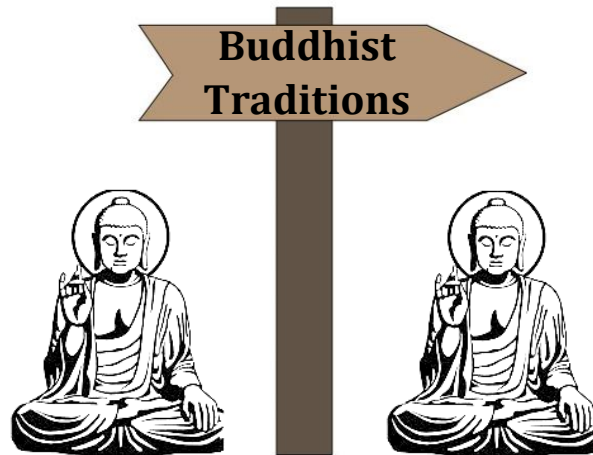
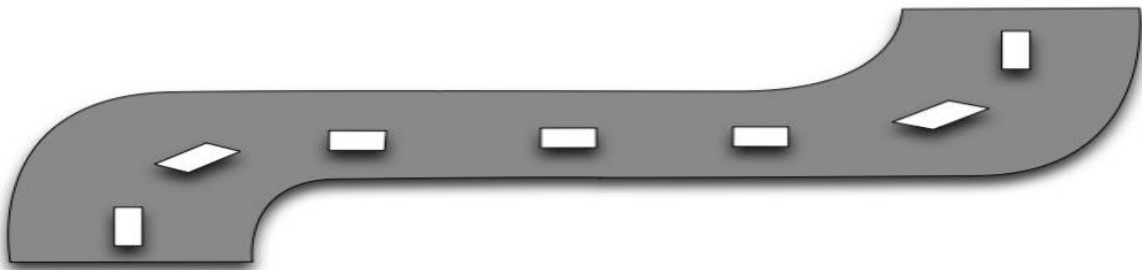


RE Road Map: Approaches and Resources for Teachers for Use in School

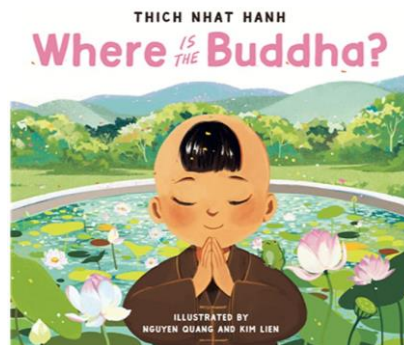
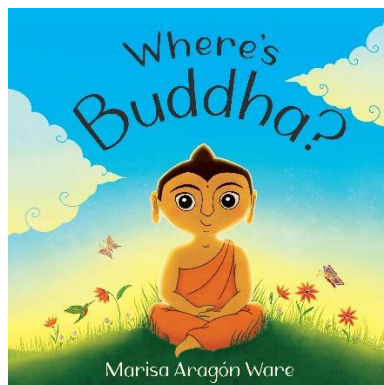


This document will lead teachers towards becoming an expert in teaching Buddhist Traditions within your classroom. It is not intended for pupils.

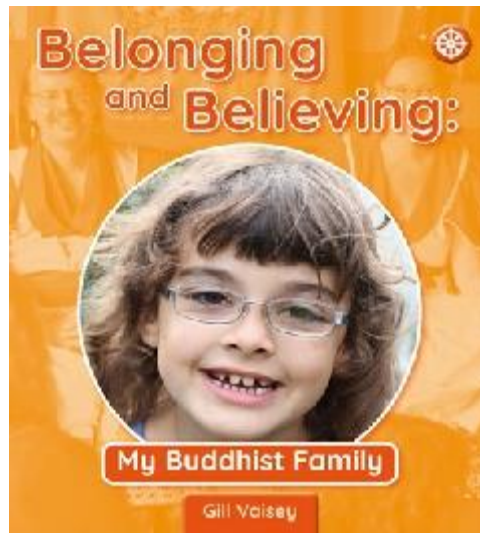


Early Years Foundation Stage

There are some lovely books for introducing young children to the Buddha:



Where's Buddha? by Marisa Aragón Ware & *Where is the Buddha?* By Thich Nhat Hanh



My Buddhist Family in the *Belonging and Believing* series from Books at Press is also a good text for introducing young pupils to Buddhism.



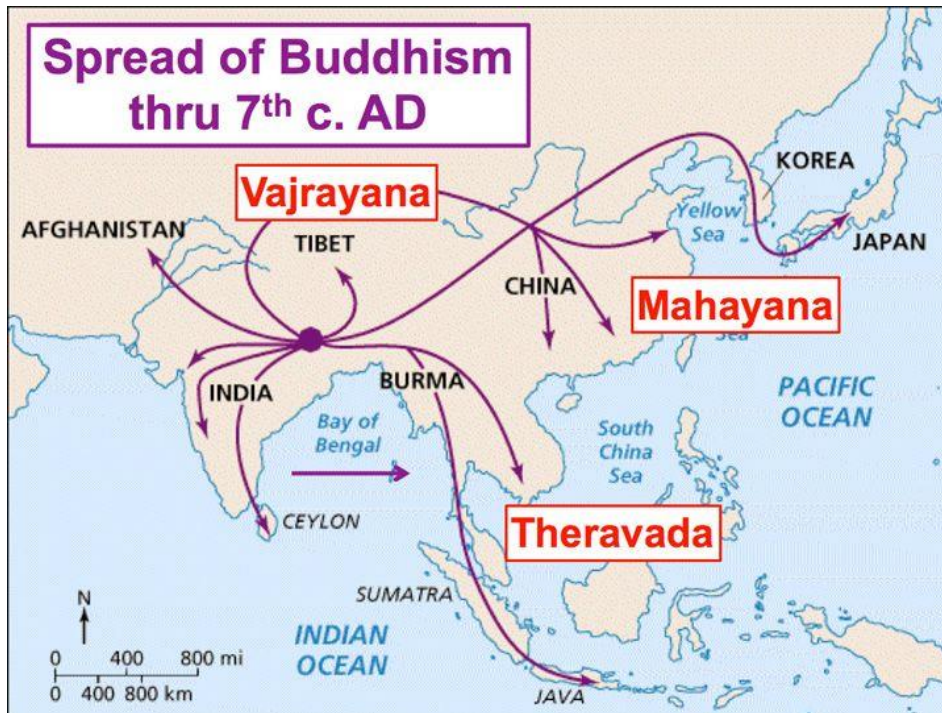
Primary

There are many schools of Buddhism, hence the use of Buddhist traditions to acknowledge that diversity. It is important primary pupils understand this diversity of expression exists.

The main three schools are:

- Theravada
- Mahayana
- Vajrayana

Each time Buddhist teachings encountered a new culture, there was a diversifying of practice whilst a retention of common teachings and teachings.



The Life of the Buddha

The life of the Buddha is a good place to start but should be used to introduce pupils to the important teachings of the Buddha, rather than to simply tell the story of a 'key founder'.



The Life of the Buddha

Aimed at ages 8 to 12, seven chapters take us through the life of the Buddha. The video quality isn't up to modern standards but is watchable!

