

Worldviews. What does it mean to live in a religiously diverse world?

Session 3



LO: How do different religions celebrate the birth of a child?



Do you know if your parents followed any traditional rituals to celebrate when you were born?

- They may have had a baby shower before your arrival. Baby showers involve groups of ladies meeting with the expectant mother and 'showering' her with gifts for the unborn child.



Let's see what other countries get up to at the birth of a bundle of joy!

Germany

Over in Germany it is believed that the baby's name is linked to the child's personality as it grows. There is a list of registered names for newborns from which the parents can choose. The name cannot be objects or random words and must reflect the baby's gender. The parents can submit a reason for using a name that is not on the list but it may be rejected!

China

Celebrations are held four weeks after the birth of the baby during which the extended family are presented with gifts of red eggs, a representation of fertility and the circle of life. Traditionally red is the colour of good luck in China and red envelopes containing money are given to the baby. A second celebration takes place when the baby is 100 days old during which the baby is dressed in red and introduced to all the family friends and colleagues who again present the baby with red envelopes containing money.

Bali

They believe babies come straight from heaven and are treated as if they are Gods. For the first 210 days of life the baby's feet cannot touch the ground.

Japan

After leaving the hospital, mother and baby will stay at the mother's parents' home for a month or more. It is a cultural tradition that women stay in bed for 21 days after the birth while friends and family visit and eat celebratory food, Osekihan.

Which country do you think has the best ritual?

Celebrating Birth in Different Religions



A New Baby

It is an exciting time when a new baby is born and people celebrate it in lots of different ways.

Different religions celebrate the arrival of a new baby in their own special ways.



Christianity - Christening



When a baby is welcomed into the Christian faith, it is called a christening.

It happens in a church and is usually led by someone called a priest or a vicar. At the start of the christening, the baby will be welcomed into the church and then something will be read from the Bible (the Christian holy book).

The parents and the godparents (close friends or family chosen by the parents to support the child in learning about being a Christian) stand with the vicar, who often then makes a cross on the baby's head with some oil.



Christianity - Christening



The vicar will then hold the baby's head over a font (a special type of bowl filled with water) and sprinkle their head with water. They will then say the words: "I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Special prayers are then said for the baby and sometimes they are given a candle for them to remember the ceremony by.

Afterwards, there might be a party or a meal with family or friends. Sometimes babies are bought christening gifts.

