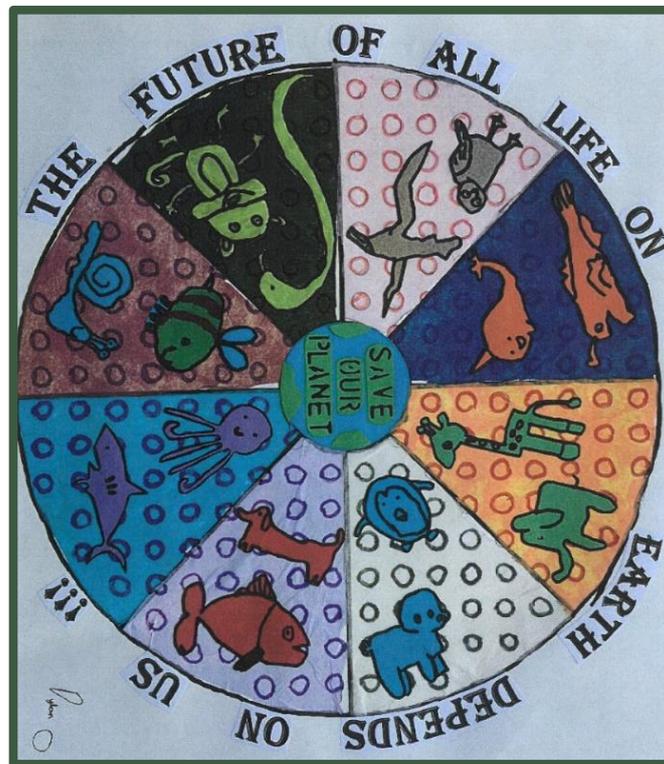


## Ethical Veganism in RE

### Unit 2 (ages 7 to 9)

What can we learn from dharmic religions about kindness to animals?

*Focus on Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism*



### 'Faith in Art'

Dylan, Age 7

NATRE Art in Heaven, 2020

Dylan wrote (abridged):

"David Attenborough inspires me because he talks about the ocean and says important speeches and he also helps the ocean and planet earth to be a better place. He really cares about the animals and the sea creatures, and it makes me feel very happy that he wants to save all the creatures in planet earth. I did the sea creatures and animals on my art because they are God's animals and I'm showing how important they are. Humans need all the animals to live and be happy."

## Aims of Religious Education

**The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and belief, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.**

To help you to make the most of these units, please read and refer to the Teachers' Guide.

### **About this unit:**

This unit introduces pupils to teachings in dharmic religions (mainly Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism) that support the compassionate treatment of animals. It is an age-appropriate introduction to thinking about the responsibilities human beings may have towards other animals, and how, for some religious believers, care and compassion for animals may be seen as integral to their religious faith, practice and identity.

This unit centres around four stories from three religions. Dealing with three religions may be too much of a challenge, so be selective if you need to be. Consider how this unit fits in with your RE syllabus and how it contributes to learners' understanding of the religions which feature. These units are designed to be flexible! You may wish to adjust the content/activities to suit your syllabus, cohort and contexts for RE.

The activities enable deep thinking and discussion. Learners will make comparisons, ask questions, and discuss a range of viewpoints. Learners will recognise that believers may interpret teachings in different ways, coming to different conclusions about what the teachings mean for their lives. Considering the impact and influence of religious teachings about kindness to animals in the lives of believers will be encouraged, as well as personal reflection on learners' own views and perspectives.

The unit enables teachers to make choices between which religions to focus on and has enough variety in terms of learning and teaching activities to make study of all three interesting and engaging. Learners continue to engage with key questions which are golden threads running through the entire series of units, this time developing their understanding of dharmic thinking: How do humans treat animals and does this align with how they *should* be treated? Do animals have rights? Should we differentiate between different species of animals, giving more regard to some than to others, and if so, why? Has religion been good or bad for animals? Should we focus more on the similarities and connections between humans and animals, rather than what sets us apart?