The Buddhist Centre offer some resources for schools on introducing the life of the Buddha to pupils: <https://thebuddhistcentre.com/stories/schools/teachers/>

You will find a timeline of the life of the Buddha here: <https://buddhismforkids.net/LifeBuddha.html#header11-78>

Books About Buddhist Traditions

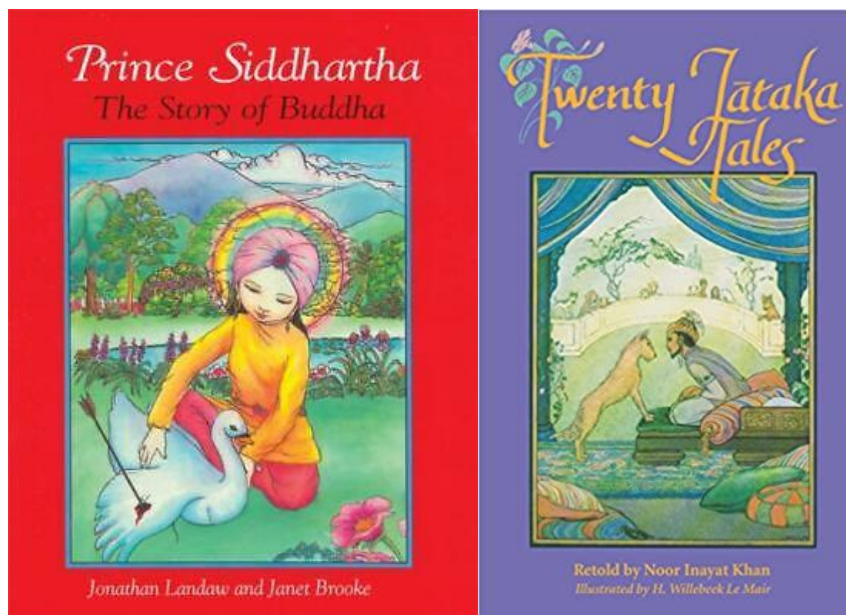
The Buddhist Society provide this list of suitable books for primary-aged pupils:

EYFS + Key Stage 1 (up to 7 years old)

- *The Seed of Compassion* by The Dalai Lama
- *A Handful of Quiet: Happiness in Four Pebbles* by Thich Nhat Hanh
- *Little Sid* by Ian Lendler
- *Under the Bodhi Tree: A Story of the Buddha* by Deborah Hopkinson
- *Buddhism for Kids: 40 Activities, Meditations, and Stories for Everyday Calm, Happiness, and Awareness* by Emily Griffith Burke

Key Stage 2: Years 3 to 6 (7-11 years old)

- *A Pebble for Your Pocket* – Thich Nhat Hanh
- *Prince Siddhartha: The Story of Buddha* - Jonathan Landaw
- *When the Buddha Was an Elephant: 32 Animal Wisdom Tales from Jataka* – Mark McGinnis



Buddhist Stories

Ages 4 - 7

Ages 8 - 11

Ages 12 - 14

Ages 15 - 16

Ages 17 - 18

STORIES from the BUDDHIST TRADITION - aged 4 to 7



Stories from the Buddhist tradition

Siddhartha and the Swan



Angulimala meets the Buddha



The Buddhist Centre also have some stories online:

<https://thebuddhistcentre.com/stories/schools/students/ages-5-7/>

As do Buddhnet:

Teaching Stories: The Jataka Tales



Buddhist Tales for Young and Old, Volume 1, Prince Goodspeaker.



Buddhist Tales for Young and Old, Volume 2, King Fruitful.

<http://buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/ebooks.htm>

RE Today have some downloadable versions of Buddhist stories:



Description

THEMES: Happiness, Living life to the full.

Stories - Buddhism: Living Life to the Full

ISBN: 110157

Published:

Format: Download

Pages: 1

Phase: Cross phase

£0.00

Add to basket



Description

THEMES: Promises for the future, fulfillment of dreams, realisation that life involves suffering, Wesak.

Stories - Buddhism: Maya's Dream

ISBN: 110155

Published: 01 March 2011

Format: Download

Pages: 1

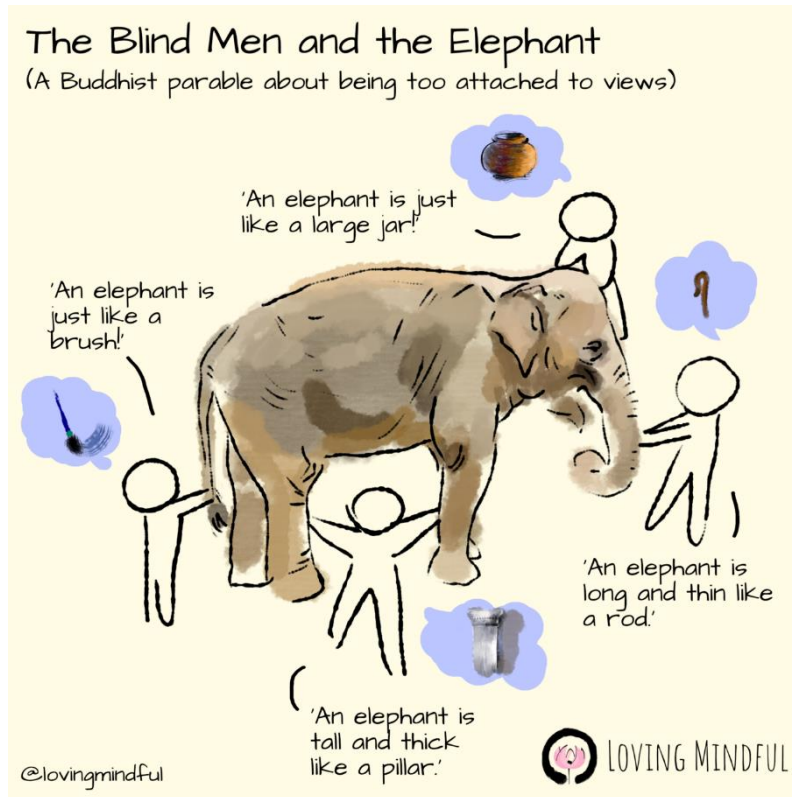
Phase: Cross phase

£0.00

Add to basket

See also the appendix for the *Prince in the Palace* interactive story kindly provided with permission by Katie Gooch and the Sidegate Multi-faith Reflective Story Project.

The Blind Men and the Elephant is included as a Buddhist story in Katherine Taylor's book, *A Time to Wonder*, which is another collection of reflective stories for RE.



Buddhist Sacred Texts

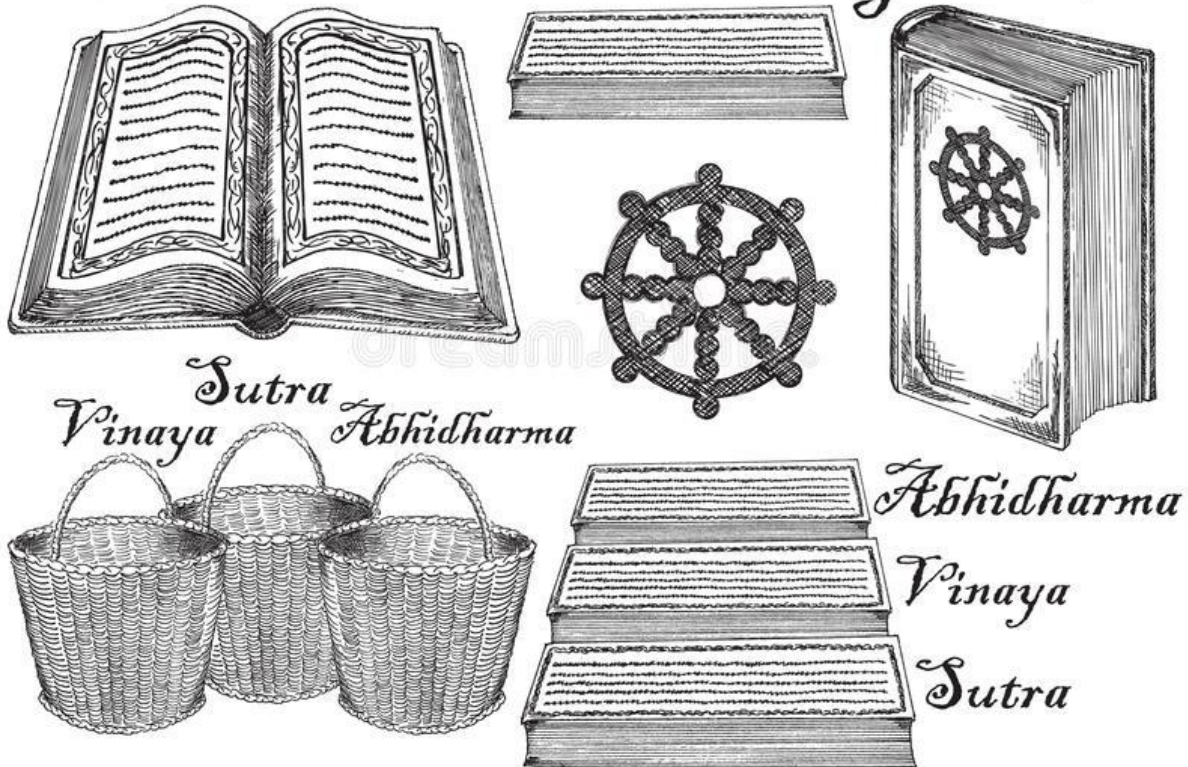
The name of the main sacred text in the Theravada Buddhist tradition is the Tripitaka, written in the Pali language, a language special to Buddhism. The early text was written on leaves and stored in baskets (pitaka in Pali). These texts have the earliest claim to being a record of the Buddha's teachings.