Judaism

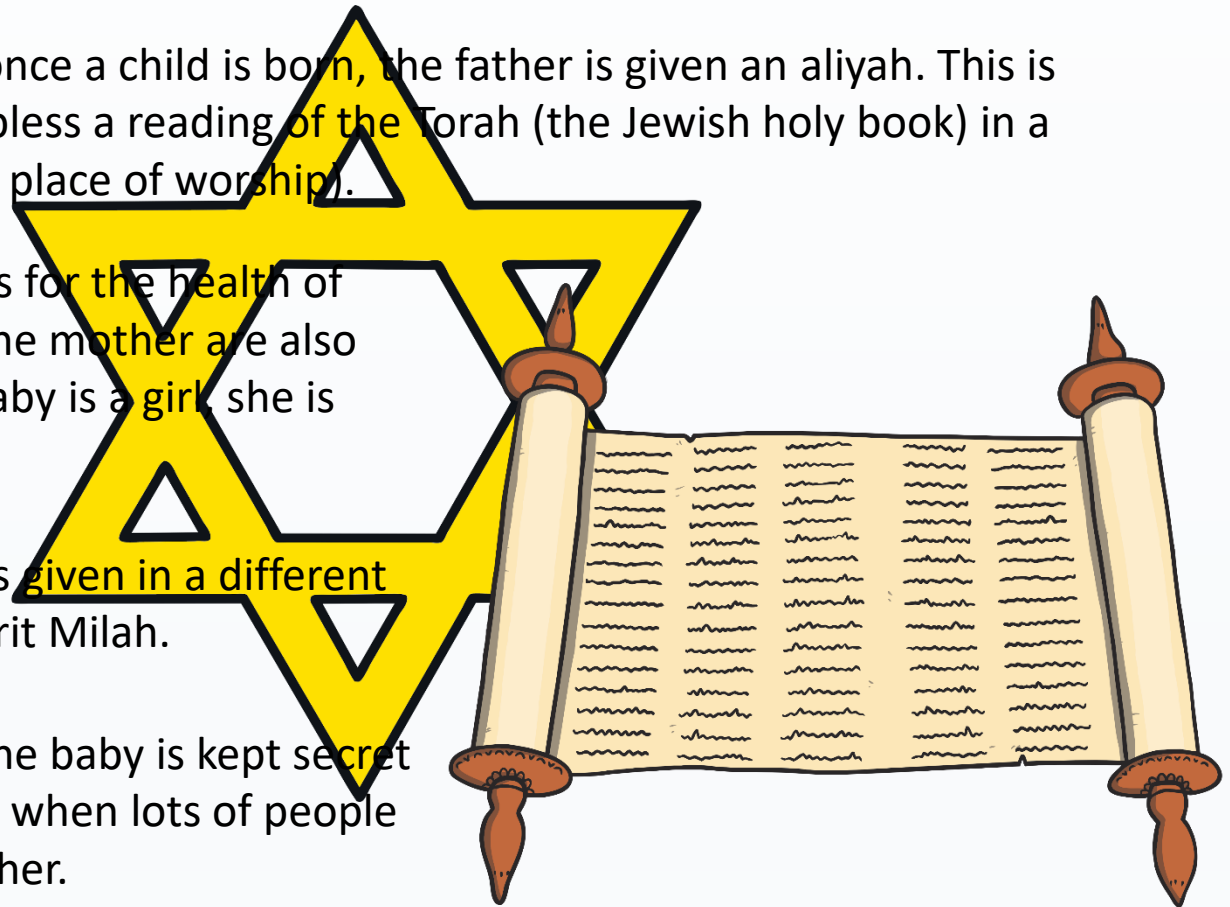


In the Jewish faith, once a child is born, the father is given an aliyah. This is where he is able to bless a reading of the Torah (the Jewish holy book) in a synagogue (a Jewish place of worship).

During this, blessings for the health of both the baby and the mother are also spoken and, if the baby is a girl, she is named.

A baby boy's name is given in a different ceremony called a Brit Milah.

Often the name of the baby is kept secret until it is announced when lots of people have gathered together.



Islam



When a child is born, the first thing they generally hear is the Muslim call to prayer. This is usually whispered into their ear by their father.

It is also common for babies to taste something sweet first such as honey, dates or a sweet juice. This is called Tahnik.



Islam - Aqiqah



Muslims celebrate the arrival of a new child in a ceremony called Aqiqah. It is usually performed seven days after the baby is born.

It is where the baby is introduced to family and friends and a special meal is shared to thank Allah (Glory Be to Him) for giving them a child.

A really important part of Aqiqah is the shaving of the baby's head.

