



SIKH  
Research Institute

**Gurmat  
Educational  
Unit  
*Seva***

**Vahiguru Ji Ka Khalsa  
Vahiguru Ji Ki Fatih!**

**Welcome to the SikhRI Gurmat Educational Unit on Seva!**

**In going through the complete set of Seva lesson plans, you will embark on an exciting exploration of understanding what Seva is in light of Gurbani-Wisdom, Tavarikh-History, and Rahit-Lifestyle. This resource can be used at home, Gurmat and Panjabi schools, or Sikh camps.**

**Through this educational unit, Seva can be taught and explained to children of five years and above, providing them with a deeper understanding of the Divine. As a family, you can begin a year-long Seva project that could involve your neighbors and even a larger community, such as Gurmat and Panjabi schools which could showcase the ‘sevadars amongst them.’**

**Each Seva lesson is designed for 1–5 days of learning, but will produce an impact that lasts a lifetime. Whether you just want to get acquainted with Seva or teach others, SikhRI’s Seva lessons will guide your path. Share your Seva inspiration with the community and help move Sikh education forward.**

**SikhRI Gurmat Educational Unit on Seva has been made available in memory of Sardar Harchand Singh and Sardarni Jagir Kaur.**

**With love and appreciation,  
The team at SikhRI**

# Seva: Personal Values

**Age:** 5 - 10

**Class:** 1

**Objective:** Children will learn that one must imbibe divine-like virtues/qualities to serve the divine

Begin talking about Seva with your children by putting out the following questions. You can choose to write it on the board or have a pre-printed paper. Give them a piece of paper and have them answer the questions. After they answer the questions, have them share their answers with a partner. Then give them a few minutes to add anything else they may want to add.

- **What is Seva?**
- **Why should we do it?**
- **Who should we serve?**
- **How should we do it?**

Following that, on the board write the word 'Seva'.

Ask children to share with you all the kinds of 'Seva' they can think of. A majority of the kids will probably share 'sevas' that they are familiar with at the Gurduara. Let them share as much as they want and continue writing on the board the different sevas until they run out of ideas.

Now ask them: 'Why do we do these Sevas?'

Let them share their thoughts ultimately leading them to the fact that seva is an act of selfless service and of no expectation in return.

After they understand that, ask them if they would like to take away any sevas that they originally had as part of the list. If they choose to take any of them out, ask them why they decided to do so.

Now ask them ‘who do we do seva for?’ The response here is to elicit that Seva is done as recognition of the Divine. It is not to benefit yourself, it may be to help others who need help, but because we acknowledge and recognize the same Divinity within all who are serving the Divine.

You can choose to explain the Bani lines below to understand the above point better.

ਸਭ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਤੂ ਸਿਰਿ ਸਿਰਿ ਦਾਤਾ ਸਭੁ ਤੇਰੇ ਕਾਰਣੁ ਕੀਨਾ ਹੇ ॥ (m1, 1028)

All is your Creation, You are the Giver of all,  
the entirety of action is Yours.

ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਕੈ ਵਸਿਆ ਸੋਇ ॥ (m1, 83)

*Having created the Creation, the Divine dwells within it.*

End the class with explaining to the children that Guru Nanak Sahib made it very clear in Gurbani that we needed to stand with/help/be in the service of those who are considered low, essentially those who are not supported. Explain to students that Guru Sahib’s Bani is particularly talking about the caste and how the higher caste considered everyone else as ‘low’. While there is still some sense of casteism today, other -‘isms’ such as racism, fascism or inequalities such as ‘gender’ or ‘age’ also stem from considering someone as ‘lower (not equivalent) than self. Guru Sahib explains that when they are cared for or they are supported, that is where Vahiguru’s grace is:

ਨੀਚਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ ਨੀਚੀ ਹੂ ਅਤਿ ਨੀਚੁ ॥ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਤਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਾਥਿ  
ਵਡਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਕਿਆ ਰੀਸ ॥ ਜਿਥੈ ਨੀਚ ਸਮਾਲੀਅਨਿ ਤਿਥੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਖਸੀਸ  
॥ (m1, 15)

Among the lowest of the low, I am the lowliest of the absolutely low. Nanak seeks their company, why would one compete with those above? Wherever the lowly are cared for, there is the glance of Your Grace!

