

Year 5&6 Key Stage 2



# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Resource File

**Optional** units of work - Buddhism - Guidelines for life





# Lesson 4 Guidelines for life

## The big picture

This lesson looks at the guidelines and the path that lay and ordained Buddhists try to follow in order to live a better life. The Five Precepts are not rules, but are a set of guidelines that are taken on voluntarily. Each of the Five Precepts has two aspects: actions to avoid and actions to work towards.

The precepts are listed in the lesson plan but it should be noted that the third precept has been changed to make it more suitable for use with young people of this age. The third precept says: 'Abstaining from sexual misconduct – practising stillness, simplicity and contentment.' This has been changed to 'Abstaining from misusing the senses – practising stillness, simplicity and contentment.' The language of the other precepts has also been slightly changed to enable easier access by this age group.

In his life the Buddha had experience of living both a life of luxury as a prince and a life of hardship as an ascetic. It was these experiences that led him to believe that there was a middle way that people could live and achieve enlightenment. It was out of this belief that the Buddha developed the Noble Eightfold Path as a way of life. The Eightfold Path is often portrayed as a wheel with eight spokes, known as the Dharmachakra.

## Learning objective

### Learning about:

- To describe and understand the Five Precepts and the Noble Eightfold Path.
- To explain the effect of following the Five Precepts and the Noble Eightfold Path on the way a Buddhist chooses to live their life.

### Learning from:

- To consider the impact that following the Five Precepts or the Noble Eightfold Path might have on their own lives.

## Success Criteria

### Learning about:

- Pupils will have described the Five Precepts and the Noble Eightfold Path.
- Pupils will have explained and given examples of the effect that following the Five Precepts and the Noble Eightfold Path could have on the way a Buddhist chooses to live their life.

### Learning from:

- Pupils will have described the impact that following the Five Precepts or the Noble Eightfold Path would have on one particular aspect of their own lives.

## Religious education council requirements

A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, C1, C3

## Resources

- **Resource sheet 6:** 'The Dharmachakra'
- **Resource sheet 7:** 'The Noble Eightfold Path'

## Vocabulary

Abstaining, Five Precepts, laity, meditation, middle way, monk, Noble Eightfold Path, nun, ordained

## Key questions ?

*What are the guidelines for a Buddhist's life?  
How might this affect the way a Buddhist acts?*

## Introduction

Give the class some thinking time and ask them to work with a partner to come up with and write down five promises they could make that would make the world a better place to live in. For each promise, ask them to write one thing they will try not to do and one thing they will try to do.

At the end of their five promises ask them to write about why they think following these promises would make the world a better place.

Give people about ten minutes to work on this activity and then discuss the promises as a whole class.

Introduce the learning objective: 'In this lesson we are going to learn about the guidelines and the path that Buddhists try to follow during their lives. We will have time to reflect on how these guidelines might affect the choices that a Buddhist makes during his or her life. You will also have time to consider how following the guidelines or path might affect some of the choices that you make in your daily life.'

## Activities

### Stimulus

Explain to the class that Buddhists have five promises they try to keep. These promises are like guidelines to help them live their lives well. They are known as the Five Precepts. Like their promises, each precept has something to try to avoid and something to try to move towards.

Talk them through the Five Precepts:

- Not harming any living beings – trying to show more loving kindness and concern for all life.
- Not stealing – trying to be more generous in your thoughts, words and deeds.
- Not misusing the senses – practising stillness, simplicity and contentment.
- Not speaking cruelly or telling lies – trying to speak the truth and say kind and helpful things.
- Not taking drinks or drugs that stop you thinking clearly – trying to be aware of all your thoughts, words and deeds.

Point out that just like their promises, these are all personal. Explain that they are not a set of rules, but are things that Buddhists promise to try to do. What do people think the difference is between rules and promises? Which do they think are more successful to use as a way of encouraging people to live better lives? Why?

Ask people to choose one or two of the Five Precepts and write about why they think they would be easy or difficult to follow.

Explain that some Buddhists choose to become ordained as monks or nuns. They live a simpler life with very few possessions and are able to spend more time meditating. For those who are ordained, the Buddha set down five further things to abstain from. These are:

- eating after midday;
- sleeping in a luxurious bed;
- taking part in frivolous amusements;
- wearing jewellery or other personal items;
- touching money.

Introduce the idea that in order to help Buddhists live better lives, the Buddha developed the Noble Eightfold Path and that following the Noble Eightfold Path should help Buddhists keep their five promises.

Show the class the diagram of the Dharmachakra on **Resource sheet 6** and talk through each of the spokes or steps. Explain that, although it is called a path, the steps are not intended to be followed one after the other. Instead, living as a Buddhist means working on all of the steps in every aspect of your life.

The Noble Eightfold Path consists of:

- Right Understanding – Developing the understanding that all life involves suffering and that the Noble Eightfold Path is the way to move beyond suffering and live a life that is happy;
- Right Thought – Developing thoughts that are unselfish, and show loving kindness and compassion;
- Right Speech – Speaking the truth and saying helpful and positive things;
- Right Action – Following the Five Precepts;

- Right Livelihood – choosing a job that isn't harmful to others, but that helps people;
- Right Effort – practise having thoughts which are kind and helpful to people;
- Right Mindfulness – using meditation to become more self aware and aware of the world around you;
- Right Concentration – training the mind through meditation to develop wisdom.

