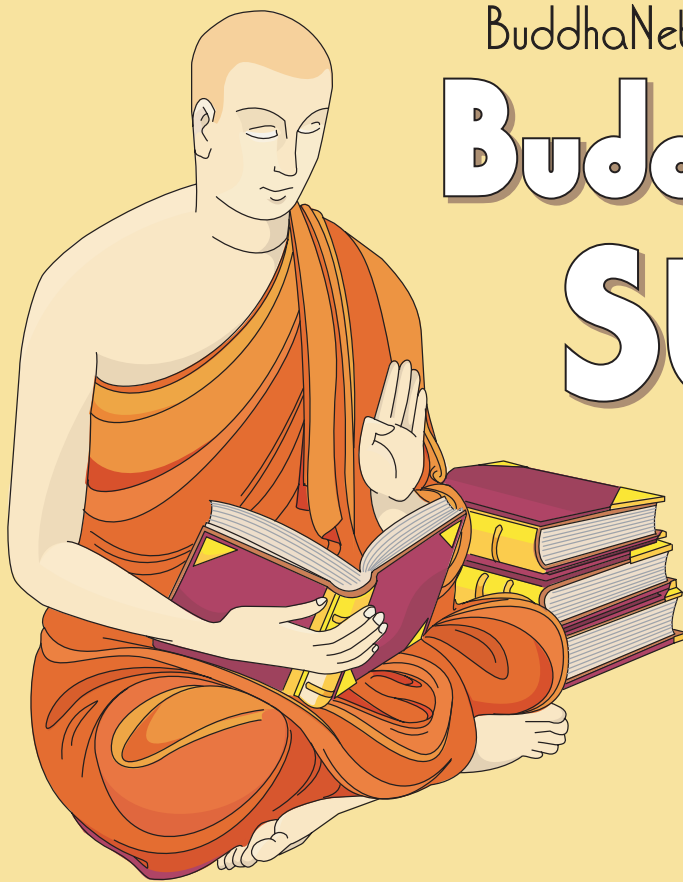


Guided Meditation for Primary Students



BuddhaNet's
**Buddhist
Studies**

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GUIDED MEDITATION FOR PRIMARY STUDENTS

Why guided meditation in the classroom?

Using these meditations with children is not the same as reading stories to them. Reading is passive. Children do understand and become involved in what you are reading, but *in guided meditation, they become actively involved*. Reading a story and reading a meditation are different functions. Reading stories to children is a must because it helps the child to learn and spell, but *meditation enables the mind to become free, to explore*.

Each meditation has its own distinctive theme and gives children the opportunity to experience it. They feel the love of the Buddha; radiate loving-kindness; climb mountains; collect seashells; become a bird; feel the touch of the wind on their face; and go to the moon. There are so many things they can do, and all these things must bring their imagination to the fore. Most importantly, they learn to appreciate the Dhamma more. In other words, they participate in the meditation and *learn to be in touch with the source of love, strength and wisdom inside themselves*.

Why teach meditation in the classroom?

“From the time I started, we noticed that some children immediately went into a relaxed state and stayed motionless for the duration of the meditation. Others fidgeted. They could not sit still and had trouble keeping their eyes closed.”

“The children who went deeply into meditation, and stayed, happened to be the better students. The ones who fidgeted were children whose attention span was limited and who had difficulty concentrating in the normal course of learning.”

“The children who were having the most difficulty with their studies were improving. They were able to think processes through, which was not possible before. The quality of their stories improved and showed a far better use of imagination.”

“Anything that can free a child’s mind should be used. We end up being bound by restrictions, which we must accept to get through life, but our minds should be free and active. Problem-solving becomes easier if the mind can see around corners instead of existing in the limited space to which we sometimes condemn it.”

(Extracted from *Moonbeam – a book of meditations for children* by Maureen Garth)

How to do it?

The meditations for children include five steps:

1. Relaxing the body
2. Deep breathing
3. Concentration of the mind
4. Expansion of the mind
5. Productive activity

1. Relaxing the Body

Some stretching or yoga exercises will be recommended.

After the yoga exercises, have the children tense and relax each body part, starting with the toes and ending with the top of the head. Or you can do the waterfall relaxation meditation with the children.

2. Deep Breathing

- i. Gather the children to sit cross legged on the cushions, left palm over the right palm

- ii. Keep the back straight and also relaxed as that will allow a natural flow of energy up and down the spine
- iii. Have the children close their eyes
- iv. Practise deep breathing for a few moments
 - a. Breathe in to a count of three, hold the breath and breathe out to a count of three;
 - b. As you breathe, you breathe in fresh energy, love, joy and peace. They are entering and spreading throughout your body;
 - c. As you breathe out, imagine any negative feelings — sadness, boredom, anger or tiredness — coming out through your nose and leaving your body and disappearing.

3. *Concentration of the Mind*

This step is focusing the mind at one point.

- i. Visualise a point on your upper lip and concentrate at that point. Draw all the energy and attention into that point while staying very relaxed. Let any stray thoughts or memories pass through, always gently drawing the attention back to the point.