# Seva: Whom and How We Serve

**Age:** 5- 10

**Class:** 2

**Objective:** Children will understand whom we serve and how we serve

Review first lesson with the students reminding them that since the *Creator* is in creation, we serve the creator. Explain further that Seva is 'to serve', 'to worship', 'to adore' and when we keep this in mind, seva comes naturally.

Now ask children, what makes them happy? Let them answer to their heart's content. They may talk about family, gadgets, friends, etc. Then share with them the following line:

ਸੇਵ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੰਤੋਖੀਈਂ

ਜਿਨ੍ਹੀ ਸਚੇ ਸਚੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ ॥

ਸਭਵ ਕੀਟੀ ਸਭਨਟੋਕਹੀਓ

ਜਛੀ ਸਭਚੇ ਸਭਚੁ ਦਹਾਇਓ।

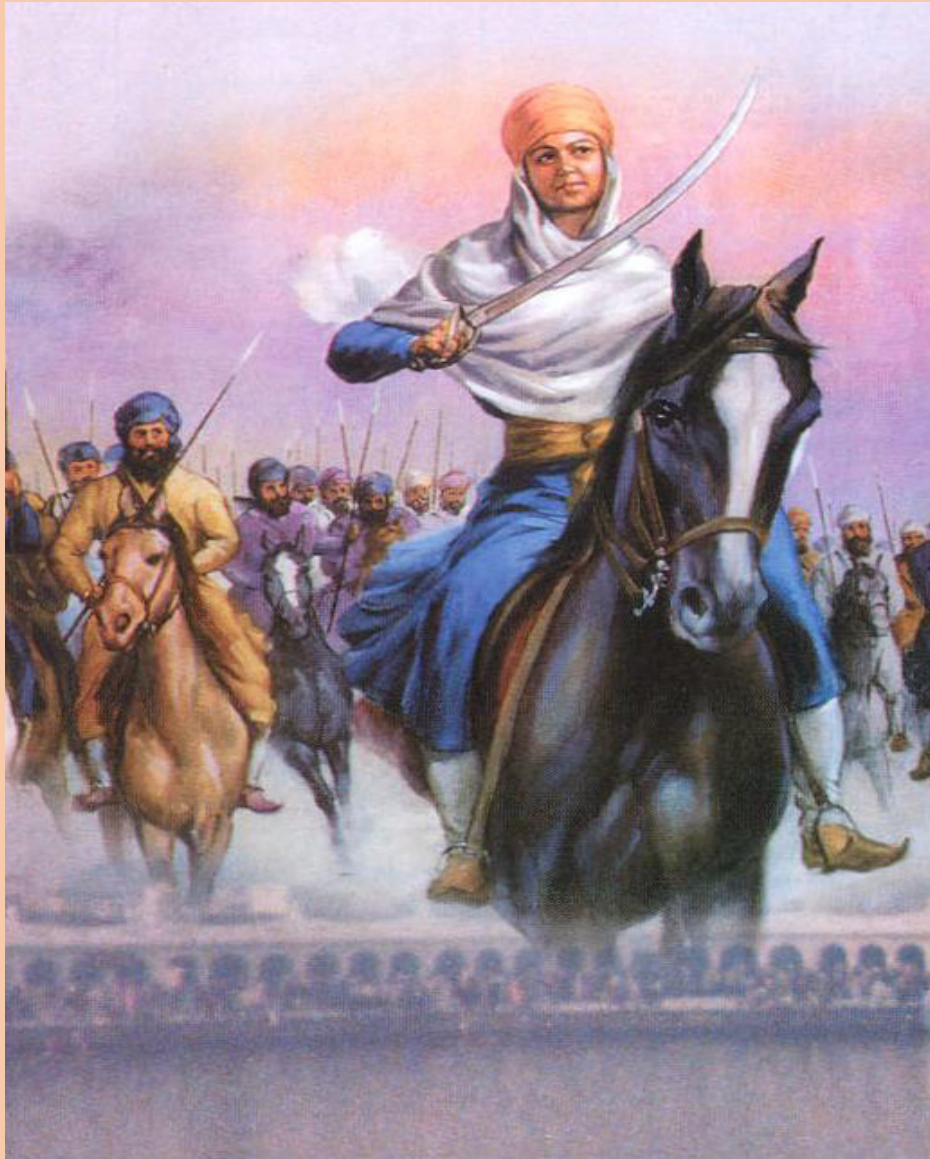
*The servant who serves while truly remembering the Truth is content.*

Guru Granth Sāhib, p. 466

Then continue the discussion further and ask children what they understand from the above *tukh* (line). Explain clearly that every time service is done with 'truth' as the forefront, one is automatically content/happy/satisfied.

