

## **Buddhism - Some advice on teaching Buddhism.**

Almost all the advice that follows can be found either in the guidance for the KAS or in the guidance issues for the pervious syllabus.

It may be of interest that there was a mistake in the publication of the syllabus and one section Expression of Spirituality has been missed off the Buddhism syllabus. There is **no compulsion** to teach anything in this area as a result, but you may wish to look at the worship, or mediation and prayer or pilgrimage so feel free to add this to your syllabus.

The teaching of Buddhism is only required by the new syllabus at KS3. It is therefore for the majority of pupils a new religion when they start studying it with you. For this reason some of you may chose to do the complete study of Buddhism over the course of one year along side Christianity, or you may wish to split it up over the three years, . The option is yours.

Below is highlighted the content as it appears in the KAS but please remember that the course is skill focused and that you need to refer to the whole KAS syllabus before writing or amending your own scheme of work.

<b>Compulsory content</b> (i.e. what they pupils must be taught.)	Options with in the content. (i.e. those areas you can leave out or adapt to suit your interests, work constants or syllabus.)
<b>Beliefs and Concepts</b>  The Dharma How do we know what is true? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Belief in no God</li></ul> Exploring <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The 3 marks of existence</li><li>• The 4 Noble Truths</li><li>• The 8 fold path</li><li>• The wheel of life</li></ul>	

<p><b>Authority</b></p> <p>The Buddha</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The life of Siddhartha Guatama</li> <li>• Siddhartha's enlightenment</li> <li>• The importance of the 3 refuges/jewels (underlined in the content boxes)</li> <li>• Scripture</li> </ul>	<p>Scripture -Here you can look at the use and the development of scripture within Buddhism or you can look at the content of specific scriptures. You can tie scripture into the teachings of the Buddha or the application of Buddhist ethics. The suggested Scriptures are the Tripitaka or the Dhammapada but it is really up to you what content you include here and how or even whether you connect it to another part of the course.</p>
<p><b>Ethics and Relationships</b></p> <p>The 5 Precepts – as a way of life.</p>	<p>Again there are suggestions as to how you might break this down. Family, the upbringing of children and passing on of values and the interaction with other. However, you can choose not to do these topics and link the 5 Precepts with a rights &amp; responsibilities topic or a global issue.</p>
<p><b>Rights and Responsibilities</b></p> <p>The Buddhist ideas of service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Sangha</li> <li>• Life in the community.</li> <li>• The challenges facing Buddhists in the secular of non-Buddhist society.</li> <li>• Protesting and speaking out against injustice in society.</li> <li>• The different groups within Buddhism.</li> <li>• Concept of Self.</li> </ul>	<p>With the Sangha you can look at the lives of monks/nuns or you can look at the lay community in Britain or else where.</p> <p>Which groups within Buddhism you look at is up to you the suggestions are Theravada, Zen and Mahaynan, but you may wish to look at Tibetan Buddhism because you what to tie it in with a study of protest and the Dali Lama.</p>

<p><b>Global Issues</b></p> <p>Respect for life</p>	<p>Here you have a totally free option. The suggestions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The environment and Animal Rights</li> <li>• War and Peace</li> <li>• Wealth and Poverty.</li> </ul> <p>But you don't have to follow these you could look at the rights of the child, disability or some aspects of medical ethics. However, try and make the topic appropriate to the age of the pupils. Abortion may not be a good topic to study with year 7.</p>
<p><b>Interfaith Dialogue</b></p> <p>The Buddhist attitudes of tolerance and response to other world faiths.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationships with other world religions</li> <li>• A look at the similarities and differences in the life &amp; teaching of the Buddha with other significant religious figures.</li> <li>• A study of the different attitudes to suffering between Buddhism and another world faith</li> </ul> <p>Compare attitudes towards moral issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A look at the similarities and differences in the life &amp; teaching of the Buddha with other significant religious figures. The choice here is only limited by the figures we study. However, as you can adapt the syllabus to include a local faith you may be able to broaden the study if you wish.</li> <li>• A study of the different attitudes to suffering between Buddhism and another world faith i.e. Christianity. Christianity is suggested here because the contrasts are striking but you can look at another faith.</li> <li>• Compare attitudes towards moral issues, e.g. women, war, violence and animals and the environment. As these are only suggestion you can look at a new option or have a running theme whether it fits the suggestions or not. The options allow comparison on all the ethic issues. It is best suited to a thematic approach but you can build this in however, you want. Each year you can have a comparison unit, or you can do the inter-faith work as you go along. If you only teach two religions a year one unit of study can compare the two. Adapt to suit your needs.</li> </ul>

