



The Sikh Gurdwara

Introduction

The word “Gurdwara” means “Door to the Guru” or “House of the Guru”. The Guru in this case refers both to God (referred to variously as Satnam - “True Name”, Satguru - “True Guru”, Waheguru - “Wonderful Guru”), and the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh holy book. Every Gurdwara will have at least one copy of the Guru Granth Sahib, in fact it cannot call itself a Gurdwara if it does not. Most Sikhs will not have a copy of the Guru Granth Sahib at home, but if they do, their house then becomes a Gurdwara, and the book has to be treated with the same respect as it would receive at the Temple.

This lesson concentrates on the themes of respect and equality and how they are exhibited at the Gurdwara.

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Overview

Suitable for:	Key Stage 3
Lesson Objectives:	To learn the main features of a Sikh place of worship. To learn how equality is shown in the Gurdwara To learn how respect is shown to the Guru Granth Sahib.
Key Question:	How should you behave in a Gurdwara?
Time:	1 hour
TrueTube Film:	<i>Holy Cribs - The Gurdwara (8:52)</i> Theme: <i>Ethics & Religion</i> Topic: <i>Religious Traditions</i>
Resources:	Internet connected whiteboard or enough PCs for the class. <i>Gurdwara - Floorplan.</i> <i>Guru Granth Sahib - annotated picture.</i> <i>Respect and Equality - sort cards.</i> <i>Respect and Equality - answers.</i> (Full list below)
Key Words:	Gurdwara Sikh Satnam Waheguru Nishan Sahib Khanda Ik Onkar Langar Diwan Takht

Film Digest






[Holy Cribs - The Gurdwara](#) (8:52)



Theme: *Ethics & Religion*








Topic: *Religious Traditions*







Ramonjot, a young Sikh, gives TrueTube a tour of his Gurdwara, the Sri Guru Singh Sabha in Southall. He shows us the prayer hall, the dining hall and even the Guru Granth Sahib's bedroom!

Lesson Plan

	<p>Starter</p> <p>Have a bowl of sweets (<i>M&Ms, Skittles, Smarties</i> – no need to spend much) and let every student take one as they arrive at the lesson, apart from one minority. It should be arbitrary (for example, all those with blond hair), not justifiable (not, for example, those wearing incorrect uniform).</p> <p>Wait for the students to object (they will). Ask them to give reasons for their objection. Once they have explained that it is unfair or discriminatory or prejudiced or an example of inequality, then give out sweets to the rest.</p>	3 mins
	<p>Now ask the students to think of their poshest friend or relative (almost <i>everyone</i> has a posh auntie). What rules do they have to obey when they visit? E.g. taking shoes off, not eating in front of the TV, minding their language, using a coaster for drinks, putting the toilet seat down etc.</p> <p>Get them to make a short list.</p>	3 mins
	<p>Ask for a few of the rules they've experienced. Then discuss: Why do we obey these rules? Why do different households have different rules?</p> <p>E.g. So we don't cause offence, to respect them, because we want to go again, because they've just laid a new carpet.</p> <p>Some people and places deserve our respect e.g. because they are offering us hospitality or because they have done something important.</p> <p>Make the point that both "Equality" and "Respect" are important themes in a Gurdwara.</p>	2 mins

	<p>Explain the meaning of the key words (there are <i>a lot</i> of new words this lesson, but these are the most important):</p>	<p>5 mins</p>
	<p>Gurdwara “Door to the Guru” – a Sikh holy building containing the Guru Granth Sahib.</p> <p>Sikh “Learner” – a follower of the Guru Granth Sahib’s teachings.</p> <p>Satnam Waheguru “True name, Wonderful Lord” – the Sikh name for the one, unseen God.</p> <p>Nishan Sahib A triangular orange flag decorated with a Khanda or Ik Onkar found outside a Gurdwara.</p> <p>Khanda A Sikh symbol featuring a two edged word (a khanda), a circle (a chakra) and two single-edged swords (kirpans).</p> <p>Ik Onkar (or Ek Onkar) Another Sikh symbol, the first words of the Guru Granth Sahib meaning “God is One”.</p> <p>Langar A dining hall in every Gurdwara where everyone is welcome to share a meal.</p> <p>Diwan hall (or Darbar Sahib) The main prayer hall of a Gurdwara.</p> <p>Takht “Throne” – the raised platform at the front of the diwan hall for the Guru Granth Sahib.</p>	