Then share examples of the following Panthic Sevadars. Remind them that there is no one way to serve and that you will touch on only a few sevadars to show an example of variety. Their follow up activity will be to go and find more examples from Sikh history as well as present day examples that they can see.

There is a link to each of the Sevadars. We recommend that you read the content to familiarize yourself with the story of each sevar and explain it to the children in simple terms.



## Leadership Services

**Mai Bhago:** Mai Bhago could have decided that because society viewed the women's role to be at home, that she did not have to mobilize the Guru's Sikhs, but instead she became a leader despite the societal pressures. Explain to children that seva is not gender specific.

- ✓ Led return of Calī Mukte to Guru Gobind Singh Ji
- ✓ Survived armed combat at Battle of Khidrana
- ✓ Enlisted as Nanak X's bodyguard
- ✓ Serves as model for all Sikhs, both men and women
- ✓ Defies stereotypes of gender-based roles
- ✓ <https://www.allaboutsikhs.com/great-sikh-women/mai-bhago>





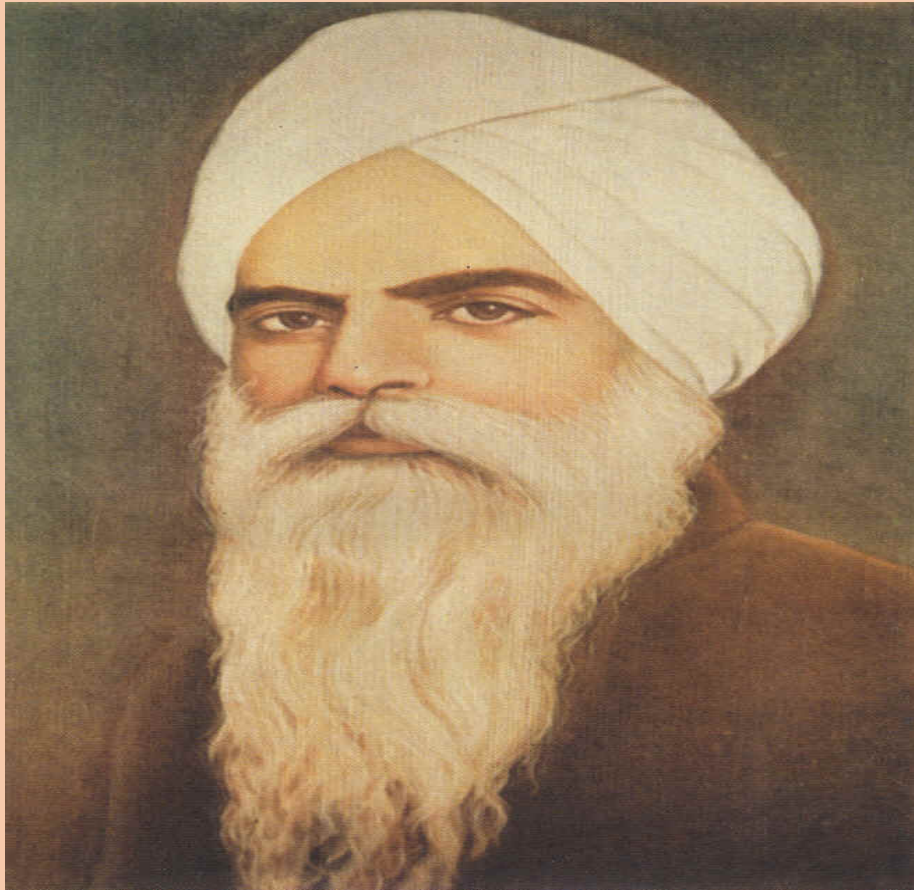
## Baba Gurbaksh Singh Nihang: Baba Gurbaksh Singh

- ✓ Studied under Bhai Mani Singh, Baba Dip Singh
- ✓ Led *jathas* against Afgani invaders
- ✓ Defended Darbar Sahib from Abdali's 30,000 with 30
- ✓ Became *lara* (bridegroom) on 1 December 1764
- ✓ Established precedent of armed-struggle within Gurduara confines for purposes of defense
- ✓ <https://www.allaboutsikhs.com/guru-sakhis/bhai-gurbaksh-singh-ji->

## Educational Service

**Bibi Harnam Kaur (no image available):** Bibi Harnam Kaur chose to take on a little more traditional seva. Her seva was important at the time because educational access to women was limited, so she was able to use materials that she had to create opportunities for women.

