

Golden Dragon Activity



Summary:

With this activity, children will learn that dragons are represented differently in world cultures. They will create a golden dragon twirler that represents their own compassionate wishes.

Grade Level: K–5th

Duration: 1 hour

Materials:

- *Kuan Yin: The Princess Who Became the Goddess of Compassion*
- Printouts of the golden dragon's face, tail, and spiral body
- Scissors
- Coloring materials
- Glue
- A paperclip
- Thread

Background:

For centuries, dragons have been represented in cultures throughout the world, though attitudes toward them differ. Chinese Emperors used the dragon as symbols of power, nobility, and divine descent for at least 6,000 years. They referred to their thrones as “dragon seats” and their beds as “dragon beds.” We can find many dragons on furniture, clothing, jewelry, and decorations throughout the palace in *Kuan Yin*.

In Chinese Buddhism, artists depict the dragon as a symbol of the spiritual power, wisdom, and enlightenment versus the worldly power of imperial rule. This is the type of dragon that appears to Ling and Miao Shan to assist the sisters in response to Ling’s heartfelt compassionate wish.

Resources to Support Learning:

- [The Role of Dragons in Chinese Culture](#): The Cleveland Museum of Art offers a lesson plan intended for grades 3-5 that can be adapted to fit grades K–2 [here](#).
- [Dragons in Buddhism: Great Serpents of Buddhist Art and Literature](#)

Procedure:

1. Read *Kuan Yin: The Princess Who Became the Goddess of Compassion* to the children
2. Bring attention to all the dragons in the book
3. Ask the children what they think about dragons
4. Address the fact that in different cultures, animals or mythological creatures can mean different things
5. Ask the children what they think about the Golden Dragon that appeared when Ling made her wish
6. The children make their own dragons that represent their own heartfelt wishes
7. Hang the dragons up in a window or outside where they can twirl in the breeze

Steps for Making the Dragon:

STEP 1: Color the head, tail, and body of the dragon. While coloring, contemplate heartfelt wishes for the benefit of others: family, friends, animals, Mother Earth, etc.



STEP 2: Write or draw the heartfelt wishes on the spiral body. Use both sides.

STEP 3: Cut out both sides of the head **as one piece** that folds in half. Cut the tail and body.



STEP 4: Glue both sides of the head and the tail on. Add the paperclip to the tail.



STEP 5: Attach string by weaving through the dragon's horns. Weave both sides of string up through the center of the spiral. Adjust the string so that the dragon's head is level with the ground.



STEP 6: Tie off the string on the paperclip and leave extra string above the clip for hanging.



STEP 7: Hang in a place to twirl and send the heartfelt wishes out on the wind!