## **Buddhist Contacts in Kent**

Addresses of religious communities and places of worship in Kent

This is not a list of SACRE recommended contacts for schools, simply a list from available evidence. This list was taken and copied from the guidance. I have tried an internet search on all of them and most I can still find and contact. However, that may not be the case by the time you try a search.

### Canterbury Tibet Link

55 Havelock Street

Canterbury

CT1 1NP

Tel: 01227 763505  
Contact: Caroline Latham  
Position: Founder  
Activities: Worship/practice/meditation  
Traditions: Tibetan

### Jampel Kadampa Buddhist Centre

26 Cherry Garden Road

Canterbury

CT2 8EP

Tel: 01227 760955  
Email: [info@jampel.org](mailto:info@jampel.org)  
Website: <http://www.jampel.org>  
Contact: Kunden  
Position: Programme Co-ordinator  
Contact email: [kelsang\\_kunden@hotmail.com](mailto:kelsang_kunden@hotmail.com)  
Activities: Worship/practice/meditation  
Affiliations: NKT

Maidstone Meditation Group

Maidstone

Tel: 01622 670587  
Email: [alpatching@lineone.net](mailto:alpatching@lineone.net)  
Contact: Andrew  
Activities: Practice/meditation, resources  
Traditions: Tibetan  
Movements: Nyingmapa  
Affiliations: Longchen Foundation

*I had difficulty finding this group on the internet. There are groups out there that you can make contact with but I have removed the website address of this group because it was no longer valid.*

Mid Kent and Medway Buddhist Group

c/o Friends Meeting House

Union Street

Maidstone

Tel: 01634 375728  
Email: [anthony.millett@virgin.net](mailto:anthony.millett@virgin.net)  
Contact: Worship/meditation

Zen Practice Centre Trust

26 Milford Close

Maidstone

ME16 0EX

Contact: Barbara Hussong  
Contact Tel: 01622 670587

## Some recommended 'Do's and Don'ts' when teaching about Buddhism

Do	Do not
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain that the translation of <i>Dukkha</i> as suffering is not entirely accurate. It can also be translated as unsatisfactory. Buddhists do not claim that all life is painful</li> <li>• Make it clear that Siddhatta Gotama should not be considered to be the Buddha until after his enlightenment</li> <li>• Ensure pupils understand that meditation practices differ not only in practice but also in intention. The aim of Christian meditation is very different from that of the Buddhist</li> <li>• Ensure pupils understand that karma for Buddhists is not exactly the same as for Hindus</li> <li>• Ensure that pupils understand that the Noble Eightfold path is not a path in the sense that you take one step at a time. It is more like a single path with eight aspects to it</li> <li>• Ensure pupils understand that Buddhists do not worship the Buddha when bowing before a statue or image of him. It is more a matter of showing respect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call Buddhist atheists. They do have ideas about 'a realm of the gods' but do not have a concept of God as in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Better described as 'non-theistic'.</li> <li>• Imply that all Buddhists are celibate monks or nuns wearing yellow robes. Monks and nuns wear different coloured robes, e.g. Tibetans wear wine or gold, Zen wear black or brown</li> <li>• Use the term 'begging bowl.' It suggests monks are parasitic. Use the term 'alms bowl' instead</li> <li>• Use the word reincarnation (unless carefully qualified), for it strictly speaking indicates that a soul is reborn. Buddhists do not believe in a permanent soul or self and prefer the term rebirth</li> <li>• Equate the 5 and 10 precepts with commandments. They are more like guidelines or 'a training manual.'</li> </ul>

Below is an example of a systematic scheme of work as taken from the guidance. It will give you one suggestion only of how you might link Buddhism to another religion – Christianity – consideration of making interfaith links during the units needs to be addressed.

