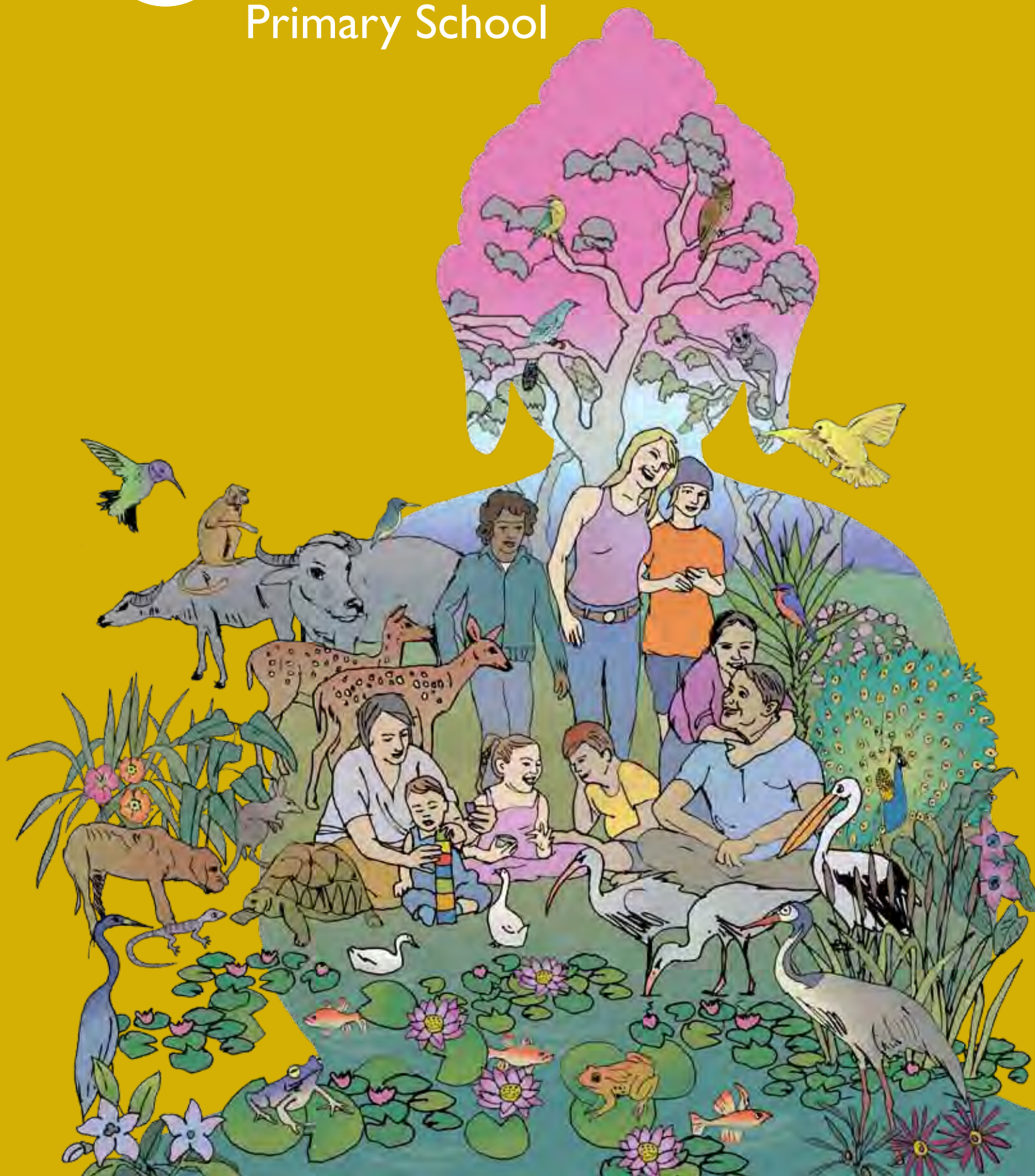




# DISCOVERING BUDDHA

Lessons for  
Primary School





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Primary School





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## Acknowledgements

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### Published by

Buddhist Council of Victoria, 36 McDowall St, Mitcham VIC 3132, Website: [www.bcv.org.au](http://www.bcv.org.au)

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First published 2008. Second edition 2015. Third edition 2018

**ISBN** 978-0-6483718-0-9 (Printed)

**ISBN** 978-0-6483718-1-6 (PDF)

Original edition made possible with financial support from the Victorian Multicultural Commission.

This manual may be photocopied for instructional purposes.



**Design** Carey Rohrlach, Caro Way

**Illustrations** David Bennett, Rolpa Graphic Design

**Editor** Judith Macdonald

**Printing** Kwik Kopy Printing Centre, St Kilda

### For materials used:

The BCV's Buddhist Religious Instruction (bENGAGED) program acknowledges with gratitude the following organizations and publications for use of material in this publication:

- For worksheets and creative ideas: Buddhnet and the Buddha Dharma Education Association: Buddhism for Primary Students. [www.buddhanet.net](http://www.buddhanet.net)
- For worksheets and background information: The Clear Vision Trust, Manchester. UK. [www.clear-vision.org](http://www.clear-vision.org)  
Illustrator: Adiccabandhu
- For Mountain Meditation: Jon Kabat-Zinn: *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life*. Hyperion Press. New York. 1994.
- Reference book for the life of the Buddha: Jonathan Landaw and Janet Brooke: *Prince Siddhartha*. Wisdom Boston. 2003.
- The modern versions of the Jataka Tales were adapted by Sue Erica Smith from Cowell, E.B. (ed.) 1990. *The Jataka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births*. Vol. 1 and 2. Translated from Pali. Moltilal Banarsidas Publishers, Delhi.
- Material originally developed by FPMT Education Department, © FMPT Inc, [www.fpmt.org](http://www.fpmt.org)



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**T**he Buddhist Council of Victoria (BCV) is honoured to present this copy of the resource manual *Discovering Buddha*. The original publication was produced with the assistance, hard work, advice, recommendations, and dedication of numerous people including Judith Macdonald, Sue Smith and Serena Seah with the help of a very generous donation from the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC). The manual is beautifully designed to bring the Dhamma/Dharma to a modern audience.

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Welcome

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# DISCOVERING BUDDHA

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Lessons for  
Primary School

*Key to Icons*



Text



Activity



Creative Work



Meditation



# Introduction

---

**T**his resource book of ideas and inspirations for volunteer Buddhist Religious Instructors is relevant to today's primary age students and to mainstream instructors.

Based on the teachings of the Buddha, it provides practical, everyday applications of wise and skilful action. The reflective and inclusive approach is complementary to current Australian educational practices and values and will provide a significant addition to the revised Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), especially in the domains of Thinking Processes, Personal Development and Inter-Personal Learning.

Buddhist Religious Instruction (bRI) classes have been offered in a small number of Victorian primary schools since 2004. The program was founded on collaboration with a cross-section of Buddhist communities and traditions under the umbrella of the **Buddhist Council of Victoria** (BCV). The ideas and lesson plans in this collection are a result of instructors' experiences, trialling of different approaches and feedback from both staff and students. Curriculum development days for the volunteer instructors of Buddhism have been a fruitful means of reviewing and consolidating the curriculum and resources.

This resource book would not have been possible without the hard work and commitment of the small team of **past and present bRI Instructors**: they are the heartwood of the program and this book is a special gift to them. In addition we are grateful to the schools which have welcomed the bRI program, and the class teachers for their willingness to be open to this possibility.

The BCV and its Buddhist Religious Instruction (bENGAGED) Program Committee, along with the spiritual advisors to the bRI program, have provided on-going support and encouragement. The organisation **Religions for Peace** provides an invaluable bridge for minority faiths to the mainstream Victorian education system and we thank them for that.

The **Victorian Multicultural Commission** (VMC) has made it possible to bring a dream to reality. We acknowledge with gratitude the financial contribution of the VMC to this publication and join with them in celebrating the rich diversity of faiths and communities that make up the State of Victoria.

May this book inspire, interest and fill with hope, all those who turn to it with that question: "What shall we awaken in mind tomorrow?"





# How to Use This Resource: A Guide for Instructors

---

**T**his is a resource to support a journey of learning that you will engage in with your students. It is not a textbook where you might start at page one and finish at the end of the year. Rather it is a compendium of lesson plans, resource materials and notes for instructors suitable for students in Grades 3-6.

It is not, however, a course *about* Buddhism. It is a course where the Dhamma/Dharma is presented in ways that encourage children to think, reflect, explore, act and create so that mindfulness and loving-kindness may develop within each child because he or she can see for themselves some direct benefits.

This manual is divided into nine sections: Introduction to Buddhism, Life of the Buddha, the Jataka Tales, More Virtuous Qualities, Change and Impermanence, Meditation, Special Days, Craft Activities and an extension activity on Cause and Effect for older students.

**Section 1: Introduction to Buddhism:** The starting point for any Buddhist class in our program is to introduce children to where Buddhism fits in the world – where and how Buddhism originated, where Buddhist people live today and some basic Buddhist principles and practices. In this section there is a choice of lessons, including a brief version of the life of the Buddha, because you may well find that some children in your class are new, and some would have attended before.

**Section 2: The Life of the Buddha:** After some introductory lessons, each class will learn in more depth about the Buddha's life story. The lessons are based on chapters in the recommended text *Prince Siddhartha* (Landaw and Brooke. Wisdom Boston. 2003) which is provided to every bRI instructor.

This epic tale exemplifies the important teachings of Buddhism and could take more than one year to work through. Included is a short version to give an overview, followed by detailed lessons from which you as a instructor may choose particular parts to focus on. For example, younger children might enjoy lessons around Prince Siddhartha's birth while older children may be quite excited by the years of asceticism. You do not have to teach every event in the one year. You will notice though, that the lessons that accompany this story, and the other stories in this manual, go beyond comprehension and lead the children towards personal experience.

**Sections 3 and 4: The Jataka Tales, the Paramitas and More Virtuous Qualities** are included for you to dip into as the need or occasion arises in your classroom. These stories with their suggested activities can be included at anytime and in any order.

**Section 5: Change and Impermanence:** You may choose to make this a special theme for a semester and work through all the lessons, or just choose one or two to include in your overall program. The choice is up to you.


**Section 6: Meditation:** This is an essential part of *every* Buddhist RI lesson. The meditations included have been selected because instructors who have pioneered this program have found them to be the most effective. There are many different meditations and too much variety can confuse children. We aim for a calm, stable routine where children develop concentration and loving-kindness and are allowed the opportunity to imagine and feel their own potential and the value in contributing to a better world.

**Section 7 and 8: Special Days and Craft Activities:** Variety too is most important, and this manual provides many choices. You may wish to suspend the Buddha's story, to respond to a classroom or topical issue, have some fun with a play, make a beautiful lotus or do some 'field work'. Here the instructor has the liberty to delve into the other sections in this book.

**Section 9: Extension Activities for Upper Primary:**

Buddhist RI classes have been offered for more than four years in some Victorian primary schools. Many students have studied Buddhism for all that time and in Years 5 and 6 are looking for more challenging content and ideas. *The Wheel of Life* section is intended only for those who have already studied some Buddhism and meditation and attempts to introduce the deeper concepts of cause and effect and interconnectedness.

**Note:** Located within the lesson plan, these notes are advice to the bRI Instructor or a warning that this lesson contains sensitive material.

 **Background Information Sheet:** These pages are intended to provide more depth for the instructor. It is not recommended that the notes be read to the students although instructors may share the extra information with the students in the course of the lesson.

**Homework** is not part of the regular routine for these weekly classes but may be set occasionally. By maintaining your weekly records you will easily be able to review the previous week's lesson with your class and provide continuity in learning.

At the back of this manual is a **Record and Planner** sheet (*EA12 p9.22*) where you can enter the lessons that you conduct with each grade in your school. This will provide a valuable record for you, and information for any instructor who might come into the school after you. In this way instructors will easily know if, for example, students in one year have done the play of *The Wounded Swan* then it need not be repeated the following year.

