



Bodhi Day

1. As the pupils enter

Have the webpage open:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/assemblies-bodhi-day/zy9vp4j>

Play your chosen music and display the picture of the Bodhi Tree:

http://teach.files.bbci.co.uk/schoolradio/assemblies/images/bodhi_tree.jpg

2. Introduction

Display the image of the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya. Tell pupils: *This tree is known as the Bodhi Tree, or 'Tree of Enlightenment'. It stands next to the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya, India. The temple was built to mark the place where, around 2,500 years ago, a man called Siddhartha Gautama sat down to meditate - to think deeply about what it means to be alive. Siddhartha had once been a prince, but had left his rich palace to live the life of a poor holy person. Siddhartha sat underneath a tree just like this one, promising himself he would not stop meditating until he fully understood life and had found an answer to pain and death. It is said that after meditating for seven weeks he gained this understanding and became the Buddha, which means 'the awakened one'. Today, around 376 million people call themselves Buddhists and follow his teachings. Each year, on Bodhi Day, Buddhists celebrate the moment their great teacher woke up to the meaning of life.* Ask: What are some of the ways other faiths celebrate important days or festivals? Gather the children's ideas and conclude: *Bodhi Day is marked in Buddhist homes by meditation and by decorating a small fig tree with coloured beads and lights. Families enjoy Jataka tales too: stories once told by the Buddha about his past lives. Before becoming enlightened, he believed he had lived many times before, sometimes as a human, sometimes as an animal, but always learning something new about life. This is one of those Jataka tales, the story of The Monkey King's sacrifice...*

3. Play the video

Play the video. Duration: 4' 40". Final words: '...temple was built in his memory.'

4 & 5. Time to talk

What do you think the Buddha hoped people might learn from this story?
[Gather responses; then say:] *Many people who are not Buddhists use meditation to calm themselves and forget their everyday cares. They try to be 'mindful' - aware of the present moment and the world around them. Let's try a moment of mindfulness. Close your eyes and breathe deeply. In your head, count each time you breathe out. Concentrate on counting the breaths and let all the other thoughts in your mind slip away. Ready? We'll close our eyes and stay still and quiet while we count ten breaths.*

Play video



6. Time to sing

An opportunity to sing your chosen song.

7. Opportunity to reflect

Buddha taught that we should try to be kind and caring towards all living things...

He believed we should try not to be greedy...

He taught that by following good examples, each of us is capable of change and of being a better person...

What change for the better could you try to make today..?

8. Opportunity for prayer

Use your standard form of address ('Dear God, Lord Jesus' etc) and:

Help us to be kind and caring towards all living things and not to be greedy.

Help us to remember that by following good examples, each of us is capable of change and of being a better person.

Amen.