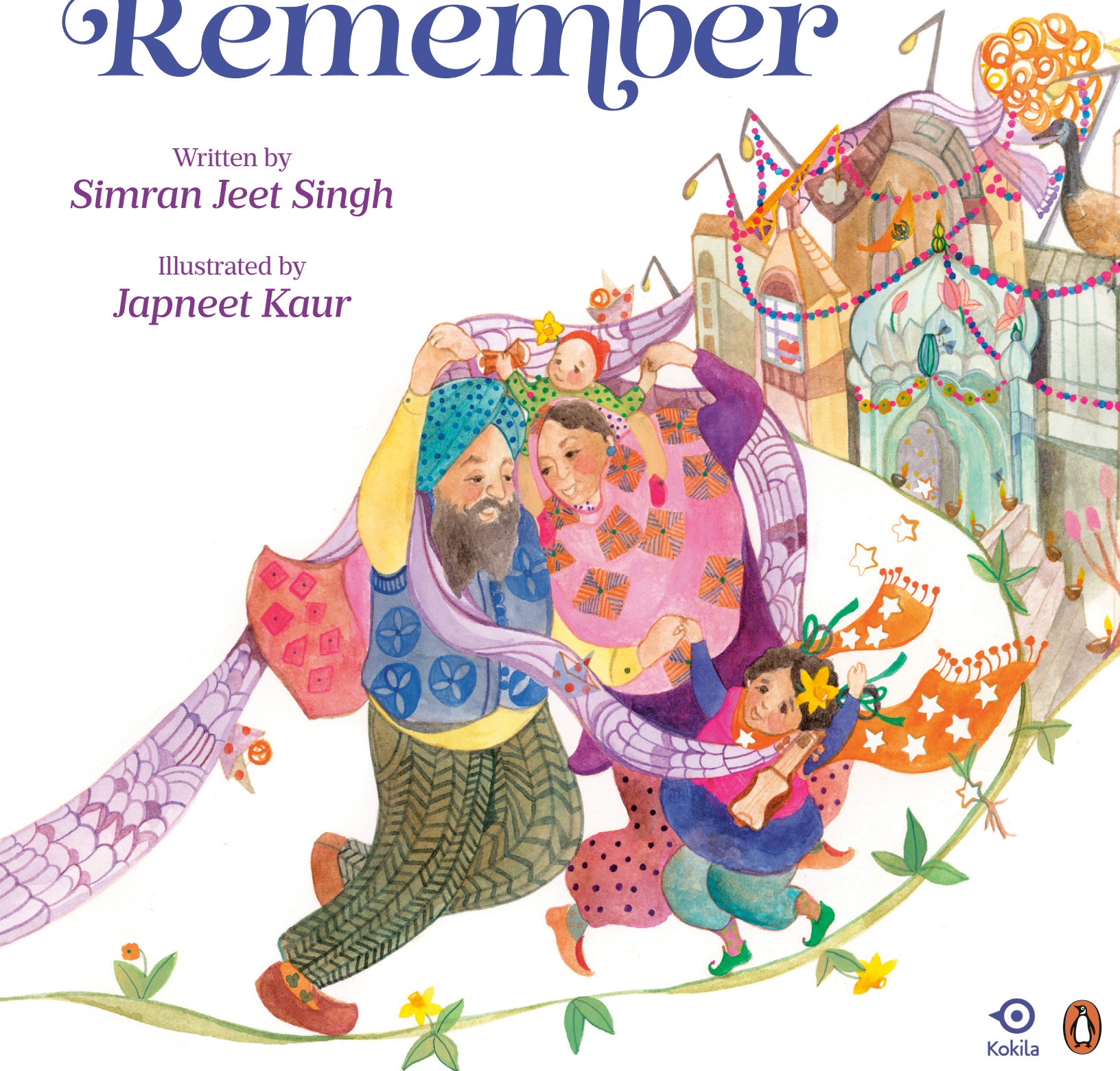


An Educator Guide to A Vaisakhi to Remember

Written by
Simran Jeet Singh

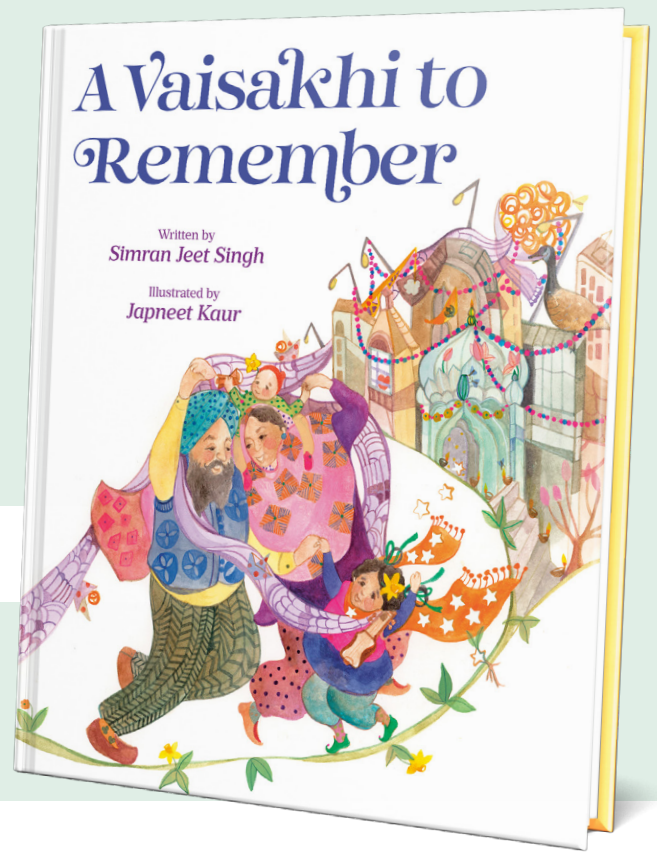
Illustrated by
Japneet Kaur



“A heartfelt story of home, tradition, and continuity.” –Booklist

“Visually evocative . . . a beautiful picture book.” –BCCB

“An empathetic tale that speaks to the complex feelings inherent to undergoing big change.” –Kirkus Reviews



About the Book

A picture book that celebrates community and heritage as a young girl looks for points of connection in a new country through the joyous Sikh spring harvest holiday of Vaisakhi.

About the Creators



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Simran Jeet Singh is a writer and professor. He teaches about different cultures and religions, and he is the author of multiple books, including the award-winning picture book *Fauja Singh Keeps Going*.

Simran grew up in Texas and now lives with his family in New York City.



© Bugeecha

Japneet Kaur graduated with a fine arts degree from the Chandigarh College of Art. She currently lives and works in Toronto, Canada, as a painter, illustrator, potter, and animator. Her work is inspired

by narratives, some real, some fantastical—tales that weave through the natural and human worlds using a visual vocabulary based on themes of homes, habitats, ecosystems, migrations, immigration, and representation.

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This discussion guide was created in collaboration with the Sikh Coalition, the nation's largest Sikh civil rights organization, which leads efforts to promote accurate Sikh awareness and prevent bullying in our nation's public schools. Email: education@sikhcoalition.org



Pre-Reading Activity

Objective: To expand understanding of diverse identities, experiences, and methods of celebration of one's culture.

Method: Help students observe shared characteristics with those who seem different from themselves and different characteristics of those who seem similar.

- Reflect on if you have had to move to a new home, classroom, or school. What were some things that were different? How did that make you feel? What helped you feel better about the change?
- List different ways your loved ones make you feel at home.
- Draw a picture of your favorite food to eat during a celebration with your family.