This unit fosters learners' understanding that dharmic traditions emphasise the oneness or interconnectedness of all living beings. Teachings and stories are selected as stimuli bringing to the fore concern for human beings' fellow earthlings, encouraging reflection on kindness and compassion towards animals as a religious duty. As we progress through these units, learners will see how some religious believers see commitment to ethical veganism as a logical conclusion to fulfilling their religious and moral duty in regard to caring for God's creation.

The enquiry questions set challenging standards for learners, encouraging them to think critically and creatively and to engage in thoughtful discussion. As with the teaching of all religious and non-religious worldviews, this unit does not seek to promote any worldview as correct, nor does it seek to alter the views or behaviours of the children/young people who engage with it.

### **Where does this unit fit in?**

The unit will provide teachers with guidance in planning and delivering around 3 hours of RE lessons designed for pupils around the ages of 7 to 9 years old. Of course, these lessons can be adapted to suit children of other ages, and teachers might wish to make adaptations to the content to suit their particular cohorts. The lessons are designed to slot easily into RE schemes of learning.

Teachers are encouraged to think about where these lessons may fit in with their current RE syllabus. The lessons can be used to enrich currently taught themes/religions/worldviews. For instance, to enhance teaching about concern for the environment, as well as the more obvious placement within themes that deal with religious (and/or secular) views of animals. They may also be added to a systematic study of religion, offering a new dimension on belief and practice within a particular religious tradition. Alternatively, these lessons could be used within a stand-alone RE enrichment day.

**Estimated teaching time for this unit: 3 hours. Teach less, in depth, if you have less time – it is not recommended to skate over the surface of the important issues covered in these lessons. Invest more time if you can or teach fewer concepts well if time is limited.**

**This unit is designed to enable you to select and omit the content that you wish your learners to encounter. For instance, you may wish to focus on just one religion, two or all three. The unit can be split across year groups, or taught as a complete package.**

**The unit will provide these opportunities:**

- Examining teachings from dharmic religions that encourage compassionate treatment of animals
- Considering the impact and influence of these teachings on the daily lives of believers
- Thinking about their own views in relation to what is learnt
- Developing exploration and discussion of philosophical and theological stances on the moral status of animals
- Deeper thinking around the values that underpin religious belief and practice in relation to animals
- Creative and critical engagement with sources of wisdom which will enhance learners' religious literacy
- Development of literacy skills through discussion and writing activities

**KEY THEMES ADDRESSED BY THIS UNIT**

**Beliefs and concepts:**

- The treatment of non-human animals by humans and the extent to which this aligns with religious values in dharmic religions
- Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh perspectives on extending compassion, consideration and kindness beyond humans and towards non-human animals
- Ways in which kindness and compassion to animals has featured in dharmic religions

**ATTITUDES FOCUS:** Students will explore attitudes of:

- **Self-awareness** by becoming more aware of the implications of behaviour and ideas about human and animal relations
- **Open mindedness** by thinking deeply on the issues and discussing varying and sometimes conflicting views with peers
- **Empathy** by being encouraged to think about and reflect upon the experiences of non-human animals
- **Compassion** by thinking about how their own actions and those of other humans impact on non-human animals, and considering ways to have a positive impact

