|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Ealing Agreed Syllabus: guidance for teachers | |
| **KS1\_3: Learning from stories (3)** | **Overall aim:** to build on the capacity to learn from stories, specifically how stories convey important beliefs and values; to further develop the ability to formulate questions. |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The Big Question | Pupils will | develop thinking and life skills by learning to listen carefully to stories, and to think about and to ask questions about them. | | |
| ***Aim:*** to develop the ability to ask questions about a story. | SEN |  | | |
| Gifted |  | | |
| **Possible activities** | | | | **Suggested resources** |
| **Note:** There are eight possible lessons in this scheme of work from a variety of traditions, giving you a choice of which stories to explore. However you should all start with the first general lesson (taken from the [BHA’s Humanism for Schools](http://humanismforschools.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Stories-KS1and2.pdf) website) about learning from stories. | | | | |
| **Starter:** Read an age-appropriate non-religious story that has an interesting subject or theme that can be used as a starting point for discussion. This story should focus on a particular value, e.g. fairness or loyalty. | | | *Thinking skills to develop in this unit:*   * using language clearly and accurately * reasoning and explaining * hypothesising, testing, and correcting ideas * making connections * using evidence and criteria * communication skills to do with speaking and listening * social skills such as working with others, empathy and tolerance * confidence and a sense of personal identity. | |
| **Activity 1:** Ask members of the class to volunteer a question about the story. Ask the class to listen carefully without comment or interruption and to try and remember the questions. | | |
| **Activity 2:** Then as a class choose the question they want to explore. At this point they should be encouraged to say *why* they want to discuss a particular question. (*Note:* You can answer simple factual questions as you go along in order to save the complex questions for discussion.) | | |
| **Activity 3:** Be sure that no-one is made to feel stupid for their choice of question. If someone asks a really implausible/fanciful question, this might be the place to comment on the creativity of the imagination. | | |
| **Activity 4:** Hold a vote as to which question they would most like to discuss. Each child has one vote, which is an opportunity to introduce the ideas of fairness and egalitarianism. | | | *Note:* if the chosen question proves unfruitful, vote on another question. | |
| **Activity 5:** Discussion with the teacher as facilitator. At this stage the teacher can ask prompting questions such as “What does someone else think about this? | | |  | |
| **Plenary:** Establish ground rules for discussion of stories in the rest of the unit. For instance:   * everyone to have the right to be listened to * one person to speak at a time * children to discuss with and respond to each other, not just to address teacher * no ridicule of others | | |  | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The valley of the ants | Pupils will | listen to a story from the Qur’an and talk about what it means; think about being thankful, and whether it is important to feel/show gratitude. | |
| ***Aim:*** to understand how religious stories are used to convey important lessons. | SEN |  | |
| Gifted |  | |
| **Possible activities** | | | **Suggested resources** |
| **Starter:** Read the story “The valley of the ants” from *Goodnight Stories from the Quran* (p98). | | | *Goodnight Stories from the Quran* by Saniyasnain Khan, Goodwood Books, ISBN 81-7898-346-X  Available from [Amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Goodnight-Stories-Quran-Khan-Saniyasnain/dp/817898346X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1432903314&sr=8-1&keywords=Goodnight+Stories+from+the+Quran)  Picture of ant or ants. |
| **Activity 1:** Explain that the word ‘blessed’ in the context of the story means given something special such as a gift or happiness. Religious people may feel that any blessings they receive ultimately come from God. But it is also important to point out that non-religious people may also feel blessed, i.e. lucky that they have certain talents, or a loving family and plenty to eat. | | |
| **Activity 2:** Tell the children that there are also stories about Solomon and David in the Bible and that these are read by Jews and Christians. Show children a map of the Middle East, pointing out how the prophet Muhammad came in contact with Jews and Christians during his travels as a merchant. Explain that Sulayman is the name Muslims use for Solomon. | | |
| **Activity 3:** Discuss the things for which Sulayman was thankful and list them on the board. To whom did Sulayman say ‘Thank you’? Explain that thankfulness to Allah is very important for Muslims. Ask children in the class if any of them ‘give thanks’ before a meal or feel grateful that they have enough to eat? Why might it be important to do this? | | |