The Tripitaka is organised into three sections:

- Vinaya pitaka: rules for communal life of monks and nuns
- Sutra pitaka: the sermons of the Buddha and his senior disciples
- Abhidharma pitaka: interpretations and analysis of the concepts shared by the Buddha

Holy book of Buddhism

Tripitaka



The British Library's Sacred Texts website has some useful text and images with regards to sacred texts in the Buddhist traditions:

Buddhism

Search Discovering Sacred



The Buddha lived over 2,500 years ago, yet his life and teachings continue to inform the lives of millions of Buddhists worldwide. Learn about the Buddha's teachings, the different Buddhist traditions, and Buddhist meditation.



The Buddha and Buddhist sacred texts



The development of the Buddhist 'canon'





Translation and transmission of Buddhist texts

<https://www.bl.uk/sacred-texts/themes/buddhism>

Buddhanet also have an illustrated Dhammapada, a collection of sayings of the Buddha.

The Dhammapada

 The Illustrated Dhammapada — Ven. Weragoda Sarada. [Note large file size - 21.0 MB]

 Text version of the Illustrated Dhammapada — Ven. Weragoda Sarada.

<http://buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/ebooks.htm>

Buddhist Festivals

The main festival for primary pupils to be aware of is the one associated with the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha:

Wesak: a festival which happens at the full moon in the month of Vesakha, in late May or early June. Vesakha the name of the month when Theravada Buddhists celebrate the birth, enlightenment and the passing of the Buddha. On this day, Buddhists will go to the local Buddhist temple or monastery where they listen to a talk about the Buddha's enlightenment, participate in chanting and meditation, make offerings, and receive blessings given by the monks. Water is poured over the statue of the Buddha and the Buddha rupa is taken out of the temple and put on a platform in order for people to process around the rupa, keeping their right side to the Buddha (Buddhist monks will keep their right shoulder bare as mark of respect to the Buddha), carrying lamps and surrounding it with light. Buddhists will clean their homes at Wesak and decorate with flowers, often giving Wesak cards and gifts. Customs vary according to the local culture and geographical location.

CBeebies have a video showing children celebrating Wesak here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/watch/lets-celebrate-wesak>



Buddhist Teachings

The main things for primary pupils to be aware of are:

- The Four Noble Truths
- The Noble Eightfold Path
- The Five Precepts

Some important Buddhist vocabulary:

- **Anicca**: impermanence- everything in life is changing
- **Dukkha**: suffering- people want things in life to be permanent but they are not. They grasp at things and crave what they cannot have.
- **Anatta**: the non-self- there is no permanent 'I' or soul; 'me' and 'mine' are an illusion
- **Nirvana**; true peace/enlightenment- by accepting change as a part of life humans can reach contentment; a state of complete selflessness. Nirvana means to blow out a candle- a state of harmony with the universe, not a place

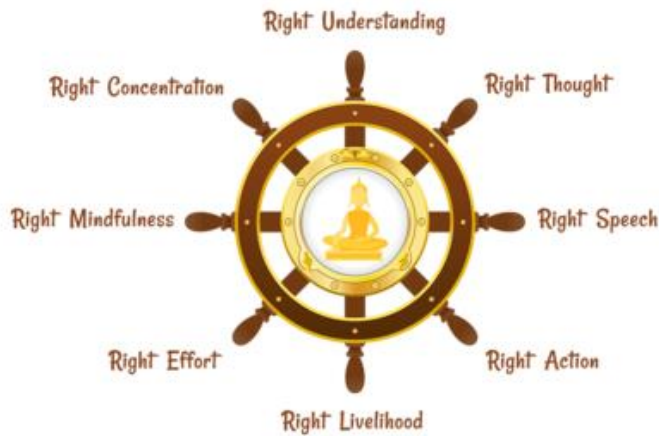
The Four Noble Truths

4 Noble Truths

- **Dukkha**: Truth of Suffering
- **Samudaya**: Truth of the Cause of Suffering
- **Nirodha**: Truth of the End of Suffering
- **Magga**: Truth of the Path

The Noble Eightfold Path (Magga)

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH



The Division of Wisdom

- 1.) Right Understanding
- 2.) Right Thought

The Division of Ethical Conduct

- 3.) Right Speech
- 4.) Right Action
- 5.) Right Livelihood

The Division of Mental Discipline

- 6.) Right Effort
- 7.) Right Mindfulness
- 8.) Right Concentration



The Five Precepts:

- Refrain from taking life. Not killing any living being.
- Refrain from taking what is not given. Not stealing from anyone.
- Refrain from the misuse of the senses. Not having too much sensual pleasure.
- Refrain from wrong speech.
- Refrain from intoxicants that cloud the mind and impair mindfulness

This website has some additional information for primary pupils regarding Buddhist teachings: <https://buddhismforkids.net/teachings.html>

Meditation

The Buddhist Society recommend some books for helping pupils to understand Buddhist mediation:

- Dharma Family Treasures: Sharing Mindfulness with Children - A collection of Essays on sharing Dharma with Children edited by Sandy Eastoak
- Secular Meditation and Mindfulness for EYFS + KS1
- Meditation Is an Open Sky: Mindfulness for Kids Book by Whitney Stewart
- Meditation for Kids: 40 Activities to Manage Emotions, Ease Anxiety, and Stay Focused by Tejal V. Patel

<https://www.thebuddhistsociety.org/page/emotional-exercises-for-children>

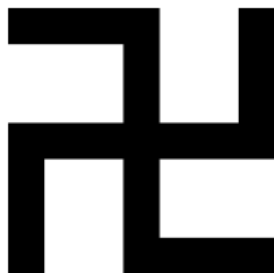
This website shares some insights into meditation and its benefits:

<https://buddhismforkids.net/meditation.html>

It is important pupils understand how meditation fits with the teachings of Buddhism and not just as a separate practice.

Buddhist Symbols

There are several symbols associated with Buddhist traditions. There are three common ones, showing the wheel of the Noble Eightfold Path, the meditation position and the lotus flower:



In Buddhism, the swastika is considered to symbolise the auspicious footprints of the Buddha. The left-facing sauwastika is often imprinted on the chest, feet or palms of Buddha images.

For further information on Buddhist symbols see:

<https://buddhismforkids.net/symbols.html>



Buddha Mudras

Within Buddhist holy sites and monasteries, you will find Buddha rupas (statues of the Buddha) as integral to the shrine. Each Buddha rupa may show the Buddha making different hand positions (known as mudras).

For more information on mudras and their meaning see:

<https://buddhismforkids.net/buddhistmudras.html#header11-f6>

Also, the infographic below:



The Sangha

The Sangha is **the Buddhist community**; it is the men, women and children who follow the teachings of the Buddha. The term means “collection” or “community” in Sanskrit/Pali and indicates a group of people living together for a certain purpose.

Two meanings: Enlightened Ones & Monastic Tradition.

In its typical usage the Sangha refers to Buddhist monks and nuns.

The ‘Sangha’ is one of the Three Jewels of Buddhism:



The Parisa are the lay men and women following the teachings of the Buddha.

See [A Day in the Life of a Buddhist Monk - TrueTube](#) for a video of a day in the life of a Buddhist monk (previously part of the community at the Forest Hermitage in Warwickshire).

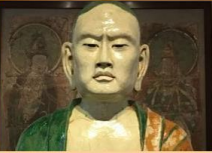




Encountering Buddhists

It is important pupils know that Buddhist practice is diverse and monks are not the only people practising Buddhism.

You can find an ‘Ask a Buddhist’ section on this website:

<https://thebuddhistcentre.com/stories/schools/ask-a-buddhist/>

Video answers to commonly-asked questions

				
Being Buddhist	Ethics	Meditation	The Buddha	Teachings

You will find details of women followers of the Buddha in the resources here:

<https://thebuddhistcentre.com/stories/schools/teachers/>

Buddhist Studies

You will find a syllabus of study for Buddhism at primary here: <http://buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/index.htm>



<https://thebuddhistcentre.com/stories/schools/students/ages-8-11/>

Buddhanet also have some resources to support the study of Buddhism at primary level:



The Buddhist Studies eBook Library











To open an eBook, click on the Acrobat icons. 