- Share with your group and write a small reflection on how your experiences and celebrations are similar to and different from your partners. Write one new thing you learned about celebration or feeling at home.



Discussion Questions During Reading

Teachers can use the description of the story below to help guide the classroom discussion.

Plot:

- What is the story about?
- What is the main idea of the story?
- What are the key turning points in the story?

A Vaisakhi to Remember is a story about a girl who has moved to a city far away from her village in India.

In the village, she really enjoyed the celebration of Vaisakhi with the harvest and their visit to the gurdwara. However, everything she enjoys changes as her family moves to a new city where her home looks and feels nothing like before.

Rather than feeling the excitement of Vaisakhi, the girl feels nervous about how different it will look this year without her nani (grandmother) with her. Her parents do small things that they did in the village in their new home to continue the happy memories the girl has around Vaisakhi. Although this Vaisakhi is different from what she experienced in India, the girl finds small similarities with how they celebrated before as well as new ways to celebrate with the friends she makes in the community. She finds comfort in knowing that Vaisakhi is a happy occasion for her in both places she has called home.

Kindergarten: [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.2C](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.3](#) | **Grade 1:** [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.2](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.3](#) | **Grade 2:** [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.6](#) | **Grade 3:** [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.1](#) | **Grade 4:** [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2](#) | **Grade 5:** [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.2](#)

Discussion Questions During Reading (continued)

Characters:

- Who is the main character in this story?
- What are some characteristics of her community that you see in this story?
(Suggested answers: religious identity, ethnicity)
- What are the emotions felt by the girl in this story?
- Which characters does she miss when she moves and what does she remember?
- How do her parents help her feel better after moving?
- How do friends in her new home help her make memories?