| **Activity 4:** Ask the children to suggest similarities between an army of soldiers and an army of ants, perhaps illustrating with video clips or googled images. Discuss how situations can remind us of other occasions. And that this often happens when we read stories or watch a story in a film or tv programme, i.e. the situation we see reminds us of something else. | | |
| **Activity 5:** Share some ideas of things for which we can be thankful and whom we thank for these various things. Children could role-play receiving and opening a present and then saying thank you. Discuss the concept of “saying grace”, i.e. giving thanks before a meal to express gratitude for the food they are able to eat. Explain that people who are not religious and who don’t believe in a god can still be grateful for having enough to eat. | | |
| **Plenary:** If the classroom has an IWB make a list of things for which the children can be thankful. The heading could be ‘30 blessings’ (or however many children are in the class) or 50 or 100 blessings according to time. This list can be printed out for children to stick in their books. | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| David and Goliath | Pupils will | learn that many religious people believe that their talents come from God; they will also learn that it is important to discover what we are good at, and that it is good to use our gifts to help others. | |
| ***Aim:*** to start to explore religious ideas around the origin of talent. | SEN |  | |
| Gifted |  | |
| **Possible activities** | | | **Suggested resources** |
| **Starter**: Ask the children to share something that they feel they can do well. Ask them to suggest something their friend or another child in the class can do well. Look at the words ‘talent’ and ‘gifts’ (i.e. ‘abilities’). | | | *The Lion Storyteller Bible*, Bob Hartman (illustrator), Lion Publishing Plc  ISBN 0 7459 3607 5  Available from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk/s/ref=nb_sb_ss_c_0_10?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=lion%20storyteller%20bible&sprefix=Lion+Story%2Caps%2C218)  (Useful for this age group because the stories are only two pages long.) |
| **Activity 1:** Introduce the idea that we all have some natural abilities, but that these differ from person to person. Why don’t we all have the same talents? Perhaps if everyone had the same talent, some things would simply not get done? Talk about the abilities needed to get us through a day or part of a day. | | |
| **Activity 2:** Explain that Christians, Jews and Muslims believe that our abilities come from God; that they believe God chooses which talents to give us, and benefits when we use our gifts. Make sure the children realise that this is an important belief for many religious people. But explain that many non-religious people also feel that it is important to develop and use the abilities that they were born with to help their fellow humans. Also point out that even if a person does not seem to have a natural talent, they can work hard to develop a special ability. | | |
| **Activity 3:** Read the story of ‘David the Giant Killer’ from the *Lion Storyteller Bible* or another suitable version. Talk about David’s job as a shepherd and why he would have learned to use a slingshot (i.e. to keep predators away). | | |
| **Activity 4:** Introduce the idea that David felt confident because he believed God had helped him to protect his flock from wild animals. He believed God had given him gifts and that he could use the skills he had learned working as a shepherd. | | |
| **Plenary:** Children could draw a picture of themselves using one of their abilities to help someone. Some could write a sentence about their drawing, or write a sentence instead of a drawing. The lesson could finish with an acknowledgement of each other’s gifts. | | |
| Chanukah story | Pupils will | listen to, think about and ask questions regarding a religious story about a miracle. | |
| ***Aim:*** to introduce the religious idea of miracles. | SEN |  | |
| Gifted |  | |
| **Possible activities** | | | **Suggested resources** |
| **Starter:** Read the story of *Judah who always said no!* or another version of the Hanukah story. | | | *Judah who always said “No!”* by Harriet K Feder (available from [Amazon](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Judah-Who-Always-Said-No/dp/0929371135/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1432907136&sr=8-1&keywords=judah+who+always+said+no))  One or more Hanukiah (candlesticks) and/or pictures from Google image search  [Eternal flame in Paris](http://www.arcdetriompheparis.com/history/the-unknown-soldier) under the archway at the Arc de Triomphe, which has burned continuously since 1921, in memory of all who died in World War I.  [Eternal flame in Arlington Cemetery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_F._Kennedy_Eternal_Flame) to honour assassinated president John F Kennedy. Perhaps first eternal flame to honour a single individual. |
