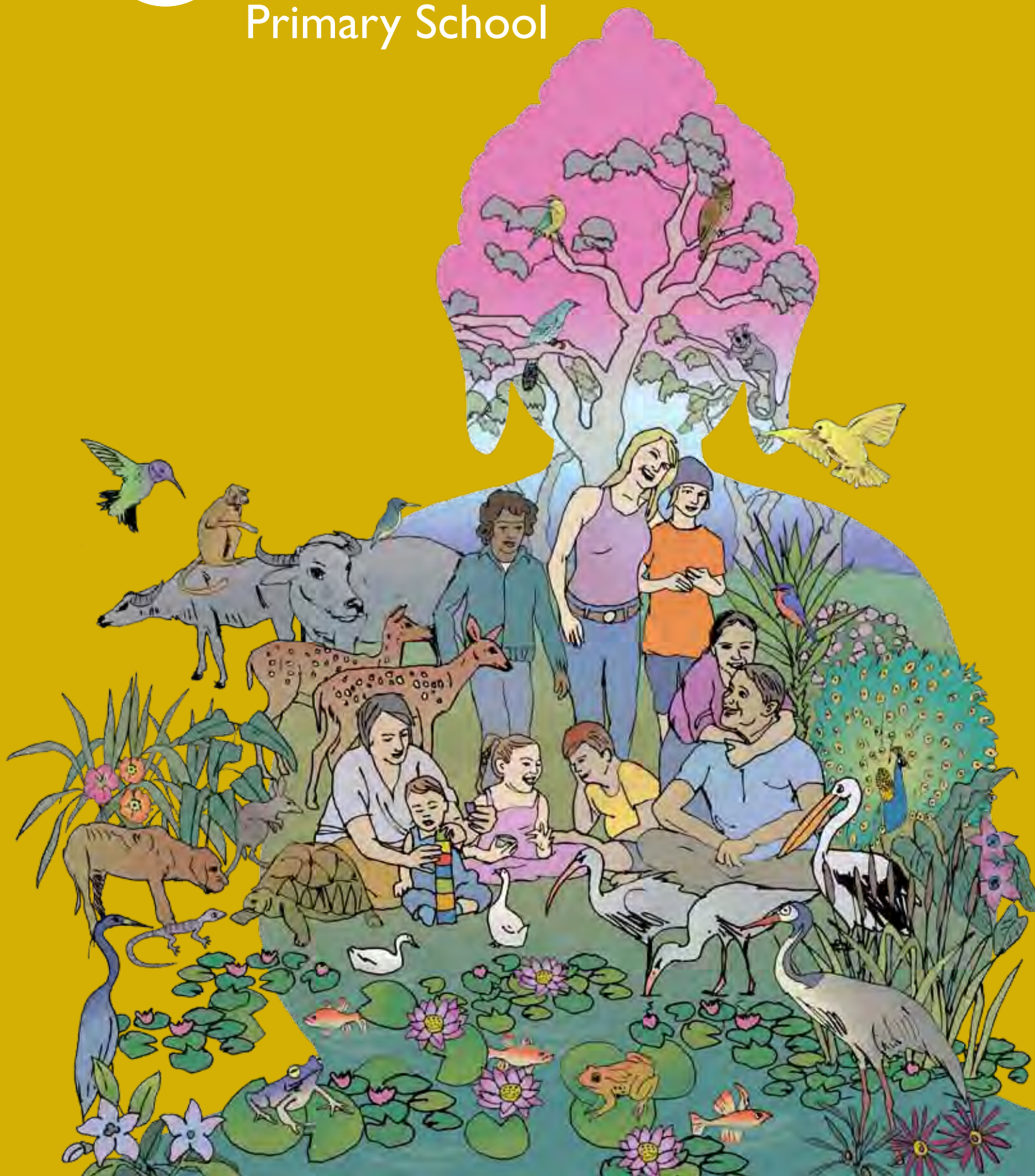




# DISCOVERING BUDDHA

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.