### Response

Give everyone a copy of **Resource sheet 7** showing the blank wheel. Ask them to fill in each spoke of the wheel with an action or decision that would show a Buddhist is working on that particular step of the Noble Eightfold Path. Give them an example such as:

Right thought – thinking about something good someone else in their class has done instead of thinking about something that annoys them about that person.

As an alternative or further activity, you might like to ask the class to work in small groups to devise and create a freeze-frame to show what a Buddhist might do in a particular situation, and explain which part or parts of the Noble Eightfold Path they would be following.

## Plenary

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Explain that the Buddha called the Noble Eightfold Path the middle way. Ask people to complete the following sentence starter to show their thoughts:

- I think the Noble Eightfold Path is called the middle way because...

Give people some time to think and then ask them to write about what changes they would have to make in their lives if they promised to follow the Five Precepts and the Noble Eightfold Path.

## Differentiation

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(By task) less able people could be challenged to write examples for a smaller selection of steps on the Noble Eightfold Path.

(By support) if teaching assistant support is available, less able people may want to concentrate on the Five Precepts and role-play a situation in which a Buddhist acts differently from another person because of one of the Five Precepts.

## Extension

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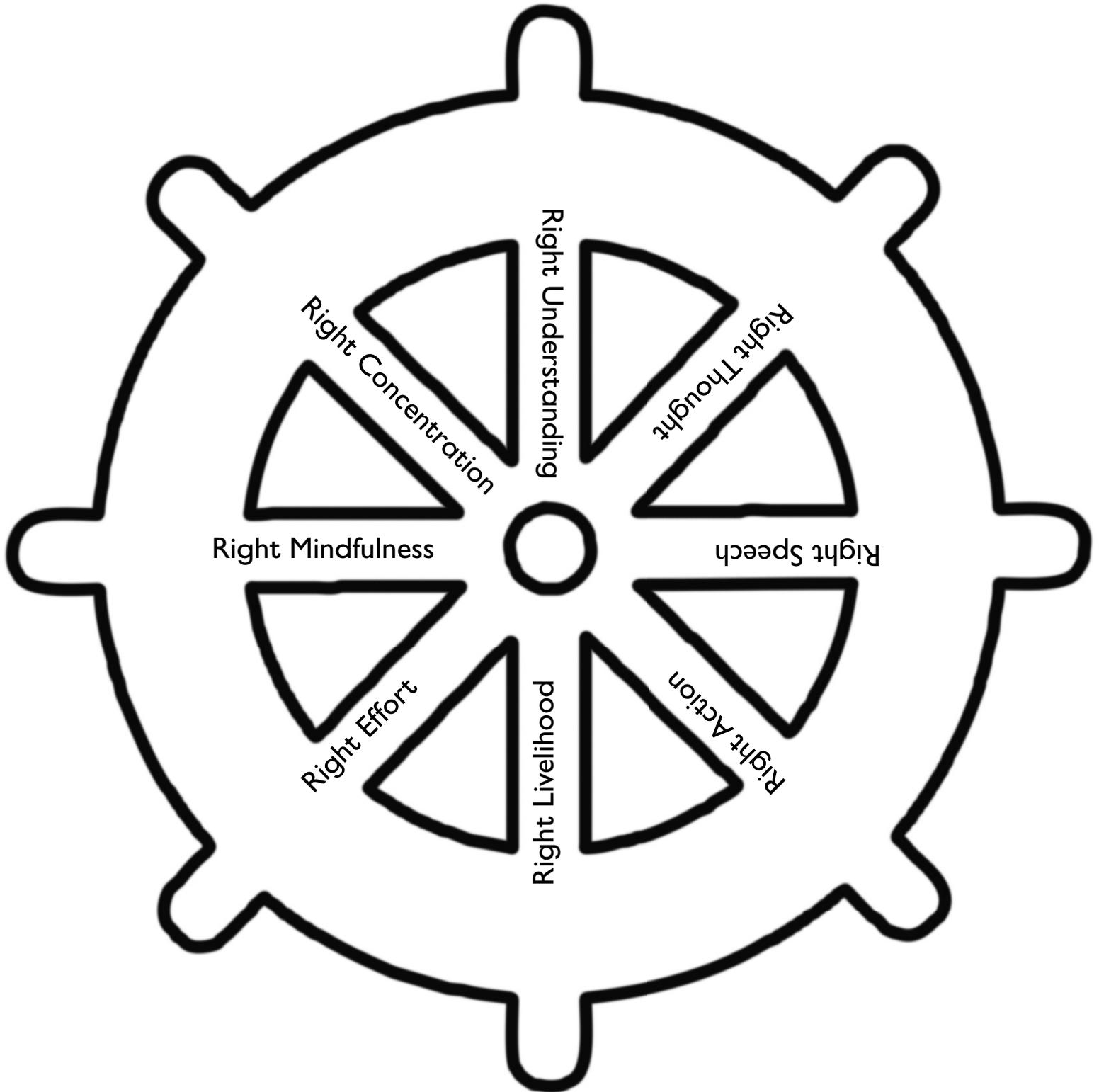
More able people could be challenged to compare how a Buddhist and a person from another faith might act in the freeze-frame created. They could also consider why that person would act in that way.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Dharmachakra





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Noble Eightfold Path