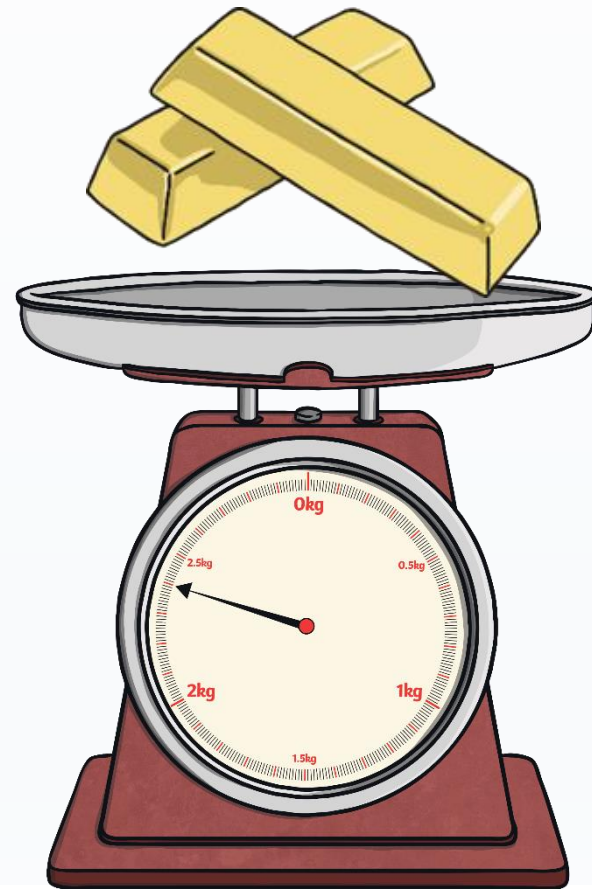
Islam - Aqiqah



The baby's hair is then weighed and parents will give the same weight in gold or silver to charity. Giving to charity is an important part of being a Muslim.

Once the baby's head has been shaved, parents then announce the name of the baby.

Boys are often named after one of Allah's (Glory Be to Him) special messengers and girls will often be named after women in the Qu'ran.