# Change and Impermanence

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DISCOVERING  
BUDDHA

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Lessons for  
Primary School

*Key to Icons*



Text



Activity



Creative Work






Meditation





# CHANGE AND IMPERMANENCE:

## CI1. Change in Myself

Lesson Plan		Years	Lessons
		3-6	2
1. Theme:	Impermanence		
2. Topic:	Change		
3. Values:	Awareness of the impermanence of all things		
4. Aims:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To encourage the children to observe change</li><li>• To see that everything is impermanent</li></ul>		
5. Outcomes:	To arrange a pictorial story of a child		
6. Preparation:	Photos of either your own or other children from birth to the present time, extra sets of pictures for children who forget.		
7. Lesson 1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In the previous lesson, ask the students to bring in photos of themselves at one-year intervals from birth to the present.</li></ul> <p> Instructor shows his/her photos to the class and they arrange them into chronological order.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask students how they know which photo comes first.</li><li>• Make a list on the board of the physical changes that take place in a child over the years.</li><li>• Ask the students if the same thing happened to them. Does the same process happen to everyone?</li></ul>		
8. Lesson 2:	<p> Students arrange their own photos and tell their story to the class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask them to include landmark questions such as :<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– When did you learn to walk?</li><li>– When did you learn to swim?</li><li>– When did you learn to dress yourself?</li><li>– When did you learn to ride a bicycle?</li></ul></li><li>• Explore with the class what other emotional, social, and behavioural changes have happened to them over the years.</li><li>• Explore with the class how everything changes. We all grow older and change.</li></ul>		





# Change and Impermanence:

## CI1. *Activity*. The Changes I See/Feel in Myself

Name .....

Date .....

1. When were you born? .....
2. How old are you? .....
3. Look at some of your old photos at one-year apart to see how you have changed.  
Make a list of how you have changed. The first one has been done for you.




Physical Changes	Changes in My Behaviour	Changes in Feelings
1. Growing taller	1. Can open the door by myself	1. Confident that I can do things myself
2. .... ..... .....	2. .... ..... .....	2. .... ..... .....
3. .... ..... .....	3. .... ..... .....	3. .... ..... .....
4. .... ..... .....	4. .... ..... .....	4. .... ..... .....
5. .... ..... .....	5. .... ..... .....	5. .... ..... .....
6. .... ..... .....	6. .... ..... .....	6. .... ..... .....
7. .... ..... .....	7. .... ..... .....	7. .... ..... .....

## CHANGE AND IMPERMANENCE:

# CI2. Observing Change Around Us

<i>Lesson Plan</i>		<i>Years</i> 3-6	<i>Lessons</i> 2
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- 1. Theme:** Impermanence
- 2. Topic:** Change
- 3. Values:** Awareness of the impermanence of all things
- 4. Aims:**
  - To allow the children to observe change around them.
  - To see that everything is impermanent.
- 5. Outcomes:** To observe and collect evidence of change around them.
- 6. Lesson:**
  - Ask class if they have noticed any changes in themselves over the week? What about people around them? Have they been sitting with the same classmate for the whole year? Could it be changed next week? In 1 month? In 3 months?
  - What change have they noticed of someone in the classroom? A new hair cut? Growing taller? Running faster? Getting faster at times table?
  - What about change outside the classroom but within the school? Does the tree outside the classroom drop its leaves? Why do some trees drop their leaves as the season turns colder?
  - Think of last night's dinner. What ingredients went into it? Did they still look the same as when your mum first came home from the shops? What did she do to change the ingredients to make that delicious dinner?
  - Think about a famous person whose fortune suddenly changed eg. a footballer who was injured, Paris Hilton going to jail for drink driving.

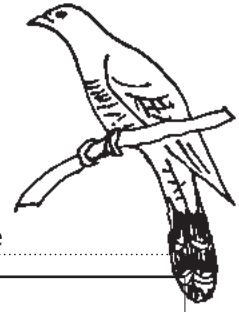
 Ask the students to fill in the table and to share some of their entries.

  - Ask the students to think about change, whether it can happen suddenly or slowly? Can we predict when change is going to happen? What can we do to prepare ourselves for it?





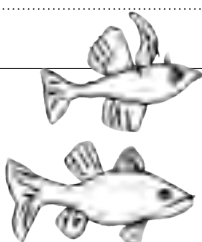
# Change and Impermanence: CI2. *Activity.* Observing Change Around Us



Name .....



Date .....

Where/Who	Before	After
1. In the classroom	..... ..... ..... .....	..... ..... ..... .....
2. At school	..... ..... ..... .....	..... ..... ..... .....
3. In the kitchen	..... ..... ..... .....	..... ..... ..... .....
4. Someone famous	..... ..... ..... .....	..... ..... ..... .....
5. A sports person	..... ..... ..... .....	..... ..... ..... .....