- ✓ Studied Gurmukhi (granthi system) intensely under Bhai Dula Singh Dhadhur for several years
- ✓ Co-founded and operated Sikh Kaniya Vidyalaya, first Sikh girls' boarding school
- ✓ Established *Istri Satsang*, weekly women's group



## Community Enhancement Service

**Bhai Vir Singh:** At a time when many Sikhs were forgetting their basic principles, Bhai Vir Singh came with a renewal of the Panjabi Literary tradition. He was both well versed in the Sikh literary tradition as well as the current day education and rather than pursuing a career for his benefit, he chose to work toward development of Sikh material.

- ✓ Khalsa College, Amritsar for higher education
- ✓ Composition and distribution of diverse literature
- ✓ Khalsa Tract Society for scholarly study of Sikhi
- ✓ Panjab & Sind Bank for economic growth
- ✓ Chief Khalsa Divan for Sikh political representation
- ✓ Sikh Education Committee for educational extensions
- ✓ Khalsa Samacar, journalistic medium for mass awareness
- ✓ <http://sikh-history.com/sikhhist/personalities/literature/veer.html>





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## Humanitarian Service

### Bhagat Puran Singh:

Bhagat Puran Singh has come to be known for the help that he provided to physically challenged and unwanted children and adults. He devoted his entire life to fulfill his mission and his work continues even now after he is gone.

- ✓ Established Pingalwara aid shelter for sick and disabled
- ✓ Transported orphan cripple on back for 14 years as the “garland around my neck”
- ✓ Nobel Peace Prize Nominee, 1992
- ✓ Donated earnings to print free literature for Sikhs
- ✓ Environmental advocate
- <http://pingalwara.org/pingalwara1/bhagatpuransinghji/article-on-bhagat-ji/>



## Human Rights Service

**Jaswant Singh Khalra:** Jaswant Singh Khalra helped uncover illegal mass cremations in Panjab and as a result was captured, tortured and killed.

- ✓ General Secretary of Human Rights Wing of the Shiromani Akali Dal
- ✓ Uncovered illegal mass cremations
- ✓ 2,200 in 3 case studies  
approx. 25,000 in Panjab
- ✓ Filed cases up to the  
Indian Supreme Court
- ✓ 'Disappeared' 6 September 1995
- ✓ <http://www.panthic.org/articles/5512/>

# Assignment

Ask children that they need to now research a person from history or present that they think can truly be considered a sevadar.

They can choose to write an essay about the person or create a poster to present to the class. If they write an essay, they will read their essay.

In their presentations they must say:

- 1) Why they chose this person
- 2) How this person has made a difference in the community
- 3) Do they think this person has a connection with the Divine and how or why?
- 4) Was it easy for this person to take on the seva that they have chosen?

# Seva: Sevadars Amongst Us

Age: 5-10

Class: 3-5

## Objective:

- Children will make a presentation about the sevadar that they chose.
- Children will learn about possible seva opportunities.
- Children will identify a seva project for themselves and follow through on it over several weeks.

Have children share their presentations about the sevadars that they chose. At the end of everyone's presentation, have students share their thoughts about other presentations.

Following that, share with them some examples of Seva in different communities.

Sometimes it is not easy to determine what certain children may be interested in. For younger children you can begin with the following.

Some great beginner activities for young children are:

1. Planting flowers at a school, park or Gurduara.
2. Serving meals to shut-ins (restricted to their homes) or at a shelter.
3. Collecting food, toiletries or clothes for emergency relief.
4. Cleaning up a playground or community area.
5. Raising money for a charity they believe in.
6. Gathering or sorting food for a food bank.
7. Visiting the elderly. Reading to the elderly.
8. Tutoring or reading with younger children.
9. Helping out at an animal shelter.

## Community Projects

*Here are some websites write-ups that can help you find information on providing help in your communities. It is important that children are guided through this process.*

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/>

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/serve>

### **Share Our Strength**

[www.strength.org](http://www.strength.org).

