

RELIGIOUS STUDIES · Y3-Y6

Buddhism

Knowledge Organiser — KS2 RE

Key vocabulary

1

Buddhist

A follower of the teachings of the Buddha. There are around 500 million Buddhists worldwide.

2

Buddha

Means 'the awakened one'. Refers to Siddhartha Gautama, who lived in India around 2,500 years ago and discovered the path to enlightenment.

3

Enlightenment

Understanding the true nature of life and freeing oneself from suffering. The Buddha's goal for all beings.

4

Dharma

The teachings of the Buddha — the truth about life and how to live well.

5

Sangha

The community of Buddhists, especially monks and nuns.

6

Karma

The law that actions have consequences. Good actions lead to good results.

7

Reincarnation

Buddhists believe beings are reborn after death. The aim is to escape this cycle through enlightenment.



8

Nirvana

The state of perfect peace and freedom from suffering, achieved through enlightenment.

Four Noble Truths

The core teaching of the Buddha

- 1. Life involves suffering (dukkha) — pain, change, dissatisfaction.
- 2. Suffering is caused by craving — wanting things to be different.
- 3. Suffering can end — by letting go of craving.
- 4. The path to ending suffering is the Eightfold Path — eight ways of living well.
- The Eightfold Path: Right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.
- The Five Precepts (rules for daily life): no harming living beings, no stealing, no lying, no harmful sexual conduct, no intoxicants.

Beliefs and practices

How Buddhists live and celebrate

- Wesak — the most important festival. Celebrates the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death.
- Parinirvana Day — remembering the Buddha's passing
- Bodhi Day — remembering the Buddha's enlightenment under the Bodhi tree
- Meditation — sitting quietly, focusing the mind, a daily practice for many Buddhists
- Mindfulness — paying attention to the present moment with kindness
- Compassion (karuna) and loving-kindness (metta) — central to all Buddhist practice
- Many Buddhists are vegetarian (because of the precept against harming living beings)
- Pilgrimage to sites in India where the Buddha lived and taught

Places of worship and symbols



Buddhists worship in temples and monasteries. Many have a home shrine with an image of the Buddha. Important sites include Bodh Gaya in India, where the Buddha became enlightened. Symbols include: the Buddha statue (in many forms), the Dharma wheel (representing the Buddha's teachings), the lotus flower (representing the journey to enlightenment), and the Bodhi tree. Different traditions include Theravada (Southeast Asia), Mahayana (East Asia, including Zen) and Vajrayana (Tibetan Buddhism). Buddhism is unusual in that there is no creator god — it is a path of practice and ethical living.