<p><b>Contributions to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students</b></p> <p><b>Opportunities for spiritual development come from:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaging with profound questions about how religious people understand the value of human and non-human animals and their relationships with each other, the natural world and, where applicable with God/a higher being</li> <li>Reflecting on and developing their own views in relation to dharmic teachings and enabling pupils to think critically about these and to formulate and express their own views</li> </ul> <p><b>Opportunities for moral development come from:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exploring and valuing a diversity of views and values on issues relating to kindness to animals</li> <li>Asking and answering moral questions: Do we have moral duties towards non-human animals, and if so what are these duties?</li> <li>Reflecting and formulating ideas around duties, rights, responsibilities and our place and status in the world in relation to non-human animals and the environment</li> </ul> <p><b>Opportunities for social development come from:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appreciating different ways and contexts for thinking about how animals should be treated by humans</li> <li>Considering a range of stances on the treatment of animals and understanding why some religious people see kindness to animals as an important responsibility</li> <li>Articulating their own ideas and understanding those of others</li> </ul> <p><b>Opportunities for cultural development come from:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exploring the relationship between religious and cultural motivations for kindness to animals</li> <li>Promoting inter-cultural understanding whereby pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their own cultural pre-dispositions</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Expectations:</b> By the end of this unit, most learners should achieve the following outcomes:</p>		
<p><b>Make sense of belief:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand some teachings from dharmic religions which encourage people to be kind and caring towards animals</li> <li>Talk about the different meanings these teachings could hold for Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Understand the impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain how religious teachings may influence how believers live their lives</li> <li>Begin to think about how religious believers might come to different conclusions about what these teachings mean in practice</li> </ul>	<p><b>Make connections:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compare and contrast teachings encouraging kindness to animals within and across dharmic religions</li> <li>Consider what duties human beings might have towards other animals -are these duties different or the same, depending on your religious (or non-religious) view of the world?</li> </ul>

Please feel free to adapt these to meet the requirements of your RE syllabus.

### ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE FOR LEARNERS

Pupils would benefit from a rudimentary understanding of the religions featured (Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism). Understanding key words like ‘vegetarianism’ and ‘veganism’ would be advantageous.

Whereas western mindsets often distinguish humans sharply from animals, the dharmic thinking sees all life as one. In Hinduism and Buddhism, a duty of harmlessness - ahimsa - towards all creatures comes from this perspective. For many Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs their treatment of and relationship with non-human animals can be an important expression of spiritual life, for instance, vegetarianism and veganism is widely practised among adherents of dharmic traditions.

It is important to acknowledge that there is great diversity within as well as across religions, and there is often no single clear view on the right way to treat animals. This unit focuses on a range of interpretations of beliefs and teachings, opening them up to learners’ scrutiny.

**SUB QUESTION: What do Hindu beliefs tell us about the importance of animals?**

**Ideas and some content for learning:**

Teachers can select content from these examples and add more of their own to enable students to achieve the outcomes.

**Hindu Gods Gallery Exhibition**

Use the BBC Key Stage 2 clip ‘What is Hinduism?’ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zh86n39/articles/zmpp92p> to recap or teach some key beliefs.

Put around 6-8 murtis (figures) or pictures around the room of different Hindu deities such as Ganesh (partially elephant), Hanuman (partially monkey) and Narasimha (partially lion) who are partially animals alongside those who are often shown with animals, Shiva (bull) e.g. Saraswati (swan, or sometimes peacock), Durga (tiger or sometimes a lion), Krishna (cow), Lakshmi (owl). You can find some very good images online, e.g.: <https://pixabay.com/images/search/hindu%20god/>. Number the images clearly for ease of reference later on. Let learners walk around the room, exploring the images and discussing them with peers, as if it were a gallery exhibition. This may be a recap on their prior learning about Hindu gods. It is important that learners know that the images are of Hindu deities, which all represent some of the many features of Brahman – the one God/Ultimate Reality. Ask them to think about and discuss the following points:

- what they *know* about the deities they can see – can they name any?
- what they can *guess*
- what can they *see* they all have in common (hopefully they will spot that animals feature in all the images)
- questions they would like to *ask* about them

Participate in the ‘exhibition’, asking questions and helping learners to make connections, and to recall prior knowledge.

Discuss as a class, focusing on the fact that animals feature strongly in all the images. Encourage learners to give examples. Ask them what conclusions they might draw from seeing animals featured so prominently in these images.

**Independent Research Task**

Allocate or allow learners to choose one of the deities they saw in the exhibition. At home (or at school if you have time) find out 5 things and 2 of the 5 things should be about the animal connected with the deity. Select pupils to show and tell.