**Relevance to current education practice:** This course fits appropriately with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). Religious instruction is an addition to schools' curricula but the contents of this manual are consistent with, and supplement students' formal learning in the VELS areas of: *Interpersonal Development, Personal Learning, English, the Humanities* and most significantly the *Thinking Processes* that span all disciplines. Our meditations and the excitement of moral imagination through stories provide fresh approaches to cognitive, affective, meta-cognitive and reflective ways of thinking. Instructors in your school may be interested in this program and at times you may have the opportunity to share our teaching methods and content with them.

The Dhamma/Dharma is a precious jewel to promote peace, joy and happiness. If you become familiar with the contents of this manual, you will find a treasury of stories, plays, games, quizzes and opportunities to have fun with your students.

# Making Learning Fun: Strategies for Instructing

---

**A**ll teachers seek to engage their students in whatever activity they are presenting. Planning class-work that includes different kinds of learning styles (mental, physical, creative, visual, aural (hearing), kinaesthetic (movement), intuitive and emotional) is one way of achieving this. Most instructing is done through the visual and aural senses but many children learn just as well, and sometimes better, through other approaches.

Different learning approaches are also useful for students who are active and easily distracted, or for a tired and lethargic class. A change of pace and activity can give a lift from text-based work in the classroom. Fun learning wakes the students up.

In this section a number of different strategies are suggested, such as different ways to run a class quiz, or the more ambitious but very engaging, putting on a class play or organizing a charade. There are also craft activities and creative drawing and design: plenty of scope for everyone! So be courageous, try out these different approaches and watch how your class responds!

## How to Apply these Strategies

1. For most of these interactive instructing strategies, guidelines have to be set to describe what is acceptable behaviour. For example, the waiting group must keep quiet while the active group is performing or answering a question, though some level of noise is acceptable since the students are all excited and involved. So whilst learning with these approaches may be a variation on their everyday activities, regular classroom standards still apply.
2. To have competition or co-operation – that is the question! Obviously a little competition is a good way to raise the energy and have fun, especially if everyone is in a win-win situation and the opportunity is used to share joy with others. In the end, it is the group effort that needs to be applauded and not just the winners. All are winners because they have demonstrated that they have learnt something.
3. Co-operative and group learning are important features of primary school classrooms and are qualities to be encouraged and practised in the bRI class as well. Many Buddhist virtues can be fostered and highlighted through opportunities such as working together, helping one another and sharing skills and resources. All of the lessons in this book include group activities.
4. Spontaneously including one of these activities in your lesson can lift a tired class or calm an over-stimulated one (eg. quiet drawing or colouring for a few minutes).

---

## Story-telling

Whether you are a gifted dramatist or simply enjoy reading aloud to children, story-telling should be a regular activity. In this book there are many stories to choose from – the Jataka Tales, the Life of the Buddha and other stories, poems and verses.

Here are some points to think about as you prepare a story for your class:

- A picture is worth a thousand words. Use visuals wherever you can to bring the story alive.
- Use props such as puppets, dolls, masks or special clothing eg. put on a special shawl when you are telling a story or whatever you can think of to animate the story.
- Use simple words and FEWER of them. Don't confuse the children with too many words.
- Draw out the children's knowledge and experiences with open-ended questions (eg. NOT 'yes' or 'no' answers). Instead use questions such as: *What do you know about the figure in this picture?* Rather than *Do you know who this is?*
- For further ideas on story-telling, see *Section 3: Jatakas and Paramitas JP2. Telling a Story with a Virtuous Meaning, p3.4.*

## Making Revision Fun

Re-capping and revising is not only a useful strategy but essential in the bRI classroom where students only attend once a week. So, always recap on the previous week's theme, new words and concepts etc.

Here are some ideas to get you started with quick revision exercises for each lesson:

### I. Revising Stories:

- *Re-arranging text*
  - Students arrange jumbled sentences of a story into the correct order on the board or on pieces of card.
  - Students arrange jumbled parts of a sentence into the correct order.
- *Picture sequencing*

Students arrange jumbled pictures of a story into the correct order. They can then retell the story in their own words.
- *Matching text to pictures*

Students match pictures to text and then read the story as a whole.
- *Re-telling the story*

Go around the circle with each student adding the next part of the story. The instructor asks: *And what happened next?*

---

## 2. Word Games for reinforcing new words, terms and concepts:

New terms such as impermanence, wisdom, loving kindness and compassion, can be easily reinforced through word games such as:

- *Matching*  
Students match concepts to the meaning of the words written on the board, or on card. Easily made into a pair game on the lines of *Snap!* or *Pelmanism*.
- *Fill in the Gaps*  
Students are given a text where words are missing. It is helpful to provide a text box of words that students choose from.
- *Missing letters*  
Students could be asked to learn the spelling of words and given a worksheet with letters missing from each word.
- *Crossword Puzzles*  
Crossword puzzles reinforce meaning and spelling of new words.  
[www.buddhanet.net](http://www.buddhanet.net) has some examples but making your own specially suited to a recent topic and to the level of your students is always best.
- *Word Searches*  
Word searches help students learn the spelling of words as they have to look for the words in a sea of letters. See section 9: *Extension Activities EA11*, [p9.19](#))
- *Making 'Who Am I?' Riddles*  
The instructor gives three clues about a person or a place from Buddhist history and the students have to guess who or what it is.  
eg.  
I have only one son.  
I am a queen.  
I died young and my sister took care of my son.  
*Answer:* Queen Maya

## 3. Other Games and Activities:

Many well-known board games can be adapted for use in the Buddhist RI classroom. Snakes and Ladders or Q&A Ludo are just two.

The Wisdom Game (see *Section 3: Jatakas and Paramitas JP3 p3.5*) using knowledge from the Jataka Tales has been designed specially for this program and could be adapted for every Jataka Tale lesson.



---

## Games and Performing Activities

### 1. Charades:

This is a fun activity for an end-of-term/year party.

- Create a list of words or story titles.
- Cut out small pieces of paper. Write a word on each piece of paper and fold in half.
- Put all the folded papers into a container.
- Divide the class into 2 groups. One group plays at a time.
- The *playing group* sends one representative who selects a piece of paper from the container. Without making any sound, the representative has to act out the word for the rest of the group to guess. If the group guesses the correct word within a set period (eg. 30 secs) then the group scores a point.
- The other group then gets a turn and then it comes back to the first group. This time a different student chooses the word and acts it out.
- Continue until all students in both groups have had their turn.

### 2. Passing Whispers:

- Students are divided into two groups and form a line one behind the other.
- The instructor stands a distance away from the two lines and asks the first student of each line to come forward.
- The instructor whispers a sentence into the ears of those two students who run back to their own line and whisper into the ear of the second student, who whispers into the ear of the third student, and on and on it goes.
- The last student goes to the board and writes down what was whispered to him/her.
- The group with the most accurate sentence gets one point. It is possible to give both groups points. It would be great if they get them right!
- Example of sentences could be, "One way of describing impermanence is nothing stays the same forever."
- The last student then comes up to the front of the line to become the first student. This way all students have a turn to write on the board.
- The object of this game is to encourage the students to think of ways to remember what they hear and to pass on the right message. This is a useful way for students to understand something, as the message has to make sense for them to remember it.

---

### 3. Quizzes:

- Students could be divided into two groups and run up to the board to write the correct answer.
- Students could be divided into two groups and the students take turns to be standing at the board to answer questions and to write the answer down.
- Students could be seated in groups and given paper to write down answers and to show their answers. This way the group can discuss their answers.
- Students could form two lines as in Passing Whispers and the instructor whispers the question into the ears of the first student. The question is then whispered down the line and any student who knows the answer would whisper the answer too. The last student will write the question and answer on the board. The last student then comes up to the front to become the first student.

### 4. Plays and Poems:

- All classes enjoy performing a play, either just amongst themselves or for an audience. Several plays are included in this resource book (see *The Wounded Swan* [p2.8](#) and several others) but as you grow in confidence, writing your own plays for the class will evolve naturally for you.
- Though plays may take up many lessons, they are interactive and require the student to understand the significance of the story and to act it out appropriately. Shy students can be involved in making props or improvisation. Others can provide sound and lighting support.
- *Props* can be simple and imaginative eg. a crown to represent a king or queen, a large green cloth held up to symbolize a forest, a cardboard cut-out for the wounded swan and so on. In fact, the simpler and more creative the props, the more fun the students will have.
- Once the play is well rehearsed, it can be presented to their mainstream class, parents, invited guests or at school assemblies. Make sure you ask permission of the class instructor, deputy principal and inform the Buddhist Education Program Co-ordinator if letters etc are to go home to parents.
- *Poems* are lovely to hear aloud and students enjoy reciting in groups or individually line by line (see *More Virtuous Qualities MV2: Happy, Peaceful and Kind* [p4.6](#)). Encourage your students to write their own poems about a new concept.
- *Recitation of Verses*: Students could learn to recite verses of motivation and dedication. The older students could write their own dedication and take turns to lead the dedication at the end of the class.

---

## Craft and Drawing

### **Craft**

Making things by hand caters to students who learn by doing. It also requires concentration which is good practice for mindfulness. Make sure your instructions are clear and simple and that you have all the materials needed. Creating the item yourself is the best way to ensure you know how to do it and it provides a model for the class to follow. The fruits of their labour could be used as gifts for someone deserving.

Section 8 contains several ideas for craft lessons.

### **Cartoons and Drawings**

Cartooning and drawing are also good activities to make students think of the gist and significance of a story. Students can update a Jataka Tale by using a modern context to illustrate a point in the story and retell it with speech bubbles or cartoon squares or as a story-board. These can be shared with younger students in other classes or given as little gifts.

### **Making a Class Bodhi Tree**

This activity can be an on-going class activity encompassing both craft work in making the tree itself and the leaves but more importantly playing a role in reinforcing positive and helpful behaviour.

For a full description of this activity, see CA5. *Growing our Bodhi Tree* [p8.9](#).

## Bringing the Outside World into the Buddhist RI Class

Integrating the Buddha's teachings with everyday life is the ultimate challenge for us all. Doing this in the Buddhist RI classroom can be refreshing and stimulating, especially for older students.

For younger children, bringing in objects of both special and mundane significance (a feather, a Buddha image, a special stone, an elephant statue, a beautiful piece of cloth or a flower) can transform the atmosphere and point children towards the spiritual in everyday life.

## Festivals and Special Days

Buddhist festival days are an excellent time to celebrate Buddhism and to share this with the rest of the school or class. Many schools now acknowledge the different religious festival days, so enquire as to whether your school does this. It may be a notice at assembly or in the newsletter that it is the Wesak Festival for instance with a short description of what it is.

Section 7 provides several lessons for observing Wesak. It is also a time when different cultures can express their particular way of celebrating this special time in the Buddhist calendar.

# Introduction to Buddhism

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DISCOVERING  
BUDDHA

---

Lessons for  
Primary School

*Key to Icons*



Text



Activity



Creative Work






Meditation





# INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM:

## IB1. Life Story of the Buddha

Lesson Plan		Years	Lessons
		3-6	2-3
<b>1. Theme:</b>	Life Story of the Buddha.		
<b>2. Topic:</b>	Introduction to the life story of the Buddha.		
<b>3. Values:</b>	Respect and awareness of the importance of great teachers and an ethical life		
<b>4. Aims:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To teach about the life story of the Buddha.</li><li>• To recognize the knowledge some children may already have about the story of the Buddha.</li></ul>		
<b>5. Outcome:</b>	Children will be able to match the text and pictures of the life story of the Buddha.		
<b>6. Preparation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Print copies of the appropriate worksheet(s)</li><li> Have copies of the short version of the Life of the Buddha (Clear Vision <a href="http://www.clear-vision-org">www.clear-vision-org</a>)</li></ul>		
<b>7. Lesson 1:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask the students what they already know about the life story of the Buddha.</li><li>• Write key words on the board.</li><li>• Read or tell the story.</li></ul>		
<b>8. Lesson 2:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do a quick revision of previous lesson. Eg. a quiz.</li><li>• Arrange students in groups of 3-4, mixing the different ages and backgrounds.</li><li>• Ask the children to paste in the texts to the matching pictures.</li><li> Children who did <i>Activity B</i> to read their created texts and other groups check for accuracy.</li><li>• Repeat the steps for <i>Activity A</i>.</li></ul>		

### Note

Students who are not familiar with the life story of the Buddha can do *Activity A*. Those who are can do *Activity B*.



