

Meditation at the Mogao Caves

Class

5th-6th Grade Social Studies

Standards

1. Language Standards:
 - a. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7 - Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
2. Content Standards:
 - a. 6.6.8. - Describe the diffusion of Buddhism...
 - b. 7.3.1 - Describe ... reasons for the spread of Buddhism...

Organizing Questions

1. What role do mediation spaces play in Buddhist practice?
2. How do the Mogao Caves reflect the Buddhist practice of meditation?
3. How can students create a physical space in their own lives where they can be reflective?

Introduction

After explaining, modeling, and analyzing primary and secondary sources on the development of Buddhism in China, students should have a foundational understanding of this faith. This lesson will focus specifically on the Mogao caves, their creation, and their focus on the use of space for worship.

Before beginning this lesson, the teacher should have already completed a series of lessons and activities explaining the origin, beliefs, and history of Buddhism. These activities may include creating an age-appropriate comic strip of the Buddha's life, having students locate important places, dates, and figures in the history of Buddhism on an illustrated map of Asia, and studying the teachings of Buddhism by reading selections of popular sutras as a primary source.

The main goal of this lesson is to help students create their own "safe space" by using meditation techniques and finding a small space over which they can claim ownership. Students living in the inner city have limited space in which they can truly call their own, and in many instances they cannot find any place of solace. By following the basic principles the Tang dynasty monk Xuanzang used in creating the first Buddhist grottoes at Mogao as a place of private worship and meditation far from his homeland or any established temple, students will also be able to create their own place of peace and refuge, even if their homes are crowded and chaotic.

Objectives

1. Learn the basic teachings of Buddha.
2. Apply knowledge of Buddhism to the creation of the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang.
3. Use different text sets (Video, photographs, text) to increase understanding of the Mogao Caves in relation to meditation spaces.

4. Create a space that students can identify as their own refuge.
5. Integrate the use of sacred spaces in the Mogao Caves to the creation of the students' own place of refuge using collaborative group activities.

Materials

1. Handouts, 1 copy per student
2. Variety of colored pens, sufficient quantities for the whole class
3. Glue,
4. Post-its or note cards
5. Talking chips, 2 chips per student
6. PowerPoint presentation for use during lessons

Equipment

1. Computer
2. Projector
3. Speakers

Teacher Preparation

1. Preload the PowerPoint, websites and music
2. Make sure speakers are working
3. Pass out talking chips to students
4. Students will have to go that day's notebook page for the writing portions
5. Make sure there are enough post-it/ note cards for reflection

Time

One 92-minute class period, plus additional homework time to finish space creation project

Procedures

1. Do Now: Reflection
 - a. Play peaceful, soothing meditation music and ask students to close their eyes.
 - b. Have them think of a place in which they were at peace. Tell them to remember the sounds, smells, and textures of that place, the way it made them feel. Give them a minute to think.
 - c. At the end of the minute have them open their eyes.
2. Quick Write Activity: Mix-Pair-Share
 - a. Have students fill in the following sentence stems:
 - i. The location that I felt most relaxed was _____.
 - ii. _____ relaxed me because _____ (describe it) _____.
 - iii. After I left ____ I felt _____ because _____.
 - b. Once students finish writing, do a mix, pair, share activity to have them stand up and move around. I like to play the Madagascar song "I like to move it" while they change partners.
 - c. After students have the opportunity to share individually with a few partners, invite a few people share their thoughts with the whole class.
3. Team Activity: Talking Chips
 - a. Use talking chips to facilitate universal participation in a class discussion of the following question: Does Buddhism require meditation spaces?
 - b. Give each student two talking chips.
 - c. Each time a student wants to contribute to the discussion, they must give the