More BuddhaNet eBooks can be downloaded from [BuddhaNet's eBook Library](#).



Please Note: These PDFs have been zipped due to large file sizes.

You will need [Win-Zip](#)  (or similar) and [Acrobat Reader](#)  Version 4 or higher to view these files.

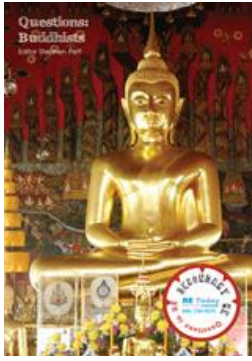
Supplementary Resource Material

-  Story of the Buddha — Text Book.
-  Story of the Buddha — Colouring Book.
-  Guided Meditation for Primary Students.
-  Life of the Buddha for Secondary Students [A4 Size, Print Quality Only].
-  The Sigalovada Sutta in Pictures.
-  Bhavana Vandana - Book of Devotion.
-  Popular Deities in Chinese Buddhism - Illustrated.
-  Main Aspect of Buddhist Arts of Thailand.
-  Rahula leads the Way [Screen version].
-  Rahula leads the Way [Print version].

Textbooks by Buddhist Education Foundation (UK)

-  Key Stage 1: A Textbook on Buddhism for children aged between 5-7.
-  Key Stage 2: A Textbook on Buddhism for children aged between 7-11.

<http://buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/ebooks.htm>



This is a useful resource book on questions regarding Buddhist Traditions by RE Today.

Subject Knowledge for Primary teachers

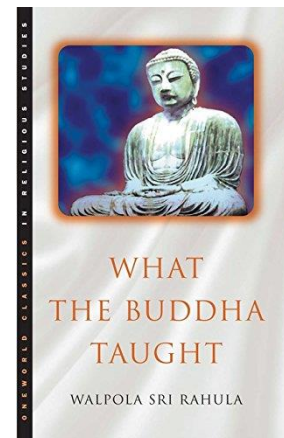
The following may be of interest if you are seeking to improve your own subject knowledge of Buddhist traditions prior to teaching:

<https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/teachingbuddhism/category/type/stories/>

The RE Podcast has two recordings on Buddhist traditions:

- S1 E8: The One With The Middle Way
<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-re-podcast/id1534213872?i=1000499691499>
- S5 E4 The One With The Buddhist and The Baptist
<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-re-podcast/id1534213872?i=1000549248275>

Book Recommendation for furthering subject knowledge:



KS3

The Life of the Buddha

'Big' Philosophical question

Who was the Buddha?

The Buddha was the founder of the religion that is known as Buddhism.

Teachers may wish to introduce the religion of Buddhism as like a manual. Think of life as being like a car. It can take you wherever you want to drive it – if you know how. If the car breaks down, you can fix it – again if you know how.

What you need is a manual – a set of instructions that teaches you how to drive your car, how to look after it, how to get the best out of it and how to fix it when it breaks down. Buddhism is a manual like that. It teaches about life. Buddhists call it the **Dharma**, which means, 'the laws of life.' 'Buddha' means 'a person who understands life at its deepest level.'

You may wish to introduce the Buddhism and the Dharma is, imagine a person who understood what life was all about – how the past relates to the present, and the present to the future; why things happen the way they do, good and bad; why we all experience suffering; and how to live happily in a way that doesn't involve always trying to be happy.

The Four Sights

Key belief – The Buddha was a man, not a God. A Buddhist is someone who follows the Buddha's teachings about life. Buddhists do not worship the Buddha

Siddhartha's father wanted his son to become a great leader. He therefore protected him from seeing what life was like for ordinary people. He thought that Siddhartha would want to help people rather than lead them if he saw the conditions of their lives, so he brought him up in total luxury.

However, after constantly pestering, Siddhartha was allowed to go out into the city. There, he saw four things that changed his life:

- An old man
- A sick man
- A dead man
- A sadhu – a holy man who had rejected the world to live a spiritual life

For the first time Siddhartha realised that all beings suffered; there was no escaping it.

- Was it possible to live to live a life without suffering?

- Could human beings overcome suffering?
- Could they be permanently happy?

Siddhartha decided the answer was to become a sadhu to find answers to his questions. He left the luxury of his palace and over the next 6 years, he learnt meditation techniques and other spiritual disciplines, but he did not reach the goal he had set himself. As a result, Siddhartha practised asceticism. This involved withdrawing from the world, giving up physical pleasures and living as simply as possible.

<https://www.truetube.co.uk/resource/the-enlightenment-of-the-buddha/>

The Middle Way

After practising asceticism, Siddhartha came to a realisation that neither the luxurious life of the palace nor the removal of physical comfort could bring him happiness. Life must therefore tread a path between the two extremes of luxury and hardship. Having no more than is necessary to be content is called the Middle Way. He sat underneath a tree to meditate. He vowed not to stop until he had gained the wisdom to overcome suffering and realise deep happiness, known as enlightenment.

Enlightenment

It is impossible to understand what enlightenment really is without experiencing it. Buddhists writings suggest that it brings freedom, contentment, wisdom, compassion for others, fearlessness, determination, and peace.

The defeat of Mara

While Siddhartha was meditating, the demon Lord Mara began to attack him. Mara sent his three daughters to tempt Siddhartha. He resisted them. Next, Mara tried to convince Siddhartha that it was wrong for him to abandon his family. Still, Siddhartha refused to move. Mara then unleashed a host of demons and monsters on Siddhartha. Still, Siddhartha did not move. Finally, Mara ordered Siddhartha: 'Arise from that seat! It belongs to me.' Siddhartha said nothing but lowered one of his hands to touch the earth. As he did so, the sky filled with thunder and the earth shook. Mara had been defeated. Siddhartha was finally free to achieve his goal of enlightenment. Through deep meditation, he gained the ability to remove all greed, hatred, and delusion. He had found nirvana and the Buddha.

Important – Some Buddhists interpret the story of Mara literally, as a historical event. They think that there was an actual demon spirit who tried to stop Siddhartha from meditating. Other Buddhists see Mara as a symbolic character, representing the desires and temptations of the mind that people need to remove if they are to achieve enlightenment.

When Siddhartha became enlightened, he was still a man, and not a god. Buddhists believe that enlightenment is a state that every person can achieve. Some say it exists in everyone in a potential form, ready to reveal itself. They would call this the Buddha nature. Over the next 45 years, the Buddha gained a large following. He encouraged

them to live the Middle Way, giving up all possessions that were not necessary to live simply.

Suggested activities

- 1.) Draw a timeline of the life of the Buddha
- 2.) Explain what Buddhists mean by 'the Middle Way'
- 3.) Explain why the Buddha's understanding of the truths of life is called 'enlightenment'.
- 4.) Explain two different ways in which the story of Mara can be interpreted

BIG Question

'There is nothing special about the Buddha.' Discuss. Do you agree with the statement? Give reasons for your view and show that you have thought about different points of view.

Do you agree with the statement? Give reasons for your view and show that you have thought about different points of view.

Different groups of Buddhism

BIG Philosophical question: 'How did Buddhism develop after the Buddha's death?

During the Buddha's life, his teachings were not written down, but his faithful bhikkhus were able to remember them and recite them, word for word. After the Buddha died, the most urgent task was to make sure that his teachings - the Dharma- could be passed on accurately. Therefore, his followers met together as a council to agree an accurate version.

The Council also decided to establish rules for the bhikkhus, but this was not straightforward. Some believed that bhikkhus should live without jobs, homes, families, and possessions, as the Buddha had done, so they could work towards their own enlightenment. People who had jobs and homes would support them.

However, others thought that the opportunity to be enlightened should be open to everyone, not just a privileged few.

The matter was never settled, so, over the next two or three hundred years, two different groups emerged: the traditional Theravada and the progressive Mahayana.

Because of this, referring to 'Buddhist Worldviews' or 'Buddhist Traditions' rather than 'Buddhism' may be preferable.

The Yanas

All Buddhists aim for enlightenment but there are different ways to get there. The Buddha said that life is like a fast-moving and dangerous river; his teachings are vehicles – 'yanas'- like a sturdy raft that will take you from one side to the other. However, once you are safely across, it makes no sense to keep the raft, carrying it everywhere with you. In the same way, once the Buddha's teachings have served their purpose, they should be abandoned. Some early Mahayanists believed the more traditional forms of Buddhism were too formal and concentrated too much on rules for monks. They labelled them 'Hinayana,' which means 'small vehicle,' to contrast it with the 'great vehicle' of the Mahayana. The term is rarely used today.

