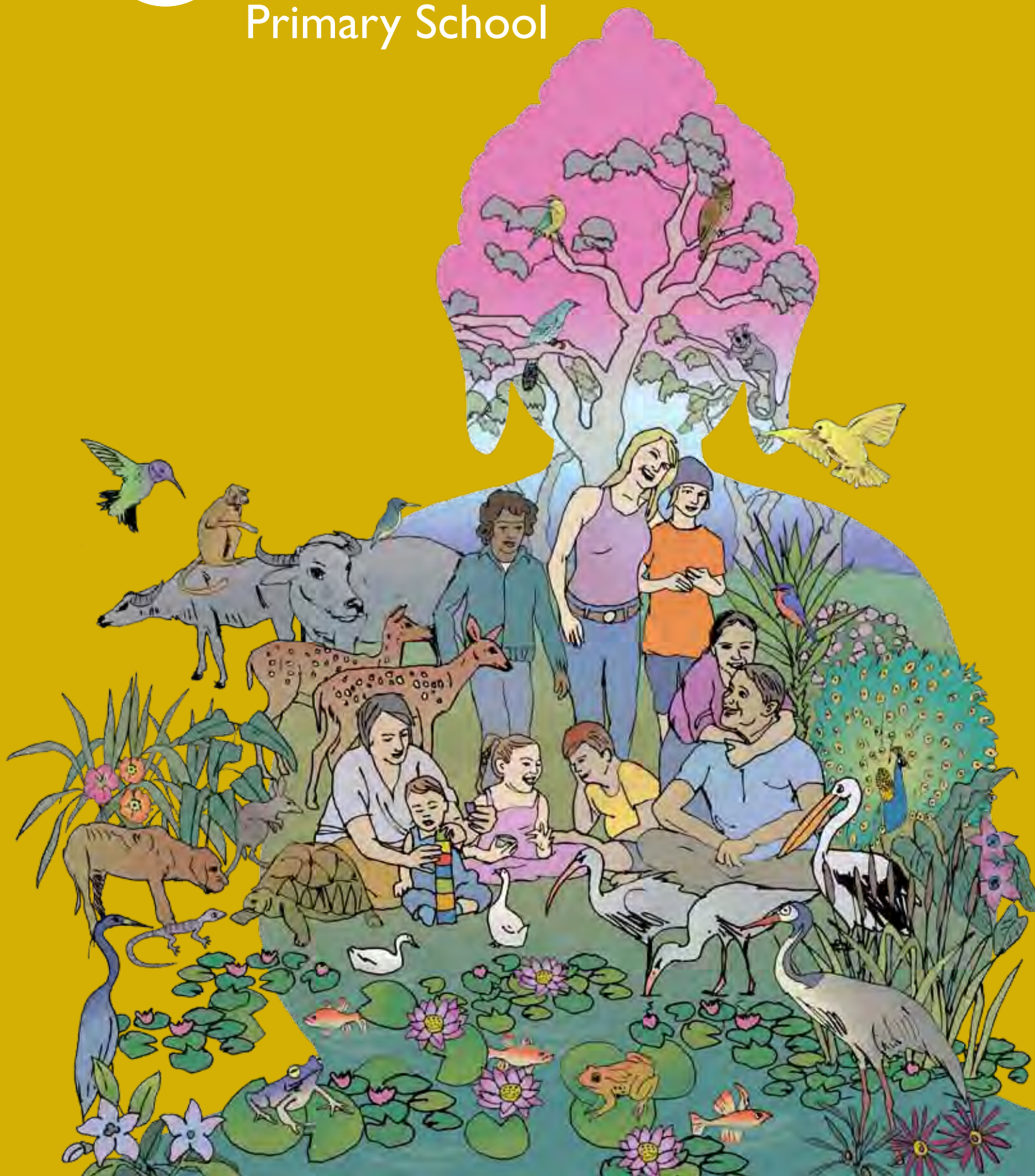




# DISCOVERING BUDDHA

Lessons for  
Primary School





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Primary School





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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.

Meditation

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DISCOVERING  
BUDDHA

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Lessons for  
Primary School

*Key to Icons*



Text



Activity



Creative Work



Meditation





# ME1. Preparation for Meditation



## 4 Ms in Buddhist Religious Education: Meditation, Mindfulness, Morality and Metta

**Here is a summary of approaches to meditation that have been working well in our program:**

1. Preparing students for meditation
2. Which meditations do we teach?
3. Making meditations accessible to children
4. Reasons for using the Happiness scale
5. Let the students record their experiences of meditation
6. The role of the Instructor at the end of the meditation session

### **1. Preparing students for meditation**

- Follow a regular routine (usually at the beginning of the class).
- Have a regular greeting, motivational prayer and dedication. (See *ME20 p6.37*)
- Do some stretching or relaxation yoga-type exercises if they are particularly 'bouncy' or lethargic.
- Pay attention to correct posture.
- If space permits, have the children sit in a circle on the floor. This is best for harnessing group energy and attention.
- Create a meditation space eg. a circle on the floor, place squares of coloured cloth for students to sit on, use a bell or flower etc to focus attention.
- Use special objects eg. a shaken bottle of muddy water, a flower, stones, a Buddha image, as an object of attention.

We know there are many types of meditation, having different purposes and using different mental skills.

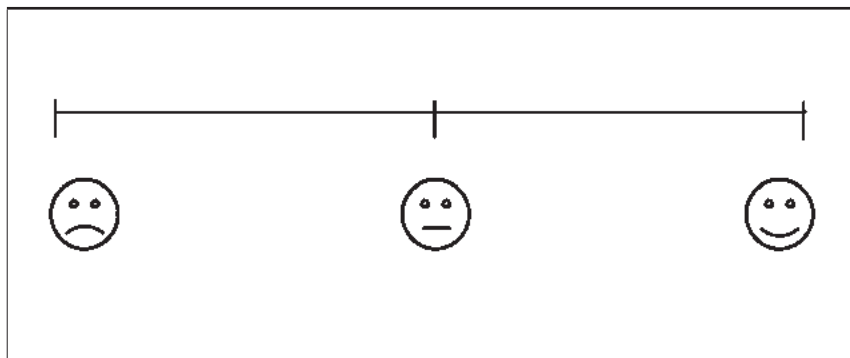
### **2. Which meditations do we teach?**

- Following the breath – developing concentration
- Connecting to the body – appreciating who we are
- Walking meditation – mindfulness with movement
- Visualisation – loving kindness
- Meditation observing the mind – acceptance of the present moment
- Observing change – it is everywhere
- Observing interconnectedness – and the implications

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### 3. Making meditation accessible to children

- Some classes have used the Happiness Scale and it has worked well.



### 4. Reasons for using the Happiness scale

- Helps children develop skill of observing their own minds
- Helps children to observe thoughts and feelings
- Helps children to observe changing nature of thoughts and feelings
- Does not depend on children using language
- Helps children to articulate thoughts and feelings
- Creates a record whereby children can observe that their happiness can be determined by their own minds
- Helps children see the benefits of meditation – without perceiving benefits for themselves they will have little motivation to pursue meditation
- Protects children's privacy if they choose not to share feedback in class

An observing classroom teacher made this comment:

*The reflections on the 'Happiness Scale' are powerful and treated seriously. They are becoming far better at tuning out distractions; greater self-discipline. Students always approach these sessions with such a positive mind-set. Self-reflection is a large element, and has huge implications across all aspects of life. The free flowing of ideas is totally engaging!!* (Year 5-6 teacher 29/8/06).