*More than food for hungry kids*

We've all seen the images on the television news: starving children in faraway places like the Congo, Ethiopia, and Liberia. But the fact is, kids in America are starving too. Close to 13 million children in our own country are at serious risk of being undernourished.

Share Our Strength supports food banks and emergency-relief organizations, and works to address hunger's root causes. It teaches low-income families about nutrition and budgeting, helps enroll poor children in federal nutrition programs, and funds groups that teach job and life skills to impoverished families. One of its programs encourages people to donate one hour's wage to battle childhood hunger. Another initiative helps communities hold fund-raisers to benefit hungry kids.

### **KABOOM!**

[www.kaboom.org](http://www.kaboom.org)

*Safe playgrounds for everyone*

When 3-year-old Faith Tinoco was starting school back in 2002, her parents were worried that their daughter, born with Down syndrome, wouldn't be able to play along with the other kids at Melody Park Christian School, in Salinas, California. A year earlier, there would have been cause for concern: The school's playground equipment was outdated and inappropriate for Faith's needs.

But thanks to an organization called Kaboom!, Faith's school had just acquired a new playground -- one that was completely safe and handicapped-accessible. Since 1995, Kaboom! has teamed up with corporate partners to create 546 playgrounds in cities and towns across the country at an average cost of \$55,000 each. It has also improved 1,500 existing playgrounds to make them safer.

# Reach Out and Read

[www.reachoutandread.org](http://www.reachoutandread.org)

## *A prescription for books*

Most kids dread going to the doctor's office, but Mikela, 2, who lives in a shelter with her mother in rural Vermont, isn't one of them. That's because this little girl's pediatrician participates in Reach Out and Read, a unique literacy program that distributes books to needy children at each of their regular checkups.

The organization, which trains doctors and nurses to educate parents about the value of reading, provides books to an estimated 1.7 million kids each year. It accepts donations of money and of gently used books, and it is currently seeking volunteers to staff doctors' waiting rooms, to help kids with reading.

# Project Linus

[www.projectlinus.org](http://www.projectlinus.org)

## *Blanketing kids with care*

Every child needs a security blanket -- especially kids who are seriously ill or who've undergone some kind of trauma. Project Linus makes sure that these children have something to snuggle up with. Volunteers create homemade, washable blankets of all sizes and styles and distribute them to kids "in need of a big hug." Since 1995, Project Linus has given 673,000 blankets to children in countries around the world.

If you want to contribute a homemade blanket, the organization offers patterns on its Website and provides links to local chapters. Blankets can be quilts, comforters, fleece throws, afghans, or receiving blankets, in child-friendly colors. Cash donations to help defray distribution costs are also welcome.

# Conclusion:

The purpose of learning about seva as a Sikh principle is to help each child know that they have a responsibility to serve beyond themselves.

Encouraging children to take on projects give them a focus, mission and purpose. Encourage all students to take on a project and make sure that they share it with their families, classmates and at large.



# Seva: Personal Values

**Age:** 11 and above

**Class:** 1

**Objective:** Students will learn that one must imbibe divine-like virtues/qualities to serve the divine

On a piece of paper, have students write the following questions and answer them. Give them a good 5-7 minutes for each question, so that they can answer them comfortably and thoughtfully.

- What is Seva?
- Why should we do it?
- Who should we serve?
- How should we do it?

Following that, have students discuss answers to their questions. Let them share their answers and don't make any judgments on them. Ask students if they would like to add or change their answers based on what others have shared.

Following that, on the board write the word, 'Seva'.

Ask students to share with you all the kinds of 'Seva' they can think of. A majority of the kids will probably share 'sevas' that they are familiar with at the Gurduara. Let them share as much as they want and continue writing on the board the different sevas until they run out of ideas.

Now ask them: 'Why do we do these Sevas?'

Let them share their thoughts ultimately leading them to the fact that seva is an act of selfless service and of no expectation in return.

After they understand that, ask them if they would like to take away any sevas that they originally had as part of the list. If they choose to take any of them out, ask them why they decided to do so.

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All is your Creation, You are the Giver of all,  
the entirety of action is Yours.

ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਕੈ ਵਸਿਆ ਸੋਇ ॥ (m1, 83)

*Having created the Creation, the Divine dwells within it.*

Further, help them contextualize seva by sharing the following and discussing with them what they understand from this. Seva stems from a love for the Divine!