Key belief

Even though the two yanas have very different approaches to practising the Dharma, they have never conflicted with each other.

Theravada

Theravada Buddhism spread south and east from India, and is largely practised in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, and Cambodia. It concentrates on developing wisdom, meditation, discipline and analysing the Philosophy of the Dharma. It emphasises the personal effort that an individual must make to become enlightened. This may take many lifetimes.

Theravada Buddhists believe that a great deal of commitment is needed to become enlightened, and that people must devote their lives to training in the Dharma to achieve it.

The laity in Theravada Buddhism are often called 'householders.' They support the Sangha in a variety of ways, including making offerings (alms) to the community of monks of food, clothes and even money. Householders are generous towards the monks because they believe that their presence in the community as teachers and preservers of Buddha's teaching is very important. In return for this support, monks serve the laity by conducting religious rituals such as funerals and by providing instruction in meditation, or schooling. For example, in Thailand, many boys leave home and travel to a nearby monastery to live as a novice monk for a year. As well as learning more about Buddhism, they are taught basic numeracy and literacy, and sometimes even computer skills.

Theravada Buddhists think that the best way to live is as a monk or a nun. Monks and nuns can concentrate on their religion, because they have no responsibilities like a family or possessions. Not everyone can leave their home and dedicate their life to religion, and Theravada Buddhists accept that this means monks and nuns may be closer to Nirvana than other people.

Mahayana

Mahayana Buddhism spread along the silk trade route, north of India, into Tibet, China, Korea and Japan. Along the way, it adapted to the cultures of the places where it was accepted, and today there are many branches of the Mahayana. For Mahayanists, compassion is the highest virtue. The ideal of Buddhism is to bring all people to enlightenment and Mahayanists vow to be reborn again and again to help all beings by developing the skills and qualities of a Buddha. Mahayana Buddhists even make a vow to delay their own enlightenment to help others in their spiritual development. Such a person is called a bodhisattva, or 'enlightenment being.' Instead, they chose to be reborn and stay in the world to help others achieve Enlightenment.

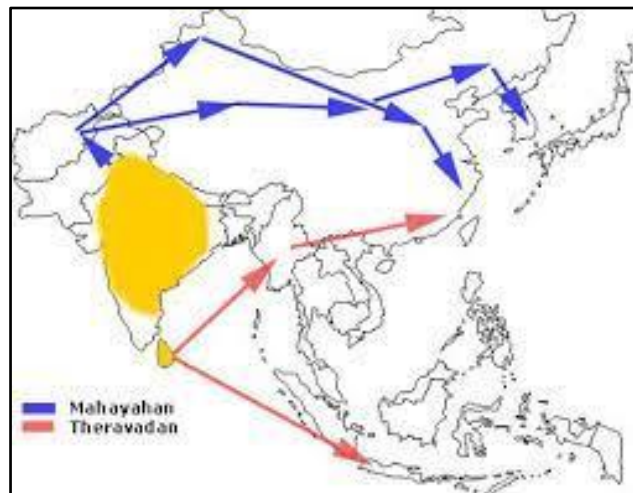
Although enlightenment may take many lifetimes of practice, all Buddhist schools agree it can be realised in this life, even in a single moment.

Many Buddhists in the Mahayana school practise meditation, but also chant and express emotions through worship, including laying their bodies on the ground in devotion in the direction of a Buddha image.

Suggested activities

- 1.) Describe what life is like for a monk
- 2.) Explain why followers of the Dharma split.
- 3.) Explain why Theravada Buddhism places great emphasis on the Sangha
- 4.) Draw a Venn diagram and use it to compare Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, noting both the similarities and differences

BIG Philosophical question: 'If Buddhists can't agree on what Buddhism teaches, then it is all nonsense.' Discuss.



Buddhist daily life and moral code

Big Philosophical question: 'How do Buddhists practice their religion?'

Daily life for a committed Buddhist consists of the Middle Way. The Middle Way has three parts to it: wisdom, morality, and mental training.

Wisdom

For Buddhists, wisdom is seeing that all things are impermanent and interdependent. However, it is more than just knowledge. To understand the Dharma deeply takes determination and practice. To do this, Buddhists try to:

- 1.) Be open to new ideas, trying to understand things they haven't previously thought about
- 2.) Develop an open mind, listening to other points of view
- 3.) Carefully examine views and ideas that appear to contradict their own
- 4.) Critically evaluate ideas, rather than just accepting them
- 5.) Take time to form opinions based on sound judgement
- 6.) Be prepared to change their views if changing circumstances require them to

Morality

Buddhists try to behave in a way that affects their environment positively. The Buddhist moral code consists of five guidelines, known as the five precepts:

- 1.) Do not take life. This means do not kill. More generally it means act in a way that causes no harm, physically or emotionally and, more positively, to act with kindness
- 2.) Do not take what is freely given. In other words, do not steal, but neither should you take advantage of people.
- 3.) Do not misuse the senses. This warns against greed. Instead, Buddhists try to cultivate simplicity and contentment
- 4.) Do not speak harshly or lie. Try to tell the truth and speak positively to and about people in ways that encourage them to become better people
- 5.) Do not take substances that cloud the mind. You need a clear head to follow the Buddhist way

Discussion point

Do people need rules to live by?

What would happen if there were no rules?

Would people behave badly, or would they want to do good?

Mental training

The practice of mental training for Buddhists usually consists of meditation. At its simplest level, it involves calming the mind. This can be done by finding something to concentrate on, like breathing or walking. This helps to enable the mind to develop clarity and self-control. Meditation is an ancient practice that many religions use to attain higher knowledge and further their capabilities of devotion. The Buddha taught that this ancient practice could allow the mind to experience a higher understanding of the nature of reality.

In addition to, or even instead of, meditation, some Buddhists chant. This means reciting a phrase or text – a sutra, for example – to focus the mind.

Many Buddhists have shrines in their homes, and the shrine is the focus of worship and mental training.

A small pot of water represents life, since it is essential for all life forms.

The lifespan of a flower is short and so flowers are a symbol of anicca: the impermanent nature of all things.



Food such as fruit is an example of dependent origination. Things grow because of other things.

Scented incense smoke is a symbol of the Dharma spreading throughout the universe.

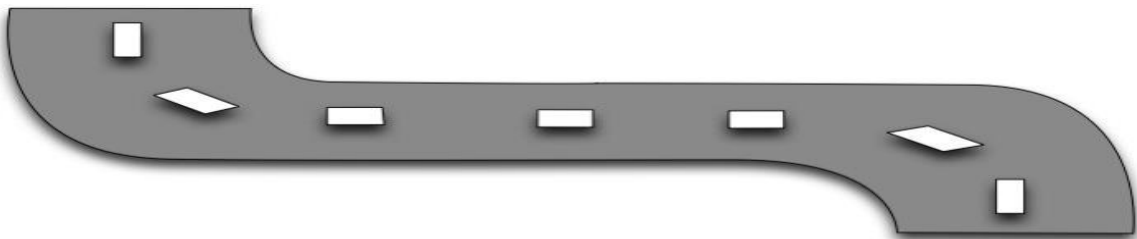
Although a statue of the Buddha will be present, Buddhists do not worship the Buddha. The statue of the Buddha is at the centre to act as a reminder to his qualities.

Candles represent enlightenment.

Suggested activities

- 1.) What are the three parts of the Middle Way?
- 2.) Why do Buddhists meditate?
- 3.) Explain how a shrine might help a Buddhist to worship
- 4.) Explain how Buddhists make moral decisions

'BIG Philosophical question: 'Buddhists places of worship are pointless.' Discuss.