### 5. Let the students record their experiences of meditation

These can be fun. It is also a way of getting to know the students better and tuning into their needs. It can be an important part of the meditation process. Younger students might like to draw.

Here are some comments from some Year 5-6 students:

- *Before meditation: "Excited, got lots of exciting activities happening today, bouncy and awake".*
- *After meditation: "Meditation helped me calm down. I stopped worrying about things I did not want to do this week. My mind calmed and settled."*
- *"I feel so much clearer!!!"*
- *"Before meditation I was tired and I am still tired but I feel more refreshed, like I am ready to start the day. I feel happy and I don't know why"*

- 
- *"I feel very calm and happy but I feel like I wanna go to SLEEP!! But I feel as if I've just woken up in the morning too, so meditation makes me feel like I've started the day all over again!"*
  - *Before meditation: "very, very tired". After meditation: "After I'm not as tired and now I'm feeling well."*
  - *Before meditation: "Pretty happy overall because of various reasons." After meditation: "The best meditation yet, it felt like 10 hours sleep."*
  - *"It's a new thing. It cleared my mind. It sorts you out. I never knew that my mind could do this. It's like when you are three and you discover chocolate. You never knew it was possible before."*

**Note**

The meditation classroom environment will be supportive, encouraging and respectful of students' privacy.

## **6. The role of the Instructor at the end of the meditation session**

The post-meditation debrief is really valuable. Students can share their experiences. With that comes the opportunity to develop language about thoughts and feelings eg. calm, tired, agitated, peaceful etc. Time doesn't allow for everyone's comments, and others will prefer not to say anything. By going back to the Happiness Scale all students are included and the awareness training is reinforced.

Some Instructors choose to write brief comments of guidance or encouragement in the children's books every few weeks. From the comments that I have seen I think it is quite an important part of the meditation process.

"Before meditation I felt like it was going to be a really good day. After meditation I felt really tired, then after I felt even more tired and felt I had really heavy eyelids."

Instructor: "Meditation will make you aware of the truth of how you feel...Meditation is hard work when you try."

Before meditation: "I was tired but after I was feeling a lot better because it served as sleep."



Instructor: "Meditation is not sleep. It needs a focused mind."

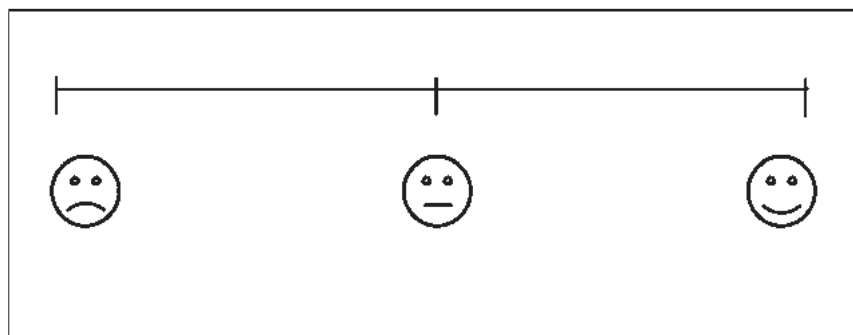
Sometimes there's encouragement: "Wow", "Cool", "Nice work".

A lot of things happen in meditation. Reflection is a key element of the Victorian schools curriculum and bRI has a lot to offer. With our care, love and patience some wonderful things are happening in our classrooms. The childrens' comments attest to that!



## ME2. Using the Happiness Scale

<i>Lesson Plan</i>		<i>Years</i>	<i>Lessons</i> For use before and after meditation sessions
		3-6	
<b>1. Theme:</b>	Developing mental awareness		
<b>2. Topic:</b>	Happiness scale		
<b>3. Aims:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To help children develop the skill of observing their own minds</li> <li>• To help children observe thoughts and feelings</li> <li>• To help children observe the changing nature of thoughts and feelings</li> <li>• To help children record experience without dependence on language</li> <li>• To provide a basis from which to help children articulate thoughts and feelings</li> <li>• To create a record whereby children can observe that their happiness can be determined by their own minds</li> <li>• To help children see the benefits of meditation – without perceiving benefits for themselves they will have little motivation to pursue meditation</li> <li>• To protect children's privacy if they choose not to share feedback in class debrief discussion</li> <li>• To provide a means of discreet Instructor-student communication and guidance</li> </ul>		
<b>4. Lesson:</b>	 Prior to the meditation session ask the children to draw a Happiness Scale in their books. Allow students to draw it their own way, it is part of the personal internal focusing process.		



- 
- They mark the date and give themselves a personal rating before the meditation.  
(This can be part of the classroom routine, done while the roll is being marked.)
  - After the meditation you may invite some comments or the children can return to their scales, record their post-meditation experience by marking their scale and, if they choose, add comments.
  - Look at the students' entries every couple of weeks and offer short comments and answer questions where appropriate. There will be no right or wrong responses but you will have the opportunity to guide and encourage them. Enjoy the journey with your students!

*Note*

Some Instructors have used the Happiness Scale as a tool for demonstrating mental awareness. Children have enjoyed the exercise and through it have observed their capacities to control their minds and affirm the calm, peaceful effects of meditation. Students have also been able to see the effects of no effort and been supported by their Instructor to persevere and use their meditation time more skilfully.

This is not a one-off exercise, but a technique to be used as part of the class routine. Over time children will see for themselves their meditation journey, and as their Instructor you can guide and encourage them.



'Happiness' is used because it is a term that students readily understand. Looking this way they will discover other thoughts and feelings arising from their meditations. The Happiness Scale is NOT used with the expectation that students are to feel happier after meditation (although most times they will) and it is not to be used as a basis for comparison between students. Student privacy is to be respected.

Using the Happiness Scale can later be used to develop empathy and wisdom when applied to characters at different stages of a story, and when applied to the Good Deeds Book.

Demonstrating meditation to children this way is not for everybody, but if it is, please use according to these guidelines.



## ME3. Initial Relaxation Exercise

Lesson Plan	Years 1-6	Lessons 1
<div data-bbox="501 365 798 439">  </div> <p><b>1. Theme:</b> Meditation</p> <p><b>2. Topic:</b> How to relax the body before meditation</p> <p><b>3. Values:</b> A calm and relaxed body</p> <p><b>4. Aims:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To recognize restlessness.</li> <li>• To learn to calm down.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Lesson:</b></p> <p><b>This is a guided meditation to relax the body. Every meditation session should start with a short body relaxation exercise (or ‘body sweep’). It is difficult to meditate if the body is tense or wound up.</b></p> <p>To gain an indication of how the students are feeling right now ask them to do this short exercise. You could incorporate it in every meditation session.</p> <p><b>Stress-Indicator:</b></p> <p>Ask the students to clench their right fist. Using the thumb as an indicator, point the thumb upwards if they are feeling calm, downwards if they are feeling either tired or unsettled, and point the thumb sideways if they are just a little tired or unsettled.</p> <p> Lead the students in the following guided relaxation exercise. You may follow this with any one of the specific meditations, for instance, <i>ME7. Observing Our Breath</i> <a href="#">p6.15</a> or <i>ME10. Loving Kindness</i> <a href="#">p6.21</a>.</p>		





## ME3. Full body Relaxation Meditation

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**C**lose your eyes and take three deep breaths. Slowly relax yourself from head to toe as you breathe out. Put your attention on the head. Think of every thought you have in your head. Identify each thought, recognise it and place it in a basket. You can collect the thought after the meditation. Think of the next thought, recognise it and place it in the basket. Search for one thought at a time until you have cleared your head of any thoughts. Feel the emptiness of your mind.