| **Activity 1:** Explain that Jewish people believe that nothing is impossible for God, and that Jews also believe God uses his power only for good purposes. Define the word miracle. What was the ‘miracle’ in this story? Describe the Jewish festival of lights, i.e. Hanukah, which is when Jews remember this story and give thanks for miracles. | | |
| **Activity 2:** Explain that Christians and Muslims share a belief in miracles and remind the class that people from these three religious traditions believe in the same God, known as the ‘God of Abraham’. This is because all three religions look back to Abraham as the person who started the belief in one god. | | |
| **Activity 3:** Ask the children to suggest words that describe Judah. Talk about which qualities we should try to copy and why. Think of everyday situations in which we could show these qualities and how they would make a difference | | |
| **Activity 4:** Talk about some natural occurrences that can appear ‘miraculous’ (like rain coming just in time to save crops). | | |
| **Plenary:** Children could look at a picture of the everlasting flame (*Ner Tamid*) burning in a synagogue. Discuss the symbolism of a light that is always kept burning, and how for many religious people this is a symbol of the eternal presence of God. On the IWB show examples of other eternal flames (see right), and what these flames symbolise. Pupils could cut flames from tissue, stick them in their books and write what they would like the flames to remind them of. | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The story of Zaccheus | Pupils will | begin to develop an understanding of being sorry and being forgiven. | |
| ***Aim:*** to explore the concepts of remorse and forgiveness through the biblical story of Zaccheus. | SEN |  | |
| Gifted |  | |
| **Possible activities** | | | **Suggested resources** |
| **Starter:** Read the children the story of Zaccheus from a suitable children’s version of the Bible, or show an animated version, e.g. from the BBC bitesize website (see links at left). | | | *The Lion Storyteller Bible*  http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/z7kq6sg  Picture of Zaccheus, outline of tree branches, green foil or paper or leaf outlines. Scissors and glue  Zaccheus colouring page:  <http://www.sermons4kids.com/zacchaeus_jesus_esp_colorpg.htm> |
| **Activity 1:** Ask class to discuss why they think Zaccheus was unpopular (e.g. he was dishonest and stole money from poor people). | | |
| **Activity 2:** While the class is discussing the story, children could cut out a picture of Zaccheus and stick it in the branches of a tree in outline. They could then cut out—or draw and cut out—leaves from green paper or foil and stick these onto the tree leaving Zaccheus’ face looking between leaves. | | |
| **Activity 3**: Explain the difference between saying “sorry” to get out of trouble and actually feeling sorry for something you’ve done or because you have hurt someone. Discuss ways to respond when people tell us that they are sorry. Perhaps two or three children could perform a role-play for the class, e.g. a falling out at playtime. They could enact a poor response that makes the situation worse and a response that restores the friendship. | | |
| **Activity 4:** Introduce the idea of forgiveness and how it relates to someone being sorry. Talk about when we forgive others and when they forgive us. | | |
| **Plenary:** In an open discussion, class to talk about what they learned about the value of forgiveness from the story. Encourage pupils to be honest: how easy or hard is it to forgive? How easy or hard is it to say you are sorry? Explain that it is important to understand that not all people can easily forgive a wrong. | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Siddhartha and the Swan | Pupils will | be introduced to the Buddhist religion through the story of Siddhartha and the swan; be exposed to moral ambiguity. | |
| ***Aim:*** To explore through a story the concept of not causing harm. | SEN |  | |
| Gifted |  | |
| **Possible activities** | | | **Suggested resources** |
| **Starter:** Show the children a picture of a swan. Read the story of Siddhartha and the Swan, stopping at the point in the story right before the boys go to the king. Have a class discussion about who *they* thought was right—Siddhartha or his cousin Devadatta—and why they think their choice is the correct one. | | | *Buddhist Stories* by Anita Ganeri, Evans Brothers Ltd.  ISBN 0-237-52034-6 (p 9)  Available from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)  Version on Clearwater Trust website:  <http://www.clear-vision.org/Schools/Students/Ages-4-7/story-Siddhartha-swan.aspx>  Swan colouring pages: <http://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/birds/swans> |
| **Activity 1:** Show children a picture or statue of the Buddha, explaining that, because of things that he learned in his life, Siddhartha would grow up to become this wise man. Tell children that there are people all over the world who still follow the Buddha’s teachings and example, and that these people are called Buddhists. | | |
| **Activity 2:** Tell them that when Siddhartha, was a young man he became deeply concerned about the suffering in the world. Have a discussion about suffering. Have the children ever seen an animal or person who was suffering? | | |