# IB1. Activity A. Life Story of the Buddha Page 1 of 2

Name .....

Date .....

1. Cut out the 4 speech bubbles and 2 picture panels below.
2. Match and glue each speech bubble to the corresponding picture on page 2.
3. Match and glue each picture to the corresponding text on page 2.
4. Read the texts in the correct order.



One day, Prince Siddhartha went into the city with Channa, his chariot driver. On the first day, he saw an old man, on the second day he saw a sick man, on the third a dead man and on the fourth day a holy man.



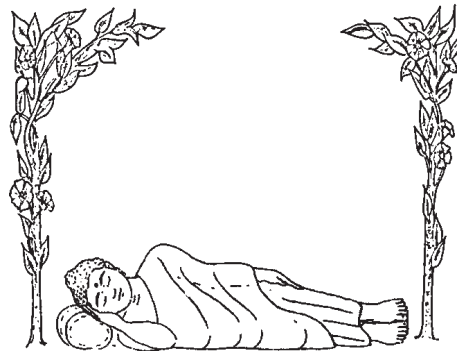
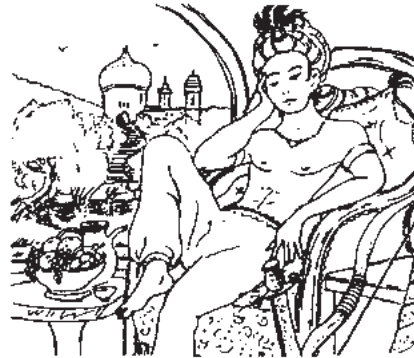
Siddhartha washed in the river and ate some food. Then he sat down to meditate and vowed not to get up until he had found the truth. At last he awakened to the Truth. I am a Buddha, I am Enlightened. He went on to teach the Truth to anyone willing to learn.



A long time ago, in India, a Prince called Siddhartha was born. A wise sage foretold that he would either be a great king or a great holy man. King Suddhodana wanted to make sure that his son would become a great king.



The night Prince Siddhartha decided to leave the palace, he kissed his sleeping wife and son. "I must go and find an end to suffering for us all." For 6 years, he wandered in the jungle and lived as an ascetic. He decided to seek another way.





# IB1. Activity A. Life Story of the Buddha Page 2 of 2

Name .....

Date .....

1



2

From that day on, only young and beautiful people were allowed in the palace. The young prince was brought up to be a king. He learned to shoot with bow and arrow, to ride a horse and hunt.

3



4



5



6

His faithful friend, Ananda, made a bed for him between two sal trees. The Buddha lay down on his side. His friends gathered round. "All things change" he said "Keep up your effort." Then he closed his eyes and died peacefully.

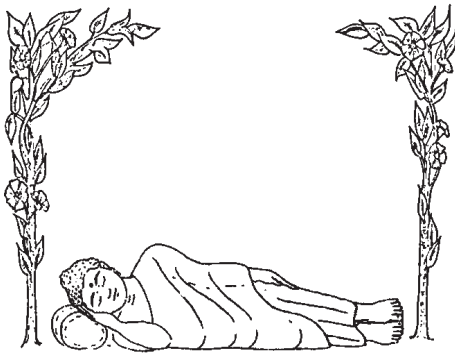


# IB1. Activity B. Life Story of the Buddha Page 1 of 2

Name .....

Date .....

1. Number or cut out and arrange the pictures below in the correct order according to the life of Buddha.
2. In the space provided below each picture on page 2, write texts to explain the pictures.
3. Read your texts to the class.











# IB1. Activity B. Life Story of the Buddha Page 2 of 2

Name .....

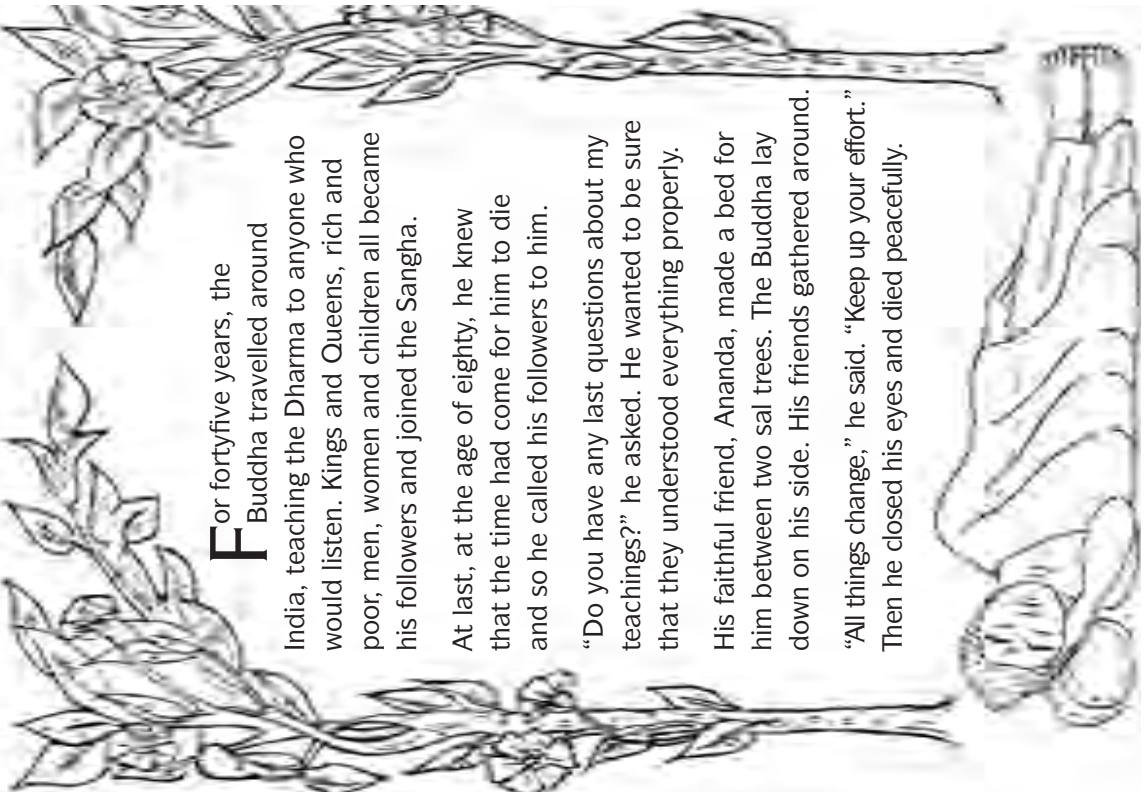
Date .....

<p>1</p> 	<p>2</p> 
<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>3</p> 	<p>4</p> 
<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>5</p> 	<p>6</p> 
<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

Based on material originally developed by The Clear Vision Trust, © Clear Vision [www.clear-vision.org](http://www.clear-vision.org)



## The Parinirvana



**F**or fortyfive years, the Buddha travelled around India, teaching the Dharma to anyone who would listen. Kings and Queens, rich and poor, men, women and children all became his followers and joined the Sangha.

At last, at the age of eighty, he knew that the time had come for him to die and so he called his followers to him.

“Do you have any last questions about my teachings?” he asked. He wanted to be sure that they understood everything properly.

His faithful friend, Ananda, made a bed for him between two sal trees. The Buddha lay down on his side. His friends gathered around.

“All things change,” he said. “Keep up your effort.” Then he closed his eyes and died peacefully.

Based on material originally developed by The Clear Vision Trust, © Clear Vision [www.clear-vision.org](http://www.clear-vision.org)

# The Life of the Buddha



## A Prince is Born



A long time ago, in India, a Prince called Siddhartha was born. A wise old man came to see the baby. He wanted to tell his fortune.

“This little one will be a great king one day, or will leave home and become a great holy man,” he said, holding the baby in his arms.

The king was upset. “He will be a king,” he said, “I shall see to that!” and he called his chief servant. “The Prince is to have everything he wants,” he said, “and make sure he sees nothing to upset him or make him unhappy.”

From that day on, only young and beautiful people were allowed in the palace. The young Prince was brought up to be a king. He learned to shoot with a bow and arrow, to ride a horse and to hunt. He was taught all the things a future king would need to know.

## Teaching the Truth



The Buddha walked the long journey to Sarnath to look for his five friends. He found them in a deer park. They were sitting under a tree. They could see at once that he looked different. As he talked to them they listened carefully.

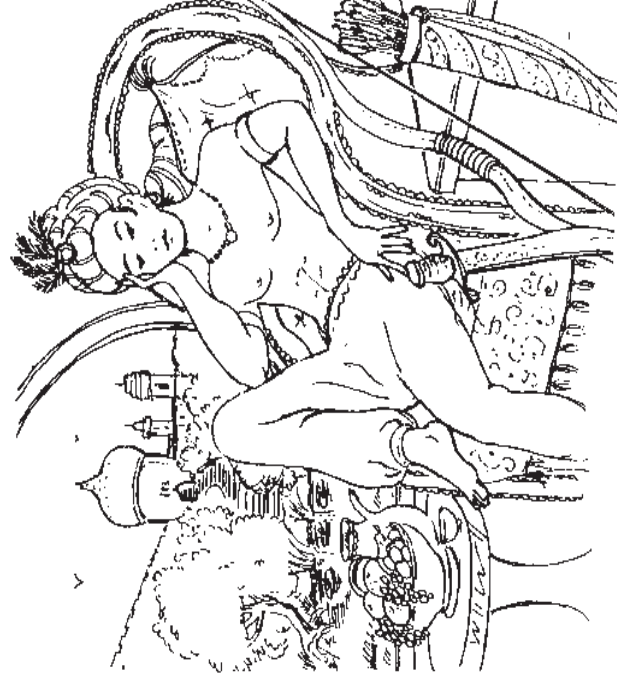
One by one, they too became free. They understood, they became Enlightened.

“The whole world needs to hear the Truth,” said the Buddha, so he and his followers set out to teach the Dharma to anyone who would listen.

The Buddha had not forgotten his family, however. One day, he decided to visit them. And what a day that was! His wife, Yashodhara, his son, Rahula, and even his father, the King, became his followers.

“Now I understand,” said the King.

## The Young Prince



As time passed, Siddhartha grew up.

He married the beautiful Princess Yashodhara and they had a son called Rahula. The King was delighted, his plan was working.

“How happy Siddhartha is here in the palace with his beautiful princess and his baby son.” he thought. “He has his own parks and swimming pools and everything he could wish for. He will never want to leave. One day he will be a great king.”

But prince Siddhartha wasn’t happy at all.

“I don’t want to be shut up in the palace all day. I need to go out and see the world for myself,” he said.

## The Four Sights

One day, Prince Siddhartha went out into the city with Channa, his chariot driver. Soon, they met an old man leaning on a stick and walking very slowly. His hair and teeth were falling out.

Siddhartha was puzzled. “What’s that?”, he asked. “Old age,” said Channa. “Everyone grows old.” This sight upset the prince.

“What’s happened?” he asked. “Sickness,” said Channa. “Everyone gets ill some time in their life.”

Siddhartha was shocked. He had never before seen anyone who was ill.

On the third day, he went out again and saw something even worse. He saw a funeral.

“Death has come,” said Channa. “Everyone has to die”.

“That’s terrible” said Siddhartha. “Why is there so much suffering? What can I do?”

On the fourth day, they saw a man dressed in simple robes and carrying a bowl.

“There’s a holy man,” said Channa. “That’s all he owns.” “And yet he looks so peaceful and happy,” said Siddhartha. “How strange”.





# The Enlightenment

**S**iddhartha washed in the river and ate some food. Then he sat down to meditate in the shade of a tree. He felt much stronger.

“I will sit here until I have won,” he said.

“I will never give up, even if I have to stay here until my blood dries up.”