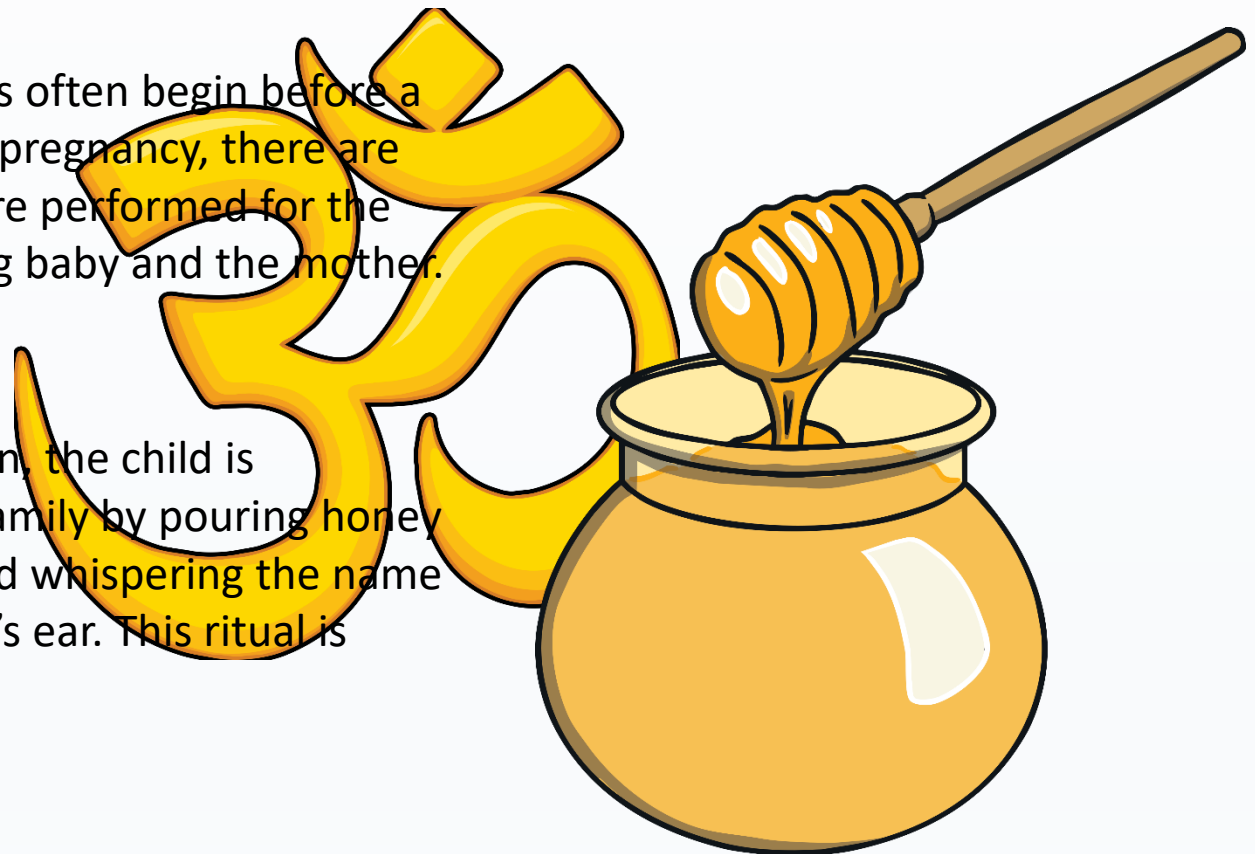


Hinduism



Hindu birth traditions often begin before a baby is born. During pregnancy, there are several rituals that are performed for the health of the growing baby and the mother.

Once the baby is born, the child is welcomed into the family by pouring honey into their mouths and whispering the name of God into the child's ear. This ritual is called Jatakarma.

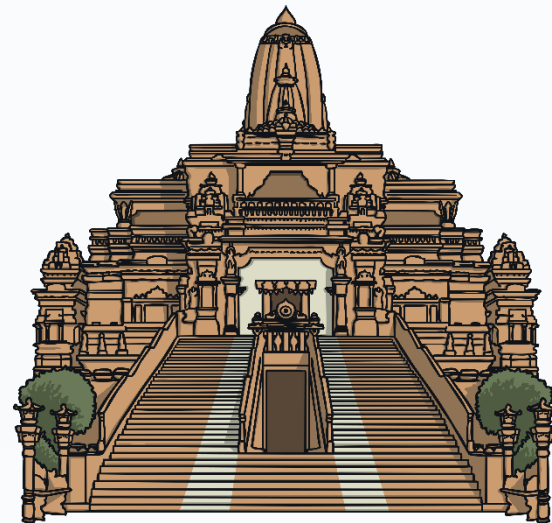


Hinduism



40 days after the baby has been born, a naming ceremony called Namkaran is performed. It is usually held in a mandir (a Hindu place of worship). This involves the father placing an offering of ghee-soaked wood onto a fire, announcing the name and the priest putting holy water onto the baby's head. Often the priest also places a liquid called amrit onto the baby's tongue too. This is a holy liquid that is made of sugar and water.

Names are carefully chosen in the Hindu faith. Sometimes babies are named based on a Hindu calendar and priests may be called upon to give advice about it.



Sikhism



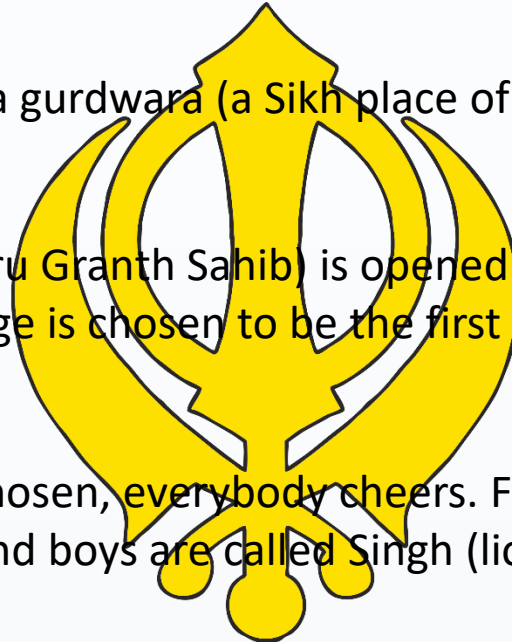
Naam Karan is a Sikh baby naming ceremony where the baby is welcomed into the Sikh faith.

Naam Karan takes place in a gurdwara (a Sikh place of worship) about two weeks after the birth of the child.

