



Bandi Chhor Divas

1. As the pupils enter

Have **the webpage** open. Play your chosen music and display any images.

2. Introduction

Tell the assembly that there is an important festival celebrated by Sikhs all around the world at about this time of year (if your school is celebrating - or plans to celebrate - Diwali you may wish to emphasise that although this festival falls at the same time of year it is not actually Diwali). The festival is called 'Bandi Chhor Divas' - which translates as 'Prisoner Release Day'. The festival commemorates an event over 400 years ago when Guru Hargobind was released from a fort in northern India, where he was being held against his will. A 'guru' is a spiritual leader and Guru Hargobind was the sixth leader of the Sikh community. Tell the assembly they are going to watch a short animation about the event. It's a story about being resourceful - one that we can all learn from. Also tell the assembly that they will hear Guru Hargobind called 'sahib-ji' - which is added to his name as a term of respect.

3. Play the video

Duration 3' 27". Final words: 'Bandi Chhor Divas - the Prisoner Release Day.'

4. Time to talk

Ask everyone to turn to the person beside them and tell them two things they remember from the story. You could consolidate pupils' recall of the story and their understanding of it by asking the Video questions:

- Why has a crowd gathered at the the fort? (Guru Hargobind is inside)
- How did the guru become imprisoned in the fort? (The emperor sent him there to say prayers, but then had the guru locked inside)
- How long had the guru been imprisoned in the fort? (12 years)
- Who was also imprisoned in the fort? (52 princes)
- Why has the guru refused to leave the fort? (He will not leave unless the 52 princes are also released)
- How many of the princes has the emperor said can leave the fort? (As many as can hold on to the guru's robe - a way to restrict the number)
- How does the guru ensure everyone can leave together? (He has a special robe made, sufficiently long for everyone to be able to hold on to it)

Ask the assembly to suggest words to describe the actions of Guru Hargobind and his plan. Direct the discussion towards an understanding that the guru has shown great self-sacrifice, but has also been extremely resourceful and creative: he has found a way to fulfil the unreasonable demand of the emperor, enabling everyone to leave the fort peacefully.

5. Opportunity to sing

Link to video page



6. Opportunity to reflect

Festivals are an opportunity for us all to celebrate - to share happy times with family and friends and enjoy a holiday... Think to yourself about what your favourite festival times are...

During Bandi Chhor Divas there are fireworks and processions and Sikhs light up their homes and places of worship...

And they remember how 400 years ago their leader - Guru Hargobind - was able to arrange the freedom of 52 princes... The guru showed great self-sacrifice... but he also showed great resourcefulness and creativity... Spend a moment thinking how you might be able to show those qualities today... and in future...

7. Opportunity for prayer

Use your usual form of address ('Dear God', 'Let us pray', etc) and:
Thank you for the lives of all those people from who we can learn so much.

When we find others in need of help, may we be willing to sacrifice our time and energy.

And when we face difficulties ourselves, may we be resourceful and creative in finding solutions.

Amen.