He meditated all night. In the morning, just as the sun rose, he knew he had won.

“I have done it.

I am free from suffering.

I understand.

At last I am awake to the Truth.

Now I am a Buddha.

I am Enlightened.”



## Leaving Home



**T**hat very night, Siddhartha decided to leave the palace. He kissed his sleeping wife and child: “Goodbye,” he whispered, “I must go and find an end to suffering for us all.

Silently, Siddhartha and Channa crept out of the palace gates and rode off into the night. At last they came to a river at the edge of the forest.

Siddhartha cut off his long hair and put on simple robes. He gave his rich clothes, jewels and his horse to Channa. “Please return to the palace with these. I am no longer your master the Prince, I am Siddhartha the wanderer. I now go forth to find the Truth.”

Channa watched sadly as Siddhartha crossed the river and went off alone into the dark forest.

## The Wandering Holy Man



**F**or six years, Siddhartha wandered in the jungle. He went to famous holy teachers. He learned all they had to teach him, but was still not satisfied. “I have still not learned the Truth,” he thought.

Then he lived with five friends. They were ascetics. They thought that by living a hard and uncomfortable life they would find the Truth. Siddhartha became an ascetic, too.

He ate less and less food until he was living on only one grain of rice a day. He almost starved to death.

“This isn’t helping,” he said, “I am still no nearer the Truth. A very rich life in the palace was not the way. A very hard and uncomfortable life is not the way. I will try a middle way.”


Siddhartha ate some milk-rice that a woman gave him. His friends did not agree. When the five ascetics saw this they didn’t like it.

“He’s given up,” they said, and they left him.



# INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM:

## IB2. Who is the Buddha?





Lesson Plan		Years 3-6	Lesson 1
-------------	---	--------------	-------------

(This lesson should be preceded by an Introduction to Meditation lesson)

1. **Theme:** Who is the Buddha?
2. **Topic:** Images of the Buddha
3. **Values:**
  - Respect for religious artefacts
  - Appreciation of the depth of human potential, including their own
4. **Aims:**
  - To give children the opportunity to examine a picture or statue of the Buddha in detail.
  - To show children that images of the Buddha represent the highest human potential.
  - To cultivate students' abilities to appreciate the potential of their own minds.

### Note

As you explain what an image of a Buddha means to Buddhist people, explain that it is for these reasons that images and pictures are treated with the greatest respect and should not be soiled, defaced, trodden on or thrown away carelessly. The Buddha is an image of what we can be. His teachings show us how we can be our absolute best. This is why words and images of the Buddha are respected.

5. **Preparation:**
  - A statue or picture of Sakyamuni Buddha
  - A bottle of muddy water
6. **Lesson:**
  -  **Meditation:** Lead the students in a guided meditation using the muddy water image. Eg. ME4 p6.8, or ME5 p6.10.
  - **Focus:** Introduce the students to an image of the Buddha, either a statue or a beautiful coloured picture.
  - Ask the children what they notice about the Buddha, eg. eyes, ears, smile.
  - Explain that images of the Buddha are a symbol and reminder of the qualities of the Buddha and represent the best that we can be as people.
  - Explain that this is why the Buddha image is respected. (It is not about magic or luck, but a reminder of our true nature).
  - Explain the meaning of Buddha: *budh* = awake (Sanskrit) *buddho* = possessing complete knowledge and wisdom (Pali)
  - Talk about waking up. What happens? What do you see?
  - If there is time, explain the *anjali* – the special greeting of Buddhists and what it means – that you are bowing to the Buddha in both your hearts.
7. **Activity:**
  -  Draw a waking up picture.
  -  Write in books: 'Buddha' means to be awake to my true self. Meditation helps us to settle our minds to see this true nature.
  -  Give out IB2. *Anjali Mudra* activity sheet for students to complete and take home.





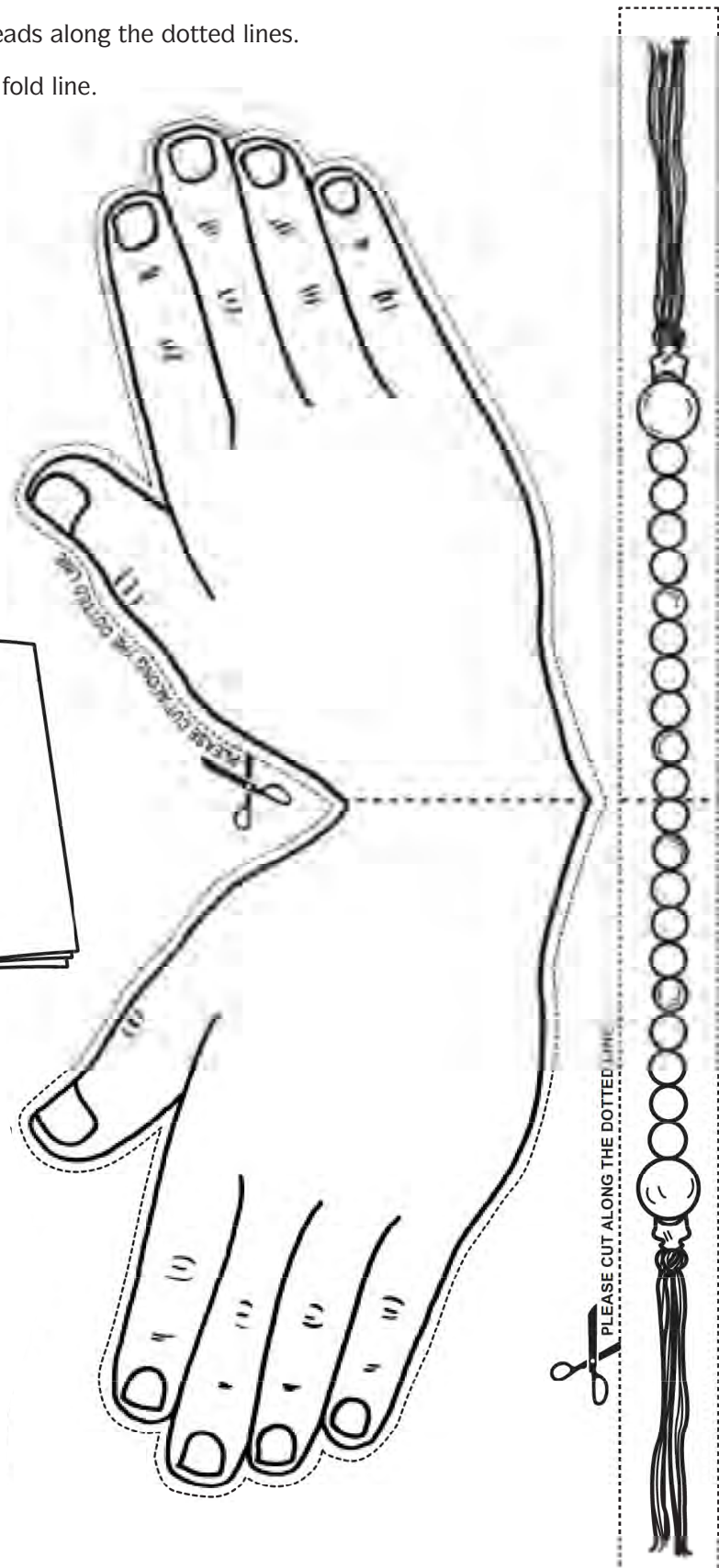
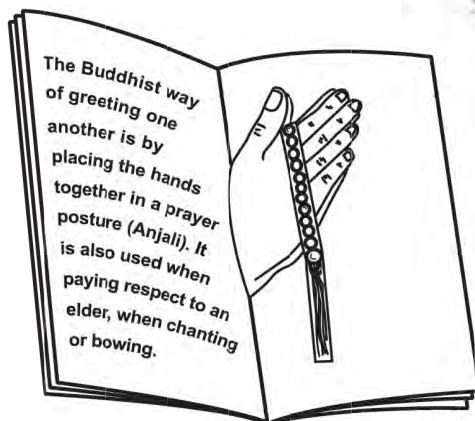
## IB2. Activity. Anjali Mudra

Name .....

Date .....

### Instructions


1. Cut out the hands and beads along the dotted lines.
2. Fold the hands along the fold line.
3. Apply glue to the tips of the fingers and thumbs for a few seconds.
4. Fold the beads along their fold line and hang over fingers as shown.



Based on material originally developed by Buddha Dharma Education Association, © Buddhanet <http://www.buddhanet.net/>

## INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM:

# IB3. Why Does the Buddha Look Like That?

Lesson Plan		Years	Lessons
		3-6	2

- 1. Theme:** Image of the Buddha
- 2. Topic:** Features of the Buddha
- 3. Values:** Respect and developing an inquiring mind
- 4. Aims:** To understand the symbolism of the features of the Buddha.

### Notes

- Halo is a symbol of truth, wisdom and purity of heart
- Big earlobes are a symbol of compassion
- Lotus is a symbol of enlightenment
- Wheel is a symbol of the Buddha's teachings
- Urna is a symbol of the third eye

(See Information Notes [p1.15](#) for further details)

- 5. Preparation:**
  - Statues and pictures of the Buddha
  - Instructor needs to be familiar with the meanings of the different symbols of the Buddha statue. (Refer to information section)
- 6. Lesson:**
  - Bring in statues or pictures of the Buddha from different cultures eg. China, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tibet etc.
  - Ask what differences they notice.
  - Ask students to quietly and respectfully take a closer look at them.
  - What questions would they like to ask of these statues and pictures?
  - Write the questions on the board. (See Information notes to help you with the explanation)



*Activity A:* Students cut out the picture of the Buddha and colour in.



*Activity B:* Students fill in the Labels next to the corresponding symbol and colour in.



## Background Information: Explanation of the Symbolism of the Buddha statue

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1. The **posture** is relaxed and confident and the face is handsome, gentle and noble. There is a calmness and serenity about the face.
2. The **robe** is simple but neatly arranged over both shoulders. His feet, with long toes of equal length, are bare, as is the tradition of monks.
3. Often standing on a **lotus**, a symbol of his enlightenment. The lotus grows out from the muddy darkness at the bottom of a pond, grows towards the warmth and light of the sun, as humans grow towards the warmth of love and compassion, and the light of truth. It rises above its muddy environment and becomes an outstanding beauty, likewise the Buddha grew out of ignorance and achieved enlightenment.
4. There is also the **wheel**, with eight spokes representing the “Eightfold Noble Path”, and a thousand spikes, appearing like the sun, which represents the bright clear teaching that dispels the darkness of ignorance.
5. The **disc**, as a weapon, represents the teaching that destroys ignorance as it spins through the universe.
6. As a **wheel of a ship**, it represents the guiding influence of the Buddha’s teachings.
7. Big, long **earlobes**: as a noble person, he was likely to be decorated with ornate jewellery as a symbol of wealth and his background. Big earlobes are also symbolic of his good hearing. As a symbol of compassion having big ears suggests being able to hear the ‘voice’ of the world – sounds of laughter and cries of pain. If we listen to each other with kindness and patience then we hear the world like a Buddha.
8. There is a small **dot between his eyebrows**. This is called ‘urna’ which is an Indian practice still practised today. Different colours mean different status in society. This is sometimes referred to as the ‘third eye’ which opens to give wise and divine vision of truth.
9. The **hair** is drawn up in a top-knot. As a nobleman, he grew his hair long and tied it up. He also wore a turban. The combination of these two regal symbols can be seen in the shape of a bump. At the time of his renunciation, according to one legend, having pulled his hair together on top of his head, he cut it off and it went into fine curls, which explains the small, spiralling bobbles.
10. Some statues have the Buddha holding a **medicine jar**, a symbol of his healing powers.
11. There is a **halo** around the head. In relation to holy people, a halo symbolizes truth, wisdom and purity of heart. This light dispels the darkness (of ignorance). A halo around other parts of the body is called an aura.
12. The **throne** is usually thought of as a special seat of a king or queen. Having a throne for Siddhartha shows his importance, and places enlightenment as the ruler of the spiritual world.
13. **Footprints** were a symbol. If you were following someone across unknown ground, you would look for footprints as reassurance and as a sign that they had been there. A single footprint, or a pair, represents the presence of Buddha. Usually Buddha prints have a wheel on the sole. Footprints can often be seen before an empty throne, or with other symbols, representing particular events in the life of Siddhartha.