Setting:

- What are some ways that the girl's home in the village and home in the city are similar?
- What are some ways that her homes are different?
- What are some memories that the girl is thinking about as she is preparing for Vaisakhi in her new home?
- What reminds the girl of her home in India when she visits the gurdwara?
- Why may it be hard for the girl to get used to her new home?

Themes:

- What are some of the lessons we can learn from the girl about how to make moving to a new place feel less scary?
- When and how does the girl realize that although she's in a new place, she can find ways to make the city feel like home?
- What role does the girl's community in the city play in making her feel less scared to call a new place home? How does it remind her of her village back home?



Extension idea: C3 lesson plan titled
"What do the things I wear say about me?"

[Click For Extension Idea](#)

After-Reading Activities

Activity 1

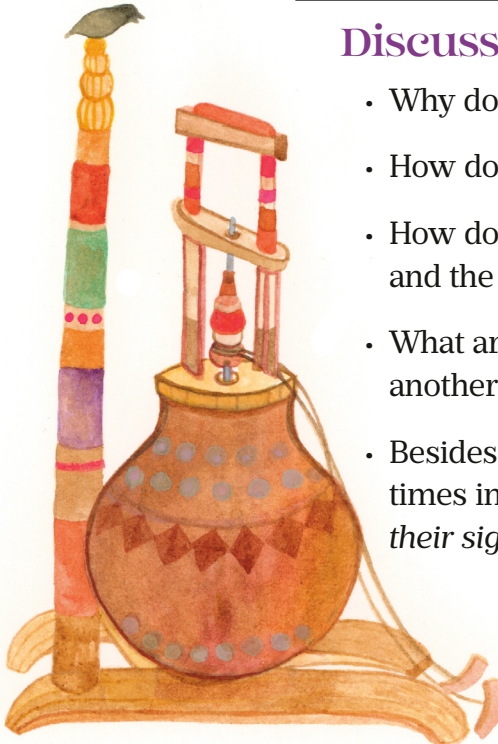
Find the following items in the illustrations and write about why they matter to the girl and her family.

- Langar
- Nishan sahib
- Kara
- Guru Granth Sahib
- Gurdwara
- Khanda
- ੴ, Ik Oankar
- Jalebi
- Bhaturay and cholay
- Lassi
- Bhangra



Discussion questions:

- Why do you think we see some of the items more than once?
- How does the gurdwara look different in her old and new home?
- How does her home and everyday life look different between the village and the city?
- What are the different ways you see people working with and helping one another?
- Besides the items we looked for, are there any others that you see multiple times in the story? (Optional: As students list different items, their significance can be shared.)



After-Reading Activities (continued)

Activity 2

Read about Vaisakhi at the CBC Kids website.

Discussion Questions:

- What are the religious celebrations of Vaisakhi?
- What are the cultural celebrations of Vaisakhi?
- How does the imagery depict the little girl's process of readjusting after immigrating?
- What are the different components of Sikhism's values or practice seen depicted at the gurdwara?

Extension idea: SAP

[Click for Extension Idea](#)

Grade 2: [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.6](#) | Grade 3: [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.2](#) | Grade 4: [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.8](#) | Grade 5: [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.2](#)



Grade 3: [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.2](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.6](#) | Grade 4: [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.5](#) | Grade 5: [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.2](#) | Grade 6: [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.2](#)



Reflection/ Essay Prompt

Essay Prompt: Explore the ways in which the family is able to continue practices and traditions from their village in India in their new home after immigration. What are some of the challenges, similarities, and differences for the family?



In the book

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- 7

GLOSSARY (Continued)



Additional Words For Illustrations

- **Kes:** Uncut hair. Can be seen in the illustrations being combed, tied up in a bun, or braided.
- **Head coverings:**
 - **Dastaar:** Sikh turban
 - **Patka:** Smaller turban worn by younger Sikhs
 - **Chunni:** Scarf, typically worn by women
- **Kara:** Steel bangle
- **Kirpan:** Small sword
- **Kanga:** Wooden comb
- **Guru Granth Sahib:** Sikh scripture and eternal Guru. The Sikh Gurus wrote and compiled the devotional songs that make up the scripture.
- **Khanda:** an emblem associated with the Sikh faith
- **ੴ:** Ik Oankar is a foundational teaching in the Sikh tradition that appears at the opening of the Guru Granth Sahib and many times throughout it. This teaching affirms the existence of one God, the Creator.