Now concentrate on the muscles of your neck. Feel the tension in those muscles. Let go of the tension in your neck as you slowly breathe out.

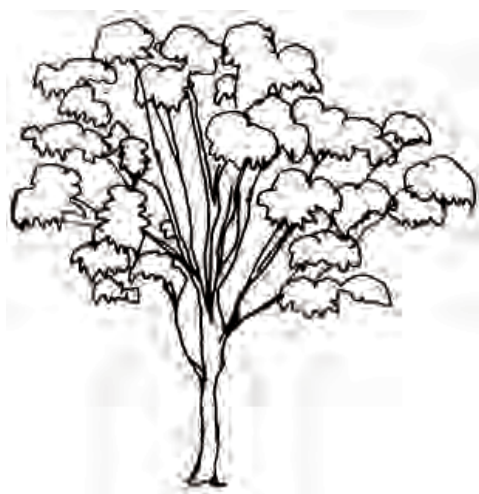
Next feel your shoulder muscles. Feel the tiredness there and release the tiredness you feel when you breathe out.

Now feel your arms and the muscles that have been supporting your arms. Slowly relax those muscles and feel your arms going soft as you breathe out.

Feel your fingers. Straighten your fingers and allow all the weight of your fingers to rest on your thighs as you breathe out.

Now feel your spine, all the bones of your back. As you breathe out let go of any tension you feel along your spine. Sit straight up and feel your head resting straight on top of your spine. Make sure you are sitting straight and tall. Now feel your thighs. Feel the contact between your leg and the chair (or carpet). Relax the muscles there as you breathe out. Let all the weight sink into the chair (carpet) you are sitting on.

Now feel your breath going in and out slowly. Feel how your body is totally relaxed as you breathe out.



## MEDITATION

# ME4. Shaking the Bottle – Allowing the Mind to Settle

Lesson Plan		Years 3-6	Lesson 1
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*A Case Study of a Meditation Class. This is a description of a lesson rather than a lesson plan. Use it for inspiration.*

**H**elen begins her class by drawing a Happiness scale on the board. From three positions, an unhappy face, a neutral face and a happy face, the children mentally note, or draw the scale in their books, noting their position on it.

The children are preparing for meditation. They are a bit restless.

“Jump up, feet apart!” she calls, “Stretch up, arms straight, straight elbows, stretch to the ceiling. Bob down and bounce like a frog – one, two three.”

“Now we are ready to sit.” Her voice is calm, “Legs crossed. Backs straight. To get the mind strong we first have to get the body as strong and still as possible, sitting like a mountain.”

The children know this routine and a child asks to shake the bottle. Helen carries a bottle of muddy water with her to class. When shaken the water is cloudy and turbulent. As the water settles it becomes clear.

“This is like our minds,” says the Instructor, “When our minds are filled with many thoughts, darting here, there and all over the place it’s like this muddy water. As it settles it becomes clear.”

Led by the bRI Instructor, the children begin a breathing exercise, watching their breath draw in and out. The atmosphere in the room is quiet and concentrated for seven minutes. After being asked to draw their attention back into the room the children are asked to again place themselves on the Happiness Scale. For the majority of children they moved up on the scale. They see that the happiness they experienced is from their own mind and not a product of some object or experience from outside of themselves.

These are children in a Buddhist RI class in an inner-city state primary school. The classroom Instructor, who is present during these classes, has written her observations of these Buddhist classes during the term, and has commented that the children, even early in the term, went from a ‘very talkative, chatty state to immediate calm the moment the meditation commenced.’ She also recorded that she ‘loved the way the students are very ready to talk about how they are travelling on the Happiness Scale’.

Most, but not all, of the children in this Year 5-6 class had begun practising meditation in their Buddhist classes the year before, so they are familiar with the process. A number of the students say that they meditate at home.

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The Grade 5-6 Instructor from the school also observed that the children bring to the classes many personal anecdotes of their experiences with friends, family and associates in relation to the meditation and *healing* (her word). Students have said that they feel 'clean', 'refreshed'. 'like you'd started the day again'. One child said that she and her friend had nearly been hit by a car on the way to school and had arrived feeling very shaken. She said that the meditation had calmed her down and she felt better. Another student said that when he burnt his arm, he meditated to calm himself down.

With the class having only been conducted for a term, for half an hour per week, the children already appear to be linking the quietude they experience in meditation to how they relate with others.

These children were practising *anapanasati*, mindfulness of breathing, the basis of Buddhist meditative practice that develops the link between the interiority of understanding the mind with considered attitudes and activity in daily life.



# ME5. Discovering the Clear Mind

Lesson Plan		Years	Lessons
		4-6	2
<b>1. Theme:</b>	Meditation		
<b>2. Topic:</b>	Re-enforcing the purpose of meditation		
<b>3. Values:</b>	Awareness, following a process, concentration		
<b>4. Aims:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To present water in a bottle as a representation of the mind's clear nature</li> <li>• To allow the children to see a concrete example of the effect of meditation</li> <li>• To motivate students to meditate</li> </ul>		
<b>5. Outcomes:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To become more engaged in a meditation session</li> <li>• To develop confidence in an essentially good and pure clear mind</li> </ul>		
<b>6. Preparation:</b>	Collect plastic bottles, a container of garden dirt and some water.		
<b>7. Lesson:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students to place themselves on the <i>ME2. Happiness Scale p6.4.</i></li> <li>• Show the children an example of a plastic bottle <math>\frac{3}{4}</math> filled with water, sand and mud. Ask the students to guess what is going to happen if the bottle is shaken.</li> <li>• Ask students how they think the bottle shaker is made.</li> <li>• Ask students what they have to be careful with when making the shaker.</li> </ul> <p> Each student makes their own shaker. Ask students the relevance of the shaker to meditation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time how long it takes for all the settlement to take place (while they are making the bottle shaker).</li> </ul> <p> Lead a familiar meditation and challenge the students to meditate for as long it takes for their shaker to settle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk about the benefits of sitting, the clarity of mind and the patience to practice that.</li> </ul>		
	<b>Feedback:</b>		
	<p><i>The lesson went well as the students were very interested in why we needed plastic bottles. Of course many forgot to bring their own and it was good that spare bottles were prepared. Even while we were making it, I resisted the temptation to give in to their continual asking about what it all meant. I started giving hints and the older students were able to figure it out quite well. Three weeks after this lesson, some of them are still keeping the bottles and giving the class updates on the progress of settlement and what they can see in their bottles.</i></p>		

## MEDITATION:

# ME6. Four Mindfulness Meditation Exercises

Lesson Plan		Years	Lessons
		1-6	3-6

- 1. Theme:** Meditation
- 2. Topic:** Introduction to Meditation
- 3. Values:** Following a process, concentration and awareness
- 4. Aims:**
  - To encourage children with no previous experience to learn some basic meditation techniques.
  - To develop appreciation of meditation practices:
    - develop the facility for the mind to look at itself
    - develop the facility for the mind to focus or concentrate
- 5. Outcomes:**
  - To be able to do a short meditation.
  - To develop awareness of sensory experiences.
- 6. Preparation:** Bring sultanas or dried apples, 2 for each student. (Check for food allergies!)
- 7. Lessons 1-2:** Ask the children who have done meditation before what is important in meditation and how it is done. Tell the students that they will do some activities to enhance their awareness.