4. *Expansion of the Mind*

Once the children's bodies, emotions and minds are quiet, they are ready for the fourth step: true meditation – turning inside for their own answers and wisdom. Guide the children to expand their imagination and awareness through guided imagery. By using guided imagery, the children will learn to see themselves on a movie screen in their minds as a caring, loving, patient etc. person. This will aid them to perform better as a human being as their thoughts are slowly being transformed into wholesome and positive ones.

5. *Productive activity*

- i. Slowly bring your attention back to your body. Feel all your body parts. Slowly wriggle your fingers and toes. Rotate your head. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes.

It is now time for the fifth step: grounding the new-found energy, wisdom, insights and heightened awareness into some useful and productive activity. Direct the children to channel this newly focused energy and creativity into dance, art, story writing, music, sharing, class discussions, creative communication, awareness games or academic work.

The tone of voice to use

Please remember that when you are speaking, you will do so in a very *slow, relaxed voice*, pausing to let the scene sink in, so that the child, whose eyes are closed and who is focusing inward, can easily visualise and feel the scene. The way you use your voice is very important. You will find it best to drop your voice by a few tones, speaking more and more slowly, with a soothing quality.

The children learn to relax before meditation

A beautiful waterfall of white light is flowing down on you. It flows down on your head, helping your head to relax. You feel your head relaxing. It moves down over your neck and shoulders. Your neck and shoulders are relaxing. Now it flows down over your arms. You feel your arms relaxing. It flows down your back. Your back is letting go and relaxing. It flows over your chest and stomach, helping your chest and stomach relax. You feel your chest and stomach relax. It moves down over your legs and feet. You feel your legs and feet letting go and relaxing. The beautiful waterfall of white light is flowing over your whole body. You are very peaceful and relaxed.



Lotus Meditation

BuddhaNet's Guided Meditation for Primary Students

(Buddhist value: Like a lotus flower that grows out of the mud and blossoms above the muddy water surface, we can rise above our defilements and sufferings of life)

Imagine that you are a lotus seed buried beneath a muddy lotus pond. There is mud all around you, and you can feel them clearly. Above you, above this muddy pool of dirt, mud and filth, are sunshine and air. You are not disheartened as you begin your journey towards the surface.

With a determined heart, you begin to wiggle in the earth. You grow roots deep, deep into the mud. Your little stem grows up slowly. Suddenly, “pop” you are out of the mud! Your stem grows higher and higher, taller and taller. You rise up slowly, fighting against the muddy water. All of a sudden, you are out of the muddy pond! You reach up towards the warm sun, shining down on you.

Your lotus bud begins to grow on top of your stem. It expands and grows larger and larger, finally bursting into full bloom. A white lotus flower. You

stand beautifully above the muddy water, not dirtied by the mud from which you grow. You are white, fragrant and beautiful.

Everyone who saw you marvelled at your beauty! Your determination to grow out of the muddy pond reminds them of the Buddha and his journey towards Enlightenment. The Buddha, like a lotus, is determined to grow out of the muddy surroundings, that is the defilements and sufferings of life. He has done all that is to be done and he is showing us that we can all do it too. We may have defilements but we all have the potential of growing out of our defilements and achieving wisdom, like the Buddha.

You are a beautiful white lotus flower, and your role is to remind people to rise above their defilements and sufferings, just as you are arising above the muddy water and not dirtied by the mud from which you grow.



Incense Meditation

BuddhaNet's Guided Meditation for Primary Students

(Buddhist value: Incense symbolises the fragrance of pure moral conduct and reminds us to cultivate good conduct)

Imagine that you are a stick of incense. Someone comes along and lights up a matchstick. The person puts the little flame to the tip of the incense. Immediately, you are burning away.

As you are burning, your body gives off a lovely fragrant smell. This fragrance spreads through the air and brings joy and happiness to people's heart.

The person then offers you to the Buddha. You are being put into an incense pot. You stand happily in the incense pot because you know that you have an important role to play. Your fragrance symbolises the fragrance of pure moral conduct. And this reminds people to cultivate good conduct. This fragrance spreads in all directions throughout the world.

As you are burning away, you also remind people to try and burn away their bad, unkind or selfish

thoughts. They should try to be like you, burning away their selfish acts and bringing fragrance and happiness to the world. Let every breath, that everyone breathes out into the world be full of sweetness and love. Continue to spread your fragrance in all directions.



Rainbow Meditation

BuddhaNet's Guided Meditation for Primary Students

(Buddhist value: The children learn to discover their innate virtues and potentials)

Feel your body becoming lighter and lighter. See all the colours of the rainbow. Feel your body becoming all of the colours of the rainbow.

Slowly, you are now giving out red colour. Your whole body becomes red colour. Feel yourself giving out energy and strength. You are now full of energy and strength.

Slowly, you are now giving out orange colour. Your whole body becomes orange colour. Feel yourself giving out happiness and joy. You are now full of happiness and joy.

Slowly, you are now giving out yellow colour. Your whole body becomes yellow colour. Feel yourself giving out intelligence. You are now full of intelligence.