- Acknowledging the Divine  
ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸੇਵੇ ਜੀਅ ਕੇ ਬੰਧਨਾ ਜੇਤੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਹਿ ॥ (m4, 552)

Without serving the true Gurū, all deeds are only chains binding the soul.

- Submitting to the higher Truth (Submission → Service)  
ਸਤਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਗਾਖੜੀ ਸਿਰੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਇ ॥ (m1, 27)

Service of the true Guru is difficult, It requires surrender and submission.

- Sikh is to serve the Gurū/Vāhigurū  
ਨੀਤ ਨੀਤ ਹਰਿ ਸੇਵੀਐ ਸਾਸਿ ਸਾਸਿ ਹਰਿ ਧਿਆਈਐ ॥ (m5, 211)

*Let us serve Vāhigurū daily with each and every breath.*

End the class with explaining to the children that Guru Nanak Sahib made it very clear in Gurbani that we needed to stand with/help/be in the service of those who are considered low, essentially those who are not supported. Explain to students that Guru Sahib's Bani is particularly talking about the caste and how the higher caste considered everyone else as 'low'. While there is still some sense of casteism today, other -'isms' such as racism, fascism or inequalities such as 'gender' or 'age' also stem from considering someone as 'lower (not equivalent) than self. Guru Sahib explains that when they are cared for or they are supported, that is where Vahiguru's grace is:

ਨੀਚਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ ਨੀਚੀ ਹੂ ਅਤਿ ਨੀਚੁ ॥ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਤਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਾਥਿ ਵਡਿਆ  
ਸਿਉ ਕਿਆ ਰੀਸ ॥ ਜਿਥੈ ਨੀਚ ਸਮਾਲੀਅਨਿ ਤਿਥੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਖਸੀਸ ॥ (m1, 15)

Among the lowest of the low, I am the lowliest of the absolutely low, Nanak seeks their company, why would one compete with those above? Wherever the lowly are cared for, there is the glance of Your Grace!

# Seva: Whom and How We Serve

Age: 11 and above

Class: 2 and 3

Objective: Children will understand whom we serve and how we serve

Review first lesson with the students reminding them that since the *Creator* is in creation, we serve the creator. Explain further that Seva is ‘to serve’, ‘to worship’, ‘to adore’ and when we keep this in mind, seva comes naturally.

Share with them that in order for us to engage in true seva, we need to develop Divine-like virtues.

- Service comes by imbibing Divine qualities

ਵਿਣੁ ਗੁਣ ਕੀਤੇ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥

(m1, 16)

*Without virtue, there is no devotion.*

- Serving Vāhigurū one becomes Vāhigurū like

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਸੇਵੇ ਸੋ ਜੋਗੀ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਭੈ ਰਚਿ ਰਹੈ ਸੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਜੈਸਾ ਸੇਵੈ ਤੈਸੇ ਹੋਇ ॥

(m1, 223)

*One who serves the true Gurū becomes accomplished. In reverence one develops fearlessness and becomes like the One the individual serves*

Now ask children, what makes them happy? Let them answer to their heart’s content. They may talk about family, gadgets, friends, etc. Then share with them the following line:

ਸੇਵ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੰਤੋਖੀਈਂ

ਜਿਨ੍ਹੀ ਸਚੇ ਸਚੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ ॥

*The servant who serves while truly remembering the Truth is content.*

Guru Granth Sāhib, p. 466

Then continue the discussion further and ask children what they understand from the above *tukh* (line). Explain clearly that every time service is done with ‘truth’ as the forefront, one is automatically content/happy/satisfied.

Explain further that often, Seva can be done in many forms. It is often spoken about in terms of using your *Tan*(body/physical), *Man*(Mind/intellect), *Dhan*(Wealth/Treasures). In essence you must offer your all in service.

**Activity:** Tell children that they will be learning about different Panthic Sevadars, but before we do that talk about what they know about the Gurus and how their work can be seen as seva.

On the board, write the word 'Gurus' in the middle and ask children to share any of the activities that the Gurus did that should be considered Seva. (Everything that they did was to 'adore', to 'worship' and to 'serve')

Then share examples of the following Panthic Sevadars. Remind them that there is no one way to serve and that you will touch on only a few sevadars to show an example of variety. Their follow up activity will be to go and find more examples from Sikh history as well as present day examples that they can see.

There is a link to each of the Sevadars. We recommend that you read the content to familiarize yourself with the story of each sevadar and explain it to the children in simple terms. For the older children, you can also give them the links to read on their own.