| **Activity 3:** Have a discussion about the phrase “finders keepers, losers weepers”. Is that a good idea? How would you feel if someone found and kept something that was precious to you? | | |
| **Activity 4:** Finish the story. Does the class think this is a good ending? Point out that it was a difficult decision (because Devadatta was following the law), and that even the king needed help to make up his mind. Explain that some decisions are difficult to make because each side seems to have a valid point. | | |
| **Plenary:** Ask children if they have pets, and how do they care for them. Make a list of ways we can be kind to animals. Children could draw a picture of their pets or stick torn scraps of white tissue onto the outline of a swan. | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Point of view | Pupils will | look at the story of Sita’s swayamvara from several different points of view; understand that the same story can mean different things to different people. | |
| ***Aim:*** to introduce the concept of point of view. | SEN |  | |
| Gifted |  | |
| **Possible activities** | | | **Suggested resources** |
| **Starter:** If there are any children from Hindu families in the class ask if they know the story of how Sita came to marry Rama. Can anyone remember the story? If you don’t get a volunteer, tell the story of Sita’s swayamvara (see background information), or show a video of the story. | | | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxeRZYrvU6A> |
| **Activity 1:** Review the fact that you have looked at stories from several different traditions. Explain that this story comes from an important book in the Hindu tradition, the Ramayana. As the name implies, this book is a collection of stories about Rama, who is considered to be one of the avatars of the Hindu god Vishnu. | | |
| **Activity 2:** Storyboard the elements in the story: who are the main characters? What are the relationships between the various characters? Is one character ‘more important’ than the others? | | |
| **Activity 3:** Ask children to say what they feel when hearing the story? Do the girls feel differently than the boys about the story? Do they *have* to feel differently? Or are girls allowed to identify with Rama? Are boys allowed to feel like Sita and hope that they ‘win’ something special (e.g. Sita wins the husband of her choice)? | | |
| **Activity 4**: Talk about the symbolism of the bow, i.e. that it was the god Shiva’s bow. What might that mean? Compare the attitude of Ravana (who just assumes he will win the challenge) and Rama (who honours Shiva before he even attempts the challenge)? What quality was Rama showing? | | |
| **Plenary:** Ask any children if they know what happens after Rama and Sita get married. Explain that when Rama is sent into exile, he pleads with Sita to stay in the court and not give up her rich life. However Sita refuses, sacrificing everything to go with Rama, showing great loyalty to him. Explain that this story is one where both male and female characters act heroically. | | |
| Room for more | Pupils will | apply a story from the Sikh tradition to a modern situation, i.e. that of refugees; think about how traditional stories can help us think about and discuss current problems. | |
| ***Aim:*** to make connections between a traditional story and current events. | SEN |  | |
| Gifted |  | |
| **Possible activities** | | | **Suggested resources** |
| **Note:** This is a good story to use if there are refugees in the school and/or in the news. But the discussion must be handled sensitively. | | | *Sikh Stories* by Anita Ganeri  ISBN 0-237-52137-0  Visual aid for explaining idea of ‘equal’  Picture of a jasmine flower  For each table:   * A bowl about the size of a cereal bowl. * A jug of water * A cloth * The head of a flower about the size of a chrysanthemum or dahlia   Using the Google ‘Image’ search facility is a good way to find pictures for use on an IWB. |
| **Starter:** Introduce the phrase the Sikh Faith and explain to the class that the story they are going to hear is about the first of ten gurus or teachers who taught the Sikh people how God wanted them to live. | | |
| **Activity 1:** Using building blocks, counters or pencils, demonstrate the meaning of the word equal. Explain that the idea of all people being equal means that they all matter the same amount and tell the children that this is a very important idea in the Sikh faith. | | |
| **Activity 2:** Ask class if any of them were born in another country. Did their family come to the UK as refugees? What was their experience of having to leave their home because the situation there was so bad? How were they treated when they arrived? If there are no newcomers in the class, have they heard stories about ‘migrants’, ‘immigrants’ or ‘refugees’ in the news? | | |
| **Activity 3:** Read the story of “The Milk and the Jasmine Flower”. Discuss how the priests had become greedy, that they were using their religious ‘fairs’ to become wealthy rather than to spread wisdom. Talk about the symbolism of sending Guru Nanak a bowl filled to the brim. It looks like they are offering Nanak and Mardana a drink, but what they were saying was “our city is full of wise men, we don’t need any more.” And Guru Nanak also replied symbolically: he knew that the jasmine flower would float, i.e. that it wouldn’t cause the milk to overflow, and therefore he was saying that there was always room for more. | | |
