs through the tumultuous times of discriminatory oppression and armed attacks of the ruling monarchy. After donning the two swords of *Mīrī Pīrī* (temporal power

and spiritual authority), Gurū Hargobind instructed Bhāī Gurdās and Bābā Buḍḍhā to help construct a monument in tribute to the politico-religious nature of the Sikh faith, namely the *Akāl Takht*. In addition, Gurū Hargobind nominated the poet-philosopher, Bhāī Gurdās, as the first caretaker of the *Akāl Takht*.

Although Bhāī Gurdās' contributions to the formation of the Sikh community are numerous, nothing can compare to the value of his literary works. Bhāī Gurdās is author of *Vārs* (verses in balladic measure in Pañjābī) and *Kabitt Savaye* (quatrains in *Braj Bhāsā*) that are an invaluable tool in interpreting the Gurū's *bānī*, *rehit* and *itihās* (the word, code of conduct and history).

The fifth Gurū enjoined his Sikhs to read the writings of Bhāī Gurdās regularly and described them as “the Key to the *Ādi Gurū Granth*” and is known to have said that Bhāī Gurdās' writings “inspire the reader to reach the highest state of Sikhī”. As such, Sikhs treasure his writings for they have the seal of approval of the Gurū – the highest of honors.

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