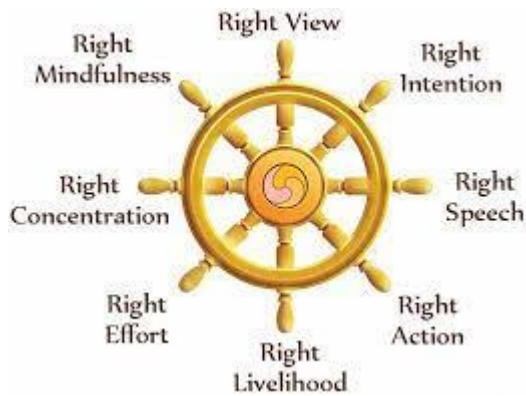


KS4 GCSE

When studying Buddhism at GCSE or as part of core Key Stage 4 Religious Education, students should be aware that Buddhism is one of the diverse religious traditions and beliefs in Great Britain today. As part of their study of Buddhism, students should study the beliefs, teachings, and practices of Buddhism. Students should study the influence of Buddhism and how this may influence the beliefs, teachings and practices studied on an individual, community, and society basis.

Common and divergent views within Buddhism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout. Students may refer to a range of Buddhist perspectives in their answers, for example, Theravada, Mahayana, Zen, and Pure Land.

Buddhist Beliefs



The Dharma

Discussion point

Can we avoid suffering in life? If so, how? If not, why?

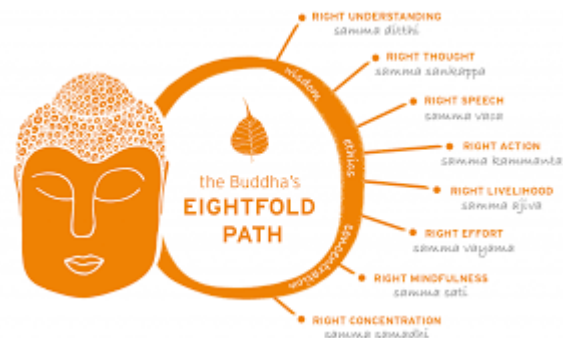
The Buddha described the Dharma as a path.

Like a path, if you follow it exactly, you will reach your destination. You cannot blame the path if you wander off it and get lost. Therefore, when he taught the Dharma, the Buddha set it out in a series of steps that build on each other.

The Three Universal Truths

The Buddha starts by defining what it is we're dealing with. What is life? What are its characteristics? There are three:

- Dukkha ('gone wrong') – in other words, life doesn't always go the way we want it to. As a result, to a greater or lesser extent, we suffer.
- Anicca ('impermanence') – nothing lasts forever: things come onto existence, exist, then fade into nothing.
- Anatta (no fixed self) – things may appear to be complete, self-contained units, but everything is connected. Your body is made of cells created from the food you eat. In any case, everything is made of atoms that have been around for billions of years. Nothing exists on its own.



TEACHERS' RE

The Noble Eightfold Path is usually represented as a wheel rather than a path because it is not intended to be a series of steps to be taken in order.

BIG Philosophical question: ‘What does Buddhism teach about life?’

Suggested activities

- 1.) Explain why, according to Buddhism, life involves dukkha
- 2.) ‘It is impossible to practise The Noble Eightfold Path in the 21st century.’ Discuss.
 - Refer to Buddhist teaching
 - Give reasoned arguments to support this statement and reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
 - Ensure you reach a justified conclusion

Buddhist Practices

Buddhist festivals

Festivals are held to mark important events in the life of the Buddha. They are also used as a way of expressing a feeling of community and a sense of belonging. There are very few festivals that are celebrated by all Buddhists throughout the world. Even those that are commonly observed are celebrated differently in different countries, even taking on different dates. Who takes part in these festivals and what happens?

Wesak

Wesak is the most important festival for many Buddhists. In many Western countries it is often called ‘Buddha Day’. The festival is a time to remember the Buddha’s birth, his enlightenment (nirvana) and his death (parinirvana). On the morning of Wesak, Buddhists visit their nearest temple or monastery, where monks give talks and lead the chanting of mantra’s, including the Three Jewels. The laity bring gifts of flowers, rice, candles and incense, which are placed by statues or shrines of the Buddha. Some Buddhists also pour water over the statue of the Buddha. This symbolises the washing away of one’s past misdeeds and the dousing of the Three Poisons (greed, hatred and delusion).

During Wesak, some Buddhists remind themselves of the importance of the Five Precepts, and others will adopt some extra precepts on the day, such as not eating after midday and not wearing perfume or jewellery. Many Buddhists will mark the occasion by donating to charity or giving free food and drink to those in need.

Vassa

In Theravada Buddhism, the period of Vassa lasts for the three months of the Asian rainy season. Monks stay in their monasteries and avoid any travel. It is known as the 'rains retreat' because monks retreat into their monasteries.

Kathina

Within one month of Vassa ending, the festival of Kathina takes place. This is when Buddhists show gratitude to the monks for the end of the rainy season. The origins of Kathina are linked to a legend from the life of the Buddha. According to the legend, a group of 30 monks were travelling to spend the 'rains retreat' with the Buddha. However, the rainy season began before they had finished their journey, so the monks had to stay where they were for three months. After this, they went to see the Buddha. To reward them, the Buddha gave them some cloth and told the travelling monks to turn it into a robe. The Buddha said that they should then decide which of them deserved it. By doing this, the Buddha enforced the idea that monks are not allowed possessions and even their robes must be donated. The story encourages monks to be self-sufficient by making their own clothes and to show generosity by giving clothes to each other.

Parinirvana

The Buddha achieved Nibbana when he became enlightened. When he died, Buddhists believed he entered Parinirvana, or Final Nibbana. Since Nibbana is a state of bliss, having overcome desire and suffering, Parinirvana is a state beyond the cycle of suffering known as Samsara. The Buddha said that it is a state to which neither of the words 'existence' and 'non-existence' applies. In other words, no one knows what it is like, but it sounds good!

Mahayana Buddhists mark the Buddha's death and Parinirvana once a year on Parinirvana Day. It occurs on 15th February in many countries. There is some solemnity on the day in remembrance of the Buddha's death. However, on his deathbed, the Buddha, aged 80, reminded his sorrowful disciples that death is a fact of life. On Parinirvana Day, Buddhists remember the lives of all they have loved who have died, while accepting their loss. They may attend a temple to worship, meditate together and reflect on the nature of life and death.

'Do not grieve, do not mourn! For have I not taught from the very beginning that all that is dear and loved must change; there must be separation and parting? Whatever is born comes into being, lives, and is subject to decay.' (Parinibbana Sutta 5.14)

Suggested activities

- 1.) What three events in the Buddha's life are celebrated at Wesak?
- 2.) When is Wesak celebrated?
- 3.) What story from the life of the Buddha is remembered at Kathina?
- 4.) How do the laity show gratitude to the Sanga
- 5.) Explain why it is important for Buddhists to celebrate festivals
- 6.) 'The Buddha's death should not be marked by celebrations.' Discuss.

The nature, use and importance of Buddhist places of worship, including temples, shrines and monasteries

BIG Philosophical question: 'Where do Buddhists worship?'

Shrines

A shrine is special to followers of the religion, and Buddhists usually worship in front of the shrine. Shrines are beautifully decorated, and contain an image of the Buddha, a Buddhārūpa. They also contain holders of incense, and usually flowers and candles. A shrine may be in a monastery or temple, or it may be one room in an ordinary house. This is more likely in Britain and other countries where there are not many Buddhist temples.

Monasteries

A monastery is a place where monks live. Buddhist monasteries are 'open,' because the monks do not live apart from ordinary people. Many Buddhists who live near a monastery go there to worship and study. For many children, the monastery is also their school, where they are taught to read and write by the monks. Some Buddhist monasteries are just one building, but most are like a small village. The most important room is the shrine-room, which is used not just for worship but for all important meetings of the monks.

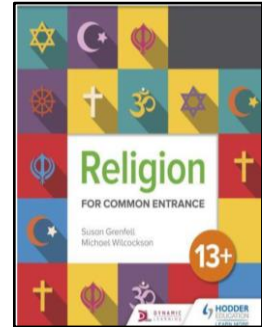
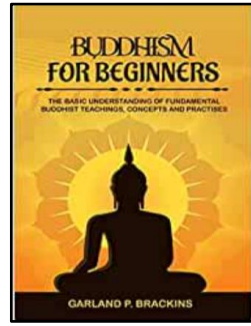
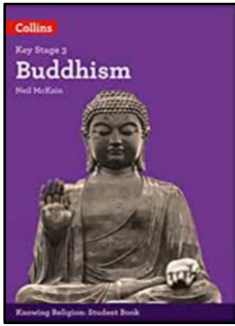
An important part of the Buddhist monastery is the garden. Many monasteries have a well-planned garden, with trees and shrubs. The trees give shade, which is important in hot countries, and the gardens help to make the monastery a place of peace and quiet. The plants are also a symbol that nothing lasts, because they grow, die and their seeds grow again.