# CHANGE AND IMPERMANENCE:




## CI3. Cycles of Change

Lesson Plan		Years 3-6	Lessons 2-3
<b>1. Theme:</b>	Cycles of change		
<b>2. Topic:</b>	Observing changes		
<b>3. Values:</b>	To accept that changes are a natural part of life and our world		
<b>4. Aims:</b>	To observe that all things change		
<b>5. Outcomes:</b>	By a series of exercises and class discussions students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand that each person is subject to change</li> <li>• understand that we can make changes to our own minds to promote the changes that we seek</li> </ul>		
<b>6. Preparation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a circular diagram with photos or drawings of the changes in your own life.</li> <li>• Prepare a template of a circle for students to draw changes they have observed, or will anticipate, in themselves or another object, person or animal.</li> </ul>		
<b>7. Lesson 1:</b>	These lessons can follow after the Life of Buddha story. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the main points in the Buddha's early life, especially recalling the Four Sights. What was Prince Siddhartha's reaction to these sights?</li> <li>• Discuss the cycle of change in your own life.</li> </ul> <div>  Give students the template and ask them to draw themselves as a baby, toddler, school student, teenager, adult/ parent etc.         </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow time for students to share their work and discuss their reactions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What can we think of that doesn't change?</li> <li>• Are there things we can think of that we don't want to change?</li> <li>• What things can't we change?</li> <li>• What things are possible to change?</li> <li>• Is it possible to change our lives for the better? How?</li> <li>• What benefits can you see from observing and understanding change?</li> </ul> <p><i>This activity can be repeated with a seed or a flower, a pair of shoes or a bike using a new template.</i></p>		
<b>8. Lesson 2:</b>	For ideas on performing a play, see <i>Making Learning Fun</i> pXVII. <p>* FPMT Inc., 2001. Adapted by Suzie Imura. Illustrations by Penny Thompson</p>		



## CHANGE AND IMPERMANENCE:

# CI4. Life Story of a Flower

Lesson Plan		Years	Lessons
		3-6	2
1. Theme:	Change and impermanence		
2. Topic:	The life story of a flower		
3. Values:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accept the changing nature of existence</li><li>• Not wanting things to stay the same forever.</li></ul>		
4. Aims:	To encourage children to notice change in the world around them and to see that everything is impermanent.		
5. Outcomes:	To list and draw changes of a plucked flower.		
6. Preparation:	A large, freshly-picked flower.		
7. Lesson:	<p>Ask the students to describe what they see, touch, smell, feel about the flower.</p> <p> Help the children fill in Day 1 of worksheet.</p> <p> Ask students to draw an outline of the flower on Day 1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tell students that the flower will remain in the classroom until next week's lesson. The students are to observe how the colour, texture, smell and size changes over the next week and record everything on a daily basis.</li></ul>		





## Change and Impermanence: CI4. *Activity.* Life Story of a Flower: What Happens in One Week?



Name .....

Date .....

Choose a picked flower and look at it everyday for one week. Write down the changes you see in it. Draw a picture or an outline of what it looks like each day.

<b>Day 1:</b> Describe how it looks/smells/feels • ..... • ..... • ..... • ..... • .....	Draw the flower
<b>Day 2:</b> Describe the changes you see • ..... • ..... • ..... • ..... • .....	Draw the flower
<b>Day 3:</b> Describe the changes you see • ..... • ..... • ..... • ..... • .....	Draw the flower
<b>Day 4:</b> Describe the changes you see • ..... • ..... • ..... • ..... • .....	Draw the flower















<b>Day 5:</b> Describe the changes you see  • ..... • ..... • ..... • ..... • .....	Draw the flower
<b>Day 6:</b> Describe the changes you see  • ..... • ..... • ..... • ..... • .....	Draw the flower
<b>Day 7:</b> Describe the changes you see  • ..... • ..... • ..... • ..... • .....	Draw the flower