Slowly, you are now giving out green colour. Your whole body becomes green colour. Feel yourself giving out harmony and friendship. You are now full of harmony and friendship.

Slowly, you are now giving out blue colour. Your whole body becomes blue colour. Feel yourself giving out peace. You are now full of peace.

Slowly, you are now giving out indigo colour. Your whole body becomes indigo colour. Feel yourself giving out gentleness. You are now full of gentleness.

Slowly, you are now giving out violet colour. Your whole body becomes violet colour. Feel yourself giving out beauty and self-respect. You are now full of beauty and self-respect.

You are the rainbow, your colours are going out everywhere. Feel yourself getting bigger and bigger, your colours going out further and further, until they cover up this whole room, then further until they cover the whole country, and still further until they cover the whole world. As you spread out all the colours, you are also spreading

out energy, happiness, intelligence, friendship, peace, gentleness and beauty. You spread out even farther and become even bigger. Now your colours of light are spreading throughout the whole universe. You are as big as the whole universe, your colours of light shining out in every direction in space and touching all of space.

Slowly, all the colours changed into a stream of white light. This white light is now flowing down the top of your head down to your heart. Feel all the white light going into your heart.



Light Meditation

Buddha's Guided Meditation for Primary Students

(Buddhist value: The children learn about the importance of offering lights to the Buddha and its significance in the Buddhist context)

Imagine that you are a lotus candle. Someone walks toward you and lights your wick. You are now giving out a small glow of orange light. Slowly, your whole body becomes an orange colour. Feel yourself giving out warm orange light. Someone lifts you up and places you on the shrine table.

Your warm orange light is like the brightness of wisdom. You are now shining brightly, as bright as you can be, to drive away the darkness of ignorance. Your light symbolizes the Buddha's teaching. His teachings help and guide us when we are in darkness. When we behave badly and get angry, it is as if we are in darkness. We need the light of the Buddha's teaching to help us.

Your light helps to remind people not to remain in darkness but to brighten themselves with the Buddha's teaching.

You are the bright orange light. Feel yourself expanding, your light going out further and further, until it shines through the whole temple, then further until it shines through the whole country, and still further until it covers the whole world. You are as big as the whole world and your light breaks through all the darkness and your light shines out in every direction. Your light of wisdom is touching all of space. Continue giving out orange light in every direction.



Joy Meditation

BuddhaNet's Guided Meditation for Primary Students

(Buddhist value: The children learn to spread joy around them)

Imagine a feeling of joy. You feel an opening in the top of your head. You feel joy floating in through the opening in the top of your head.

It fills up your head and neck. It fills your shoulders and arms. The joy floats down into your chest and your heart. Your heart is so full of joy. The joy gently floats on into your stomach and on into your back. It floats into your legs and feet. Every part of your body is full of joy.

You are so full of joy, it begins to spread out beyond your body. It spreads out to everyone in our classroom. It reaches beyond the classroom farther and farther until it spreads over the whole of Singapore. It spreads out to the whole earth, and continues to spread out even further into the universe — beyond the planets, beyond the stars, farther and farther. The whole universe is filled with your joy.

Flower Meditation

BuddhaNet's Guided Meditation for Primary Students

(Buddhist value: Fresh and beautiful flowers of today will become withered and ugly tomorrow. This reminds us of the Buddha's teaching that all things are impermanent.)

Imagine that you are a beautiful flower. What kind of flower are you? See the colour of your petals. Appreciate that you are now a beautiful flower.

Someone comes along and buys you from the flower shop. She puts you into a vase filled with water. You are gently sucking up the water and blooming more beautifully than before. You are fresh and sending off a sweet fragrance. The lady puts you on the table and offers you to the Buddha. You stand beautifully in the vase, bringing joy and happiness to people's hearts when they see you.

One day has passed. Slowly, the colour of your petals becomes dull. You are no longer sending off a sweet fragrance. Your petals become withered and discoloured. You are ugly and faded.

Although you are a withered flower, you are still happy in your heart. You know that you have an important role to play. Your role is to remind people of the Buddha's teaching that all things are impermanent. All things are constantly going through change. Everyone's body too, like your petals, will wither and pass away. Everyone should keep impermanence in mind and live in the present.



Water Meditation

BuddhaNet's Guided Meditation for Primary Students

(Buddhist value: Water symbolises purity, clarity and calmness, and reminds us to cleanse our minds and attain the state of purity)

Imagine that you are now pure clean water. Someone comes along and gently put you into a small bowl. The person then offers you to the Buddha.

You rest happily in the bowl knowing that you have an important role to play. You symbolise purity, clarity and calmness. You remind people to practise the Buddha's teachings, which is constantly cleansing their minds.

Water is used to clean away dirt. When everyone sees you, they are happy and joyful. This is because they are reminded that they can wash away the filth of their minds. They should wash away selfish and unkind thoughts and be clean and pure like you.

The Buddha is someone free from dirty defilements like desire, ill-will and ignorance. We should all be

like the Buddha, who does not have any dirt of defilements but only purity in his mind.



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Kid's Meditation

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