**Listen** with eyes closed for one minute. Open your eyes and without talking to anyone, list what you heard individually. Ask each student to share something they heard during the one minute and compile a list on the board. Then repeat the listening activity. You will notice that students have become more aware and can hear the different sounds better the second time around.



**Eating a sultana.** Give each student a sultana. Ask them to describe the sultana and then to slowly eat it.

Ask the students to describe their eating experience.

Next ask specific questions about the smell, taste and texture of the fruit.

What did they feel or notice? e.g. How did it feel against the teeth? Was it hard or soft? Was it difficult to chew? Why? Finally ask them to take another piece and to observe more closely this time.

Repeat the questions after the second tasting.



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**8. Lessons 3-6:**



**Feeling the breath activity.** Ask students to do deep breathing slowly. Talk through the process of feeling the air as you inhale through the nose. Concentrate and feel the air going down the throat and into the lungs. Feel the warm air coming out of your lungs, into the nose. As you slowly describe what they might feel, the students become more attuned to their breathing and become more aware of their breathing.

Ask the students to describe what they feel at each stage of their breathing and ask them why they feel that way. Discuss why the breath is cool when inhaled and become warm when you exhale.

Repeat this part in each lesson for the next few weeks until all students have understood the process.

**9. Lessons 5-6:**



**Walking meditation.** Get the students to line up. Demonstrate walking slowly. They must keep quiet and give some space to the next person. Give instructions slowly: keep your back straight and look straight ahead. Do not look down but concentrate on the feeling of your feet. Begin with your right foot. Take a step and place the heel on floor. Feel the first contact. Slowly place the rest of the foot onto the floor feeling the new contact. Feel the weight of your body shifting from the left to the right while you take the step. Now lift your left foot and feel the weight being lifted off it. (Repeat instructions until every student is walking in tune with each other). Make sure there is a safe place to walk around.

**Tips and Feedback:**

*All parts of this activity went well and the class was very interested. Their observation and mindfulness improved with more practice. They were surprised at how much more aware they can become when they concentrate. Even children who had meditated before found the exercise useful to help them feel their breath and become more aware of the feelings of their body. I spent quite a few weeks on this activity and found it very worthwhile.*





## ME6. My Favourite Food Meditation





### How well do I know it?

**A**sk your parents for two portions of your favourite food. Turn on the TV and eat one portion. Complete the column below. Then turn off the TV and go to the dining table. Do not talk to anyone. Look at your food and eat it slowly. Concentrate on the experience and fill in the other column. Think about why the two experiences feel different. Be ready to share your findings with the class.

	With TV on	Without Distractions	Why the differences?
Colour	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
Smell	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
Taste	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
Texture	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
Feel	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
Any other observations	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div>

## MEDITATION:

# ME7. Observing Our Breath

Lesson Plan	Years 1-6	Lesson 1
<p><b>1. Theme:</b> Meditation</p> <p><b>2. Topic:</b> Awareness and focus</p> <p><b>3. Values:</b> Self awareness, ability to keep focused, self control</p> <p><b>4. Aims:</b> To raise awareness of the constant coming and going of the breath.</p> <p><b>5. Lesson:</b> Students draw the Happiness Scale in their books.</p> <p> bRI Instructor leads with the <i>ME7. Observing Our Breath</i> meditation</p> <p> At the end of the meditation, ask the students to place themselves on the <i>ME2. Happiness Scale p6.4</i> before speaking.</p>		





## ME7. Observing Our Breath

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**S**it quietly. Relax. Close your eyes. Turn your palms upwards. Put your left palm on top of your right palm, with your fingers close together and the tips of your thumbs touching. Place your palms upwards on your lap.

Relax your feet, your legs and your body, your arms and your hands. Relax your head, your face and your eyes.

Your whole body is relaxed.

And now think of your breathing. Feel the air going in and the air going out. Feel the touch of the air going through the airway, in and out, in and out, in and out.

Feel the coolness of the air going in and the warmth of the air going out.

Still, you are aware of all the sounds around you. There may be the birds singing, the leaves rustling, the water flowing, a car passing or someone calling.

And you are still breathing slowly in and out, in and out, in and out.

You may feel itchy spots on your feet or on your back, on your arms or on your scalp. Think about the itchy spots. Look at the spots with your inner eyes. They may go away.

You are still breathing slowly in and out, in and out, in and out. Feel the coolness of the air going in and the warmth of the air going out.

You may feel some discomfort in some part of your body. Think about it and look at it with your inner eyes. It may go away.

You are still breathing slowly, feeling the air going in and going out, slowly touching the airway, cool air going in and warm air going out.



Now, bring your awareness back to the classroom – to the cushion or chair you are sitting on, the classmates around you, the classroom you are sitting in.

And now we are going to slowly open our eyes.



## MEDITATION:

# ME8. Blue Pool Meditation

Lesson Plan	Years 1-6	Lesson 1
<div data-bbox="496 365 791 439">  </div> <p><b>1. Theme:</b> Meditation</p> <p><b>2. Topic:</b> A calming meditation</p> <p><b>3. Values:</b> A calm and clear mind</p> <p><b>4. Aims:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To recognize restlessness.</li> <li>• To learn to calm oneself down.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Lesson:</b></p> <p><b>This is a guided meditation to relax the body and direct students to peaceful images.</b></p> <p>Ask students to clench their right fist. Then stick out their thumb. Using the thumb as an indicator, point the thumb upwards if they are feeling calm, downwards if they are feeling either tired or unsettled, and point the thumb sideways if they are a little tired or unsettled.</p> <p><b>Instructor says:</b></p> <p> Now we are going to do a <b>Blue Pool Meditation</b> but first I will lead you in a full body relaxation because you know, we cannot meditate if our bodies are tense or wound up. (See <i>Initial relaxation instructions</i> in Meditation ME3 p6.6).</p> <p><b>Follow-up Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After the meditation, the bRI Instructor asks the students to rate themselves again with the thumb indicator and feel if they've changed their state of mind.</li> <li>• Ask the class when they think they could use this meditation. Could they use it outside the classroom without the bRI Instructor?</li> </ul> <p><b>Variations on this same meditation:</b></p> <p>You can try different variations on this same meditation. After the initial relaxation instruction, change the visualization, for example, to <i>Blue Sea Meditation</i> or <i>Blue Sky Meditation</i>, using suitable images.</p>		



## ME8. Blue Pool Meditation

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**N**ow I am going to take you on a journey. You have been doing a lot of activities and you are feeling restless. Now you see a blue pool of water in front of you.