## CHANGE AND IMPERMANENCE:

# CI5. The Parable of the Mustard Seed

Lesson Plan	   	Years 3-6	Lessons 3-6
<b>1. Theme:</b>	Impermanence		
<b>2. Topic:</b>	The inevitability of death		
<b>3. Values:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptance of the inevitability of death</li> <li>• Awareness that all things are impermanent</li> </ul>		
<b>4. Aims:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To encourage the children to relate to death in their lives.</li> <li>• To see that death happens to everyone.</li> <li>• To understand the moral of the story.</li> </ul>		
<b>5. Preparation:</b>	 Make photocopies of <i>CI5. Activity A. Gotami and the Mustard Seed</i> .		
<b>6. Lesson 1:</b>	<p>Focus: Re-cap the story of <i>The Four Sights</i>. (See <i>LB9 p2.23</i>) Ask the children to share their experiences of looking for an adult who has had no deaths in their family.</p> <p> With the class, read aloud the story in <i>Activity A</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Then ask one child to read the whole story.</li> <li>• Before the end of the story, ask the children to guess what the villagers said to the Buddha, drawing on their own experience and from asking their adult friends.</li> <li>• Ask the children what the story teaches us.</li> </ul>		
<b>7. Lesson 2:</b>	<p> Students re-tell the story in a different way. They can choose to either fill in the speech bubbles of the pictures with those provided or write their own. After which the pictures are to be coloured in and made into a story board for display.</p> <p><b>Variations:</b></p> <p> <i>Activity B</i>. Match pictures to text.</p> <p> <i>Activity C</i>. Match speech bubbles to pictures.</p> <p> <i>Activity D</i>. Deduce text from pictures.</p> <p> Write a play from the story and act it out.</p> <p> <i>Activity E</i>. Perform the play <i>Gotami and the Mustard Seed</i>.</p>		

### Note

Talking of death/dying can be an extremely sensitive issue. bRI instructor to work with supervising teacher and ensure any potential student distress is adequately managed.



## Change and Impermanence:

### CI5. *Activity A.* Gotami and the Mustard Seed

Page 1 of 2



The only son of a woman suddenly died. The woman was so upset that she did not allow the son to be buried.



She brought her dead son before the Buddha and asked him to bring their son back to life.



The Buddha told her to find some mustard seeds to prepare the medicine. Such seeds should come from those families that had never had a dead person. Only then, would the medicine work.



## Change and Impermanence:

### CI5. Activity A. Gotami and the Mustard Seed

Page 2 of 2



With renewed hope, the woman went to look for these seeds.



But each household told her someone in their family had died recently or in the past.



Disappointed, she went back to the Buddha for an answer. Buddha said to her, “Death is the rule of nature and everyone has to go through it. How long we live depends on our karma. You are not the only one heart-broken by death.” The woman suddenly became enlightened and buried her son. Then she took refuge in Buddha and practised Buddha’s teaching.





# Change and Impermanence:

## CI5. *Activity B. Gotami and the Mustard Seed* Page 1 of 2

Name .....

Date .....

1. Cut out the 6 picture panels below.
2. Match and glue each picture panel to the corresponding text on page 2.
3. Read the story in the correct order.



### Note

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## Change and Impermanence:

### CI5. *Activity B.* Gotami and the Mustard Seed

Page 2 of 2

Name .....

Date .....







1	2
The only son of a woman suddenly died. The woman was so upset that she did not allow the son to be buried.	She brought her dead son before the Buddha and asked him to bring the son back to life.
3	4
The Buddha told her to find some mustard seeds to prepare the medicine. Such seeds should come from those families that had never had a dead person. Only then, would the medicine work.	With renewed hope, the woman went to look for these seeds.
5	6
But each household told her someone in their family had died recently or in the past.	Disappointed, she went back to the Buddha for an answer. Buddha said to her, "Death is the rule of nature and everyone has to go through it. How long we live depends on our karma. You are not the only one heart-broken by death." The woman suddenly became enlightened and buried her son. Then she took refuge in Buddha and practised Buddha's teaching.





## Change and Impermanence:

### CI5. *Activity B&C*. Gotami and the Mustard Seed Answers

1 	2 
The only son of a woman suddenly died. The woman was so upset that she did not allow the son to be buried.	She brought her dead son before the Buddha and asked him to bring their son back to life.
3 	4 
The Buddha told her to find some mustard seeds to prepare the medicine. Such seeds should come from those families that had never had a dead person. Only then, would the medicine work.	With renewed hope, the woman went to look for these seeds.
5 	6 
But each household told her someone in their family had died recently or in the past.	Disappointed, she went back to the Buddha for an answer. Buddha said to her, "Death is the rule of nature and everyone has to go through it. How long we live depends on our karma. You are not the only one heart-broken by death." The woman suddenly became enlightened and buried her son. Then she took refuge in Buddha and practised Buddha's teaching.