### Reference:

*Symbols, Mudras, Statues, Puzzles.*

Compiled by Kusalo Bhikkhu. Amaravati Buddhist Monastery, U.K.



## IB3. Activity A. Why Does the Buddha Look Like That?

### Instructions

1. Cut out the drawing of the Buddha along the dotted lines.
2. Colour in.





## IB3. Activity B. Why Does the Buddha Look Like That?

Name .....

Date .....

### Instructions

1. Choose from the box below and label the corresponding symbols.
2. Colour in.



*Match the Label to its Symbols*

calm face  
top knot



halo  
long earlobes

lotus position  
hand mudra

urna  
robe

# INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM:

## IB4. Mudras

Lesson Plan	   	Years 3-6	Lessons 2
<b>1. Theme:</b>	Hand gestures in Buddhism		
<b>2. Topic:</b>	Explanation of different mudras		
<b>3. Values:</b>	Symbols of concentration, teaching, respect, fearlessness, charity and generosity		
<b>4. Aims:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To learn the meaning of the different mudras</li><li>• To practice the different mudras</li></ul>		
<b>5. Preparation:</b>	Photocopies: <i>Anjali</i> cut-out and Mudras worksheets		
<b>6. Lesson 1:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate the <i>anjali</i> greeting. Explain its meaning and when it is used.</li><li>• Ask the children to greet one another with the <i>anjali</i> gesture.</li><li>• Explain the meaning of <i>mudra</i>.</li></ul>		

### Note:

*Mudra is a Sanskrit word which means "A hand posture or a symbolic gesture. In Buddhist iconography every Buddha is depicted with a characteristic gesture of the hands. Such gestures correspond to natural gestures (of teaching, protecting, and so on) and also to certain aspects of Buddhist teaching or of the particular Buddha depicted. Mudras acquired special significance in the Mahayana, especially in the esoteric schools. Here mudras accompany the performance of liturgies and the recitation of the Mantras." (From The Seeker's Glossary of Buddhism)*



Divide the students into small groups of 3-4 students.  
Give each person of the group the *IB4. Mudras* worksheet and information sheet. Explain to students that they have to look at the pictures and match each one to an explanation.

- Ask students to explain how they matched them.

### 7. Lesson 2:



Explain the different *mudras* again and practice them.  
Tell the students that they are going to play a game.

- Divide the class into 2 groups.
- Ask one student from each group to come forward.  
The Instructor whispers the name of a *mudra* and the student demonstrates it to his/her group.
- The group then has to identify the *mudra* and stand up to explain what it means. The first group that answers correctly wins one point.


### Reference:

This lesson referred to materials from a book compiled by Kusalo Bhikkhu, Amaravati Buddhist Monastery, U.K.




## IB4. Mudras Page 1 of 2


1. Cut out the 7 text panels below
2. Match and glue each text panel to the corresponding mudra on page 2.
3. When asked, explain how you matched them.




**Relaxed Concentration (*Dhyana*) Mudra**  
Sitting in meditation is a very important part of Buddhism. When you sit down the hands tend to rest in the lap quite naturally in this position. This is the gesture of the concentrated mind in meditation.




**Remembering the Lessons (*Vitarka*) Mudra**  
The Buddha's teachings are often presented in list form and with this gesture one could imagine Buddha counting off the 'Four Noble Truths' – one to each finger. This mudra is similar to the Dhammacakka mudra. It is the gesture of offering teachings in general.




**Respect and Greeting (*Anjali*) Mudra**  
This is a common gesture of greeting, respect and reverence. This gesture is offered between equals, or from junior to senior.




**Generosity (*Varada*) Mudra**  
The greatest gift anyone can receive is freedom. In this gesture the open hand is freely giving, nothing at all is held back. This is a gesture of true charity and generosity. It is a gesture of giving gifts generally, but especially the gift of knowledge that can lead to freedom.



**Teaching or Turning the Wheel of Dhamma (*Dhammacakkapavartana*) Mudra**  
Shortly after Siddhartha became enlightened he gave his first teaching – the Dhammacakka Sutta. The thumb touching the forefinger is like a wheel and all the other fingers radiating out representing the 'Four Noble Truths' and the 'Eightfold Path'. This is a gesture of teaching – it especially refers to the first sermon.



**Fearlessness (*Abhaya*) Mudra**  
The Buddha's cousin, Devadatta, was jealous of Buddha's popularity and wanted to kill him. So, he sent a wild elephant charging down the street toward Buddha who raised his right hand and fearlessly radiated love and loving kindness which calmed the elephant. This is a gesture of fearlessness, resulting in loving-kindness and reassurance.



**Strength from the Earth (*Bumispara*) Mudra**  
Just before Siddhartha found enlightenment, Mara, the tempter, tried to stop him. Siddhartha touched the ground, calling Mother Earth to act as a witness that he has purified his heart over many lifetimes and was worthy of enlightenment. Have you heard of someone who is well grounded? This gesture is one of making contact with the earth, who witnesses all our deeds, good and bad.












## IB4. Mudras Page 2 of 2






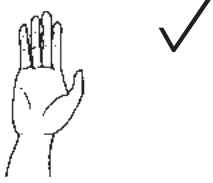
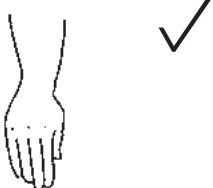
Name .....

Date .....






## IB4. Mudras Answers

	<p><b>Relaxed Concentration (<i>Dhyana</i>) Mudra</b> Sitting in meditation is a very important part of Buddhism. When you sit down the hands tend to rest in the lap quite naturally in this position. This is the gesture of the concentrated mind in meditation.</p>
	<p><b>Remembering the Lessons (<i>Vitarka</i>) Mudra</b> The Buddha's teachings are often presented in list form and with this gesture one could imagine Buddha counting off the 'Four Noble Truths' – one to each finger. This mudra is similar to the Dhammacakka mudra. It is the gesture of offering teachings in general.</p>
	<p><b>Respect and Greeting (<i>Anjali</i>) Mudra</b> This is a common gesture of greeting, respect and reverence. This gesture is offered between equals, or from junior to senior.</p>
	<p><b>Generosity (<i>Varada</i>) Mudra</b> The greatest gift anyone can receive is freedom. In this gesture the open hand is freely giving, nothing at all is held back. This is a gesture of true charity and generosity. It is a gesture of giving gifts generally, but especially the gift of knowledge that can lead to freedom.</p>
	<p><b>Teaching or Turning the Wheel of Dhamma (<i>Dhammacakkapavartana</i>) Mudra</b> Shortly after Siddhartha became enlightened he gave his first teaching – the Dhammacakka Sutta. The thumb touching the forefinger is like a wheel and all the other fingers radiating out representing the 'Four Noble Truths' and the 'Eightfold Path'. This is a gesture of teaching – it especially refers to the first sermon.</p>
	<p><b>Fearlessness (<i>Abhaya</i>) Mudra</b> The Buddha's cousin, Devadatta, was jealous of Buddha's popularity and wanted to kill him. So, he sent a wild elephant charging down the street toward Buddha who raised his right hand and fearlessly radiated love and loving kindness which calmed the elephant. This is a gesture of fearlessness, resulting in loving-kindness and reassurance.</p>
	<p><b>Strength from the Earth (<i>Bumispara</i>) Mudra</b> Just before Siddhartha found enlightenment, Mara, the tempter, tried to stop him. Siddhartha touched the ground, calling Mother Earth to act as a witness that he has purified his heart over many lifetimes and was worthy of enlightenment. Have you heard of someone who is well grounded? This gesture is one of making contact with the earth, who witnesses all our deeds, good and bad.</p>

# INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM:

## IB5. Where are Buddhists Found?

Lesson Plan		Years	Lessons
		3-6	2
<b>1. Theme:</b>	Introduction to Buddhist RI.		
<b>2. Topic:</b>	Countries where Buddhists are found.		
<b>3. Values:</b>	Confidence, awareness and knowledge.		
<b>4. Aims:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To show where Buddhists are found.</li><li>• To show the extent of Buddhism in the world today.</li><li>• To show that we are not alone in our beliefs.</li></ul>		
<b>5. Outcome:</b>	To be able to show on a map where Buddhists are found.		
<b>6. Preparation:</b>	You will need: A large world map, copies of worksheets, map of world distribution of the Buddhist population, map of the historical movement of Buddhism.		
<b>7. Lesson 1:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Show the class a map of the world.</li><li>• Ask the children to identify where Australia is.</li><li>• Ask each child to show where their families come from.</li><li>• Identify other major countries.</li></ul> <p> Give out worksheets and ask the children to colour in the countries where they think they would find Buddhists.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children show where they have coloured in.</li><li>• Instructor shows maps of:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) World distribution of Buddhists, differentiating between those countries whose people are largely Buddhist and countries with a presence of Buddhists,</li><li>b) Historical movement of Buddhism to South-east Asia, China and Japan.</li></ul></li></ul>		
<b>8. Lesson 2:</b>	<p> Children create five quiz questions based on the information they have learnt. Instructor sorts the questions (important to always read through to eliminate inappropriate questions or language).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Questions can either be used in an oral quiz or use a paper Q&amp;A worksheet or write questions and draw them out of a box. (See section <i>Welcome: Making Learning Fun – Strategies for Instructing pXIII</i> for revision and other strategies)</li></ul>		



## IB5. Where are Buddhists Found? Page 1 of 2





## IB5. Where are Buddhists Found? Page 2 of 2

**B**uddhism originated in Northern India around the year 560 BCE. About 250 years later, during the reign of the Emperor Ashoka, (289-232 BCE), Buddhism began to spread throughout India. Ashoka also asked monastics to take the Dhamma/Dharma (Pali/Sanskrit) to other countries: South-East to Sri Lanka, north towards Nepal and Tibet and west towards the kingdoms of the Greek Empire. As it took root in different countries, Buddhism adapted to different cultures without sacrificing its basic principles. This resulted in the development of several different forms, or schools of Buddhism.

### **Theravada Buddhism**

In the countries to the South and South-East of India, people practise a form of Buddhism known as Theravada. The yellow-robed monks of this school study and teach the Dhamma. They regard the monastic life and Pali scriptural language as very important and stress that living by the vinaya, or the monastic rule, is the best way to become Enlightened. Many boys or girls follow the monastic life for a time as part of their upbringing. The lay people follow the Buddha's teaching and help the monks by giving them money, food and robes.

### **Mahayana Buddhism**

Mahayana literally means the 'Great Way'. The people in the countries to the North and North-East of India follow this form of Buddhism using the scriptural language of Sanskrit. There are many different 'schools' of Mahayana Buddhism. Mahayana Buddhism emphasises the importance of compassion. It has as its ideal the Bodhisattva – one who strives to help all beings to gain Enlightenment for themselves. Buddhism spread to China at the beginning of the Common Era and to Japan about 500 years later. The Pure Land schools are based on devotion to the Buddha Amitabha. The Zen school of Buddhism lays stress on meditation as the way to gain Enlightenment.

### **Vajrayana Buddhism**

Vajrayana literally means the 'Diamond Way', 'Thunderbolt Way' or 'Lightening Way'. This form of Buddhism spread from India to Tibet around 700 CE. Ritual and worship plays a particularly important role. Many Tibetans chant mantras or special sacred phrases as they go about their daily lives. Tibetan monks and nuns wear maroon robes.

### **Buddhism in Australia**

Buddhism was introduced to Australia principally through localised gold rushes in mid-1800s CE. Becoming wider known in Australia from about 1950 CE. Most of the major Buddhist traditions are now being practised including those who came to Buddhism for reasons other than birth or birthplace.



At Census 2016, *Australia's* Buddhist population was 2.4% (2011: 3.1% and 2006: 2.1%).

