

# Buddhist Childs Religious Artefact Collection (BU-CHILD)

The main purpose behind the faith child collection is to introduce a child from the faith to your pupils. This idea stems from sessions which the Suffolk County RE team have put into practice and found successful.

Each faith child has been given their own identity and bag full of artefacts that are important to their daily worship and religious way of life. The idea of having a bag is that these artefacts belong to a child who has brought them in to show the class. This provides an awareness that these are someone's possessions and are worthy of care and respect.

As the teacher delivers the artefacts from the bag in a show and tell session, they can describe them and their associated customs and beliefs. Children will have a greater understanding of what it is like to be a child from a different faith.

Say hello to Dillon and examine all the different artefacts that he has brought to show you.



## Questions you could ask children about the artefacts

### **Initial Discussion**

- What is this object?
- Does it resemble anything the children have seen?
- What do you think the item is used for and by whom?
- Which religious belief is it used by?
- Does anyone know what it is called? Learn how to pronounce the name.
- What does it represent?
- How might it be used?

Collect any other questions the children might have about the artefacts and display them as you try to find the answers through your learning sessions.

- **What do the objects tell us about the faith?** *This last question can be returned to at the end of the investigation.*

## All About the Buddhist Artefacts

### **Buddha**

The representations of Buddha vary according to the different schools of Buddhism and the country of origin. This particular Buddha has its hand gesture in the Dhyana-Mudra position which represents total concentration in meditation.

*Research the different postures of Buddha statues. What are the Four Noble Truths? Introduce simple mindfulness exercises like focusing on breath and listening to sounds.*

### **Puja Bowls**

As part of their worship or meditation ritual, Buddhists may place offerings in small bowls which they then place in front of a shrine. The offerings may include water, flowers, fruit, money and rice. Rice and water represent the basic necessities of life. Water is also associated with cleaning, and the flowers are representative of the transient nature of life. Flowers also contain the seed of new life within them. Puja bowls are used to focus worshippers' spiritual awareness. They are used to contain offerings such as food (hard and soft) water (2 types – to wash and to drink) incense, flowers and lights.

Buddhist worship is called 'puja' and offerings of water are amongst the most common forms of offering at Buddhist shrines. Puja bowls are used on a shrine and each bowl stands for a different part of the ritual:

1 – Prostrating to Buddha 2 – Offerings to Buddha 3 – Confessing wrongs 4 – Rejoicing the good qualities of oneself and others 5 – Requesting Buddha's guidance 6 – Asking Buddha to remain with you 7 – Dedication

It is important that the bowls are displayed in a straight line and an equal distance apart, preferably the length of one grain of rice or barley. Empty bowls should not be placed on the shrine, and the first full bowl should fill the following six. During worship people chant to show their love for Buddha and to give thanks for his teachings.

*Make own puja bowls with clay or junk materials and decorate them. Discuss the meaning of the bowls and the importance of offerings in Buddhism. Look at images of Buddhist shrines.*

## **Prayer Beads**

*Also known as – Mallah, Mala, Malla*

Mala means necklace or garland. This is a set of beads which are used during devotional practices or meditation. Usually there will be 108 beads, which help to keep count of the number of mantras that are being said. 'Mantra' means 'instrument of thought' and this can be a verse, syllable or series of syllables. Buddhists believe that each manta represents a different aspect or quality of enlightenment – mainly being those of love, compassion, fearlessness or energy. Buddhists believe that mantras can develop these qualities.

The number 108 can be interpreted in many ways, but a popular interpretation is that the 1 represents the one true path, the 0 represents the circle of life and the 8 represents the infinity loop.

*Thread beads or make own beads and decorate them and then use them in mindfulness activities.*

**Read stories such as:**

### **The Monkey King Storybook**

Depicting a traditional tale from the Buddhist religion, this story follows how the king of the monkeys helps a human king learn about putting other people first. It examines the themes of greed, heroism, selflessness and change.

### **The Lion and the Jackal Storybook**

This consists of a traditional Buddhist tale which features a community of jackals and lions that learn that friendship is built on trust and generosity.

### **Useful Tips**

- *Be sensitive using religious and cultural artefacts and understand any special requirements in handling them.*
- *Avoid creating stereotypes and understand that not all people from the same culture may use the artefact in the same way.*
- *Use the appropriate language to talk about the artefacts.*
- *Teach the children to handle and store the artefacts with respect and sensitivity.*