

# BIRTHDAYS



MIDDLE WAY  
SCHOOL

## Birthdays at Middle Way School

Birthdays are a special day to celebrate precious human birth. At MWS we acknowledge the miracle of life with a short celebration on the morning of (or closest to) your child's birthday. For children born in summer, we celebrate half birthdays, so mark your calendars for 6 months from the birth date and we will do the celebration then.

On that date, parents and/or guardians should plan to come no later than 8:45 and to stay until about 9:10 a.m. Instead of regular drop off, we'll meet in the Welcome Center, where we have a cozy and practice lighting a candle. You can prepare your child at home with match safety and candle lighting, and/or we can do it together on this morning. Your child will decorate their birthday crown and also select a paramita card, which will have one of the Buddhist paramitas on it, to help them set aspirations for the year.

The paramitas are qualities that manifest for the benefit of all beings:

1. Dana: generosity, giving of oneself
2. Shila: discipline
3. Nekkhamma: renunciation, non-grasping
4. Virya: energy, diligence, effort
5. Ksanti: patience, tolerance, acceptance
6. Metta: goodwill, friendliness, loving-kindness
7. Sacca: honesty
8. Adhittana: tenacity, determination
9. Upekkha: equanimity, serenity
10. Prajna: wisdom, insight, discernment

### What to bring:

- **Wishing Stone:** Your child can choose from our wishing stones or bring a favorite stone, they will get it back.
- **Snack:** It's up to parents if they wish to prepare snack for the entire school or just the class. Snack is for all 29 students total. Snack should be vegetarian and low sugar. No candy please. Two students are vegan and two are gluten free so please consider them. Low sugar muffins or cookies are good, as are fruits. If you have any questions about what's appropriate, please ask Grace. The snack will be served at 10 a.m. snack time.
- **Crown Centerpiece:** Your child can also bring something small to add to the crown centerpiece. Something like a feather or a flower or a small figurine would work.
- **Three anecdotes:** Please be prepared to tell three very short anecdotes, one when your child was a baby, one from a few years ago, and one from recent times, that show a progression in this world.
- Please do not bring cameras, iPads, or other devices. We will take photos and send them to you.

We will head into the classroom to join the morning circle. Classmates and teachers will infuse the wishing stone with our best wishes for the year. We close with a song customized for the season:

*Autumn, winter, summer, spring*

*Birthdays are a time to sing*

*No matter the season rain or shine*

*it's a very special time*

*AUTUMN: Now the autumn leaves spin down, weave a gold one for your crown*

*WINTER: Since you are a winter child, catch a snowflake blowing wild*

*SPRING: Pick a violet small and fair in the spring to deck your hair*

*SUMMER: Since you are a summer child, wander meadows warm and wild*

*And we will all join in to say ...have a birthday glad and gay!*

The stone is offered to the child at the end and then parents can depart for the day. ♥