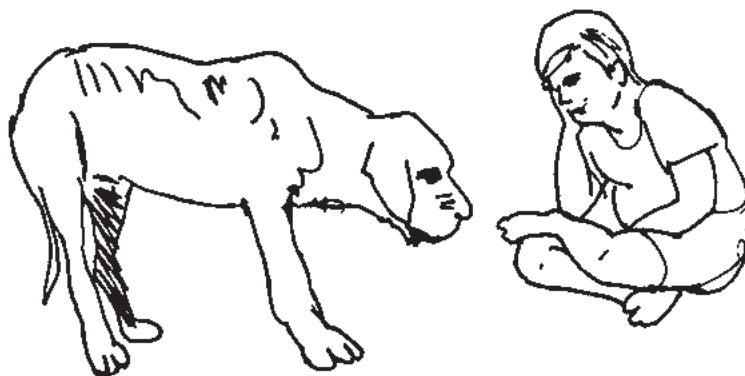
*Victoria* counted Buddhist population of 3.1% (2011: 4.6% and 2006: 3.9%) – causing official State ranking of fifth largest religion. Buddhist representation varies widely depending on local government area, with much higher representation in Greater Melbourne 3.8% than Regional Victoria 1%.

(Australian Census data is compiled of extracts from (a) State of Victoria, Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion Division's *Victoria's diverse population: 2016 Census*; (b) .id and (c) Victorian Multicultural Commission's *Population Diversity in Local Councils in Victoria: 2006 Census*)

## INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM:

# IB6. What Buddhists Believe – The Four Noble Truths

Lesson Plan		Years 3-6	Lessons 3-4
<b>1. Theme:</b>	What Buddhists believe		
<b>2. Topic:</b>	The First Teaching: The Four Noble Truths		
<b>3. Values:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Taking responsibility for oneself</li><li>• Realizing that material things do not bring happiness</li><li>• Contentment with what one has and living the Middle Way leads to happiness and freedom</li></ul>		
<b>4. Aims:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To help children appreciate that these truths can be a valuable guide for living.</li><li>• For the children to understand that the Four Noble Truths are a basic Buddhist teaching.</li></ul>		
<b>5. Resources:</b>	<p>If you are following the Life of the Buddha in the recommended text: (Landaw and Brooke: Prince Siddhartha), read  <i>The First Teaching pp107-111</i></p> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• use the story and activities found at: <a href="http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/pbs2_unit04.htm">http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/pbs2_unit04.htm</a></li></ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• read with the class, the Information Sheet: The Four Noble Truths. (Clear Vision. <a href="http://www.clear-vision.org">www.clear-vision.org</a>)</li></ul>		
<b>6. Preparation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Photocopies of information sheet.</li><li>• For follow-up lessons: poster paper/workbooks, coloured pens, glitter, stickers etc.</li></ul>		



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### 7. Lesson 1:

Ask the children:

- Have they ever wanted something really badly?
- How did it feel?
- What happened when they got it?
- What makes you want things? (eg. TV adverts)
- How does it feel when things let you down?

**Introduce the text by saying:** “After he became enlightened, the Buddha (which means ‘Awake!’) reluctantly agreed to teach people what he had learnt about how to live a happy life. This teaching, the Buddha’s first teaching, is one of the most important teachings in Buddhism. It is called the ‘Dhammacakka’ or first turning of the wheel of Dhamma. Dhamma = truth, Cakka = wheel.”

**Read:** the preferred text.

**Check** the students’ understanding of the text.

**Follow-up Activity:** A suitable follow-up story and activity can be found with the Jataka Tale *The Tortoise Who Could Not Leave Home*.

See activity: *JP10. Making a Tortoise Box p3.22*.

### 8. Lesson 2:

**Theme:** *The Four Noble Truths*: Links with the child’s experience – suffering and dissatisfaction in the wider world.

**Ask:** How do we feel when we see or hear about the suffering in the world?

*Using specific examples explore:*

- What might have caused this suffering? (For example famine could be caused by crop failure or war)
- What might be the reasons behind these causes?
- How can we help?
- How could we stop it happening in the future?



Find a suitable story eg. the earthquake in China to include here with discussion questions and activities.



### 9. Lesson 3:

**Theme:** *The Four Noble Truths:* Children will personalize this teaching by making a poster of the Four Noble Truths.

**Preparation:** Poster paper/workbooks, coloured pens, glitter, stickers etc.

**Focus:** Do a quick quiz on the Four Noble Truths (see information box).

Have the groups from the previous lesson report on their chosen activity.



Children will make a poster of the Four Noble Truths.

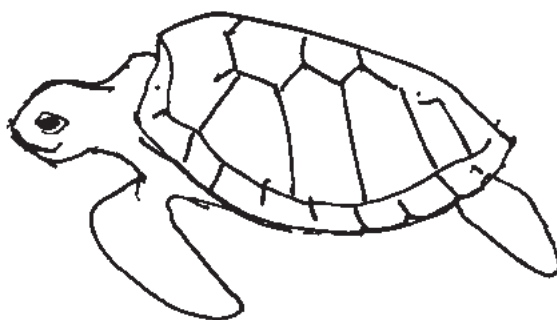
Suggested poster text:

- 1) Everyone feels unhappy or discontent at some time in their life.
- 2) Wanting too much and being unkind will not make me happy.
- 3) There is another way.
- 4) I will try hard all my life to be wise and kind and free. I will be aware of what I think and say and do to benefit myself and others.

#### QUICK QUIZ – Four Noble Truths\*

1. The first teaching of the Buddha was the turning of the wheel of the  
☐ A. Buddha    ☐ B. Sangha    ☐ C. Dhamma    ☐ D. Wagon
2. The First Noble Truth says that life is  
☐ A. Full of greed    ☐ B. Suffering    ☐ C. Happiness    ☐ D. Without purpose
3. The Four Noble Truths are said to be like  
☐ A. Chocolate    ☐ B. The future of the world    ☐ C. A holy person    ☐ D. Medicine
4. The goal of the Buddha's teaching is  
☐ A. To end suffering    ☐ B. To have pleasure    ☐ C. Ignorance    ☐ D. Heaven.

\* This quiz is taken from Buddhnet – e-learning. *Buddhist Studies for Primary Students. Unit 4.*



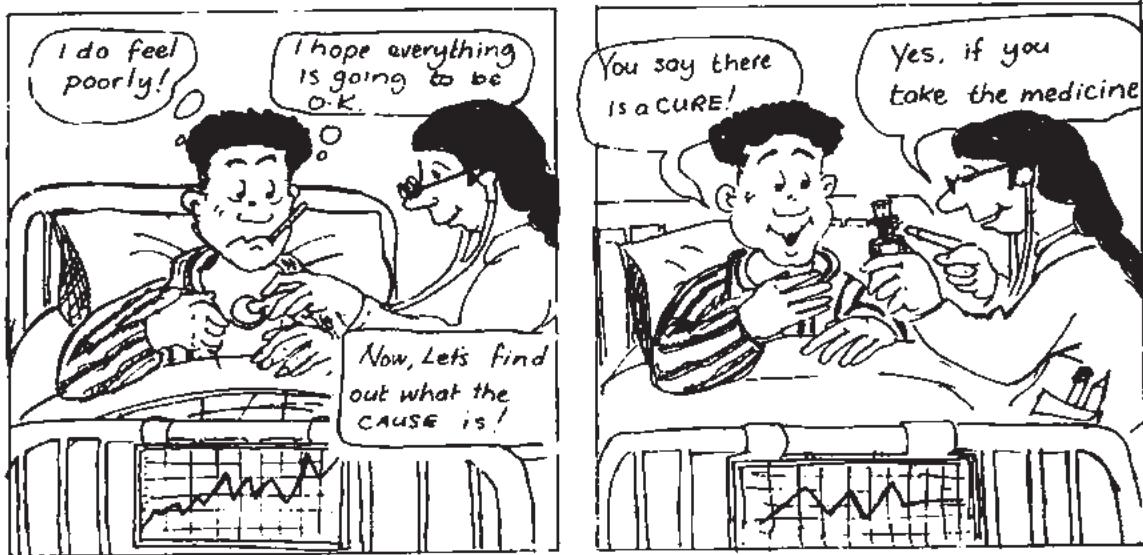


## IB6. What Buddhists Believe – The Four Noble Truths

**W**hen the Buddha became Enlightened, he found the answer to the question of why there is unhappiness and suffering in the world. He became free from suffering himself and saw that others could do the same. He walked a hundred miles to Sarnath to find his five friends. He wanted to tell them what he had discovered.

The Buddha used a well known Indian medical formula to help explain the Four Noble Truths to his friends. Buddhists believe that the Buddha's teaching is a cure for the world's illnesses.

1. What is the illness?
2. What has caused the illness?
3. Does a cure exist?
4. The remedy – what does the patient need to do in order to be cured?



### 1. The First Noble Truth – the illness.

The illness is the suffering and unhappiness that everyone feels at some time in their lives.

### 2. The Second Noble Truth – the cause of the illness.

The cause of unhappiness is craving. We tend to want more and more of everything. We become unhappy with what we have. There is always something else that is going to make us feel right.

### 3. The Third Noble Truth – a cure is possible.

It is possible to be happy and free from craving. This state of perfect freedom and happiness is the same as Enlightenment




### 4. The Fourth Noble Truth – the remedy.

The way to overcome the craving which causes our unhappiness is to follow the Noble Eight-fold Path. This path is sometimes called The Middle Way; it is a middle way between extremes.

The Buddha had once lived a life of luxury as a prince. He had also tried a life of extreme hardship – the ascetic life. He taught that following the Noble Eightfold Path, a middle way, leads to happiness and freedom from suffering.

## INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM:

# IB7. What Buddhists Believe – The Noble Eight-fold Path

Lesson Plan		Years 5-6	Lesson 1
<b>1. Theme:</b>	What Buddhists believe		
<b>2. Topic:</b>	The Noble Eight-fold Path		
<b>3. Values:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Taking responsibility for oneself</li><li>• Contentment with what one has and leading the Middle Way leads to happiness and freedom</li></ul>		
<b>4. Aims:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To help children appreciate that the Noble Eight-fold Path can be a valuable guide for living.</li><li>• For the children to understand that the Noble Eight-fold Path is a basic Buddhist teaching and the wheel a symbol of Buddhism.</li></ul>		
<b>5. Preparation:</b>	 Photocopy Information Sheet: The Noble Eight-fold Path <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Photocopy worksheet: <i>IB7. The Noble Eight-fold Path Dharma Wheel</i></li><li>• Scissors, coloured pens/pencils, glue sticks.</li></ul>		
<b>6. Lesson:</b>	<p><b>Ask</b> the children if they can remember the Four Noble Truths. Write them on the board and ask them to think about the Fourth Noble Truth: the way out of suffering and dissatisfaction. What does this mean?</p> <p><b>Talk about</b> how everything is numbered in Buddhism. Can they think of any others? Why is this so?</p> <p><b>Read</b> the Information Box to the class.</p> <p><b>Handout</b> the Information Sheet and read it with the class, making sure that they understand the words and concepts.</p> <p><b>Explain</b> how the 'Path' has eight separate steps but they are not intended to be followed one after another. It is a wheel that goes round and round.</p> <p> Hand out the worksheet <i>IB7. The Noble Eight-fold Path Dharma Wheel</i>.</p> <p>Children first colour, then cut out the dharma wheel and paste in their books.</p>		



## IB7. What Buddhists Believe – The Noble Eight-fold Path *Background Information*

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**E**arly Buddhism was a strong oral tradition. People didn't write things down. They had to have very good memories, so to help them remember, the elders numbered everything. The teachings of the Buddha were not written down until about 500 years after the Buddha died, that is why there are so many numbers in Buddhist teachings.

When the Buddha was teaching he made a certain gesture with his hands (mudra). By holding the thumb and the index finger together on both hands, you can make the Dhammacakkapavartana Mudra (see *IB4. Introduction to Buddhism – Mudras p1.18*). You are making two round wheels which can go round and round.

