

Grade 9 Life Orientation Worksheet

The Dalai Lama - The great spiritual leaders

You may have heard of the great spiritual leader – the Dalai Lama – who has done a great deal to promote world peace, and who has won the Nobel Peace Prize. Read about him in the excerpt from <http://www.nobel/prize.org>. Then answer the questions that follow.

His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is the spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetan people. He was born in a small village, called Takster, in northeastern Tibet. Born to a peasant family, His Holiness was recognised at the age of two, in accordance with Tibetan tradition, as the reincarnation of his predecessor, the 13th Dalai Lama.

Education in Tibet

He began his education at the age of six and completed the Geshe Lharampa Degree (Doctorate of Buddhist Philosophy) when he was 25.

Leadership responsibilities

In 1950, at age 16, His Holiness was called upon to assume full political power as Head of State and Government when Tibet was threatened by the might of China. In 1959 he was forced into exile in India after the Chinese military occupation of Tibet. Since 1960 he has resided in Dharamsala, aptly known as 'Little Lhasa', the seat of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

In the early years of exile, His Holiness appealed to the United Nations on the question of Tibet, resulting in three resolutions being adopted by the General Assembly in 1959, 1961 and 1965. In 1963, His Holiness promulgated a draft constitution for Tibet which assures a democratic form of government. In the last two decades, His Holiness has set up educational, cultural and religious institutions which have made major contributions towards the preservation of the Tibetan identity and its rich heritage. He has given many teachings and initiations, including the rare Kalachakra Initiation, which he has conducted more times than any of his predecessors.

His Holiness continues to present new initiatives to resolve the Tibetan issues. At the Congressional Human Rights Caucus in 1987, he proposed a Five-Point Peace Plan as a first step towards resolving the future status of Tibet.

Contact with the West

Unlike his predecessors, His Holiness has met and talked with many Westerners. He has visited the United States, Canada, Western Europe, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, Mongolia, Greece, Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Nepal, Costa Rica, Mexico, the Vatican, China and Australia. He has met with religious leaders from all these countries.

His Holiness met with the late Pope Paul VI at the Vatican in 1973, and with His Holiness

Grade 9 Life Orientation Worksheet

Pope John Paul II in 1980, 1982, 1986 and 1988. At a press conference in Rome, His Holiness the Dalai Lama outlined his hopes for the meeting with John Paul II: *"We live in a period of great crisis, a period of troubling world developments. It is not possible to find peace in the soul without security and harmony between the people. For this reason, I look forward with faith and hope to my meeting with the Holy Father; to an exchange of ideas and feelings; and to his suggestions, so as to open the door to a progressive pacification between people."*

In 1981, His Holiness talked with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie, and with other leaders of the Anglican Church in London. He also met with leaders of the Roman Catholic and Jewish communities and spoke at an interfaith service in his honour by the World Congress of Faiths. His talk focused on the commonality of faiths and the need for unity among different religions: *"I always believe that it is much better to have a variety of religions, a variety of philosophies, rather than one single religion or philosophy. This is necessary because of the different mental dispositions of each human being. Each religion has certain unique ideas or techniques, and learning about them can only enrich one's own faith."*

Questions:

1. What was the Dalai Lama's birth name? [1]
2. Where was he born? [1]
3. If the Dalai Lama was born to a peasant family, how did he become the leader of the Tibetan people? [2]
4. What degree did the Dalai Lama receive when he was 25? [1]
5. What religion does the Dalai Lama follow? [1]
6. How old was the Dalai Lama when he became head of state? [1]
7. Why does the Dalai Lama no longer live in Tibet? [2]
8. Why did the Dalai Lama appeal to the United Nations? [2]
9. Did the previous Dalai Lamas have contact with the West? Explain your answer. [2]
10. What did the Dalai Lama say to Pope John Paul 2? [2]
11. Why do you think that the Dalai Lama meets with leaders of other world religions? [2]
12. Why does he say that there should be many religions? [2]
13. Do you agree with this idea? Explain your answer. [2]

Total marks: 20

Grade 9 Life Orientation Worksheet

Suggested Solutions

Question number	Possible marks	Solution
1	20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tenzin Gyotso. [1] 2. Takster, in North Eastern Tibet. [1] 3. He was recognised at the age of 2 as being the reincarnation of the previous Lam. [1] 4. The Doctorate of Buddhist Philosophy. [1] 5. Buddhism. [1] 6. 16. [1] 7. He was exiled by the Chinese, who now rule Tibet. [2] 8. He appealed to the UN to free Tibet from Chinese rule. [2] 9. No, the previous Lamas stayed in Tibet and did not have contact with people outside the country. [2] 10. He told Pope John Paul 2 that they should work together to promote world peace. [2] 11. He met with other religious leaders to talk about what different faiths have in common and to promote unity of faiths. [2] 12. People are all different, and different religions have their own ideas, so it helps to learn about other religions. [2] 13. Own opinion. [2]