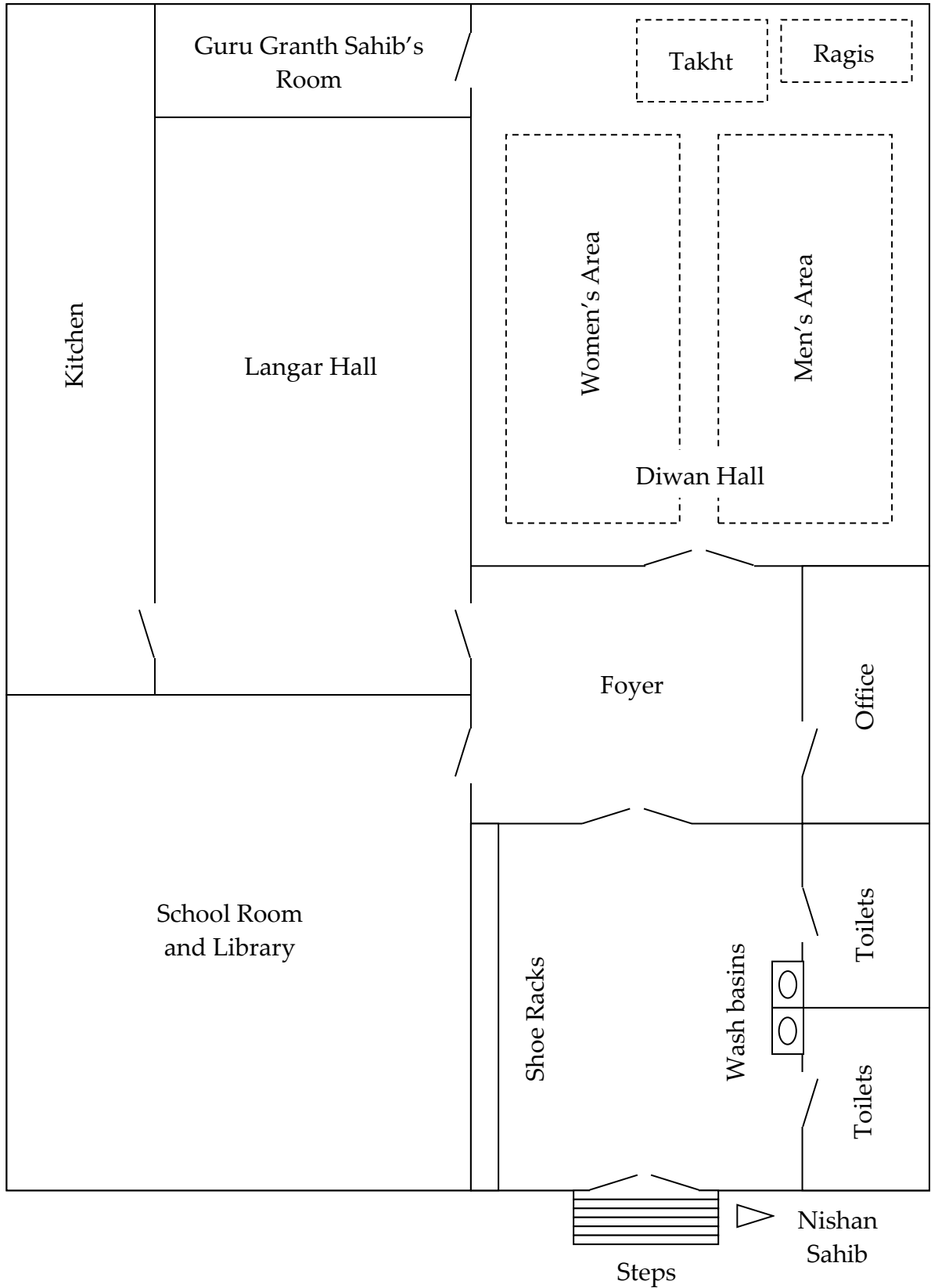
Main Activities		
	Watch the film: <i>Holy Cribs: The Gurdwara</i> .	10 mins
	Give out the <i>Respect and Equality</i> sheets and some scissors and glue.	10 mins
	<p>The students should cut out the cards and put them into two piles (they can do this individually or discuss it in pairs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Things that show respect to the Guru Granth Sahib. • Things that symbolise equality in the Gurdwara. <p>They might also want a third pile for things that show both respect <i>and</i> equality, but try to get them to come to a decision for one or the other.</p>	
	Go through the answers with the class. Ask each student to say which pile they have put a statement in, and why they have put it there. If they are wrong (or not as right as they could be) take suggestions from other students and then let them make their own minds up.	5 mins
	When you have finished, the pupils should head up two pages in their books (or files) “Equality in the Gurdwara” and “Respect in the Gurdwara” and then stick the cards in the correct place.	5 mins
	Give out the <i>Gurdwara</i> floorplan and the <i>Guru Granth Sahib</i> annotated picture.	5 mins
	In pairs or individually, the students can label the picture to show all the objects that show respect to the Guru Granth Sahib, or God.	