## Change and Impermanence:

### CI5. Activity C. Gotami and the Mustard Seed

Page 1 of 2

Name .....

Date .....

1. Cut out the 6 speech bubbles below.
2. Match and glue each speech bubble to the corresponding picture on page 2.
3. Read the story in the correct order.

But each household told her someone in their family had died recently or in the past.

With renewed hope, the woman went to look for these seeds.

Disappointed, she went back to the Buddha for an answer. Buddha said to her, "Death is the rule of nature and everyone has to go through it. How long we live depends on our karma. You are not the only one heart-broken by death." The woman suddenly became enlightened and buried her son. Then she took refuge in Buddha and practised Buddha's teaching.

She brought her dead son before the Buddha and asked him to bring the son back to life.

The Buddha told her to find some mustard seeds to prepare the medicine. Such seeds should come from those families that had never had a dead person. Only then, would the medicine work.

The only son of a woman suddenly died. The woman was so upset that she did not allow the son to be buried.





# Change and Impermanence:

## CI5. *Activity C.* Gotami and the Mustard Seed

Page 2 of 2

Name .....

Date .....

1



2



3



4



5



6





# Change and Impermanence: CI5. *Activity D.*

## The Gotami and the Mustard Seed In Your Own Words

Name .....

Date .....

1



.....  
.....

2



.....  
.....

3



.....  
.....

4



.....  
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5



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6



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.....



## Change and Impermanence:

### CI5. Activity E. Gotami and the Mustard Seed Play

**Characters:** Narrator 1, Narrator 2, Buddha, Gotami, Friend, Old Man, Young Man, Woman, Girl, Beggar

#### Scene 1: In the village

**Narrator 1:** Buddha taught in many ways, and he always knew the best way to help people who came to him for advice. He always acted with patience, kindness and love.

**Narrator 2:** When Gotami came to ask the Buddha for help, he taught her in a special way, with a single mustard seed.

*Narrators turn and direct the attention of the audience toward Gotami, who enters with a baby in her arms. She is crying and a friend is comforting her.*

**Gotami:** *(Addressing her child)*  
I have been everywhere, my precious child, trying to find a way to bring you back to life. I won't give up until I do.

**Friend:** Dear Gotami, we should go and see the Buddha. Perhaps he can help you. Come with me, I'll take you to him.

#### Scene 2: In the Forest

*Buddha is seated under a tree. Gotami and her friend kneel in front of Buddha. Gotami is distressed.*

**Friend:** Lord Buddha, can you help my friend, Gotami, bring her baby back to life?

**Gotami:** O Buddha, please help me. My baby is so tiny and so precious to me, I can't bear to lose him. Please help me bring my baby back to life.

**Buddha:** *(Speaking gently)*  
Yes, I can help you, Gotami. First you must bring me something. I need one small mustard seed. But it must come from a house where no one has ever died.

**Gotami:** Thank you, Lord Buddha. I'll do as you say. Soon my baby will be well again.

*Gotami and friend bow and rise to leave.*

#### Scene 3: In the village

**Narrator 1:** Gotami goes to the village and knocks on the door of the first house.

**Gotami:** Can you help me? I need a mustard seed, but it must come from a house where no one has ever died.

**Young Man:** Of course you can have a mustard seed. You can have whatever you want – but you should know that last year my wife passed away after a long illness.

**Gotami:** Oh, I am sorry to hear that. I'll go and look somewhere else.

- Narrator 2:** Wherever Gotami went, the same thing happened. Everyone wanted to help her, but...
- Gotami goes to the next house and knocks.*
- Woman:** I'm so sorry. I can't help you. Three years ago I lost my daughter.
- Gotami goes from house to house to house.*
- Old Man:** My best friend died last month.
- Girl:** My little pet monkey got sick last week and we could not save its life.
- Beggar:** My brother was killed here yesterday.
- Narrator 1:** It was always the same. There was not a single house where no one had died.
- Gotami:** I'm sorry for all of you. My sadness is not unique. Death comes to all of us. I will put my baby to rest now. Good-bye, precious child.
- Gotami wraps the baby gently in a cloth, places it in a basket, and sprinkles it with flower petals. The villages come forward one by one and each places a flower in the basket.*
- Gotami:** Good-bye precious child.
- Scene 4: In the forest**
- Narrator 2:** At the end of the day, Gotami went back to see the Buddha.
- Buddha:** What have you found, Gotami? Where is your mustard seed? And where is your son? You are not carrying him any longer.
- Gotami:** Lord Buddha, today I discovered that I am not the only one who has lost a loved one. Everywhere people have died. I see how foolish I was to think I could have my baby back. I have accepted his death and this afternoon laid my son to rest.
- Buddha:** Gotami, you have learned a great deal today. Death must come to everyone sooner or later. But if you learn the truth you can live and die in happiness.
- Gotami:** Thank you, Lord Buddha, you have helped me so much with your advice. I came back to hear more of your teachings. I am ready to listen.
- Buddha:** Come, I shall teach you now.
- Buddha gives Gotami a flower. She takes the flower and sits at his feet.*
- Narrator 2:** And so he taught her, and soon she found more peace and happiness than she had ever known before.

