

# Week 3: Interconnection

**Lesson Time:** 1 hour

**Instructors Required:** In-person: 2, Virtual: 1- 2

**Supplies:**

- Small bell and striker
- Want Monster book by Chelo Manchego
- Activity paper and markers, colored pencils, and crayons.
- YouTube Link for What's In Your Mind Today. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZA1\\_SWIf68](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZA1_SWIf68)
- YouTube Link for Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZA1\\_SWIf68](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZA1_SWIf68)

**Learning Objectives**

- *Create safe, fun and participatory environment.*
- *Introduce interconnection and relate the concept to the life of Buddha and the concept of a Bodhisattva.*
- *Elicit examples of interconnection from participants. Encourage youth to relate examples to their daily life.*
- *Demonstrate the link between service and giving to others to interconnection.*
- *Offer examples of ways interconnection and mindfulness/meditation intersect.*

*Outline*

<b>I. Gather &amp; Morning Message</b>	<b>20 mins</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Morning Message</li><li>• Alter Practice/Gassho and Bow</li><li>• Fun &amp; Games</li></ul>	
<b>II. Movement &amp; Meditation</b>	<b>5 mins</b>
<b>III. Dharma Lesson—Interconnection</b>	<b>15 min.</b>
<b>IV. Main Activity - Nature Meditation</b>	<b>15 mins</b>
<b>V. Closing Chant</b>	<b>5 mins</b>

**Gather & Morning Message**

Begin day with informal questions to get participants talking.

- Ask participants what they remember about a Bodhisattva Vow from the previous week.
- Ask participants if they have any examples of ways they or someone they know acted like a Bodhisattva during the previous week.
- Ask participants what they remember about the breath and bell exercise from the previous week.
- Ask participants if any experimented with paying attention to their breath or the sounds around them.

**Alter Practice/Gassho and Bow**

Refer participants to the alter. Provide an example of Gassho and bow

Instruct participants individually to Gassho and bow at alter.

# Week 3: Interconnection

## Movement & Meditation

Take participants through a series of mindful movement postures as a way to give participants an opportunity to move around, stretch, and explore mindfulness.

Suggested movements with instruction:

**One:** Begin with your feet slightly apart, arms at your sides. Breathing in, keep your elbows straight as you lift your arms in front of you until they're shoulder level, horizontal to the ground. Breathing out, bring your arms down again to your sides. Repeat the movement three more times.

**Two:** Begin with your arms at your sides. Breathing in, lift your arms in front of you. In one continuous movement, bring them all the way up, stretching them above your head. Touch the sky! This movement can be done with your palms either facing inward toward each other, or facing forward as you reach up. Breathing out, bring your arms slowly down again to your sides. Repeat three more times.

**Three:** Breathing in, lift your arms out to the side, palms up, until your arms are shoulder level, parallel to the ground. Breathing out, touch your shoulders with your fingertips, keeping your upper arms horizontal. Breathing in, open your arms, extending them until they're stretched out to a horizontal position again. Breathing out, bend your elbows, bringing your fingertips back to your shoulders.

**Four:** When you breathe in, you are like a flower opening to the warm sun. Breathing out, the flower closes. From this position with your fingertips on your shoulders, do the movement three more times. Then lower your arms back down to your sides.

**Five:** In this exercise, you make a large circle with your arms. Breathing in, bring your arms straight down in front of you, centered between your hips, palms together. Raise your arms up and separate your hands so your arms can stretch up over your head. Breathing out, continue the circle, arms circling back, until your fingers point toward the ground. Breathing in, lift your arms back and reverse the circle. Breathe out as you bring your palms together and your arms come down in front of you. Repeat three more times.

**Six:** Start by putting your hands on the sides of your waist. As you do this exercise, keep your legs straight but not locked, and your head centered over your body. Breathing in, bend forward at the waist and begin to make a circle with your upper body. When you're halfway through the circle, your upper body leaning back, breathe out and complete the circle, ending with your head in front of you while you're still bent at the waist. On your next in-breath, begin a circle in the opposite direction. On your out-breath, complete the circle. Repeat the series of movements three more times.

