

Buddhism Outdoors

Explore a range of Buddhist practices which support mindfulness and meditation

All

Religions



Background

At the heart of the Buddhist faith is the ability to meditate and appreciate the moment (mindfulness.) Labyrinths and mandalas are two important tools to help focus the mind. Zen gardens provide a peaceful, aesthetically pleasing setting which reflects the beauty of nature and are considered a place for contemplation.

Allowing pupils to recreate these features not only supports their understanding of the religion of Buddhism but also supports their **health and wellbeing** as they build their own capacity for **mindfulness**.

Equipment (suggested)

- Loose natural materials including rocks, leaves, moss and sticks
- Sand or gravel
- Small rake or comb

Activity

1. Labyrinth

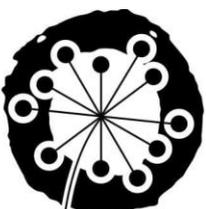
A labyrinth is a winding pattern with a single pathway leading to the centre and back out the same way. There are no trick pathways or dead ends. It could be created from natural materials, planted in a border or even cut out of grass.

2. Mandala

Mandalas from the Sanskrit for circle are intricate circular patterns usually with radial symmetry used to symbolise the circular nature of life. They can be created: as flat transient art pieces using natural materials; as a sun-catcher in a willow hoop frame or using free pouring flour, sand or salt onto tarmac.

3. Zen Garden

This is a stylised landscape using rocks, water, moss, pruned trees, bushes and raked gravel or sand to represent ripples in water. It is surrounded by a wall and is meant to be seen from a single viewpoint outside the garden. They are to serve as an aid to meditation on the true meaning of life. Zen gardens could readily be recreated by pupils on miniature scale particularly if you have access to a sand or gravel area.



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