| **Activity 4:** Talk about the fact that we are all different, not just to look at, but in our ideas and lifestyles. Introduce the idea that even though we all follow the same rules in school, we can still be different and that there is room for different ideas, people and beliefs in our class or school, our city and our world. | | |
| **Plenary:** Bring the unit of lessons to a close by reminding the children that they have looked at stories from a variety of traditions. How does “The milk and the jasmine” story show that there is always room for a new or different point of view or story? In groups at their tables, children could try to float a flower in a full bowl of water without spilling any of the water. Perhaps digital photos of this activity could be stuck in the children’s books. Alternatively, children could cut and stick some national costumes in their books and some could write a sentence about our all being different. | | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Key words | Values, talents, forgiveness, remorse, miracles, point of view |
| **Points to note** |  |
| Outcomes | |
| *Children are working at an emerging level if:*   * They understand that religions use stories to teach important lessons. * They can recount elements from one or two of the stories told during the unit. * They are able to articulate why they like a particular story.   *They are working at an expected level if:*   * They can link an element in a story to a belief from a particular tradition (e.g. the story of David and Goliath reflects the fact that Jews and Christians believe that talent comes from God). * They understand that stories can hold lessons for everyone, not just followers of a particular religion. * They are able to articulate something they have learned from a story.   *Children are exceeding expectations if:*   * They demonstrate the capacity to formulate questions that are relevant to the story told. * They demonstrate an understanding of the concept of different interpretations/points of view. * They can name an abstract concept/human quality addressed by a story (e.g. fairness, equality, humility, bravery, greed). | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Background information | |
| Sulayman and ‘Izra’il  Detail of a miniature painting from a sixteenth century manuscript of *The Teachings of Rumi*. Shows ‘Izra’il—the Angel of death—kneeling before Sulayman who is surrounded by jinn, animals and birds. Although the figure of the prophet is shown, typically for this kind of painting his face is veiled.  [British Library Images on line](http://www.imagesonline.bl.uk/) | *Sulayman was David’s heir. He said, “O people, we have been endowed with understanding the language of the birds, and all kinds of things have been bestowed upon us. This is indeed a real blessing.” Mobilized in the service of Sulayman were his obedient soldiers of jinns and humans, as well as the birds; all at his disposal. When they approached the valley of the ants, one ant said, “O you ants, go into your homes, lest you get crushed by Sulayman and his soldiers….” He smiled and laughed at [the ant’s statement] and said, “My Lord, direct me to be appreciative of the blessings You have bestowed upon me and my parents, and to do the righteous works that please You. Admit me by Your mercy into the company of Your righteous servants.”* (Sura 27: 16-19)  **Sulayman** is King Solomon, who also appears in the Old Testament and in the Jewish Bible. This particular story does not appear in Jewish or Christian scriptures but the concepts of mercy (i.e. not being punished for wrongdoing when we deserve punishment or consequence) and of being thankful to God are shared in all three faiths. Sulayman was believed to have had the ability to communicate with all creatures, including jinn, and it is said that he had jinn in his army.  **Jinn** are believed to be creatures with free will, made of smokeless fire (the literal translation being ‘subtle fire’, i.e. a fire which does not give itself away through smoke) by Allah, much in the same way humans were made of ‘clay’. Jinn are frequently mentioned in the Qur’an; Sura 72, entitled “al-Jinn” is entirely about them. In fact, the prophet Muhammad was said to have been sent as a prophet to both “humanity and the jinn.” Like humans, jinn possess the ability to be good and bad. They have the power to transform into humans and other animals; they also have the power to possess humans—having much greater strength than them—and live longer lives.  In numerous religions, including the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam), Jah religions (Rastafarian), Sikhism, and many forms of Paganism, a **prophet** is person serving as intermediary with a deity, particularly someone who claims to speak for the deity or interprets the deity’s will or thoughts. Believed to operate through some means of divination, channelling, or extra-sensory perception, the prophet’s pronouncements in the name of a deity are sometimes called ‘revelation’. The holy book of the Islamic faith, the Qur’an, is considered to be Allah’s revelation through his prophet Muhammad. |