The wheel has become an important symbol of Buddhism and of the Buddha's teaching. The logo of the Buddhist Council of Victoria is an eight-spoke wheel.

**1 Right Understanding:**

Understanding that life is always changing and by practising letting go of attachments and that contentment leads to peace and happiness.

**2 Right Effort:**

Mindful, kind and positive thinking.

**3 Right Intention:**

Having helpful and positive feelings behind actions.

**4 Right Livelihood:**

Doing useful work that doesn't harm others

**5 Right Mindfulness:**

Being mindful of thoughts, words and deeds and how they affect others.

**6 Right Speech:**

Speaking in a kind, thoughtful and helpful way.

**7 Right Action:**

Living an ethical life avoiding doing any harm.

**8 Right Meditation:**

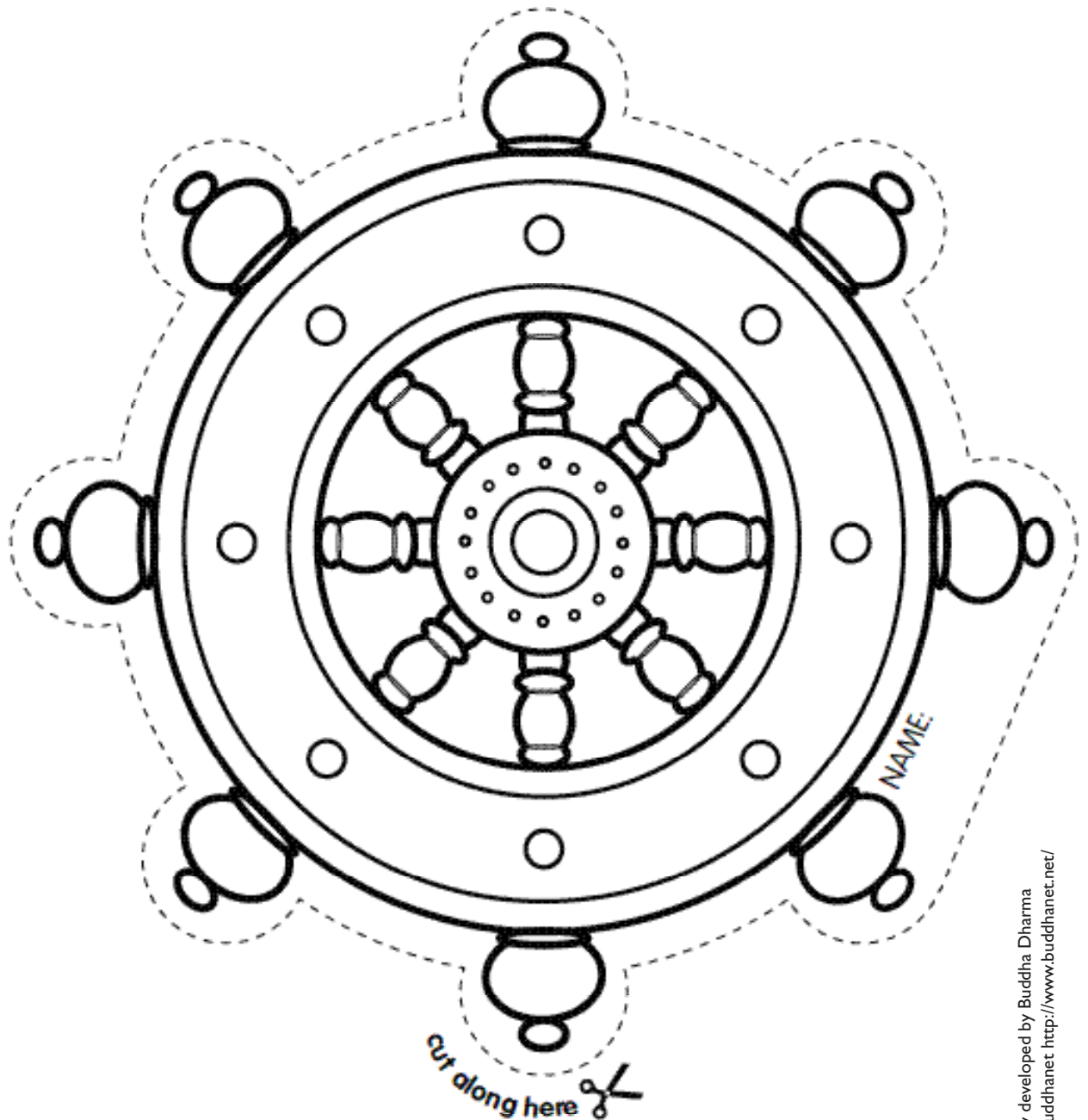
Training the mind to be calm and positive in order to develop wisdom.



## IB7. What Buddhists Believe – The Noble Eight-fold Path Dharma Wheel *Activity A*

### Instructions

1. Cut out the Dharma Wheel along the dotted lines.
2. Colour in and paste in your books.

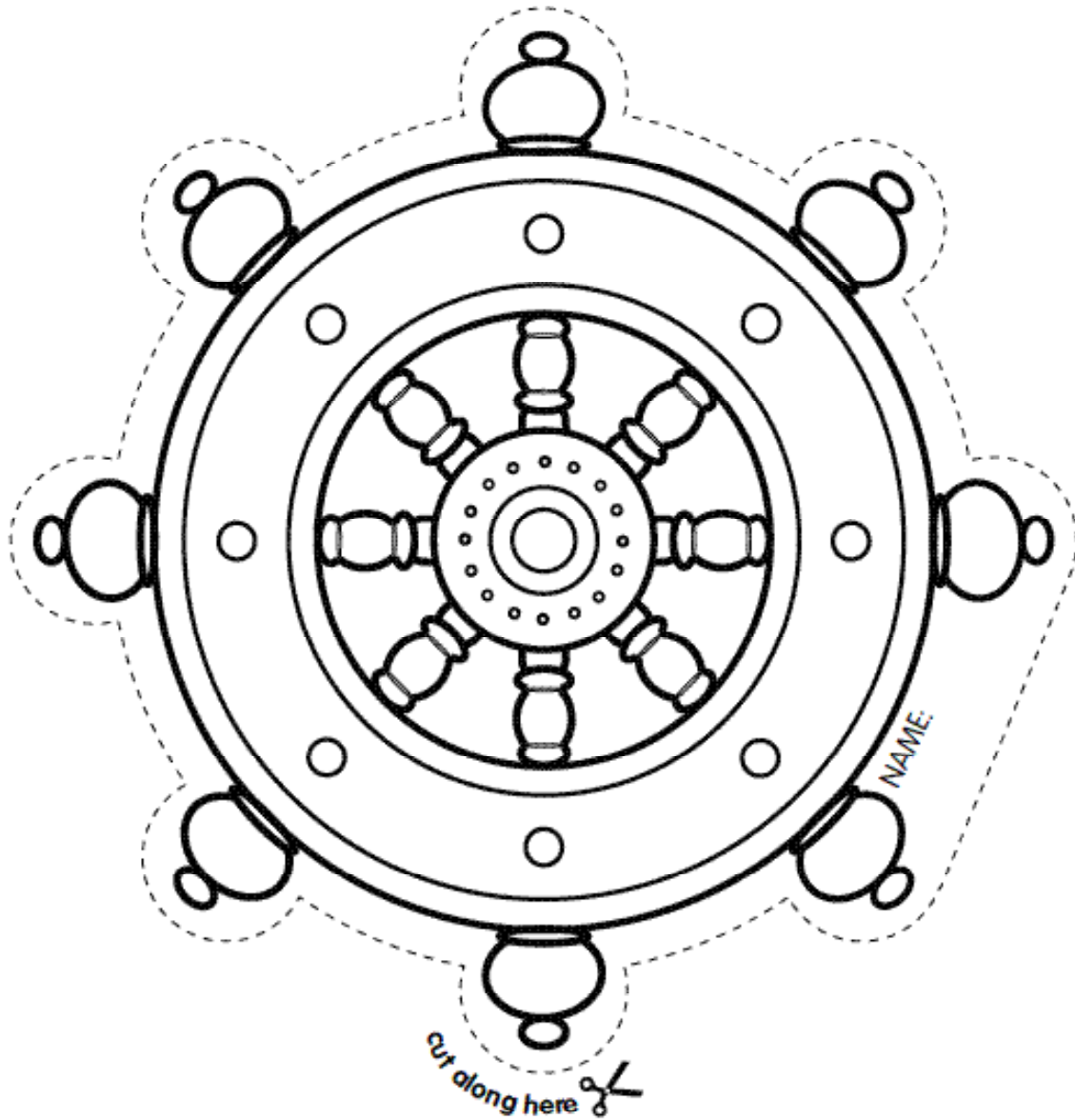


Based on material originally developed by Buddha Dharma Education Association, © Buddhanet <http://www.buddhanet.net/>



## IB7. What Buddhists Believe – The Noble Eight-fold Path *Activity B*

1. Cut out the 8 text panels below.
2. Cut out the Wheel and paste it into your book or on coloured backing paper.
3. Glue each text panel to a spoke of the Wheel and colour in.

**Right Understanding:**

Understanding that life is always changing and practising letting go of attachments and that contentment leads to peace and happiness.

**Right Effort:**

Mindful, kind and positive thinking.

**Right Intention:** Having helpful and positive feelings behind actions.

**Right Livelihood:**

Doing useful work that doesn't harm others

**Right Mindfulness:** Being mindful of thoughts, words and deeds and how they affect others.

**Right Speech:** Speaking in a kind, thoughtful and helpful way.

**Right Action:**

Living an ethical life avoiding doing any harm.

**Right Meditation:**

Training the mind to be calm and positive in order to develop wisdom.

## INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM:

# IB8. What Buddhists Believe – The Five Precepts

Lesson Plan		Years	Lessons
		5-6	2-3

- 1. Theme:** What Buddhists believe
- 2. Topic:** The Five Precepts – the moral principles of Buddhism
- 3. Values:** Moral principles
- 4. Aims:**
- To introduce in a careful way, the five Buddhist precepts
  - To explore with the children why these precepts are important

### Note:

The bRI Program requests that Instructors keep to the exact guidelines for this lesson and do not change the language or activities in ANY way. Government primary schools are particularly sensitive to issues around ‘sexual misconduct’ and have asked our Instructors not to discuss these matters with students. The bRI Program approaches the Five Precepts from the broad ethic of non-harm and non-greed. We support the teaching of the Five Precepts but only in the way represented here.

- 5. Lesson 1:**
- **Preparation:** Copies of *IB8. Activity A. Stopping and Starting*.
  - Present the Five Precepts as “unhelpful habits” which we can change.
  - Ask the children:  
*Do we have any unhelpful habits? What are they? What effects do they have on oneself and on others? How do we try to stop them?*
  - **Say:** Buddhism teaches the Five Precepts as a way of stopping unhelpful habits.



With the class, work through  
*IB8. Activity A. Stopping and Starting*.

The worksheet asks the students to think of different ways of writing the Five Precepts as positives, as ‘helpful habits’. eg.  
No.1. ‘Doing no harm to all living beings’ or ‘Helping all living beings, especially those that are small, young, weak, or sick.’  
No.2. could become: ‘Returning things that I borrow.’ And so on.  
Work with the children to find five helpful habits that they agree with and feel they can carry out.



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**6. Lesson 2:**



**Preparation:** A copy of *The Story of Angulimala* (you may choose the following one or a shorter version)  
Copies of *IB8. Activity C. The Story of Angulimala*

- **Ask** the children if they have heard this story before.  
How do they feel about it?
- Tell them that it shows that everyone can change for the better and it shows the fearlessness and forgiveness of the Buddha.
- **Read** the story with the class.
- **Check** for comprehension.
- **Ask** *which parts they most liked/disliked? Why?*  
*What unhelpful habits did Angulimala stop?*  
*What helpful habits did he start to practise?*

**7. Lesson 3:**

**Preparation:** Poster paper, textas, colouring pencils, glitter, glue sticks.  
Discuss with the children the difference between guidelines and rules.