The water is as blue as the blue sky. It is calm and you feel drawn to it. You walk towards the water and put one foot in, to feel it. The water is warm and you slowly walk into the pool.

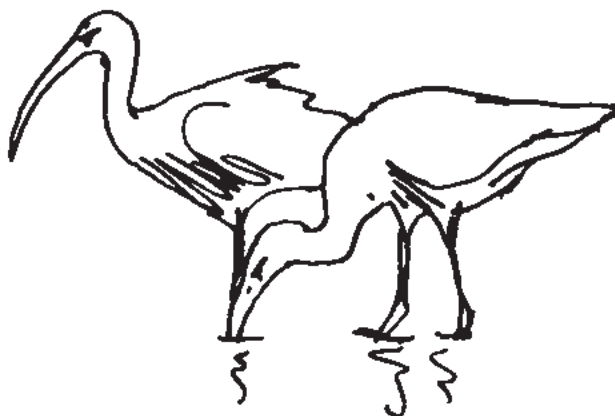
As you walk in you feel the warmth of the water washing around your feet and legs, washing away the tiredness of the legs and relaxing your muscles. With each step the water goes further up your body, calming your body and relaxing all the muscles on your back, your arms and your chest.

You are now in neck deep and the warm water is relaxing your shoulders. You feel the weight of your burdens lifted off your shoulders and you gently submerge your face into the water. The water cleans your face as you feel it flowing over your face. Now you are just floating in the pool of water, totally relaxed and looking at the beautiful blue sky. Enjoy this relaxed state and allow your total self to float around for a while.

Now slowly get out of the water. You feel totally calm and refreshed. Your mind is peaceful.

Slowly bring your mind back to this room and keeping this calm state of mind, open your eyes and give a peaceful smile to the first person your see.

Do not try to talk. Just sit and keep still for a while.



## MEDITATION:

# ME9. Mountain Meditation

Lesson Plan		Years 1-6	Lesson 1
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1. **Theme:** Meditation
2. **Topic:** Attention to posture
3. **Values:** Self awareness, concentration, self control and observing change in oneself
4. **Aims:**
  - To encourage the class to experience and appreciate stillness
  - To encourage students to see how posture is important in meditation
  - To encourage students to observe change
5. **Outcomes:** To remain still and enjoy it.

### Note

Mountains are sacred places. In some cultures they are seen as the dwelling places of the gods. They are places where spiritual teachings are given, for example, when Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount, and the Buddha gave his teachings to his disciples at Vulture's Peak.

They are places of visions and spiritual renewal. To traditional people, the mountains were protectors or guardians, mother or father.

In meditation practice, it can be useful to use such powerful images and the qualities that they suggest, to encourage our own practice of becoming still. Mountains, in particular, are symbolic of peaceful strength and stillness.

6. **Preparation:** If you plan to follow the drawing activity at the end of this meditation, provide sheets of drawing paper and beautiful coloured pencils or crayons.
7. **Lesson:**
  - Prepare your students for meditation in your usual way (relaxation, thumb indicator etc)



**Instructor says:** Attention to correct meditation posture is helpful because it makes our bodies look and feel like a mountain. We are going to imagine our bodies as still and straight as a mountain.



At the end of the meditation, before speaking, students may like to draw their mountain and keep it as a reminder of the strength and resilience they hold within themselves.

Quietly move around the class, providing drawing paper and coloured pencils.

\*This lesson is adapted from *The Mountain Meditation* in *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life* by John Kabat-Zinn, Hyperion Press, New York, 1994, p135



## ME9. Mountain Meditation

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**I**magine the most beautiful mountain that you can think of. Observe its shape: the lofty peak, the base firmly connected with the earth and the steep or gently sloping sides. Note how huge it is, how beautiful, whether seen close or from afar.

Perhaps your mountain has snow on top and trees on the lower slopes. It may have one peak, or a series of peaks. However it appears, just sit breathing with the image of your mountain.

When you feel ready, see if you can bring the mountain into your body, so that your body sitting here and the mountain you imagine, become one. Your head becomes the lofty peak; your shoulders and arms the sides of the mountain; your buttocks (bottom) and legs the solid base connected with a cushion on the floor or your chair.

Throughout the day as the sun travels through the sky, the mountain just sits. Light and shadow and colours are changing from moment to moment; but the mountain remains still beneath the light.

Dawn lights the top of the mountain like fire, clouds pass across its peaks; day turns to night; the moon rises and shines on the mountain with silver light; stars shine and night turns again into day. And the mountain just sits, simply being its self.

Spring changes to summer, summer to autumn, autumn to winter; the snow falls, covering the rocks and trees; this melts and becomes streams and waterfalls. Flowers push up through the earth, bloom and fade away; birds sing; possums play in the trees.

The seasons flow from one to another, the weather changes moment by moment and day by day. Sometimes wild storms flash across the mountains with wild winds. Then they pass and all becomes quiet. The mountain remains still and calm.

As we sit, thinking about the mountain, we too can feel our stillness, the peaceful centre that is always inside.

In our lives, we experience constant change; friends come and go, we move house, change school, learn new things. Sometimes we are happy, sometimes angry or sad or confused. These changes are just like the clouds that pass across the mountain.



Our own mountain nature is still and quiet and strong. It is always there.





## MEDITATION:

# ME10. Loving Kindness Meditation

Lesson Plan		Years 1-6	Lesson 1
<b>1. Theme:</b>	Meditation		
<b>2. Topic:</b>	Loving Kindness Meditation		
<b>3. Values:</b>	Self awareness, concentration, loving kindness to self and others		
<b>4. Aims:</b>	To encourage the class to practice greater kindness to self and to others		
<b>5. Lesson:</b>	 This lesson is based on the Discourse by the Buddha called the <b>Metta Sutta</b> . (For a full version, see <i>ME12 p6.25</i> )		

### Note

A spiritual path is not complete without the integration of a loving heart and mind. Metta has been described as ‘making space in the heart’. It is a form of unconditional love. This may sound impossible to do, but if it is broken down into more familiar feelings such as goodwill, friendliness and love, then the task is not so daunting.

In the Metta Sutta we chant:

*“even as a mother protects with her life, her child her only child,  
So with a boundless heart should we cherish all living beings.”*

Metta is the development of this feeling of connectedness, that we are all parts of the same whole. When we actually feel this, not just as a thought, then it is much easier to feel metta for all sentient beings. We do not have to work too hard at this feeling of connection. It can be a natural process of letting go into what we already know and experience but which often is buried under layers of protection and survival skills.

Loving Kindness meditation is basically wishing ourselves and all living beings wellbeing and happiness and other good things. In other words, we send out thoughts of good will towards ourselves and others as well. Whatever good things we wish to ourselves, we also wish to others.

There are many different ways to practice metta, but all start with the heart. To make metta meditation a heart-centred meditation (as opposed to *thinking about* metta) the focus of the meditation is the feeling of the heart and the quality of loving-kindness. After first putting the attention on the breath, one moves to focus on the heart centre.