**The Oneness of Beings**

Explain that Hinduism teaches that we are all one – there is no separation between humans and other creatures as everything contains the spark of Brahman/Ultimate Reality. This means that all living things, although different in lots of ways are all connected and united. To demonstrate this, use a large piece of thick card with holes cut into it, held up to a sunny window, or ask learners to imagine that they are lying on the floor in a rickety old shed with cracks in the roof. They can see light shining in between the cracks. They might, if they didn’t know better, be under the illusion that there were lots of different, separate lights, when actually the light is all from one, single sun. The broken old roof (or the cardboard with holes in it) is standing in the way of seeing the oneness of what’s truly there, instead making it look like lots of separate things. Hinduism teaches that when we think of things as separate, we are not seeing what is truly there. This is called ‘maya’ (delusion).

**Learning outcomes** (applying this content to the RE end of key stage outcomes):

Teachers will enable students to achieve these outcomes, as appropriate to their age and stage, so that they can:

**Make sense of belief:**

- Recall or learn basic facts about Hindu deities and consider the prominence of animals in relation to these
- Understand the Hindu belief that all beings are connected, and all beings have a soul/atman which stems from Brahma/Ultimate Reality

**Understand the impact:**

- Explain ways in which Hindu beliefs show that animals are important and should be treated with kindness

**Make connections:**

- Begin to compare Hindu beliefs about animals with those of other religions and in relation to their own points of view

Pose the question: what do you think this means for how Hindus think about animals?

Learners might suggest that this means that Hindus will want to treat animals with kindness and respect, and that they should not be cruel, even to tiny animals. Help learners to develop their thoughts, by giving scenarios and examples. Make connections with the previous unit – e.g. what would the kid in the storybook *'Hey, Little Ant'* do if he were a Hindu? Why? How would his reason differ from if he were, say, a Muslim?

Introduce this Hindu quote:

'Whoever sees the one spirit in all, and all in the one spirit, from then on cannot look with contempt on any creature.'  
(Swami Vivekananda 1863-1902)

Deconstruct the quote and simplify the language if necessary. How does this fit in with learners' thinking in the last activities? Invite learners to offer their own views about how connected we are, as humans, to other animals and to the world around us. Can they give examples? Can they give examples of things which create an impression that we are separate from the rest of nature? (This is pretty challenging thinking)

What do they think of the idea that it is not only humans who have a spirit/soul? In Hinduism the closest equivalent is the atman, which is in every being, even the tiniest of creatures, and comes from Brahman. This is a very different idea to the Christian belief that only humans have a soul, which sets us apart from other animals.