  	<p>If you have any Sikh artefacts, (e.g. a chauri, a khanda, a Nishan Sahib, a kirpan) then allow groups to pass them round. Touch is a powerful communicator especially for kinaesthetic learners.</p> <p>Go through the answers and allow the students to correct their work.</p> <p>Students can now use the floorplan, the picture and the information on the sort cards to write a <i>Gurdwara Guests' Guide</i>. This should give advice to visitors so that they don't do anything that will cause offence, and will know where to go and what to do.</p>	<p>3 mins</p> <p>10 mins</p>
	<p>Plenary - Has Learning Taken Place?</p> <p>Choose a few students at random to roleplay being a Gurdwara Guide. They should give a short talk (without notes) greeting visitors at a Gurdwara, making them feel welcome and explaining what they need to do, and what will happen during the visit.</p>	<p>5 mins</p>
 	<p>Extension - Suggested Further Activities</p> <p>Visit a Gurdwara! There's a directory on SikhiWiki: www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Gurdwaras_UK</p> <p>Make some Karah Prashad: http://sikhism.about.com/od/gurugrantsahib/ss/Prashad.htm</p> <p>This could be given out at the start instead of sweets, or you could even persuade the Food Technology Department to give a lesson over to Food in Religion, e.g: Karah Prashad – Sikhism; Bread – Christian; Doughnuts or Latkes (potato cakes) – Judaism; vegetarian – Hinduism & Buddhism; Halal – Islam).</p>	

Resources

- *Gurdwara* - Floorplan
- *Guru Granth Sahib* - Annotated Picture
- *Respect and Equality* - Answers
- *Respect and Equality* - Sort cards
- Scissors and glue
- A bowl of sweets - *M&Ms*, *Skittles* or similar

