

Lesson Plan | My Bodhisattva

Student Name _____

A bodhisattva is an especially wise and kind person. *Bodhi* means awake, *Sattva* means being. Put them together and we have an awakened being. Bodhisattvas find great joy in helping others. Some bodhisattvas specialize in a particular type of help. For example Quan Yin specializes in compassion. Manjushri specializes in wisdom and clarity. Saraswati specializes in creativity. Tell us about your Bodhisattva!



What is a problem that you would like help with?

It might be a problem related to physical needs (like hunger, sleepiness, needing shelter) or emotional needs (like fear, sadness, conflict) or other problem solving (environmental crisis, etc). It could be something personal, community oriented, or global.

Design a bodhisattva to support you with this problem. What skillful qualities might they need for dealing with it?

Possibilities might include:

- Bravery
- Compassion
- Creativity
- Caretaking
- Clear seeing or understanding
- Concentration
- Deep Listening
- Equanimity or calmness
- Generosity
- Honesty
- Inventiveness
- Kindness
- Patience
- Persistence
- Steadfastness
- Stillness
- Wisdom



What action will your bodhisattva take to help solve your problem?

Choose one or two special physical characteristics that your bodhisattva might have on the outside to tell about who they are and how they help.

Possibilities might include

- Exaggerated or extra human parts (like extra arms) or super senses (sound, taste, touch, smell, sight)
- Animal parts
- Special or magical implements, symbols, or tools
- Nature elements: earth, air, fire, water, or space
- Special colors on its body or clothing

What would you name your bodhisattva?

Sketch

Create a color sketch of your bodhisattva, including all its important details (action/pose, clothing, colors, special objects or parts).

LESSON

This makes a good follow up activity to the [4 Noble Truth worksheet](#). Introduce the concept of Bodhisattvas and their beneficial qualities. Talk about the idea of protectors and talisman. Give examples of Bodhisattvas and their symbols: Tara, Manjushri (flower with book on top: knowledge and showing how rare), Saraswati. Use statues and images.

Guiding Questions

- Can you think of a problem where one of these qualities might be helpful?
- If you were going to have perfected one of these qualities, which one would you have and how might you use it to help others?
- What is an action or pose that might show your way of helping?
- How do you help? And how does it feel to help?
- What is a problem that you think needs to be solved (Optional: use Four Noble Truth sheet)
 1. Problem
 2. Cause
 3. End of problem/cessation (what looks like when success)
 4. Path

Activity

- Design a bodhisattva that has a particular quality or problem solving ability.
- Use worksheets and spend time conceptualizing
- Sketch
- Use cardboard, found materials, paper, and other supplies to create a bodhisattva figure.
- Bring something from home to add to the object, like a bead or a piece of special fabric.
- Optional: Paint the eyes last with some ceremony that shows this is the moment it comes “alive”*

Resources

[Taking the Bodhisattva Vow with Mingyur Rinpoche](#)

* A ritual that may have started in the 1800s was for painting the Buddha’s eyes—a ritual named *netra mangalya*—is the last act in decorating a new image, and there is a special spirit or protective chant of passages from the dharma that accompany that act.





















