

The Buddha and the Mustard Seed Medicine (RR)

Materials: Buddha piece
Mother Piece
Child piece
Underlay

Presentation:

Watch where I go to get our story for today.

Get basket from the shelf.

This is a story about Beginnings or maybe about Endings. Let's see what we have to help us get ready. What could this be?

Place felt underlay.

It's a circle. I wonder what this could be. Mmmmm. That's all. Let's get ready for our story.

Have you ever been sad? I mean really sad? Today's story starts with a mother who was very sad.

Place the mother on the underlay. Then take the child piece and cradle it in both hands.

She was sad because her child was so sick. She had bathed him, and given him medicine, she did everything she knew to help her son get better. Finally in desperation she did one last thing.

Hold the child in one hand and with the other place the Buddha on the story telling field.

She had heard the Buddha teach many times. His stories and teachings were so wise. The Buddha was the wisest smartest person she could imagine. This mother like many other people believed that the Buddha could do anything, even make sick people well.

Place the child at the Buddha's feet.

She told the Buddha how sick her child was and how she had tried everything she knew to help him. She said, "You are the wisest person on earth. If anyone can help my child it's you."

Place your hand on the Buddha and shake your head while looking at the child.

But the Buddha saw that the child wasn't sick. He was dead. The Buddha knew that there was nothing he could do for the child, but he thought that perhaps there was something he could do for the woman. He told her that he could make a special medicine for the child but that to make this medicine he would need the woman to find him a rare ingredient.

Cup one hand and with the other pretend to with draw a seed. Hold the imaginary seed on the tip of your index finger.

He needed her to bring him a mustard seed. But that wasn't all. This mustard seed had to come from a house in which none who lived there had ever experienced pain or loss. He told her, "Go door to door and bring me a mustard seed from each house free of sadness, loss, and death."

Hold the woman in one hand.

So she went to each house in the town . . .

Point to each child around the circle.

And at each door she would say . . .

Look at the child closest to you on the right.

"My child is dying but the Buddha said if I could find a seed from a home in which no one has ever been sad, or known death, or been lonely, or experienced loss. Have you ever been sad?"

Wait for the child's response. When the child expresses that yes he or she has been sad then continue . . .

"So you don't have a seed that would help the Buddha make his special medicine."

Continue in this way, asking each child if they have ever been sad or if they have a seed that will help. Each time you learn that the child has been sad or has no seed, shake your head and show your disappointment.

When the mother had visited every house in the village she returned to the Buddha.

Set the mother beside the Buddha.

The Buddha asked the woman if she had found a mustard seed to make the special medicine. She answered, "No, I have no mustard seed, for there is no house in the entire village in which no one there had not at some time been sad or experienced loss, or been in pain. But I have found that there is another medicine, as you knew I would find." She said that she learned that there was nothing the Buddha could do to help her child. She said she also learned that she wasn't alone. That as sad as she was she now knew that others had cried tears of loss before her.

Responses: Wondering Together

I wonder what part of the story you liked best?

I wonder what part is most important?

I wonder where you are in the story?

I wonder if there is any part of the story that we can leave out and still have all the story we need?