| ‘Star of David’ oil Hanukiah  [www.smalljudaica.om](http://www.smalljudaica.com/)  Eternal light (Ner Tamid)  [www.plaqueimpact.com](http://www.plaqueimpact.com/%20welcome.htm) | The two books which tell the story of the revolt of the Maccabees are found in the Apocrypha, books included in the Catholic Bible but not in the Protestant canon. They can also be found in a collection called *Sefer HaChitzonim* which contains other writings left out of the Hebrew Bible but mentioned or quoted in the Talmud. For historical background to the Maccabean revolt see: <http://www.rainmall.com/hanukkah/history.htm>  The hanukiah is a specific type of menorah (branched candlestick) used for Chanukah. Chanukah is the festival of lights that falls in December. It celebrates the miracle that a quantity of oil sufficient for one day lasted for eight during the Maccabean siege. A hanukiah is made up of nine branches. Eight of the branches symbolise the lasting of oil for eight nights while the ninth branch is the *shamash* (the master light). The branches of a menorah may differ in number and in height. However, to be considered a hanukiah the eight branches must be of uniform height and spacing. During Chanukah Jewish families may place their hanukiahs in the window of their homes to remind people of the miracle of Chanukah.  An eternal light (*Ner Tamid*) hangs above the ark in every synagogue. It is often associated with the menorah, the seven-branched lamp stand that stood in front of the Temple in Jerusalem; it is also associated with the continuously-burning incense altar which stood in front of the ark. Originally an oil lamp, most Ner Tamid are today fuelled by either gas or electricity. They are never extinguished or turned off, symbol of the Jewish belief in God’s eternal presence. |
| Sita garlands Rama  [astrobix.com](http://astrobix.com/festivals_of_india/dussehra/dussehra_ramlila.aspx) | **One day, Princess Sita was walking on the terrace of her quarters, when she saw Rama standing just below. Their eyes met and it was love at first sight for both of them, almost as if Lord Vishnu and the goddess Lakshmi realized that they had met again in human form. After this encounter Sita prayed that Rama should end up becoming her husband in her forthcoming Swayamvara, a ceremony where the bride is allowed to choose her groom from among an assembled group of men.**  **King Janaka, Sita’s father, soon realized that his daughter was of marriageable age, and made the arrangements for her swayamvar. Kings and princes from all over India attended the event, including Rama and his brother, Lakshmana as well as Ravana, the mighty, ten-headed demon King of Lanka.**  **Janaka erected a beautiful wedding pavilion (mandap). In the centre of the mandap he placed a gigantic bow that had been given to him by Lord Shiva. The story goes that Sita had been found playing with this bow as a child, and Janaka had been advised that when the right time arrived, he should marry off his daughter only to the man who could lift the bow, thus proving to be her equal.**  **The swayamvar ceremony commenced and King Janaka welcomed everyone assembled at the venue, declaring that he would give his daughter’s hand in marriage to the person who was strong enough to lift the bow and string it. Many princes and kings tried and failed. The demon Ravana took up the challenge, boasting that he was so strong that he would be able to lift it with the little finger of his left hand. Many failed attempts later he tried to lift it with both his hands. But the bow would not budge and Ravana was forced to admit defeat.**  **And then it was Rama’s turn. Before he even attempted it, he offered his obeisance to Shiva and his mighty bow. To the utter surprise of all present, he lifted the bow with ease and strung it with a resonant twang. Overjoyed Sita placed the wedding garland around Rama’s neck.**  **From: http://www.dollsofindia.com/library/sita/** |
|  | ***The Milk and the Jasmine Flower*** is a story about Guru Nanak, his friend Mardana, and the people of a city named Multan. Each year some unscrupulous ‘holy men’ (fakirs) in the city would put on a fair to display their ‘powers’ and take money from gullible people. Guru Nanak had obtained a reputation for wisdom and when the people found out that he was coming to their city they ran out to meet him. This incensed the fakirs, who sent a messenger to him and Mardana with a bowl of milk filled to the rim.  The messenger asked if they had anything to say to the priests and holy men. Guru Nanak plucked a jasmine flower and placed it on the milk. The Guru said that even though the bowl seemed to have met its maximum capacity, it could still hold the flower, like the world will always have room for more sacredness and righteousness. When the priests and holy men heard this message, they repented and allowed the Guru and his companion into their city. |