

Grade: Kindergarten
Lesson Number: 9
Unit Name: Celebrations
Course: Virṣā
Title: 'Bandī Choṛ

Standards

Standard 5: Understanding Sikh Celebrations

- Students identify and describe the events or people celebrated during Sikh holidays and why we celebrate. (e.g. Vaisākhī, Divālī, Holā Mohallā, Parkāsh Utsav Gurū Nānak, Parkāsh Utsav Gurū Gobind Singh, Shahīdī Chote Sāhibzāde, Gurgaddī Gurū Granth Sāhib, Māī Bhāgo and Sikh Bībīām Celebration)

Objectives

1. Students will be able to understand the importance of Bandī Choṛ Divas and why we celebrate this important event. Students will listen to the sākhī and reenact it to understand why Gurū Sāhib made the choice he made.

Prerequisites

- This lesson plan is a part of a series focusing on Sikh celebrations.

Materials

- Explanation of Bandī Choṛ Divas (attached below)
- Visual of Jahāngīr (ਜਹਾਂਗੀਰ)
- A colā
- Color pencils
- Scissors
- Large piece of cloth – that can be cut into 52 strips.
- Pencils
- Chalkboard or chart-paper
- Markers/ chalk
- Sentence strips/ two pieces of poster paper cut horizontally into 8 strips
- **(Felt board and felt is optional.)** Teacher may choose to create a pictorial felt board so that students can get a sense of the story via pictures. This involves cutting out pictorial representations from felt to tell the story.

Advanced Preparation

- Practice telling the sākhī of Bandī Choṛ so that when you are reading it to the students, you can dramatize the parts that need to be dramatic.
- During the sākhī, it's important to emphasize the fact that the Gurū had an opportunity to be free and leave the horrible prison, but he chose not to leave until the other Kings were also released. He did this because the other kings were being oppressed. He was willing to give up his personal freedom for a just cause.
- It is always best to have pictures or objects from the era being discussed.

- It is essential to have a colā because so many of our students may not understand what a colā is.
- Have a large piece of cloth that can be cut into 52 strips. (I would mark it in advance so that when I cut it in front of the students, it will be that much quicker.)
- On the poster paper or sentence strips, write important parts of the sākhī. (e.g. Gurū Hargobind becomes Gurū. He begins to wear two Kirpāns; he starts an army. He is arrested. There are 52 kings in jail with him. Jahāṅgīr lets the Gurū leave. The Gurū refuses to leave without the kings. He is allowed to take anyone who can hang on to his colā. All the kings hold on to the Gurū's colā. When Gurū Sāhib returns to Amritsar – the whole city is lit up with lights.)

Engagement (20 minutes)

- Write “Gurū Hargobind” both in Gurmukhī and English on the board / chart paper.
- Ask student to figure out what is written on the board – if they can't identify the name tell them what it says and see if students have any knowledge about this Gurū.
- If they have information, listen to it and write it down on the board. If they don't have any knowledge of the Gurū start by naming the Gurūs in order.
- Have students help you with the names of the Gurū once again but this time stop when you get to the fifth Gurū. Explain to students how Gurū Arjan attained martyrdom and share with students that he was the father of the next Gurū.
- Ask students if they could remember who the sixth Guru was, if not, say the name slowly, one syllable at a time allowing students to guess the name.
- Then begin telling the sākhī of Gurū Hargobind. Use visuals while sharing the Sākhī to keep students' attention.

Exploration (30 minutes)

- Once you have shared the sākhī, ask comprehension questions to make sure students have understood the sākhī. You can use the following questions or create your own:
 - Who was the main person in this sākhī?
 - What was something that Gurū Hargobind emphasized?
 - Why did he wear two swords (Kirpāns)?
 - Why do you think King Jahāṅgīr arrested Gurū Hargobind?
 - Under what conditions do good guys go to jail?
 - Why did King Jahāṅgīr let Gurū Hargobind leave the prison?
 - Why didn't the Gurū want to leave the prison?
 - How many other kings were in prison with the Gurū?
 - What did the Gurū do to help the other Kings?
 - Why did Gurū Hargobind want to help the others?
 - What happened when Gurū Hargobind got back to Amritsar?
- Explain to them that you wouldn't want to cut up a real colā so instead, you are going to show them how the Gurū helped the other Kings to be free by using a piece of cloth. While you are cutting the strips, have students count in Pañjābī with you. (Count up to 52; if the students can not count that high, have them repeat after you.)
- Show the students the cloth and begin to cut it into strips. Have each child hold on to one strip and walk from one side of the room to the other with the students while

reminding them why Gurū Sāhib chose to help the Kings. Gurū Sāhib tried to help all people not just Sikhs.

- Have students sit on the floor in a circle.
- Have students help you retell the story to make sure they remember the sequence of events from the sākhī.

Explanation/Extension (10 minutes)

- Next show the students the sentence strips or poster board with the story sequence written on it.
- Hand each student a strip with a part of the story and read to them what their sentence strip says. Have them help you put the story back in order.
- Read each strip and allow students enough time to think about the sequence of events.
- Tape up the sentence strips on the wall/ board and read them in order once you have completed the activity.
- Answer any questions students may have.

Evaluation (On-going)

- For homework, have students tell the sākhī to their parents/ family members.
- During the following class, see how much they remember this piece of history.

Teacher Resources

Bandī Chor Divas (ਬੰਦੀ ਛੋੜ ਦਿਵਸ)

Sometime between 1617 and 1619, the sixth Gurū; Gurū Hargobind, was imprisoned at Gavāliar (ਗਵਾਲਿਅਰ) Fort by the Mughal Emperor Jahāngīr (ਜਹਾਂਗੀਰ). Jahāngīr had kept him under close surveillance. Many devotees came by to see the Gurū on a daily basis but were turned away each time. This did not stop them from returning the very next day.

However, the Gurū's well-wishers such as Bhāi Jeṭha (ਜੇਠਾ), and the Muslim mystic Hazrat Miām Mir (ਹਜ਼ਰਤ ਮੀਆਂ ਮੀਰ) rallied for Gurū Hargobind to be released. Although Emperor Jahāngīr duly granted such freedom, Gurū Hargobind refused to leave the prison. This is because 52 other rulers were also being held unfairly at Gwalior Fort. In protest, the Gurū insisted on remaining a captive for as long as the other prisoners were held there. At this, the emperor conceded that however many prisoners could hold onto Gurū Hargobind's colā (ਚੋਲਾ / robe) at the emancipation would also be released. So a special colā was stitched, which had 52 strips attached to it, to be held by each prisoner.

To celebrate Gurū Hargobind's freedom, lamps were lit in Amritsar. Gurū Sāhib and this event have come to be known as Bandī Chor, which loosely translates as 'the release of the imprisoned' or 'the grand emancipator' or 'munificent liberator.' When Gurū Hargobind reached Amritsar, his Sikhs had lit lamps to welcome him. Since then this occasion is celebrated and commemorated.

There is not any significant reason for Sikhs to celebrate Divālī as this is not a Sikh holiday. However, Bandī Chor Divas falls on the same day as the Hindu festival of Divālī. This is a time of celebration for us because Gurū Jī sacrificed and rejected personal freedom in order to defend the innocent and the exploited.

'The brave one fights for the downtrodden' (- Kabīr, Gurū Granth Sāhib)

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