### Leadership services

**Mai Bhago:** Mai Bhago could have decided that because society viewed the women's role to be at home, that she did not have to mobilize the Guru's Sikhs, but instead she became a leader despite the societal pressures. Explain to children that seva is not gender specific.

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## Educational Service

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- ✓ Co-founded and operated Sikh Kaniya Vidyalya, first Sikh girls' boarding school
- ✓ Established *Istri Satsang*, weekly women's group
- ✓ Created a parcarak jatha (group sharing/teaching) for education of masses
- ✓ Published a monthly *Panjabi Bahin* (publication) for female education
- ✓ Born a Hindu (1882); Initiated as a Sikh (1901);
- ✓ Died at age 24 (1905)
- ✓ <https://www.allaboutsikhs.com/great-sikh-women/bibi-harnam-kaur>





### Community Enhancement Service

**Bhai Vir Singh:** At a time when many Sikhs were forgetting their basic principles, Bhai Vir Singh came with a renewal of the Panjabi Literary tradition. He was both well versed in the Sikh literary tradition as well as the current day education and rather than pursuing a career for his benefit, he chose to work toward development of Sikh material.

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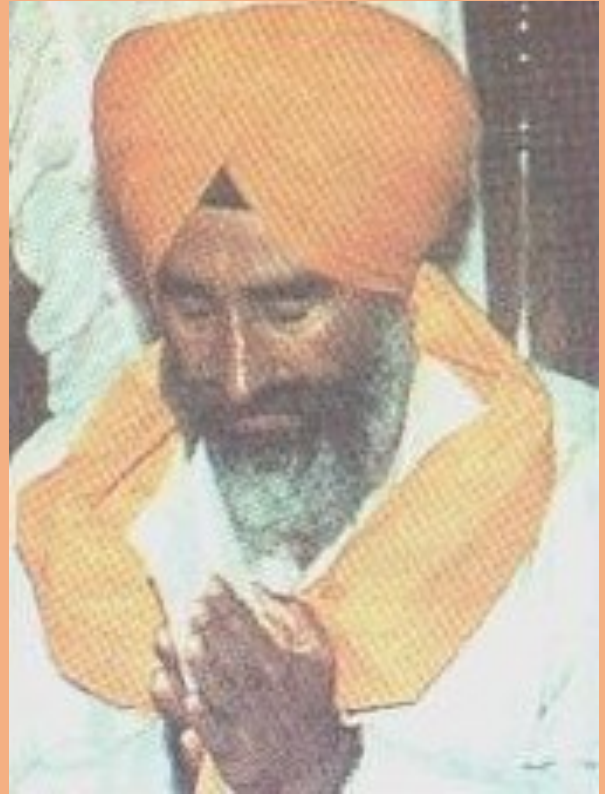




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# Assignment

Ask children that they need to now research a person from history or present that they think can truly be considered a sevadar.

Remind them that every action can exemplify service if it is done through purposeful decision making.

They can choose to write an essay about the person or create a poster to present to the class. If they write an essay, they will read their essay.

In their presentations they must say:

- 1) Why they chose this person?
- 2) How this person has made a difference in the community?
- 3) Do they think this person has a connection with the Divine and how or why?
- 4) Was it easy for this person to take on the seva that they have chosen?
- 5) What kind of Seva would the student like to take on?

# Seva: Sevadars amongst us

Age: 11 and above

Class: 4-5

Objective:

- Children will make a presentation about the sevadar that they chose.
- Children will learn about possible seva opportunities.
- Children will identify a seva project for themselves and follow through on it over several weeks.

Have children share their presentations about the sevadars that they chose. At the end of everyone's presentation, have students share their thoughts about other presentations.

Now explain to children that they need to come up with their own personal plan on what kind of seva project they would like to get themselves involved in.

Have them think about developing SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals for themselves. While they would like to begin making their goals in class, they really should research and focus on what they want to do. As a reference you give them the following link:

<https://www.smartsheet.com/blog/essential-guide-writing-smart-goals>

- You may choose to have students present their SMART goals to the class or present them in smaller groups. You can ask them to choose to make any changes depending on their discussions.
- An ideal way to ensure the project is moving forward is to make sure you continue to check in with students and re-visit your goals.