**SUB QUESTION: Why do many Hindus believe that kindness to animals is important and how is this put into practice?**

<p><b>Ideas and some content for learning:</b> Teachers can select content from these examples and add more of their own to enable students to achieve the outcomes.</p>	<p><b>Learning outcomes</b> (applying this content to the RE end of key stage outcomes):</p>
<p><b>3 Hindu reasons to be kind to animals</b> As a class, read pages 1 and 2 of the supplementary resources, ‘3 reasons why kindness to animals is important to Hindus. Give learners opportunities to ask questions and stop to give further explanations where needed. Divide a page into three (perhaps in a ‘Y’ shape). Try to show each of the three reasons: oneness, reincarnation and ahimsa in a visual way, one in each section of the page. Try to use as few words as possible (you might limit learners to 5 words per section, perhaps). The challenge for learners is to make the ideas clear in a visual format. Select some pupils to show and tell. Discuss which of the reasons they might agree or disagree with, or maybe just find interesting.</p> <p><b>Cows</b> Explain that cows are very special to many Hindus, reading from page 2, about some of the reasons why. If time permits, learners can find out about the production of ‘ahimsa milk’ in Leicestershire: <a href="https://www.ahimsamilk.org/">https://www.ahimsamilk.org/</a> or cow protection/cow day (Gosthastami) at Bhaktivedanta Manor <a href="https://newgokul.bhaktivedantamanor.co.uk/">https://newgokul.bhaktivedantamanor.co.uk/</a> and produce a ‘visit us’ poster or leaflet for one of these places.</p> <p><b>Putting beliefs into practice</b> Ask learners to discuss with a partner something they strongly believe is right. Give an example of your own. Share some ideas across the class, inviting those with similar or opposite beliefs to exchange views – this is good practice for having peaceful and purposeful talk in the classroom! Ask learners how they show that this belief is important to them. How do they act on it, through how they behave, what they say or do? Learners could record their ideas, e.g. as a simple two-step flow chart. If not already discussed from learners’ ideas, ask them what a person who believed that being kind to animals might do to put this belief into practice.</p> <p><b>Vegetarianism and veganism</b> Read and discuss the section from the supplementary resource, ‘vegetarianism and veganism’ (p.5) as a class. This explains that many Hindus put their beliefs about kindness to animals into practice by being vegetarian, and some, by being vegan. Discuss the differences between vegetarianism and veganism. Is anyone in the class vegetarian or vegan? If so, they could share some of their own reasons for this. Are their reasons similar or different to those Hindus may have?</p> <p><b>The Story of Yudhisthira (pronounced yoo-dish-tira) and the Dog</b> Read the story on p.6 of the supplementary resource, or watch this animated version: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-OJXcPxkSGE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-OJXcPxkSGE</a>. Use the questions on p.7 to guide a discussion of the story and its meaning. As the great King Yudhisthira refuses to leave behind his lowly dog to gain a special place in heaven, he demonstrates that kindness to all beings is important. It also gives us insight into Hindu beliefs about dharma, and the heavenly realm. Ask learners to imagine that there is a children’s book version of the story coming out. They have been asked to design a front cover and write a description on for the back of the book, summing up the meaning of the story. Perhaps hold a class vote and give a prize for the best one.</p>	<p>Teachers will enable students to achieve these outcomes, as appropriate to their age and stage, so that they can:</p> <p><b>Make sense of belief:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand three main reasons why kindness to animals is important to many Hindus</li> <li>• Explain the importance of cows for many Hindus</li> <li>• Recount the story of the Yudhisthira and the dog and discuss its meanings</li> </ul> <p><b>Understand the impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain some of the ways in which Hindus may put their beliefs about kindness to animals into practice</li> </ul> <p><b>Make connections:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin to consider the diverse ways in which Hindus live out beliefs around kindness to animals</li> </ul>

**SUB QUESTION: What does Buddhism say about kindness to animals?**

**Ideas and some content for learning:**

Teachers can select content from these examples and add more of their own to enable students to achieve the outcomes.

**The Buddha**

Remind learners or explain that Buddhists follow the teachings and example of the Gautama Siddhartha. If learners have not yet been introduced to Buddhism, here are some helpful clips for them to gain a very basic understanding:

BBC Bitesize Key Stage 2, *What is Buddhism?* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zh4mrj6>

Channel 4, *Animated World Faiths: The Buddha* (available on You Tube)

**Precepts**

In groups of around 4, think of 5 things to try to do or to try not to do to live a good life. Be careful not to frame this in terms of rules or commands – speak instead of guiding principles or ideals to live up to. Take time for some show and tell or ask learners to discuss ideas carousel style. Are there any ideas common to all groups? What does this tell us? Discuss some of the more unusual ideas as well. Explain that these sorts of principles/ideals are called ‘precepts’ in Buddhism and the Buddha taught that there are 5 of them. Here is a simplified and age-appropriate list:

1. Do not kill or do harm to living beings
2. Do not take what is not freely given to you (note that this may be considered as going beyond ‘do not steal – discuss this)
3. Be faithful to your marriage partner (the actual precept is concerned with sexual misconduct – make a professional judgement about how to articulate this to your class – it does not feature in this unit of work)
4. Do not lie or gossip or speak badly of others
5. Do not take drugs or alcohol or anything that will cloud your mind

Discuss how these Buddhist precepts compare with learners’ own ideas.