Stupas

Many Buddhists go to worship at important stupas. A stupa is a burial mound. Some are part of monasteries, but others are built at holy places. After the Buddha had passed away, his body was cremated, and the ashes were taken to eight different places. Stupas were built around them.

BIG Philosophical question: 'Buddhist temples are no longer needed today.' Discuss.

Suggested resources to support the teaching of both Key Stage 3 and 4 Buddhism



Chester University A-Level lectures on Buddhism:

Women in Buddhism: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/7155624/video/420355196> and <https://vimeo.com/showcase/7155624/video/424816673>

Is Pureland Buddhism, Buddhism?
<https://vimeo.com/showcase/7155624/video/425790053> and
<https://vimeo.com/showcase/7155624/video/434131211>

Self and Not-Self in Hinduism and Buddhism
<https://vimeo.com/showcase/7155624/video/434140002> and
<https://vimeo.com/showcase/7155624/video/434136822>

Its Wrong so Don't do it: An Introduction to Metaethics <https://vimeo.com/548485583>

Is Mindfulness Buddhist? <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8411187/video/565526831>

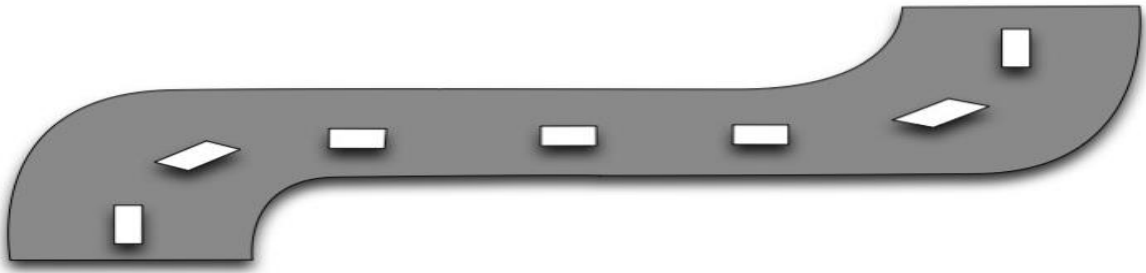
Emptiness and the Heart Sutra <https://vimeo.com/710810729/e8a8bba2ec>

Support for teaching Buddhism from Edinburgh University: <https://buddhist-studies.ed.ac.uk/school-teaching>

Studying Buddhist in the UK Twitter account: @BuddhistEdu

Oak National have some Buddhism teaching resources:
<https://classroom.thenational.academy/units/buddhism-beliefs-and-teachings-9bab>





For all year groups, facilitating 'encounter' with Buddhist traditions as a living tradition is very important. Visiting the place of worship or inviting in a representative into school are excellent ways for pupils to encounter the living tradition.

Local Buddhist Visitors:

Contact schools@foresthermitage.org.uk or use the online form here: <https://foresthermitage.org.uk/#>

Local Buddhist Monastery for School Visits:

The Forest Hermitage

Lower Fulbrook

Warwickshire

CV35 8AS



The Forest Hermitage, Lower Fulbrook, Warwickshire



TEACHERS' RESOURCE

Appendix

The *Prince in the Palace* interactive story, and associated resources, are kindly provided with permission by Katie Gooch and the Sidegate Multi-faith Reflective Story Project

The Prince in the Palace **A Story of the Buddhist Faith**

Characters:

Siddhartha

King

Sick Man

Old Man

Dead Man (wrapped in white tissue or fabric)

Holy Man

Props:

Wooden bricks to build walls

Empty bowl

This story has points of discussion throughout the story which appear in italics, these are optional, they have been included because they offer opportunities for reflection and may be used across a series of lessons.

Today I'd like to share a story that is special to Buddhists.

Place Buddhist Symbol.

This story took place in India, more than 2500 years ago.

This story is about a very special boy.

Place Siddhartha in front of you.

The boy's name was Siddhartha.

Siddhartha was a Prince.

Siddhartha's father was an important and rich King.

Place King beside Siddhartha.

Because Siddhartha was the son of a rich King he had everything he wanted.

Siddhartha ate from golden plates.

He drank from silver cups.

He had all the toys he could ever wish for.

He had all the friends he could play with.

I wonder what it would be like to have all the things you wanted.

What would you ask for if you could have anything?

I wonder if you think it would be right to have everything you wanted?

Something else was important about Siddhartha.

Siddhartha lived in a great and beautiful palace.

Place bricks at 4 corners of the palace around Siddhartha.

I wonder what you think it would be like to live in beautiful palace?

What things would you have in your palace?

(Invite Children to share ideas. Children could draw their idea of a palace or something they would have in their palace.)

(Return children to story)

So Siddhartha grew up in the palace, having everything he wanted and he was happy.

Hold up index finger.

But, as he grew older he realised that there were walls around the palace.

Add more bricks to surround Siddhartha.

Siddhartha realised there was a world outside the walls of the palace, and he had never seen it.

Siddhartha's father, the King, wanted to keep Siddhartha inside the palace.

I wonder if you think Siddhartha should stay inside the palace?

I wonder, why might his father want to keep him inside the palace?

I wonder, what things do you think he might see if he went outside the palace?

(Invite children to respond)

Now this is a very important part of the story.

Point to Siddhartha.

Siddhartha had grown up into a man. He had even got married and had a child of his own, all inside the palace. Siddhartha had a happy life, but one day he decided he must see what was outside the palace walls.

Siddhartha sneaked out of the cool rooms, through the lush gardens and past the stream that ran through the palace grounds. He reached the great palace walls and sneaked outside all by himself.

Place Siddhartha outside the palace walls.

Outside the palace Siddhartha saw Four Sights that changed his life forever.

Place Old Man.

First Siddhartha saw an old man.

Siddhartha saw the man's back was bent, his face was lined with wrinkles and his hair was grey.

Siddhartha was shocked; he had never before seen anyone who was not young and beautiful.

Place Sick Man.

Second, Siddhartha saw a sick man.

He saw the man was weak, his skin was pale and he was not able to stand up.

Siddhartha was shocked; he had never before seen anyone who was not fit and healthy.

Place Dead Man.

Thirdly, Siddhartha saw a dead man.

The man's thin, dead body was lifeless, his face was as white as the cloth he was wrapped in.

Siddhartha was shocked; he had never before thought about what would happen at the end of a person's life.

Siddhartha walked on, wondering that there was so much suffering in the world. He understood suddenly that everyone would get old, anyone could get ill and suffer and that everyone would eventually die. It didn't matter how rich they were, or how many beautiful things they possessed. Everyone must suffer old age, sickness and death.

Place Holy Man.

Finally, Siddhartha saw a fourth sight.

Beside the river stood a man.

The man wore rags and had no possessions but a begging bowl.

Place bowl before Holy Man.

The man had nothing, but Siddhartha saw that he was content. He did not fear old age, sickness or death, even though he had nothing.

Siddhartha made his way back to the palace.

Place Siddhartha back inside palace walls.

Back inside the safe walls, Siddhartha had everything he wanted.

But he couldn't stop thinking about the four sights he had seen:

Point to each in turn.

The old man.

The sick man.

The dead man,

And the holy man.

Wondering Questions:

I wonder, how do you think Siddhartha felt when he returned to the palace?

I wonder, what do you think Siddhartha might do next?

I wonder, what would you do?

I wonder, what does it mean to be content?

I wonder, why do you think the man with the begging bowl was content?

I wonder, how do you think the four sights changed Siddhartha's life forever?

Notes on Delivery:

How to use these Reflective Story scripts:

Originating from the idea of Godly Play introduced by the Reverend Jerome Berryman in the US, the practice of Christian reflective storytelling has grown in the UK. The method involves sharing a story in a quiet, calm and wondering way, encouraging the observer to look beyond the simple objects and words used in the story. The technique develops language skills, deep thinking, spiritual awareness and cements the story in an observer's mind.

Props and figures:

In an ideal world, the figures for the stories would be sturdy, wooden, childproof cutouts. To make the resource for these stories cheap and accessible to all, these scripts come with simple printable figures, designed to be photocopied onto card and cut out. The card tabs can be stuck together in a loop to make a stand or held in place by pegs to make them easily moveable.