1 Autumn 2		1 Spring 2		1 Summer 2	
<b><u>Christianity</u></b>	<b><u>Christianity</u></b>	<b><u>Buddhism</u></b>	<b><u>Christianity</u></b>	<b><u>Buddhism</u></b>	<b><u>Buddhism</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christian ideas of service and self-sacrifice</li> <li>• Inspirational Christians eg: Oscar Romero</li> <li>• Protesting and speaking out against justice and injustice in society.</li> <li>• A Global Issue ie Wealth and Poverty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• War or animal rights and the environment</li> <li>• Making moral choices eg euthanasia</li> <li>• The teachings of Jesus on love and forgiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teachings of the Buddha</li> <li>• 4 Noble truths,</li> <li>• 8 fold path</li> <li>• 5 precepts</li> <li>• The up- bring of children</li> <li>• War and Peace or environment/animals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good and evil- origins, free will and suffering</li> <li>• Racism or sexism</li> <li>• The environment animal rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scripture</li> <li>• Buddha and his enlightenment</li> <li>• The belief in no God</li> <li>• The importance of the 3 Jewels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Buddhist attitude of tolerance and its relationship to Christianity</li> <li>• Compare Christian and Buddhist attitudes to suffering and a moral issue.</li> </ul>

## Teaching about Buddhism

The following is taken from the guidance provided for the previous Kent Agreed Syllabus (2000) – the order has been slightly changed and a few items added.

An old Buddhist Monk told me that the best way to start with a study of Buddhism is with the three refuges or three jewels. This therefore is where I will start.

### **Key Elements of Buddhism: the ‘three refuges’ or ‘three jewels’.**

1. The Buddha he is seen as a guide – it is the teaching which he imparted rather than the person that is important.
2. The Dhamma the teaching – basic expression in the Four Noble Truths.
3. The Sangha the community – can mean the monks/nuns but also includes all Buddhists.

This often finds expression in the Buddhist phrase:

I take refuge in the Buddha  
I take refuge in the dhamma  
I take refuge in the sangha.

### **The Buddha**

Before his enlightenment he was known as Siddhatta Gotama. The conventional dates for his life are 566-486 BCE. However, more recent research suggests 490-410 BCE. Tradition presents him as a Prince, but he is more likely to have been the son of a tribal leader. The story of his experiences with suffering in the form of old age, sickness, death and then the holy man: is unlike to be an accurate description of the events. Damien Keown, has suggested, *“This simple, poignant story is unlikely to be true in the literal sense. It is hard to believe that the Buddha was so naïve as the story portrays him, or that his disenchantment with palace life was nearly as sudden.”*

Key questions Gotama asked: Why do people suffer? How can it be stopped? He left home at 29 to search for the answers and enlightenment. At 35, Gotama found enlightenment (awakening) under the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya. He taught for 40 years before his death at the age of 80.

## The Dhamma

“I set forth only this: suffering and the end of suffering.”

The key teachings of the Buddha are set four in the four Noble Truths and extended through the Noble Eight Fold Path and the Five Precepts. Below are the basic on these teachings.

### The Four Noble Truths

<b>Dukkha</b> Life is suffering Life is unsatisfactory The truth of suffering	Human condition is one of disease. <i>Birth is suffering. Sickness is suffering. Old age is suffering. Death is Suffering. Pain, grief sorrow, lamentation and despair are suffering. Association with what is unpleasant is suffering. Separation from what one likes is suffering. Not to get what one wants is suffering.</i>
<b>Samudaya</b> Suffering is caused by craving	The origin of unsatisfactoriness is thirst/craving/desire (tanha), which is never satisfied and so results in rebirth. It does not mean all desire but desire which is excessive or wrongly directed.
<b>Nirodha</b> Suffering can end The cessation of Suffering	When craving is removed, suffering ceases and nirvana is attained. Nirvana is very difficult to translate. It means quenching or blowing out, i.e. the ending of the fires of greed, hate and ignorance which causes suffering. It is also deliverance from Samsara or the continual round of rebirths.
<b>Magga</b> The Path of the Way which leads to the end of suffering	Explains how nirvana is to be achieved. It is achieved through following the Noble Eightfold Path.