Gurdwara Floorplan

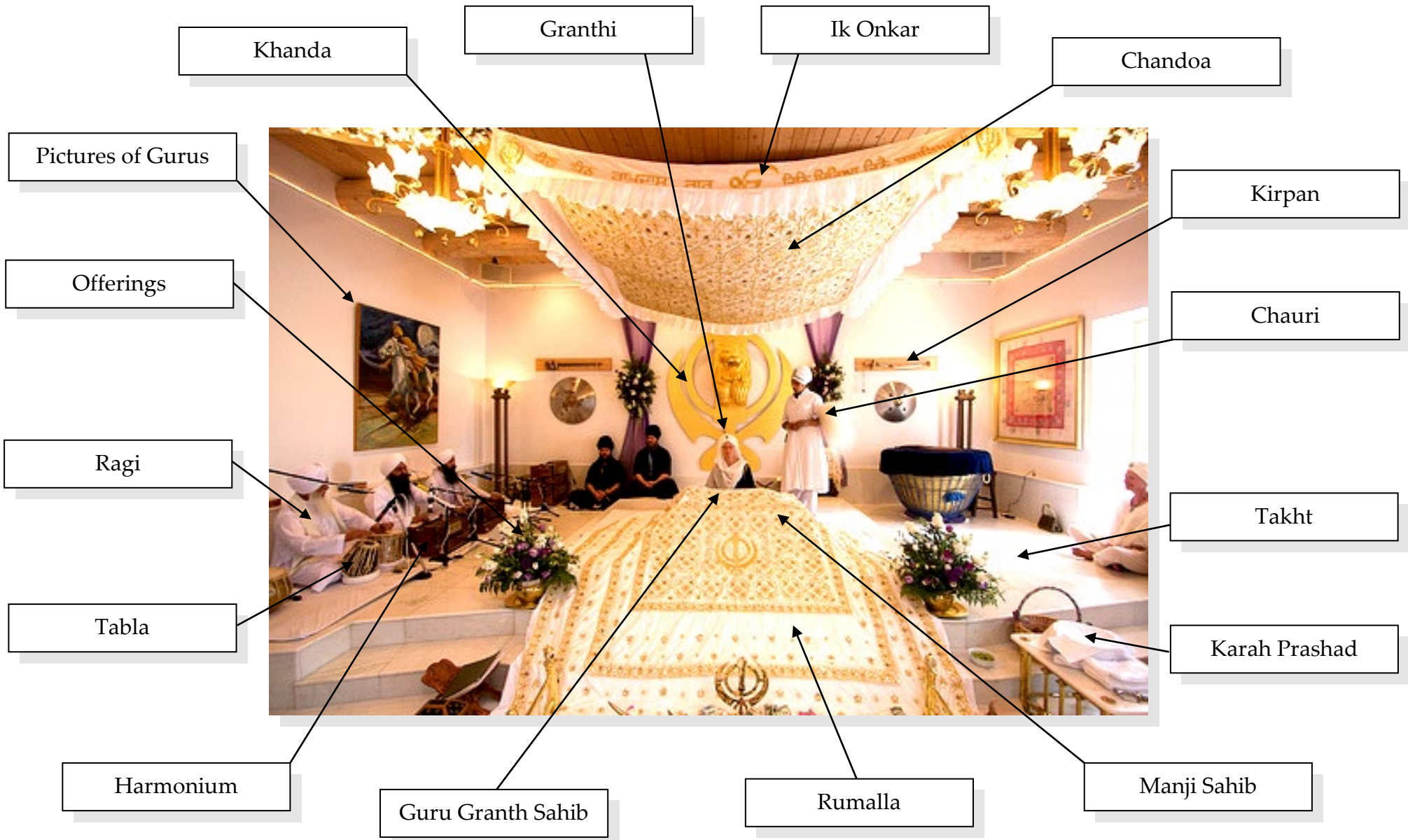


The Guru Granth Sahib

Look at the picture below. It shows the front of a Diwan (worship) Hall in a Gurdwara with all the people and objects you would find around the Guru Granth Sahib.

Read these descriptions and then have a go at labelling the picture.

