

Sacred Threads

Lesson 7: Buddhist Meditation

4.14.2019

Objectives: Introduction to *Buddhadharma* and meditation practice.

Materials: Flipchart, index cards, lesson attachments, reserved space in Ames Chapel.

Time allotments suggested for 50 minute class, followed by 25 minute closing service.

***Class begins as usual in classroom. Then youth go to Ames Chapel for meditation portion of class.**

1. Nametags and Graffiti Wall (5 minutes before class begins)

- Make nametags using blank paper, markers, and holders. Youth can create their own unique but LEGIBLE nametag. Make it a regular practice to wear nametags.
- “Graffiti Wall” questions: Write the following on whiteboard. Invite youth as they arrive to grab a marker and weigh in with their responses:
 - ▶ Have you ever visited a Buddhist center or community?
 - ▶ From any prior meditation experience, what have you discovered about your mind?
- Teachers complete attendance sheets.

2. Silly Fun: “If you” (5 minutes max)

Each youth writes an “If you...” question on a card, then places it face down in a center pile. Be creative! (For example, “If you could bring someone back to life, who would it be? If you could win any famous prize, what prize would you want to win? If you could ask God/Cosmos one question to be answered, what would you ask?”) Each person takes a turn picking up a card, reading it aloud, and giving their response. The card is returned to the bottom of the pile before the next person takes a card.

3. Chalice Lighting: Light the chalice, saying these words together: “We light this chalice as a symbol of our faith; the light of truth and the warmth of love.”

Teacher reads: (from a Zen teaching)

“How do you step into life without constantly repeating yourself? The endless pattern of our habitual thoughts. Our habits which become the habitats that we inhabit. And meanwhile, beyond our small habitat lies a wondrous world waiting to be lived.”

4. **Buddhadharma Basics:** (15 minutes)

Teacher summarizes: We have already seen how Siddhartha Gautama began to question the answers Hinduism provided to his questions about life and human existence. What he comes to discover for himself is a path leading from dis-ease and basic unsatisfactory nature of existence to awakening and liberation. He distills his insights into what is called the **Four Noble Truths** and the **Eight-Fold Path**.

- Hand out lesson attachment and review information.

Like other religions, Buddhism branched out over the centuries into different schools and cultures. (Think about Judaism's movements: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist.) Today, three major "vehicles" or branches of Buddhism exist (hand out map attachment):

- a) **Theravada** Buddhism is historically earlier and more "orthodox" (in Burma, Thailand, Laos, Sri Lanka).
- b) **Mahayana** Buddhism is later and more "reform" (in China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam, and Tibet).
- c) **Vajrayana** (or Tantrayana) Buddhism is even later, a form of Tantric Buddhism (in Tibet, Bhutan).

5. **Exploring Meditation** (30 minutes)

Complete next steps 6 and 7 first. Class heads to Ames Chapel for introductory practice to meditation with guest teacher.

6. **Extinguish the chalice**, saying together:

"May the light of truth and the warmth of love go with us in our hearts."

7. **Help clean up classroom** before leaving: Please keep regular practice of readying classroom for the next class.

- leave lesson plan and all materials organized
- wipe the whiteboard clean
- tables and chairs neatly returned
- nametags collected in Ziploc bag
- leave any comments for RE staff on attendance sheets