## The Noble Eightfold Path

The Noble Eightfold Path is also known as the Middle Way as it seeks to steer a course between the extremes of indulgence and austerity. It consists of eight factors which can be divided into three categories of wisdom, morality and meditation. It provides a model of how a Buddha should live and so helps the Buddhist to achieve Buddha hood.

<b>Eightfold Path</b>	<b>Wisdom</b>
<b>1. Right Understanding or View</b>	Accepting Buddhist teaching
<b>2. Right Intention</b>	A commitment to developing right views and attitudes
	<b>Morality</b>
<b>3. Right speech</b>	Telling the truth, being thoughtful and sensitive, avoiding gossip, abuse and slander.
<b>4. Right action</b>	Refraining from what is harmful, e.g. killing or stealing.
<b>5. Right livelihood</b>	Not engaging in an occupation that would harm others.
	<b>Meditation</b>
<b>6. Right effort</b>	Gaining control of one's thoughts, cultivating a positive state of Mind; effort to generate goodness
<b>7. Right mindfulness</b>	Cultivating a constant awareness
<b>8. Right meditation</b>	Developing a deep level of clam through meditation.

## The five Precepts

The five precepts are the basic rules of living or training principles for the lay Buddhist. monks/nuns follow additional precepts.

Precept	Negative	Positive
<b>1. Abstaining from taking life</b>	Not killing or harming living things including animals. Most Buddhist are vegetarian but not all are e.g. Tibetan Buddhists do eat meat.	Care for all living things.
<b>2. Abstaining from what is not freely given</b>	Not stealing.	Be generous and share what you have.
<b>3. Abstaining sexual misconduct</b>	Against over indulgence, not taking advantage of another (Does not mean celibacy for lay Buddhists).	Be content.
<b>4. Abstaining from wrong speech</b>	Not lying. No slander, harsh speech, or gossip.	Be truthful, honest and kind.
<b>5. Abstaining intoxicants</b>	No misuse of the senses through the use of drink or drugs.	Keep you mind clear and be aware of your action. Be awake.

Additional principles (making up Ten Precepts) for monks

Precept	Negative	Positive
<b>6. Refrain from eating after midday</b>		Allows focus on more important matters than food.
<b>7. Refrain from dancing, singing and unsuitable entertainment</b>	Avoids worldly attachments.	
<b>8. Refrain from use of scents or garlands</b>	Not using cosmetics or other adornments.	The Dhamma is sufficient for life.
<b>9. Refrain from comfortable beds</b>	Sleep to be seen as a necessity not as a comfortable pastime. Avoidance of luxury.	Staying awake and alert.
<b>10. Refrain from handing gold and silver</b>	Non attachment to worldly objects.	

## **The Sangha**

“The Dhamma could not be taught without the Buddha and could not be followed without the Sangha”.

The Sangha is open to both men and women, which at the time Buddhism started was unheard of. It applies to both the lay community and those that join a monastery. There are also two Councils that are referred to as the first and second Council of the Sangha. The first met shortly after the Buddha's death, the other a hundred years later. The first meeting established the rules and the teaching of Buddhism, the second sort to relax some of these rules. This caused disagreement and this conflict was never resolved and Buddhism split. The traditionalist that upheld the rules became the Theravada and the more relaxed group became the Mahasanghika. These groups continued subdividing until by the end of the first century BCE there were about 18 or 20 forms of Buddhism in practice. However, all groups see themselves and all others as Buddhists and belonging to the Sangha.

Buddhism is a world wide religion which has members in most countries and of most nationalities. It often adapts to the cultural practices of each new country so new forms of Buddhism come into existence. Buddhism arrived in Britain in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and while there are members of many traditional forms of Buddhism now practicing in Britain we also have a new form, the FWBO the Friends of Western Buddhist Order. This was founded in 1967 by Dennis Lingwood also known as Sangharakshita. This order is neither lay nor monastic and emphasizes going to refuge. Members are free to live in society or in communes or a combination. This order aims to adapt the teaching of the Dhamma to British life.

If you are studying the different forms of Buddhism the similarities and the differences then you are studying the Sangha of Buddhism.