The following lessons provide some different ideas for using metta in your classroom.

### Follow-up:

- Lead the students in the simple *ME10. Loving Kindness Meditation*.
- Ask the students how they feel after this meditation and to record it on their *ME2. Happiness Scales p6.4*.



Ask the students to draw how they feel or any visual ideas that come to their minds. Give them plenty of time to do this.

- In pairs, students talk about their drawings to their partners.

For further information on Metta and Loving Kindness:

<http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/basic-guide.htm>

and [http://www.buddhanet.net/metta\\_k.htm](http://www.buddhanet.net/metta_k.htm)



## ME10. Loving Kindness Meditation

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*This is an example of a simple practice:*

Sit or lie down comfortably and close the eyes.

Now turn your attention to yourself and say in your mind: “May I be well, may I be happy”.

Then recall in your mind someone very dear to you and say in your mind: “May (s)he be well, may (s)he be happy”.

Then recall in your mind your friends and also wish them in your mind: “May they be well, may they be happy”.

Next turn your attention to the whole world, to all people around you and say in your mind: “May all people be well, may all people be happy”.

Finish by saying, “Peace, Peace, Peace”.



## MEDITATION: LOVING KINDNESS

# ME1 1. The Flower Garden in Your Heart

Lesson Plan		Years	Lesson
		5-6	1

- 1. Theme:** Meditation
- 2. Topic:** Extended Loving Kindness meditation with visualisation
- 3. Values:** Self awareness, concentration, loving kindness to self and others
- 4. Aims:** To encourage the class to practice feeling thoughtful and kind to oneself and to others
- 5. Lesson:** This lesson is based on a visualization practice developed by the Buddhist nun, Venerable Ayya Khema. The practice will take about 10 minutes, so it is recommended only for higher upper primary and fits well with study of the Wheel of Life or inter-connectedness, though it is also very suitable for simply cultivating friendly feelings and actions.

### Before starting:

Remind students that Buddhists care for ALL living things, including worms, ants, spiders etc. and that loving kindness is sent to beings both “born and to be born”, as well as the devas and bodhisattvas. So it is a very inclusive meditation.

### Variations:

Images of the sun beaming rays of golden light or a lotus-flower opening all its petals would also be suitable but the starting point is always the heart-centre.

### Follow-up Activities:

- This can be a powerful meditation so allow the children plenty of time to return to themselves.
- A simple discussion – with no compulsory sharing.
- Ask the children to draw their heart centres.
- If used in conjunction with *SD5. Appreciating Special People p7.14*), you can use SD5 worksheets.



## ME1 1. The Flower Garden in Your Heart Meditation

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**P**ut the attention on your breath for just a few moments.  
(Pause)

Feel in your heart that you have a beautiful garden of flowers.

Surround yourself with these flowers – their perfume,  
their colours, their gentleness, their warmth..

From the centre of each of these flowers comes a beautiful ray of  
loving-kindness: maybe it is pink or gold or pale blue.

Surround **yourself** with these beautiful rays of loving-kindness. Soak them into  
your heart centre until it is over-flowing. Feel loving-kindness and joy towards  
yourself. Feel happy for the effort you are making to practice this meditation.

*Pause*

Then bring to mind **the people who are closest to you**, maybe your parents, your  
brothers and sisters, or a special friend. Feel yourself collecting the flowers from your  
heart and giving them to these people. It is a beautiful bunch of flowers and you are  
handing them to your special person with a smile and with the loving-kindness from the  
garden of your heart flowing into them and you wish that they be well and happy .

*Pause*

Then bring to mind **your classmates, your Instructors, your neighbours  
at home** and feel yourself collecting the flowers from your heart and giving  
them to these people. Feel the loving-kindness from the garden of your  
heart flowing into them and you wish that they be well and happy.

*Pause*

Now bring to mind **people who you don't know well at all** – maybe the  
person who brings your mail everyday, the people you pass on the street  
or in the bus, and feel yourself collecting the flowers from your heart and  
giving them to these people. Feel the loving-kindness from the garden of your  
heart flowing into them and you wish that they be well and happy.

*Pause*

Extend your loving-kindness from the garden of your heart to **people all around  
the world**. Feel yourself collecting the flowers from your heart and giving them  
to these people, especially people in war-torn parts of the world, or where  
there have been physical disasters. Feel the loving-kindness from the garden of  
your heart flowing into them and you wish that they be well and happy.

*Pause*





And now, let your loving-kindness from the garden of your heart extend to **all living creatures** – in the skies above and the earth below, in the seas and rivers and lakes – all living things, human and not human. Born and not yet born. All living things want to be happy. Feel the loving-kindness from the garden of your heart flowing into them and you wish that they be well and happy.

*Pause*

Finally, bring the feeling of loving-kindness **back to yourself**. Surround yourself again with the warmth and beauty of the flowers in the garden of your heart and send yourself wishes that you be well and happy. Now seal this feeling in your heart, knowing that it is there always for you to call on whenever you need it: that you have a beautiful garden of loving-kindness in your heart which you carry around with you always.

Take a few moments to come back to the classroom, to your friends around you. Now very gently open your eyes and turn to the person beside you and give them a very gentle smile.


*End of meditation – allow the children plenty of time to come out of this meditation.*



# MEDITATION: LOVING KINDNESS

## ME12. Metta Sutta

<i>Lesson Plan</i>	   	<i>Years</i> 5-6	<i>Lessons</i> 2
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1. **Theme:** Meditation
2. **Topic:** Metta Sutta (Loving Kindness)
3. **Values:** Understanding and appreciation of a classic Buddhist text.
4. **Aims:** To read together the Metta Sutta, understand the meaning of this text and to apply it to everyday situations
5. **Preparation:**  Copies of the Metta Sutta.



### Note

There are many different ways to approach the study of a classical text. It would be most appreciated by students with some knowledge and experience of Buddhism and of an age to understand the language.

Whilst a traditional didactic approach is not recommended, there are times when the study of an ancient text can be enriching and exciting for young people. The text provided is a translation from the Pali Canon. It is regularly chanted in Pali and in English in monasteries and temples and at special occasions and blessings.

6. **Lesson:** You may want to choose one or more of these approaches to introduce students to text study.
 

**Some suggested approaches for teaching a text:**

  - Provide a background introduction to the Metta Sutta. A useful general website is: <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/basic-guide.htm>
  - Give the students a copy of the text and the Instructor reads it straight through.
  - Ask the students what they think about it. What does it mean? Did it make them feel differently? What parts did they like/dislike? What words/phrases did they find interesting or colourful?
  - Write any words/phrases on the board.
  - Then read the text again, stopping line by line to explain words and concepts.
  -  Divide the sutta into sections and have the students read it aloud.
  - Create a verse poem and perform it as a class with suitable actions or hand gestures.
  - Ask the students to bring in suitable music to go with it.
  -  Make illustrations to accompany the text. The older grades could make an illustrated version for the younger grades then present them on a shared day.
  - Ask the students to memorise the sutta, or at least some stanzas.