**The first two precepts and animals**

Explain that, when thinking about Buddhist views on animals the first 2 precepts are really important. It is clear to see why the first one is – encourage pupils to make the connection that this is ahimsa – important in Buddhism as well as Hinduism.

Ask pupils, giving them some thinking time, why they think that the 2<sup>nd</sup> precept – the one about not taking what is not freely given is important in Buddhist thinking about animals. What might people take from animals that might not be freely given. You may want to show some age-appropriate pictures as stimuli to get learners thinking hard and discussing/debating. Ideas: a circus animal, wool, a picture of a meat product (perhaps a burger, chicken dinner), milk. Discuss whether these animals are freely giving what humans take from them. It is important to allow learners to express a range of views and for a range of view to be brought into the discussion for impartiality.

Read Resource 2: What does Buddhism say about kindness to animals up to the subheading ‘Six Buddhist Teachings on Animals’. Discuss the two precepts a little further in relation to this information.

**Learning outcomes** (applying this content to the RE end of key stage outcomes):

Teachers will enable students to achieve these outcomes, as appropriate to their age and stage, so that they can:

**Make sense of belief:**

- Understand the two Buddhist precepts that relate most readily to issues around the treatment of animals
- Understand three key ideas – ahimsa, metta and that animals and human beings are not separate

**Understand the impact:**

- Give examples of how these teachings may be lived out in Buddhists’ lives

**Make connections:**

- Reflect on their own attitudes and actions towards kindness to animals considering these teachings and ideas

**Three key ideas – ahimsa, metta and that animals and humans are not separate**

Either display a large three-circle Venn diagram like the one in the resource on the whiteboard or provide a large version for pairs and groups, perhaps on sugar paper. The three circles should be labelled with the three key ideas as above. Write in each circle some notes about what each idea means. Encourage learners to think about solid examples of what each could mean in practice. Make sure that learners understand the difference between ahimsa and metta. Metta goes beyond simply avoiding killing or harm to actively developing and sustaining loving kindness for all beings. An example might be that you see a tired wasp on the pavement. You might be tempted to squash it – wasps can be pretty annoying! If you leave it to live, then that's ahimsa. You have not killed or harmed the wasp. But if you made sure the wasp was out of the way of people's stomping feet and perhaps offered it a little sugar water to revive it, that would be practising metta (loving kindness). Can learners come up with their own examples?

**Six Buddhist teachings**

Look at the table showing 6 Buddhist teachings. You will need to do some work to unpick some of the difficult language for the learners. Cut them out and challenge pupils to place the teachings where they think they fit onto the Venn diagram. There are no fixed answers – the important thing is that learners can discuss their ideas and show a good understanding. As a class use the focus questions above the Venn diagram in the resource to deepen thinking and discussion.