Chandoa	A canopy above the Guru Granth Sahib – important people would have sat beneath a canopy to keep them out of the sun, so it became a symbol of respect.
Chauri	A fly-whisk – a handle with hair or feathers protruding from one end, waved over the Guru Granth Sahib as a sign of respect.
Granthi	The man or woman who reads out the Guru Granth Sahib to the congregation.
Guru Granth Sahib	The Sikh holy book.
Harmonium	A small keyboard instrument similar to a piano accordion.
Ik Onkar	A Sikh symbol – the first words of the Guru Granth Sahib in Gurmukhi letters that mean, “God is One”.
Karah Prashad	A sweet food made of flour, sugar, milk and butter. It is mixed in a bowl and offered to the Guru Granth Sahib before being shared around the congregation.
Khanda	A Sikh symbol made up of a two edged sword (a khanda), a circle (a chakra) and two single edged swords (kirpans).
Kirpan	A single-edged sword, often slightly curved.
Manji Sahib	A pile of cushions that the Guru Granth Sahib is placed on.
Offerings	Various offerings of money, flowers, food etc are placed before the Guru Granth Sahib as a sign of respect.
Pictures of the Gurus	These are placed around the Gurdwara to remind the congregation of the Gurus’ example.
Ragis	Musicians who sing and accompany hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib.
Rumalla	A cloth used to cover the Guru Granth Sahib in order to keep it clean.
Tabla	A small drum played with the fingers.
Takht	This means “Throne” and is the name given to the raised platform on which the Guru Granth Sahib is placed.



Picture © Flickr/Gurumustuk Singh



Picture © Flickr/Gurumustuk Singh

Respect and Equality in the Gurdwara (Answers & Sort Cards)

Respect

Take your shoes off.
Cover your head.
Sit below the level of the Guru Granth Sahib.
Men and women sit on opposite sides of the hall.
A chauri is waved over the Guru Granth Sahib.
The Guru Granth Sahib is beneath a chandoa (canopy).
The Guru Granth Sahib is sat on a manji sahib.
Cover the Guru Granth Sahib with a rumalla.
The Guru Granth Sahib is given its own room.
The Guru Granth Sahib is on a Takht.
Dress modestly.
Sit cross legged so the soles of your feet are beneath you.
Wash your hands.
Don't wear revealing clothes.
No meat, drugs, tobacco or alcohol.
Offerings of money, food and flowers are given.
Hymns are sung from the Guru Granth Sahib.
The Granthi reads out the Guru Granth Sahib.
Worshippers bow to the Guru Granth Sahib.

Equality

Men and women sit the same distance from the Takht.
Sit on the floor.
Everyone is welcome in the Gurdwara.
Everyone shares a meal in the Langar.
The Langar is vegetarian.
Dress simply.
Don't wear lots of jewellery.
Everyone takes a turn to serve in the Langar.
Karah Prashad is shared.
The Granthi can be a man or a woman.
The ragis can be men or women.
Sikhs all take the names 'Singh' or 'Kaur'.

Take your shoes off.	Sit on the floor.	Sit below the level of the Guru Granth Sahib.
Everyone is welcome in the Gurdwara.	Dress simply.	The Guru Granth Sahib is beneath a chandoa.
Cover the Guru Granth Sahib with a rumalla.	Wash your hands.	Karah prashad is shared.
The Granthi can be a man or a woman.	A chauri is waved over the Guru Granth Sahib.	The Langar meal is vegetarian.
Cover your head.	Men & women sit the same distance from the Takht.	Sit cross-legged so the soles of your feet are beneath you.
Everyone shares a meal in the Langar.	Don't wear lots of jewellery.	Men and women sit on opposite sides of the hall.
The Guru Granth Sahib is sat on a Manji Sahib.	Don't wear revealing clothes.	The Guru Granth Sahib has its own bedroom.
No meat, drugs, tobacco or alcohol.	Everyone takes a turn to serve in the Langar.	The ragis can be men or women.
The Guru Granth Sahib is placed on a Takht.	Offerings of money, food and flowers are given.	Hymns are sung from the Guru Granth Sahib.
The Granthi reads out the Guru Granth Sahib.	Sikhs all take the names 'Singh' or 'Kaur'.	Worshippers bow to the Guru Granth Sahib.