Have the class complete *Activity B. Five Guidelines for Living*.  
Vote on which 5 Guidelines are the most important.

- Make a decorated class poster portraying these Five Guidelines.



## IB8. What Buddhists Believe – The Five Precepts: *Activity A. Stopping and Starting*

Name .....

Date .....

1. Look at the list of unhelpful habits that are worth stopping.
2. Think of and write the *corresponding* helpful habits that are worth starting.

### Unhelpful Habits

can  
become

### Helpful Habits

1 Harming any living beings	➔	1 ..... ..... .....
2 Taking what doesn't belong to you	➔	2 ..... ..... .....
3 Not being a loyal friend	➔	3 ..... ..... .....
4 Telling lies or speaking unkindly	➔	4 ..... ..... .....
5 Clouding the mind with drink or drugs	➔	5 ..... ..... .....

Based on material originally developed by The Clear  
Vision Trust, © Clear Vision [www.clear-vision.org](http://www.clear-vision.org)



# IB8. What Buddhists Believe – The Five Precepts:

## Activity B. Five Guidelines for Living

Name .....

Date .....

1. Think of five (5) ways to make the world a happier place for everybody.
2. Write them in the space below.

1 .....

2 .....

3 .....

4 .....

5 .....



## IB8. What Buddhists Believe – The Five Precepts: *Activity C. The Story of Angulimala*

### *Note:*

This is a famous story throughout Buddhist countries and will be known to many children from Buddhist families. It is a sequel to *JP13. Prince Five Weapons*. This story is not strictly a Jataka, because these events, we are told, happened in the Buddha's lifetime. This story holds many lessons, but the most important one here shows that there is always the possibility to change and improve our attitudes. Love and compassion are the antidotes to anger and hatred and through loving kindness even very wicked people can attain peace and liberation. Spend some time before teaching this story to anticipate answering some questions that students might ask. Angulimala was able to find inner peace, but this alone could not prevent others, with their delusions, from acting against him. Were Angulimala's efforts worthwhile?

*This is the story of Angulimala, a serial killer who became a saint.*

**L**ong, long ago a king called Prasenajit ruled over the northern Indian kingdom of Kosala, from the capital Sravasti. One night when he was fast asleep the room was suddenly lit by flashes of light. He woke with a fright. All the weapons in the palace were shining brightly.

"Whatever is happening here tonight," he thought, "How is this happening? This is really creepy."

The next moment it was dark again, and the king went back to a troubled sleep.

The next morning the king's guards ran to him and told him that all the weapons in the palace blazed with light during the night.

At that same time during the night, in the house of the royal priest named Garga, a beautiful son was born. But the priest was worried, because he also noticed the weapons blaze at the time of the birth. He consulted the court astrologer who charted the planets, then shook his head sadly and told Garga that the boy was destined to be a public nuisance, of the most despicable kind.

Sad and troubled, Garga approached the king.

"Oh king," he said, "I cannot raise a son who is destined to wreak havoc in society. The scriptures say that one life may be sacrificed to save a hundred. Therefore king, please allow me to kill this child."

"I cannot allow the killing of an innocent baby," the king said firmly, "I believe that there is goodness in every living creature. Let the boy have a good education, and under your guidance Garga, I am sure he will grow up to be a decent citizen."

Garga was grateful, and he and his wife brought up the boy with kindness and understanding. The boy studied hard and when he was fourteen asked his parents if he could go to the best school in the country. His parents were pleased, and thought that by this time there must have been a mistake in the prophecy.

The boy was an excellent student, respectful of his teachers and a hard worker. His teachers were full of praise and held him as a fine example to the other students. This made some of his classmates jealous.

Some wanted to bring him down and they started to spread rumours.



One day, within earshot of the teachers, a group talked untruths about how the boy was bragging about how much he knew and that he no longer needed his teachers because he already knew all they could teach.

One teacher in particular was furious. “I will not be shown to be a fool by this young upstart,” he thought, “This student will have to go.”

Soon afterwards the teacher saw his wife talking with the young student. The teacher crept up to them without them noticing.

“Stand up when you see me!” he roared, “Show some respect!”

“Sir, I am sorry,” stammered the lad as he rose to his feet, “I did not hear you approach Sir.”

“I haven’t taught you to become an arrogant brat. Respect and humility should be the outcome of knowledge,” thundered the teacher, “I can’t teach you any more. There’s no place for you here. You can leave!”

No matter how hard the lad protested no one supported him. His fellow students were very pleased.

To stop any likelihood of return to the school the teacher added, “Bring me a necklace of one thousand fingers and I will consider teaching you again.”

Confused and dismayed he returned home and tried to explain to his parents what had happened. His parents were in no mood to listen to a son who had just been expelled from the best school in the country. They would hear none of his story.

As word spread around the town no one was prepared to give the lad a job either.

“This is so unfair! Why have I been treated like this? I haven’t done anything,” he thought time and time again.

He was rejected at school, at home and in the town. There was no one to listen to him or be his friend. He had to leave.

On the road out of town a robber sprang from the bushes.

“Give me what you have got! Now! Or pay with your life!” roared the robber.

“Forget it!” cried the lad and landed the first punch, “You’ll get what I have got alright.”

The robber was kicked, and bitten, and pummelled with punches until he begged for mercy. The lad saw the fear in the robber’s eyes and felt strong again, but let him go.

The lad sat brooding in the forest. The hurt, disappointment and loneliness from the past had been transformed into anger and vows of vengeance: no one was going to do wrong by him again and people were going to pay for the wrongs he had suffered. Besides, his teacher had told him that this is what he should do. This was surely the right thing to do.

That evening several bullock carts carrying loads of goods were on the road. The lad jumped out on the path and threatened them with his knife. The merchants outnumbered him and chose to fight there and then.

Fuelled by blind rage the lad fought hard, and slaughtered them. Then, remembering the wicked teacher’s instructions, cut off their fingers and strung them around his neck.

Angulimala (meaning ‘finger necklace’) the most feared robber and serial killer ever known in all of India was born.

Angulimala ranged the highways robbing and murdering without mercy, and each



time adding a victim's finger to his necklace. The people of Kosala were terrified and begged their king to stop the madness. The king sent his army to track him down.

When Angulimala saw the army approaching he was very pleased.

"More little 'angulis' for my necklace!" he cried, and hurled boulders into the path to lay ambush.

Sadly, this ended in another massacre and the king had no choice but to close the highway.

He had nine hundred and ninety-nine fingers on his necklace with only one more to add before he could return to his teacher. But with the road closed Angulimala started to despair. The fingers on the necklace began to rot and smell; no victims, no new fingers, nothing to do.

Then one day he saw a monk walking along the road.

"Stop right there!" demanded Angulimala as he ran after the monk.

Curiously, the monk appeared to be walking at a leisurely pace, but no matter how fast Angulimala ran, the monk remained one step ahead of him.

"Oh stop moving monk!" Angulimala cried, exhausted.

"Moving? I am not moving. I am at rest. It is you who is constantly moving because you lack peace of mind," came the sure reply.

"Whatever you say! Nice try! Give me your little finger," Angulimala demanded.

"By all means, if it brings you peace of mind," the monk replied, unfazed and kindly.

Angulimala was moved. He looked at the monk and saw kindness and concern in his face. The monk radiated peace and understanding. This was the Buddha.

Angulimala was touched to the core of his being. It had been a long time since he had been greeted with loving kindness. Overcome with emotion he fell at the feet of the Buddha and cried. He cried for all the crazy cruelties he had performed. He cried for his loneliness and he cried because he felt worthless.

In the Buddha he saw a different way of being, and he wanted to be like him.

Here was someone who was worth following. He begged the Buddha to accept him as his student.

The Buddha agreed and Angulimala joined the community of monks. Householders and the monks and nuns themselves were amazed and horrified, and criticised the Buddha for accepting the ruthless murderer.

Angulimala spent many long hours alone in meditation and gradually gained confidence to care for the sick, the needy and the animals in the forest.

It was not easy. Angulimala's reputation lived on. Wherever he went he was spotted and people would remember how he had cruelly taken their loved ones from them. They would hurl abuse, spit at him and throw rotten food and rocks.

Angulimala felt that there was little hope for him, but he could not go back to his old ways.

The Buddha kindly encouraged him to persevere with acts of kindness and not be swayed by other people's criticisms. He could see the goodness within Angulimala and knew that peace was possible.



One day Angulimala and the Buddha were out walking in the forest. They heard the pained cries of a woman giving birth.

“Oh h-help me! Somebody please help me,” she wailed, and begged the monks to help her, for she was very near death.

“Go to this poor woman and help her,” the Buddha advised.

“What good could a scoundrel like me do? She would not want me near her,” Angulimala replied with a breaking heart.

With the Buddha’s reassurance Angulimala attended to the woman and spoke soothingly, “I have acted out of ignorance and have caused harm. Now I am wiser. If I speak the truth you will be well.”

By the power of the truth of his words and the kindness of his deeds the child was safely delivered and the mother survived.

With joy in their hearts Angulimala and the Buddha walked into the town.

In the town Angulimala was recognised.

“There’s that monster parading as a monk!” cried one person.

“He’s here to take us!” cried another.

“Let’s get him!” cried another.

The townspeople became a frenzied mob that clubbed and beat Angulimala to within an inch of his life.

This time Angulimala did not fight back. He understood that the people were acting out of misunderstandings, fear and hatred as he had done as a younger man.

Angulimala crawled from the town, bruised and bleeding with the taunts of the townspeople ringing in his ears.




On the edge of the forest  
Angulimala died – in peace.





## INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM:

# IB9. What Buddhists Believe – The Followers of the Buddha: The Sangha

Lesson Plan		Years 3-6	Lessons 1-2
<b>1. Theme:</b>	What Buddhists believe		
<b>2. Topic:</b>	The Buddha's followers – the Sangha (For guidelines, see section: <i>Making Learning Fun pXVII</i> )		
<b>3. Values:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect for Instructors, respect for monks and nuns.</li> <li>• Helping and supporting one's friends.</li> </ul>		
<b>4. Aims:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To help children appreciate the role of Instructors</li> <li>• To appreciate the support we get from friends and from belonging to groups in our community</li> <li>• To look to Instructors and ordained people as possible role models</li> </ul>		
<b>5. Lesson 1:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the children if they belong to any groups, clubs or communities eg. sports teams, gymnastics, ballet classes, cubs, brownies,</li> <li>• <b>Ask:</b> Why do they belong to the club or group? How does being with others with the same interest help them? eg. can they talk together about their common interest, learn from each other?</li> </ul>		
<b>6. Lesson 2:</b>	 <b>Read</b> the Information Box to the class.		
	<b>Discuss</b> any points that come up. eg. do they know any monks or nuns? What do they know about them? How do they live? What clothes do they wear? Have they heard of HH the Dalai Lama? Why is he well-known? What does he stand for in the world today?		
	 <b>Meditation:</b> Lead the class in a guided loving kindness meditation. (See ME13. <i>Everyone is a Potential Friend p6.27</i> )		
	<b>Remind</b> the class of the previous lesson on belonging.		
	<b>Quick quiz</b> on the Sangha.		
	<b>Follow-up Activities:</b>		
	If you would like to develop this topic into the area of friendship, please refer to <i>Section 4: More Virtuous Qualities: MV1 p4.1</i> and <i>MV5 p4.15</i> .		

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*Note:*

*Further Information on the Sangha:*

Some of the earliest followers of the Buddha chose to give up their family life, to live simply in the forest and to travel around spreading the Buddha's teaching. These were the first monks and nuns. Following the example of the Buddha, they shaved their heads and wore a simple yellow robe. The robe was probably similar to the common dress of the time.

Other followers of the Buddha chose to stay with their families. They practised the teachings of the Buddha whilst living at home. These lay followers were happy to support the monks and nuns with gifts of food which were collected daily in their alms bowls.

As Buddhism spread outwards from India, it adapted to the needs of different peoples and cultures. This has resulted in the development of several different forms of Buddhism. Everyone who has enlightenment as their goal and follows the teachings of the Buddha is a member of the Sangha.