**SUB QUESTION: What can we learn from two Sikh stories which encourage kindness to animals?**

<p><b>Ideas and some content for learning:</b> Teachers can select content from these examples and add more of their own to enable students to achieve the outcomes.</p> <p><b>Key Sikh beliefs</b> Teach or remind learners of four key Sikh beliefs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Belief in one God (Waheguru) who created the world and everything in it</li> <li>2. Belief that all living things are connected in the cycle of birth and rebirth (samsara)</li> <li>3. The divine spark of Waheguru is present in all living things</li> <li>4. A good life is one that it is lived honestly, serving and caring for others</li> </ol> <p>Ask pupils to think about the ways in which these three key Sikh beliefs might affect their attitudes towards animals. You might give them a table showing these 4 key beliefs and ask them to write or illustrate their ideas in blank cells. Discuss ideas as a class, drawing on learning from other dharmic religions in this unit, if possible.</p> <p>Use page Resource 3, page 12 of the Supplementary Resource to teach some key ideas relating to how Sikhs view animals. It is important to stress that Sikhs interpret teachings and examples of the gurus in different ways in their attitudes towards animals. Allow pupils to share their thoughts and questions regarding this.</p> <p><b>How do we see different animals? Snakes and bears (two animals featured in the Sikh stories we will study)</b> Ask learners to think of adjectives to describe ‘snakes’. Write down some of their responses on the board. Look at the responses written up and count how many are positive/happy adjectives, and which are more negative. It is likely that the negative words will outweigh the positive (unless you have some reptile enthusiasts in the class). Repeat this activity for ‘bears’. You are likely to get more mixed responses (but of course that is not guaranteed) because learners will be familiar with cuddly toys that are shaped like bears, bears are furry and can be regarded as cute, even though they can be scary, too. Discuss these ideas. Ask learners to think about whether there are good reasons for viewing some animals in a negative way and some in a positive way. Can they give some other examples? You may discuss that it could be sensible to be cautious of, or even afraid of, an animal that might give you a nasty bite or even attack you. But is this a reason to be unkind or mean to these creatures? What other options are there? Ask pupils to consider and discuss how our attitudes towards animals might impact on the way we feel they should be treated. How might Sikhs think about this, with the belief that the spark of Waheguru is in all living things and that Waheguru created them?</p> <p><b>Guru Nanak and the Snake</b> Read the story to the class. Stop at the point where the snake enters the story. Ask the class to try to guess what happens next. Read the rest of the story and, at the end, invite comments and discussion. Use questions to help draw out meaning. How did the snake behave in ways we wouldn’t expect? How is the different to the way we might think about animals? E.g., the snake was shown to be reflective, to understand Nanak’s inner life and an awareness of God/Waheguru. The snake also felt the duty of selfless service to Nanak. Does this show the divine spark that is in every living creature. Ask</p>	<p><b>Learning outcomes</b> (applying this content to the RE end of key stage outcomes):</p> <p>Teachers will enable students to achieve these outcomes, as appropriate to their age and stage, so that they can:</p> <p><b>Make sense of belief:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand three main reasons why kindness to animals is important to many Sikhs</li> <li>• Explain the importance of key Sikh beliefs in influencing how Sikhs view and treat animals</li> <li>• Explain how two Sikh stories encourage kindness and empathy towards animals</li> </ul> <p><b>Understand the impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appreciate that Sikhs place great value on animals, but have very diverse views about what this means in their every lives</li> </ul> <p><b>Make connections:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on their own attitudes and perspectives on the value of animals</li> </ul>
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pupils to re-enact the story in small groups. Invite some groups to share their re-enactments with the class. Put pupils into groups and ask them to think about:

- What do Sikhs learn from this story?
- How does the story teach this to them?

This is a challenging task, but a good one for drawing out and discussing a wide range of responses to the story. Share ideas from each group, making sure that you talk about how the story demonstrates that, in Sikh belief, animals, as well as humans, are connected to God, not entirely separate and different from humans, and animals can act in ways that show care for others, and are to be valued as part of God’s creation.

Ask pupils to draw conclusions about what the story teaches about how humans should treat animals

**CAUTIONARY NOTE:** It is important to make clear that the story does not say that we should not be cautious of animals that could pose danger or threat to us – but that we should treat all animals with respect and kindness- this does not entail being careless around animals that could do harm!

**Bhai Kirtia and the Bear**

Explain that this story reminds Sikhs of their belief that animals and humans are one and not separate, and that animals and people are all connected in the cycle of birth and rebirth. It also teaches people that they should have – empathy for animals, which means trying to see things from their point of view. Say that, after reading the story, you will be asking learners to say *how* the story put these points across to readers.

Use questions and invite pupils to ask questions to discuss the story and draw out its meaning. Highlight some key words, e.g. empathy, rebirth, samara, moksha, ensuring learners’ understanding.

After discussing the story, challenge pupils to record their ideas about it creatively, using the storyboard framework in the supplement resources. Use may wish to blow this up to A3 or give learners in groups different scenes to illustrate to create a group collage. It is important that each learner thinks about what the story teaches.