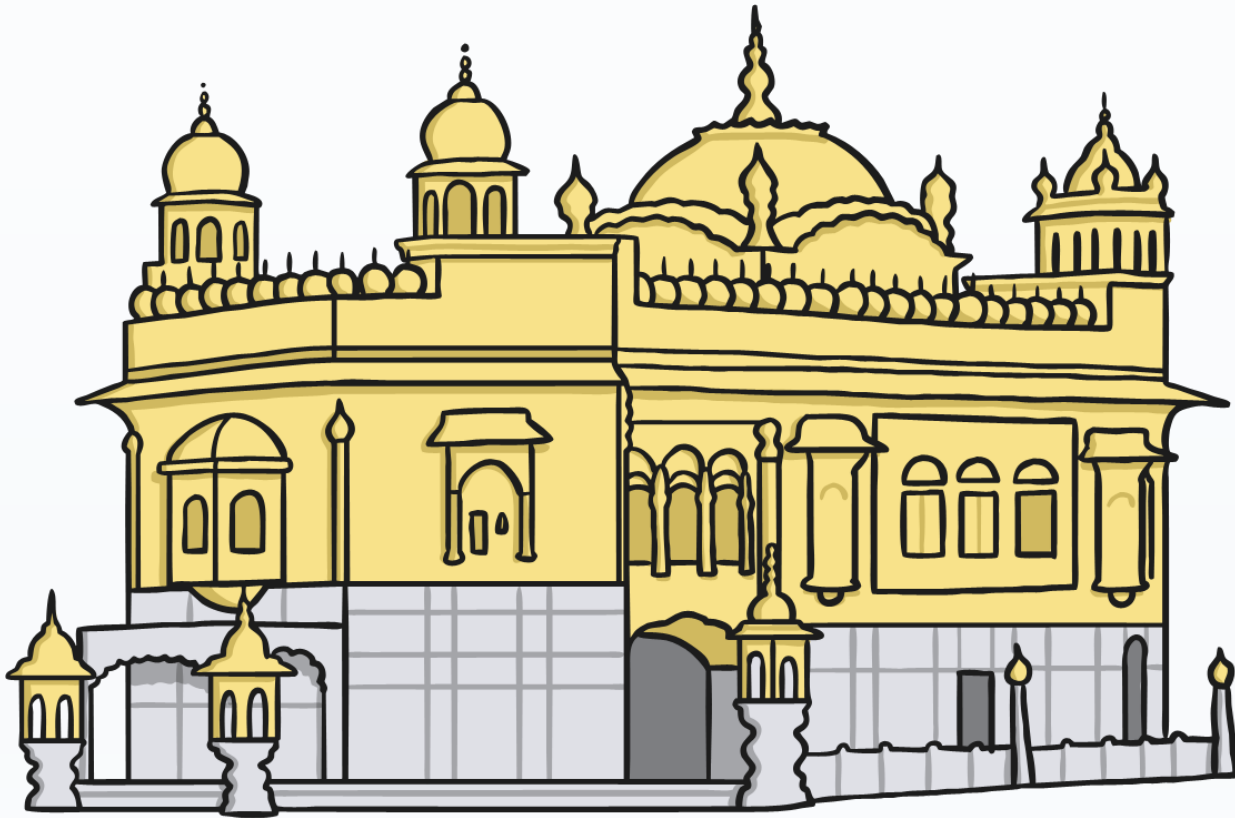
The Sikh holy book (the Guru Granth Sahib) is opened at random. The first letter of the first word on that page is chosen to be the first letter of the baby's name.

Once the name has been chosen, everybody cheers. For their second name, girls are called Kaur (princess) and boys are called Singh (lion).

Prayers of thanks are given and offerings are made to the Guru Granth Sahib. Similar to the Hindu faith, the baby is also given some amrit.



Sikhism



Buddhism



Unlike many other religions, there are no specific special rites of passage for babies born into the Buddhist religion.

Buddhism is practiced in lots of different places around the world and so birth celebrations vary depending on the country.

In many places, a Buddhist monk or priest will be involved in celebrating a birth and may read a special text from the scriptures or give their blessings.

Task:

Birth in Different Religions

In the boxes below, write down everything that you know and have found out about the beliefs and rituals in different religions. How are they similar? How are they different?