## ME12. Metta (Loving-Kindness) Sutta

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**T**his is what should be done by one who is skilled  
in goodness, and who knows the path of peace.  
Let them be able and upright, straightforward  
and gentle in speech, humble and not conceited.  
Contented and easily satisfied, unburdened with duties  
and frugal in their ways. Peaceful and calm, wise  
and skilful, not proud and demanding in nature.

Let them not do the slightest thing  
that the wise would later reprove.  
Wishing in gladness and in safety,  
may all beings be happy.  
Whatever living beings there may be;  
whether they are weak or strong,  
omitting none, the great or the mighty,  
medium, short or small,  
the seen and the unseen,  
those living near and far away,  
those born and to be born,  
may all beings be happy.

Let none deceive another,  
or despise any being in any state.  
Let none, through anger or ill-will,  
wish harm upon another.  
Even as a mother protects with her life  
her child, her only child,  
so with a boundless heart  
should one cherish all living beings.  
Radiating kindness over the entire world  
spreading upwards to the skies, and  
downwards to the depths, outwards and  
unbounded, freed from hatred and ill-will.

Whether standing or walking, seated or  
lying down, free from drowsiness,  
one should sustain this recollection.  
This is said to be the sublime abiding.  
By not holding to fixed views,  
the pure-hearted one, having clarity of vision  
being freed from all sense desires,  
is not born again into this world.







## ME13. Everyone is a Potential Friend

**T**hink about a friend you have. Was this person always your friend? Was there a time when this person was a stranger? Was there a time perhaps when you didn't like this person? Maybe they did something that you didn't like? What makes you like or dislike someone? What is the difference between a friend and a stranger? If all these labels we give people, these different relationships we have with people can change, why do we differentiate between them? If we were to treat everyone as a potential friend then how would our life feel different?

*How great it would be if all beings had happiness.*

*I will help them to have happiness.*

*How great it would be if all beings did not have sadness, sickness or suffering.*

*I will help them not to have sadness, sickness or suffering.*

*If all beings lived like this what a wonderful world it would be.*

*I will help to change the world by helping when I can help and being kind and loving at all times.*

## MEDITATION:

# ME14. A Chant of Loving Kindness and Compassion

Lesson Plan		Years	Lesson
		1-6	1

- 1. Theme:** Loving-kindness
- 2. Topic:** The mantra of compassion
- 3. Values:** Wisdom, compassion
- 4. Aims:** For students to appreciate that reciting a mantra is a way of filling the mind (heart and mind) with positive, loving vibrations. Everyday talk is replaced with sounds which promote clarity and harmony.
- 5. Outcomes:**
  - Students are introduced to some of the rich meanings of the mantra
  - Students experience repeating sacred syllables

### Note

*Mantra: Om Mani Padme Hum*

Using the mantra will need to be contextualised for the children. It may be an opportunity to introduce part of your own tradition.

*Om Mani Pade Hum* is the mantra of *Avolokitisvara* (Sanskrit), *Chenrezig* (Tibet), or *Kwan Yin/Guanyin* (China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam).

It is a Mahayana practice used by ordinary people and monks and nuns. Histories tell of great saints who have deeply studied and practised the mantra and reached full awakening.

- 6. Preparation:** You may wish to bring in a picture, image or prayer beads (mala).

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**7. Lesson:**

**Focus:** Tell the students that mantra is like a prayer or a song.

The mantra we are using is OM MANI PADME HUM.

*Mani* means 'jewel' in the ancient Sanskrit language and is a symbol of the jewel of kindness and wish for all beings to be free from suffering. *Padme* in Sanskrit means lotus. Our hearts and minds are like a beautiful lotus that blooms with wise and skilful actions in the mud and strife of the world.

There are many transliterations of the mantra, according to different cultures and traditions eg. *Ān Mání Bāmī Hōng* in Chinese, *Úm ma ni bát ni hồng* or *Ấn ma ni bát mê hồng* in Vietnamese or *On Mani Hatsumei Un* in Japanese.

These are repeated to help focus the mind and tune the mind towards wisdom and compassion.

OM MANI PADME HUM means that it is wise to be kind, and it is kind to be wise.





When children are seated for meditation, clap the six syllables of the mantra together, then move to singing. Students may be able to repeat the mantra silently to themselves.



## MEDITATION:

# ME15. Joy Meditation

Lesson Plan		Years	Lesson
		3-6	1
1. Theme:	Meditation		
2. Topic:	Joy Meditation		
3. Values:	The children learn to spread joy around them.		
4. Lesson:	 The Instructor may read aloud the following meditation <i>ME15</i> .		
<b>Follow-Up Discussion:</b>			
Ask the students to share their experiences if they want to.			



## ME15. Joy Meditation

**C**lose your eyes, relax your body – your shoulders, your neck, your arms, your back, your tummy, your legs and your feet. Now put your attention on the breath for just a few moments.

Imagine a feeling of joy.

This feeling of joy fills your head and your neck. It fills your shoulders and arms. The joy floats down into your chest and your heart. Your heart is so full of joy. It floats gently down into your stomach and your back. It floats into your legs and feet. Every part of your body is full of joy.

You are so full of joy, it begins to spread out beyond your body. It spreads to everyone in our classroom. It reaches beyond the classroom farther and farther, until it spreads over the whole country. It spreads out to the whole earth, and continues to spread out even further into the universe – beyond the planets, beyond the stars, farther and farther. The whole universe is filled with your joy.



*Pause.*

Now very gently, bring that joy back into your own body. Sitting here in our classroom. Seal that joy in your body and know that it is there for always, for you to call on whenever you need it.

Now, when you are ready, open your eyes and smile at the person sitting next to you.

## MEDITATION:

# ME16. Waterfall Relaxation Meditation

Lesson Plan		Years	Lesson
		3-6	1
1. Theme:	Meditation		
2. Topic:	Waterfall Meditation		
3. Values:	Water symbolizes purity, clarity and calmness, and reminds us to cleanse our minds to attain the state of purity.		
4. Lesson:	 The Instructor may read the following meditation ME16.		



## ME16. Waterfall Relaxation Meditation

**C**lose your eyes. Now put your attention on the breath for just a few moments. Imagine there is a beautiful waterfall of white light flowing down on you. It flows down on your head, helping your head to relax. You feel your head relaxing. It moves down over your neck and shoulders. Your neck and shoulders are relaxing. Now it flows down over your arms. You feel your arms relaxing and becoming very light. It flows down your back. Your back is letting go and relaxing. It flows over your chest and stomach, helping your chest and stomach to relax. It moves down over your legs and feet. You feel your legs and feet relaxing and letting go. The beautiful waterfall of white light is flowing down over your whole body. You are very peaceful and relaxed.

You are clean and pure and your mind is very clear and sharp.

When people look at you they are happy and peaceful.



*Pause.*

Now very gently, bring that joy back into your own body. See yourself sitting here in our classroom. Seal that joy in your body and know that it is there for always, for you to call on whenever you need it.

Now you are going to open your eyes and smile at the person sitting next to you.

