

<p><b>I take refuge in the Dharma</b> The Dharma or teaching that Buddhists take as their refuge is like a path that has been well laid down. Such a path may include signposts to show directions, bridges for crossing rivers and steps for climbing mountains. In the same way, Dharma includes the rules of good conduct to help Buddhists avoid bad actions and ways to help them overcome difficulties. It also teaches them how to overcome ignorance and gain Enlightenment.</p>	<p><b>Year Group: KS2</b></p>	<p><b>No. of lessons: 6</b></p>
<p><b>Learning objectives:</b> To explore Buddhist teaching at an appropriate level and relate their findings to their own experiences and understanding of life.</p>		
<p><b>Themes to discuss:</b> the impermanence of the world. The best way to live. Does it actually matter what choices people make. Happiness and unhappiness.</p>		
<p><b>Activities and experiences:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite pupils to bring in baby photographs so as to discuss how they have changed and will change in the future. Question to debate – is there <i>anything</i> which never changes? Remind yourselves how Buddha himself had learnt that things are impermanent when he saw the Four Sights. How does thinking about impermanence make <i>you</i> feel?</li> <li>• Explore the Four Noble Truths one at a time: (1) collect examples of suffering e.g from newspapers, magazines and personal experiences – remember to think in terms of more than physical suffering (2) consider what pupils think would make them happy (you could also look at the promises made in adverts). Question whether the new bike, gameboy etc would make them totally and permanently happy. How much of our unhappiness is caused by wanting things we can't have or by finding what we wanted wasn't so wonderful after all? (3) Hear a story of the Buddha which shows how peace comes when we learn to accept that our happiness does not depend on things or people. e.g. Kisa (Kisagotami). (4) The Eightfold Path can then be presented as the eight things that will lead to true happiness.</li> <li>• Consider together why something called a "path" is normally shown as a wheel or <b>Dharmachakra</b> ( i.e not consecutive steps but each of the eight steps equally important). As a different way of presenting the wheel, create a picture of three concentric circles – the centre is Nirvana or happiness for which you are aiming – the middle circle is divided into the three concepts of behaviour, mind and wisdom – the outer circle is the eight steps of the path (see the notes pages for how the circles relate to each other). The compartments created can be filled with text or illustrations (or both) e.g. definitions of the steps etc and /or examples of what these mean in practice. To help you consider the various steps and their meanings there are a variety of Buddhist stories you can use as stimuli in the KS2 booklet at <a href="http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/ebooks.htm">http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/ebooks.htm</a></li> <li>• Have a fortnight or week during which a different step of the Eightfold Path is highlighted each day and kept (today's target is...). By the end of this period perhaps your class will be keeping all eight! It is important to spend time reflecting on what was</li> </ul>		

difficult about the process and highlight any conditions which might have made the exercise easier.

- Create your own mandalas using Buddhist principles, and understand how Buddhists use these as aids to meditation and as part of the search for enlightenment.
- Discuss together what the world would be like if everyone followed the Buddha's path. Reference back to your earlier newspaper exercise. Why should people want to follow the Buddha's teaching? Share the story of the Phantom City from <http://www.gakkaionline.net/kids/phan.html>

**Websites and resources:** Two versions of Kisa's story can be found at: <http://www.sln.org.uk/storyboard/11.htm>

### **Buddhist Mandalas**

Buddhists focus on attaining enlightenment so as to exist in a place of perfect beauty in the universe in this life or the next. Traditional mandalas are drawn to strict rules to create a sense of perfect balance and harmony. They are used as a meditation tool and for teaching and healing. Tibetans make mandalas on cloth (thangkas) but equally they can be temporary designs made of sand or natural items such as grains or even ground up jewels.

To make a simplified Buddhist mandala you need: a compass, a pencil, a ruler, a large sheet of paper and paints or pens in the five traditional colours of yellow, red, white, green and dark blue. Gold can be added for decoration.

(1) draw a circle and use the ruler to divide the circle into four quarters. (2) use the four arms of the cross you have created as the diameters of four smaller circles. (3) connect the four points where the smaller circles intersect to the centre of the cross – this gives a central star shape with eight lines running from the centre – of course this is also the eight spoked wheel of the dharma. (4) Find the mid point of each of the four shorter arms of the star and join these together to form a square – this square is the central palace (5) Draw a circle inside the square, then a square inside the circle, and then another circle inside your second square. The inner circle is the seat of the Buddha in the centre of the mandala (6) Now draw four more concentric squares round the first square you drew – the gaps between the squares should be very narrow. These are the foundations of the palace (7) on each side of the outer palace wall draw a small semicircle which looks like a little arch – these are the entry gates to the palace. (8) and finally draw four concentric circles inside the main outer circle. These also should be narrow, so that there is a broad gap between the outer circles and the inner squares. The circles are the four barriers to enlightenment.

At last you are ready to paint the mandala. Always paint from the centre outwards, ending with the outer ring. Remember what the different sections symbolise as you choose your colours.