Remind students through this quote what 'Expressions of Love' are

*"Guru Nanak preached a higher truth. To him love was active service, and his followers soon profited by this teaching. One can see no higher record of service in the annals of nations than that shown by the Sikhs, who were taught to annihilate the thought of self and utilize all their energies in the service of God and humanity."*

**Principal Teja Singh**  
*Guru Nanak and His Mission*

Following that, share with them some examples of Seva in different communities.

Sometimes it is not easy to determine what certain children may be interested in. For younger children you can begin with the following.

Some great beginner activities for young children are:

1. Planting flowers at a school, park or Gurduara.
2. Serving meals to shut-ins or at a shelter.
3. Collecting food, toiletries or clothes for emergency relief.
4. Cleaning up a playground or community area.
5. Raising money for a charity they believe in.
6. Gathering or sorting food for a food bank.
7. Visiting the elderly. Reading to the elderly
8. Tutoring or reading with younger children.
9. Helping out at an animal shelter.

### **Community Projects**

Here are some websites write-ups that can help you find information on providing help in your communities. It is important that children are guided through this process.

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/>

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/serve>

## **Share Our Strength**

[www.strength.org](http://www.strength.org)

*More than food for hungry kids*

We've all seen the images on the television news: starving children in faraway places like the Congo, Ethiopia, and Liberia. But the fact is, kids in America are starving too. Close to 13 million children in our own country are at serious risk of being undernourished.

Share Our Strength supports food banks and emergency-relief organizations, and works to address hunger's root causes. It teaches low-income families about nutrition and budgeting, helps enroll poor children in federal nutrition programs, and funds groups that teach job and life skills to impoverished families. One of its programs encourages people to donate one hour's wage to battle childhood hunger. Another initiative helps communities hold fund-raisers to benefit hungry kids.

## **KABOOM!**

[www.kaboom.org](http://www.kaboom.org)

*Safe playgrounds for everyone*

When 3-year-old Faith Tinoco was starting school back in 2002, her parents were worried that their daughter, born with Down syndrome, wouldn't be able to play along with the other kids at Melody Park Christian School, in Salinas, California. A year earlier, there would have been cause for concern: The school's playground equipment was outdated and inappropriate for Faith's needs. But thanks to an organization called Kaboom!, Faith's school had just acquired a new playground -- one that was completely safe and handicapped-accessible. Since 1995, Kaboom! has teamed up with corporate partners to create 546 playgrounds in cities and towns across the country at an average cost of \$55,000 each. It has also improved 1,500 existing playgrounds to make them safer.

## **Reach Out and Read**

[www.reachoutandread.org](http://www.reachoutandread.org)

*A prescription for books*

Most kids dread going to the doctor's office, but Mikela, 2, who lives in a shelter with her mother in rural Vermont, isn't one of them. That's because this little girl's pediatrician participates in Reach Out and Read, a unique literacy program that distributes books to needy children at each of their <sup>12</sup> regular checkups.



The organization, which trains doctors and nurses to educate parents about the value of reading, provides books to an estimated 1.7 million kids each year. It accepts donations of money and of gently used books, and it is currently seeking volunteers to staff doctors' waiting rooms, to help kids with reading.

## Project Linus

[www.projectlinus.org](http://www.projectlinus.org)

### *Blanketing kids with care*

Every child needs a security blanket -- especially kids who are seriously ill or who've undergone some kind of trauma. Project Linus makes sure that these children have something to snuggle up with. Volunteers create homemade, washable blankets of all sizes and styles and distribute them to kids "in need of a big hug." Since 1995, Project Linus has given 673,000 blankets to children in countries around the world.

If you want to contribute a homemade blanket, the organization offers patterns on its Website and provides links to local chapters. Blankets can be quilts, comforters, fleece throws, afghans, or receiving blankets, in child-friendly colors. Cash donations to help defray distribution costs are also welcome.

## Conclusion:

The purpose of learning about seva as a Sikh principle is to help each child know that they have a responsibility to serve beyond themselves.

Encouraging children to take on projects give them a focus, mission and purpose. Encourage all students to take on a project and make sure that they share it with their families, classmates and at large.

In conclusion, remind students that if one wants to internalize Seva, then these tools are necessary and need to be developed through practice

- Eradicate-Self (I-ness)
- Develop leadership traits
- Strive for freedom, equality and justice
- Exhibit

- ✓ Divine Inspiration
- ✓ Self-sovereignty
- ✓ Intentional servitude
- ✓ Integrative creativity



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