## MEDITATION:

# ME17. Managing Strong Emotions

Lesson Plan		Years	Lesson
		5-6	1
<b>1. Theme:</b>	Meditation		
<b>2. Topic:</b>	Managing strong emotions such as anger and jealousy. The themes in this meditation are more suited to upper primary level. You could create a similar one for younger children.		
<b>3. Values:</b>	Self awareness, concentration, self control, patience		
<b>4. Aims:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To understand strong emotions</li><li>• To learn how to manage strong emotions</li></ul>		
<b>5. Lesson:</b>	 Instructor leads the class in a short relaxation exercise. (See <i>ME3 p6.6</i> or make up a short version of your own).  Read aloud the meditation <i>ME17 p6.33</i> .  <b>Follow-Up Discussion:</b> Invite the students to share their experiences if they want to.		





## ME17. Managing Strong Emotions Meditation

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**N**ow that we have allowed our minds to become calm by concentrating on the breath, we will think for a moment about the consequences of **strong emotions** (OR you can name a particular emotion such as **desire, anger, jealousy, hatred** or **ignorance**) and what we can do about it.

**[Strong emotion]** always disturbs our minds and makes us feel uncomfortable and unhappy. When we give in to **[strong emotions]** it clouds our judgement and makes it impossible to communicate in a way that will solve the problem.

With a **[strongly emotioned]** mind we are much more likely to speak unkindly to others and it can even lead to physical harm, causing even more problems.

**[Strong emotion]** creates the cause for conflict with our friends, our families, and our communities, and at its worst, it promotes conflict at a national and global level.

Think of a time in the last week when you became **[strongly emotional]** – how did it affect your mind? How did it affect the other person? Can you honestly say that the **[strong emotion]** helped to solve your problem?

**[Strong emotions]** can definitely be overcome with patience and loving kindness.

If we develop a patient attitude to problems and train our mind to remain peaceful in the face of great difficulty – it creates mental strength.

Patience allows us to see the reality of the situation and creates space in which to come to a peaceful resolution.

With patience, we don't upset the people around us and so at a very personal level we contribute in a meaningful way to world peace. If we develop our loving kindness and genuine concern for others, our lives become happier, and we are nicer to be around – resulting in better friendships and a more harmonious life.

Think of a time in the last week, when you did something nice for someone, maybe you helped someone who was having a bad time. How did that attitude of helping affect your mind? How did it affect the other person?

We definitely have the capacity to reduce harmful attitudes and increase beneficial attitudes.



Make a resolve to do something positive for someone before the end of the day – it could be as simple as making your mum or dad a cup of tea or just saying something nice to a friend.

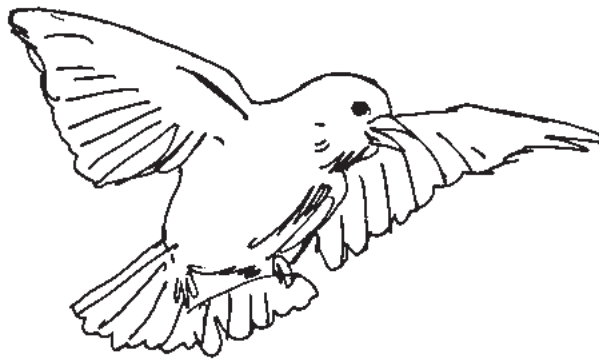
With this thought in mind then we can dedicate any positive energy that has arisen to the genuine happiness and peace of ourselves and others.



## MEDITATION:

# ME18. Reflection on Change

Lesson Plan		Years	Lessons
		3-6	3-5
<b>1. Theme:</b>	Reflection		
<b>2. Topic:</b>	Reflection on change		
<b>3. Values:</b>	To accept that everything is impermanent		
<b>4. Aims:</b>	To understand and accept that everything changes		
<b>5. Lesson:</b>	 The Instructor may begin with the relaxation exercise from meditation <i>ME3</i> <u>p6.6</u> .		
	Read aloud the meditation <i>ME18</i> .		
	<b>Follow-up Discussion:</b>		
	Ask the students to talk about the changes of their tree and why they changed.		
	<b>Further Activities/Meditations:</b>		
	At the next lesson, you could do a similar meditation. Instead of a tree, ask them to recall themselves at birth, age one, age five, current age and think of the physical changes they have gone through.		





## ME18. Reflection on Change Meditation

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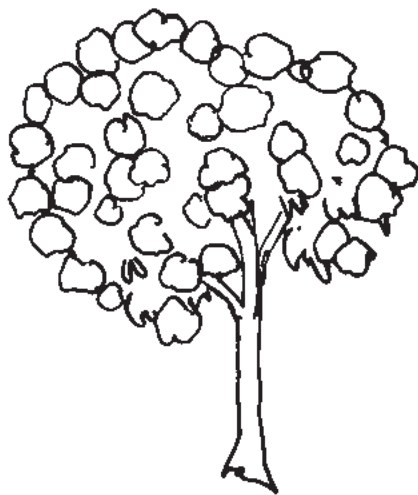
**T**hink of your favourite tree. Remember what it looks like in spring time. The leaves are turning green and they are growing many new leaves.

As the weather gets warmer more leaves grow and soon the tree is full of big leaves. It is very green and looks huge. The leaves are moist and heavy.

Then the weather begins to turn cold and the leaves start to change colour. They lose their greenness and become red and orange and brown. Some of your trees might start to shed their leaves.

As winter comes the leaves start to shrivel and dry up. Some trees might lose almost all their leaves and look quite empty. Think about why the tree changes over the seasons. Would the tree be exactly the same the next spring? In 5 years? In 10 years? In 50 years? In 100 years? What would have changed?

Now slowly come back to this room. What have you observed in this journey? Have any ideas changed? Think about how nothing stays the same. Then slowly open your eyes.



## MEDITATION:



# ME19. Meditation for a Friend

**N**ow think of your best friend in your Buddhist Religious Education class. Visualise his /her face in your mind. Think of why you like him/her. What are her/his virtues? Think of how nicely she/he treats you. Think of the warm feeling when he/she is with you. Think of how you enjoy his/her company. Appreciate what a good friend he/she is. Now think of how you can treat him/her so that he/she feels the same way about you.

Now wish that person happiness, peace and freedom from harm.

In your mind say: “May **[person’s name]** be happy,

May **[person’s name]** be peaceful, may **[person’s name]** be free from harm.”

Wish all your classmates happiness, peace and freedom from harm. May all of you be happy, may all of you be peaceful, may all of you be free from harm. Now think of all your schoolmates and wish them happiness, peace and freedom from harm. May all my classmates be happy, may they be peaceful, may they be free from harm.

Now to all the students in the world, wish them happiness, peace and freedom from harm. May all beings be happy, may all beings be peaceful, may all beings be free from harm.

Slowly bring your mind back to this room and open your eyes.  
Give a beautiful smile to the first person you see.

### *Note*

See CA3 p8.5 for activities to go with this meditation



## MEDITATION:



# ME20. Children's Motivation and Dedication Verses

May all beings have happiness,  
May all beings be free from suffering,  
May all beings feel an ocean of happiness and joy  
And may we live with the good heart  
Feeling close to all.



May all our positive energy today  
Extend out like a great ocean  
Bringing peace and happiness to all.  
May great peace begin here.



May our meditation today  
Be the cause for awakening our Buddha nature  
So that we can lead all beings  
To great happiness.



May all our positive energy today  
Become the cause for peace  
And happiness in the world.  
May this peace and happiness begin with us.