Tip: Always move the figures holding on to the stand or peg, never grasp hold of the head of a figure to move it!

Some stories require other easily obtainable items e.g. sand, wooden blocks. I've tried to keep these to a minimum and hopefully there is nothing needed that will put you off having a go. If a story says a circle of felt then any fabric/ paper will do, be practical.

Setting up the classroom:

Where possible, arrange your audience in a semicircle around you on the floor, this allows the children to get the best view of the figures. In practice, if your class is 30 children, you'll need a semicircle of chairs with a row of children on the floor in front of them. If you can, have another adult to act as "door keeper" to sort any behaviour issues in the audience so you can focus entirely on the story and props.

Set up your props and figures so they are easily accessible beside you. You might like to keep them in a box or basket so the figures not in use don't distract the audience.

Preparing your audience:

Explain to the children that this is a special way of telling a story, it is NOT like a normal story; it is for watching and listening and thinking in silence and you'll give them a chance to ask questions at the end. With experience, the children will soon know what to expect.

Delivering the story:

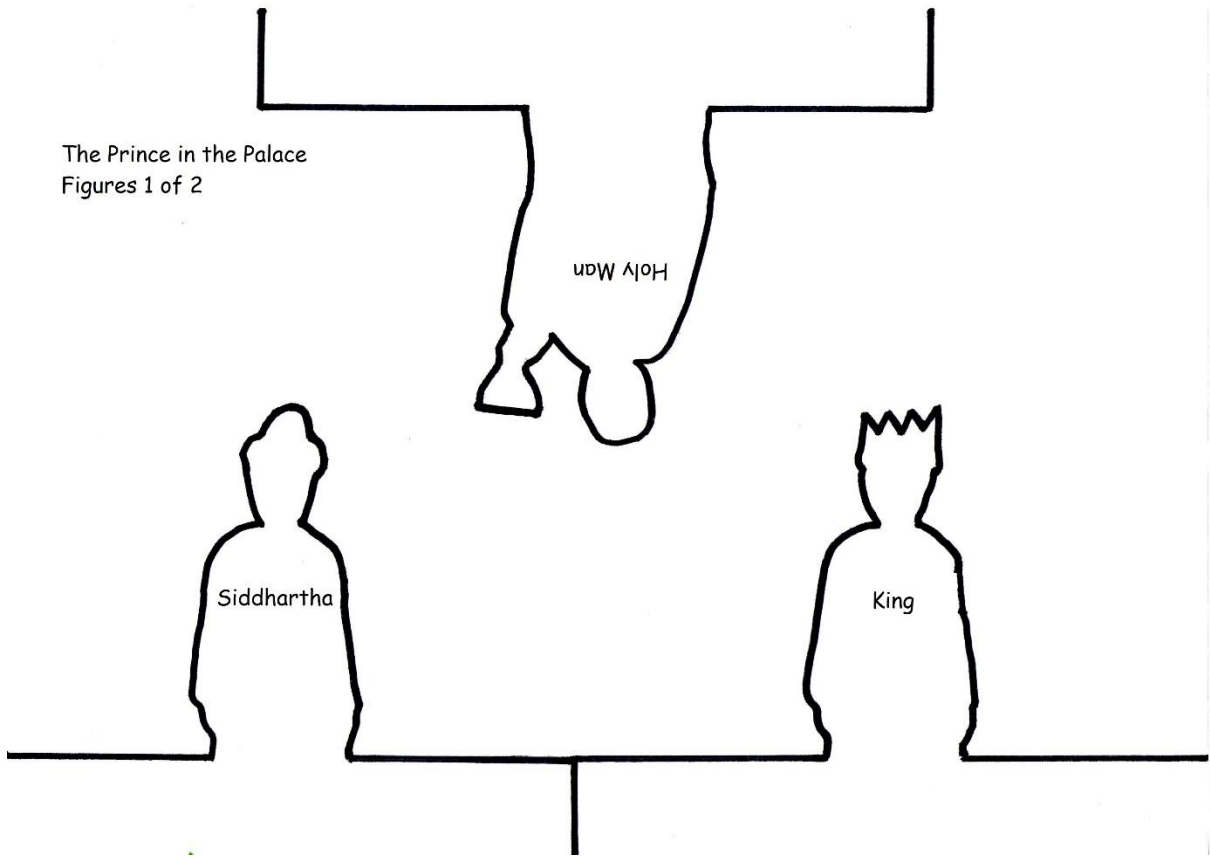
Purists would learn the script, this isn't so hard when you've got the figures in front of you. However, you could have the script beside you for emergencies or ask a colleague to read the script while you move the figures.

When delivering the story, use no inflection or animation, move really slowly with plenty of pauses, giving the children time to consider your words and actions. Do not look at the audience, they will become as engrossed in the story as you are. At the end of the story you might choose one or two of the wondering questions to invite discussion. Some groups need lots of prodding, others will keep you talking and asking really BIG questions, don't worry if you can't answer them - that's where you allow the children to lead the enquiry.

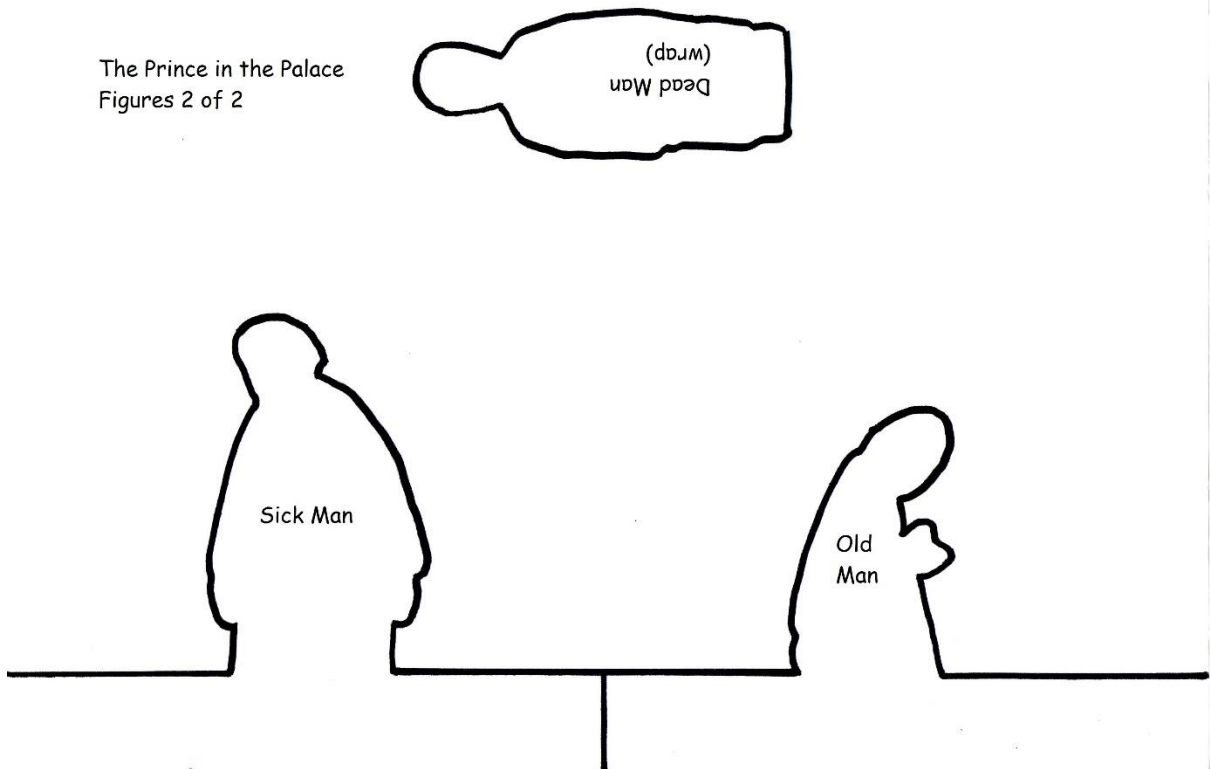
Tip: Have a pen and paper on hand to record discussion. This is a chance for students to wow you with the depth of their thinking.

Resources for story-telling:

The Prince in the Palace
Figures 1 of 2



The Prince in the Palace
Figures 2 of 2



Thanks to Westhill Endowment and Coventry & Warwickshire's SACRE for granting funding to make the SACRE RE Subject Knowledge Enhancement Programme possible. www.westhillendowment.org

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