**The End**

*Note*

Talking of death/dying can be an extremely sensitive issue. bRI instructor to work with supervising teacher and ensure any potential student distress is adequately managed.





## Change and Impermanence:

### CI5. *Activity E. Gotami and the Mustard Seed* Suggestions

#### Director's Notes

- It is essential for the director, in presenting a play, to define the key to each particular play. Once that key is found, all the logic unfolds naturally – the style, costumes, timing and character detail become self-evident and the potential for creative contribution from the director opens up like a blossoming flower.
- Casting depends on the personalities and levels of ability of the individual children in your group.
- Flexibility is essential so the play evolves organically.

#### Stage Directions I

- Scene 1:
- Buddha sits centre stage on a platform or rock, raised above the actors. He stays in this position of strength throughout the play.
  - Narrators enter and stand one at each side of Buddha.
  - Gotami enters from a position near the audience (down stage). As her character develops she moves up towards Buddha. She is walking towards hope.
  - Narrators are dressed in elaborate Indian garments.
  - When the narrators are not speaking, they kneel at either side of Buddha and watch the story unfold.
- Scene 2
- When Gotami is led to Buddha by her friend, the direction and focus of energy shifts towards him.
- Scene 3:
- As Gotami moves through the village, the villagers form a semi-circle around her as she speaks with them one by one.
- Scene 4:
- All the characters in the play regroup around Buddha.
  - The play concludes with all the actors sitting and standing around Buddha, listening to his words.
  - Gotami stands or kneels at Buddha's right.

#### Stage Directions 2

- Scenes 2 and 4:
- Actors can create the effect of a forest by holding/ draping green cloth over their bodies.
- Scene 3:
- Actors or stage hands can create the village by using simple props such as cardboard doors. The stage hands or extras should wear black clothes.
  - Doors can also be created by curtains suspended from the ceilings.

#### Props and Costumes

- You will need:
- Indian style costumes.
  - Flowers and flower petals.
  - A baby (use a doll) and a basket
  - A high seat or platform for Buddha.
  - Green cloth to create the forest.
  - Cardboard doors or curtains for the houses.









#### Note

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# CHANGE AND IMPERMANENCE:

## CI6. Samsara Dog

Lesson Plan	   	Years 3-6	Lessons 2-6
<b>1. Theme:</b>	Change and impermanence		
<b>2. Topic:</b>	Cause and effect		
<b>3. Aims:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To encourage the children to see that positive change can occur</li> <li>• To see that hard work at positive change affects the future</li> </ul>		
<b>4. Preparation:</b>	 Reference: Manos, E. and Vivas, J.: <i>Samsara Dog</i> *. Working Title Press. (2006)		
<b>5. Lesson:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ask</b> class if they have a dog at home and if their dogs can be taught tricks. Talk about dog training in general, the difficulties and how to encourage them to follow the desired behaviour.</li> <li>• Why do you think dogs want to learn tricks?</li> <li>• Do they think that dogs are like humans, each with a different personality?</li> <li>• <b>Read</b> story of <i>Samsara Dog</i>, asking questions along the way to check understanding.</li> <li>• <b>Discuss</b> how the lives of the dog changed over time and many rebirths. What is the goal of the dog? How did it work hard towards achieving that goal?</li> <li>• How has the process of rebirth affected the dog?</li> <li>  Make a timeline of the dog's different lives.            Draw a mountain range and peg the highs and lows of the dog's life along the mountain range.            Make a story-board or cartoon out of the story.         </li> </ul> <p>* The children's book <i>Samsara Dog</i> may be available in the school library or your local library.</p>		

