

Nanak and the Thread

A Story of the Sikh Faith

Characters:

Priest

Father

Mother

Guests group

(No figure for the Guru, as many Sikhs do not believe in representing the Guru.)

Props:

50cm Square of felt/ paper.

Coloured embroidery thread at least 30cm long.

Today I'm going to share a story that is special to Sikhs.

Display Sikh Symbol.

Roll out square of felt.

This story is about a very special boy. His name was Nanak.

Nanak grew up to be a Guru: an important Sikh teacher.

When this story took place, Nanak was still a boy.

Nanak's parents loved Nanak very much.

Place Parents on right of square.

They were proud of their son and knew that he was very clever and not like other children.

One day, Nanak's parents decided that it was time for Nanak to take part in a ceremony that boys did to become men. It was a family and religious tradition.

Place Priest on left of square parents.

The priest was called to give Nanak a thread to wear over his shoulder for his whole life.

Hold thread between hands then show over shoulder as might be worn. Then hold between hands again.

Nanak's parents believed that the thread was powerful, it would help him to meditate and would show that he was from an important, high caste, family.

Being high caste was important, for people of a low caste could never do great things and would do low jobs.

The ceremony of the Thread was an exciting time. Friends and family were invited to celebrate.

Place guests beside priest.

Leave space in centre where Nanak would be.

Hold up finger.

But Nanak always asked questions and wondered about things.

Nanak wondered why people took part in ceremonies when God was inside everyone.

Why, he wondered, did he need to wear a thread?

Point to priest.

The priest said: "The thread will always remind you of God."

Nanak refused to put on the thread. He said: "I can remember God without a thread. When someone dies they leave their body and the thread behind. The soul goes on. If you can give me something that will go on with my soul, I will wear that."

Point to priest.

The priest said: "This is a tradition. You must wear this thread to be a man of God."

Nanak disagreed: "People do bad things and think putting on a thread makes them men of God. What will happen when this breaks? A new one will have to be put on."

Point to Priest and parents.

The priest and Nanak's father got angry. Nanak's father was embarrassed in front of his guests and he was worried that Nanak would not be respected if he did not wear the thread.

Point to priest.

The priest challenged Nanak: "Show me the thread that would go with your soul, Boy?"

Nanak explained: "You cannot see the thread that would go with my soul, yet it is so strong it will never break."

Point to Priest.

"What kind of thread will never break?" demanded the priest.

Point to your ear.

"Meditating on the Naam is how to wear a true thread. Meditating on the Naam brings honour and grace. The Naam will never break and will go on with the soul forever, right with us into God's house."

Point to all the people.

What Nanak said confused many people, they didn't understand.

Nanak never wore a thread over his shoulder, but he remembered God through his whole life.

Wondering Questions:

I wonder if you've ever done anything just because everyone else did?

I wonder, what is more important: what you think and feel inside, or what you show other people?

I wonder if you've ever asked why we do something?

I wonder, what makes a good teacher?

I wonder, why do some people believe ceremonies and rituals are important?

I wonder, what is the best way to be close to God?

Note: A Sikh may meditate on the Naam by saying Veheguru, meaning wonderful Lord or teacher, which, in repetition, enlightens the soul.