## Sikhism and its Key Features

Directions: Students we are beginning Unit #6 World Religions Part #2. Read the following passages about Sikhism and answer the questions in complete sentences.

### Introduction

There are over 18 million people worldwide that follow the teachings of the Sikh religion. The word Sikh means ‘disciple’ or follower. A Sikh follows the teachings of the ten Sikh Gurus which are written in the **Guru Granth Sahib**, the Sikh holy book. It teaches devotion to God and to live a truthful life. It also teaches that all human beings are equal. The gurdwara is a special place of worship for Sikhs and where other important activities take place such as the Khalsa baptisms, religious services, and the operation of the langar.

### Guru Nanak

Sikhism started in India. It was founded by Guru Nanak in about 1499. He did not like the blind rituals and practices of the Hindus and Muslims.

He was born into a Hindu family in 1469 in the Punjab, India. During his life he preached love, equality and understanding. He cared for the poor and vulnerable people. Guru Nanak is the first of eleven gurus or masters. Ten are human and the eleventh is the Sikh

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| **Born 1469 – Died 1539** |

holy book. A guru is a teacher or spiritual leader of great knowledge and has a lot of followers. One of the important things Guru Nanak started was the langar. The concept of the langar is that nobody goes hungry. The last human form of gurus was called Guru Gobind Singh.

### Guru Gobind Singh and The Khalsa

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| **Born 1666 – Died 1708** |

Guru Gobind Singh started the Khalsa in 1699 and the ceremony is still practiced today in a gurdwara, a Sikh temple. The word Khalsa means pure. Guru had baptized five Sikhs and then he asked the five Khalsas to baptize him in return. A member of the Khalsa carries five articles of faith. It is these five articles of faith that show Sikh men and women are wearing a ‘uniform’ belonging to the same faith.

It is said that a long time ago terrible things were happening to Sikhs in India and so Guru Gobind Singh decided to do something about it. In a place called Anandpur the Guru gathered Sikhs to celebrate their harvest festival of thanksgiving, **Baisakhi**. At the festival, he called for a man who was willing to die for his faith. One man stepped forward and went into a tent with the Guru. Then the Guru reappeared with blood on his sword. He then asked for another volunteer and another man went into the tent with the Guru. Once again, the Guru came out of the tent with his sword covered in blood. So, two men went in and did not come out again. The Guru then asked for a third volunteer and the same thing happened. He asked for a fourth volunteer and again reappeared with blood on his sword. He then asked for a fifth volunteer and again the Guru reappeared with blood on his sword. In all five men went in. As far as the crowd could tell, the Guru had killed five men in the tent. Eventually, the Guru opened the tent and showed the five men alive. This was the beginning of Khalsa and the Sikh community.

Guru Gobind Singh wanted all Sikhs both men and women to wear five symbols to show their commitment to their faith. The five symbols all begin with ‘K’. They are the Kesh, Kanga, Kachera, Kara, and the Kirpan.

**Directions: Answer the questions below in full sentences.**

1. In what country did Sikhism start?
2. What is the name of the Guru who started the Sikhism faith?
3. What religion was the Guru born into and when did he die?
4. What does the word Sikh mean? Also find the dictionary definition.
5. What is the name of the Sikh holy book?
6. How many human Gurus were there?
7. What is the name of the last human Guru?
8. Describe the picture of Guru Nanak.

1. What is the name of the Guru that started the Khalsa?
2. When was he born and when did he die?
3. When did the Khalsa start?
4. How many men did this Guru baptize?
5. How many articles of faith does a Sikh wear to show he is of the Sikh religion?