**Seven:** Begin with your hands on our waist, heels together, feet turned out to form a V, so that they make a 90 degree angle. Breathing in, rise up on your toes. Breathing out, stay on your toes, keep your back straight, and bend your knees. Keeping your upper body centered, go down as low as you comfortably can maintain your balance. Breathing in, straighten your knees and come all the way up, still standing on your toes. From this position, repeat the movement three more times, remembering to breathe slowly and deeply.

# Week 3: Interconnection

## Fun and Games: Story Time

Read *The Want Monsters* by Chelo Manchego

After the story concludes, engage participants in a discussion. Questions may include:

- Want Monsters come in all shapes and sizes. What do your Want Monsters look like?
- What does it usually want too much of?"
- After reading story, invite participants to draw a picture of their own personal Want Monster.

## Virtual Participant Consideration

Virtual participants are welcome to view reading of book 'What's In Your Mind Today.' Book is appropriate for a 6 - 9 audience. If students are older, view Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda.

**What's In Your Mind Today:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZA1\\_SWIf68](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZA1_SWIf68)

**Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5nsySCMH36s>

## Dharma Lesson: Interconnection

Facilitators are encouraged to develop Dharma lesson content in a manner that most resonates with them.

### *Suggested talking points*

- Relate interconnection with basic Buddhist teaching
- Connect interconnection with gestures of kindness, compassion, and generosity in daily life
- Demonstrate interconnection using a zafu as an example.
- Ask participants 'What is the zafu?' Beginning with the material inside, extrapolate to other people and things connected to the zafu.
- Make bigger and bigger connections between the zafu and the wider world

Example: Is the zafu the person who sits on it? What about the person who sold us the Zafu? And what about the drivers who transported the Zafu to the store where we bought it? And how about the people who made the material inside? Or, the natural materials used to create the fiber and stuffing of the Zafu? etc.

# Week 3: Interconnection

**Main Activity:** Nature Meditation. *Note: Activity can be done outside as weather permits.*

Provide the following direction to youth:

- Find a quiet spot.
- Sit, stand, or lay in a comfortable position
- Sit with your back straight and shoulders relaxed.
- Notice your in- and out- breath
- Listen to the words that you are about to hear.
- Let your body relax, enjoy the feeling, and smile

*Ring the bell before each meditation; Each meditation takes approx. 10 breaths each.*

Breathing in, I see myself as a flower, a human flower. Breathing out, I am beautiful, just as I am and feel very fresh. Breathing in, FLOWER. Breathing out, FRESH.

Breathing in, I see myself as a mountain. Breathing out, I feel solid, nothing can move or distract me. Breathing in, MOUNTAIN. Breathing out, SOLID.

Breathing in, I see myself as still water, a calm, clear lake. Breathing out, I reflect things just as they are, inside and around me. Breathing in, STILL WATER. Breathing out, REFLECTING.

Breathing in, I see myself as the big blue sky, with a lot of space in and around me.

Breathing out, I feel very free and at ease. Breathing in, SPACE. Breathing out, FREE.

*After exercise is complete, direct participants to sit in a circle. Offer questions to the group to generate an active discussion about the participant's experience. Questions asked may include:*

- What connections did you think about during our exercise?
- What things outside of yourself did you feel connected to?
- How might thinking about interconnection help you be more helpful or generous?

## **Virtual Participant Consideration**

Ensure virtual participants can clearly hear bell and see inperson participants. In addition, ensure to call on virtual participants with questions or requests for examples throughout activity to ensure they are fully included in activity.

## **Closing Chant**

Pass out closing chant to participants. Show participants how you plan to put your hands together and chant the four line Bodhisattva Vow. Go through once on your own. For the second time, invite participants to follow along.

May we develop a deeper understanding in order to live peacefully with people, animals, plants and minerals.  
May we develop compassion in order to protect the lives of people, animals, plants and minerals.