- teacher one of their talking chips.
- d. Once everyone has used both chips, give all of the students their chips back and allow them to continue their discussion freely. This method ensures that every has equal opportunity to participate in the discussion.
4. Think, Pair, Share Activity: History of the Mogao Caves
 - a. Play the first 34 seconds of the following video clip on the history and purpose of the Mogao Caves:
<http://bugu.cntv.cn/language/english/newfrontiers/classpage/video/20100122/100440.shtml>
 - b. After they view this clip, they will answer, pair up and share their answers to the following questions:
 - i. What was the initial purpose of the Mogao Caves? According to the video, the initial purpose of the Mogao Cave was_____
 - ii. Is the Mogao Caves significant to Buddhist practice? The Mogao Cave were _____
 - iii. What Impact did the Mogao Caves have on Buddhist Monks? The Mogao Caves had_____
 - c. Students will also be exposed to several images of the caves. It is evident that careful attention to details was taken because they were used for meditation and worship. (images attached to PowerPoint)
 5. Whole Class Activity: Quote Meaning
 - a. Ask students to evaluate the meaning and purpose of the following quote:

With single-mindedness
 The master quells his thoughts.
 He ends their wandering.
 Seated in the cave of the heart,
 He finds freedom.
 -Buddha in the *Dhammapada* (Shambhala Pocketbook Edition)
 6. Individual Activity: Creating your own space
 - a. Now that students have the foundational understanding of the purpose and need of a space of reflection, they will create their own space. Choose one of the following three space-creation activities for your students to complete, or if you have enough time, let them do all three:
 - i. Draw of image of your reflective space
 - ii. Write about the elements and their purpose of your space
 - iii. Create a vision board with the elements of the reflective space using magazines
 7. Lesson Reflection/ Assessment: 3, 2, 1
 - a. In the last few minutes of class students, ask students to write the following in their notebooks as a way of reflection and assessment:
 - i. 3 summary points of the lesson
 - ii. 2 new concepts that you didn't know prior to the lesson that you want to keep exploring
 - iii. 1 question that you have about the topic covered in class
 - b. Collect the students' responses for assessment.

Assessment

1. Exit Ticket "3, 2, 1"



A Place of Refuge

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This lesson is part of a unit study of China. This unit will encompass lessons that cover different dynasties, geography, social structures and government. After explaining, modeling, and analyzing primary and secondary sources in the development of Buddhism in China, students will have a fundamental understanding of this philosophy and faith. Additionally students will have had previous lessons on the history of the Mogao Caves and the development of Dunhuang as an integral city on the Silk Road.



Unit Breakdown

Standards

Language Standards

- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7](#)

Integrate visual information with other information in print and digital texts.

Content Standards

- 6.6.8. Describe the diffusion of Buddhism...
- 7.3.1 Describe ... reasons for the spread of Buddhism...

Lesson Objective

Using collaborative grouping activities, you will integrate the use of sacred spaces in the Mogao Caves to the creation of your own place of refuge.

Lesson Agenda

- Do Now: Reflection
- Quick Write Activity: Mix-Pair-Share
- Team Activity- Talking Chips
- Think, Pair, Share Activity- History of Mogao Caves
- Whole Class Activity- Quote Meaning
- Individual Activity – Creating your own space
- Lesson Reflection/ Assessment

Do Now:



Quick Write: Sentence Frame PG 1

1. The location that I felt most relaxed was

_____.

2. _____ relaxed me because

_____ (describe it) _____.

3. After I left _____ I felt _____ because _____.



Mix- Pair- Share

Don't forget to praise your Partner!!

[Song](#)

History of the Mogao Caves

After watching the video answer the following questions. 1 ½ min to answer! PG 2

1)What was the initial purpose of the Mogao Caves? According to the video, the initial purpose of the Mogao Cave was _____

2)Is the Mogao Caves significant to Buddhist practice? The Mogao Cave were _____

3)What Impact did the Mogao Caves have on Buddhist Monks? The Mogao Caves had _____

Mogao Caves







With single-mindedness
The master quells his thoughts.
He ends their wandering.
Seated in the cave of the heart,
He finds freedom.

Buddha in the *Dhammapada*
(Shambhala Pocketbook Edition)

Class Thoughts???

Talking Chips:



1. Cut a piece of paper in halves
2. Put your name on each piece
3. I will pose a question:
4. If you want to provide an answer, place you piece of paper in the center.
5. People will take turns talking
6. Once you used all your chips, you have to wait until everyone is finished to start all over.

*You have 30 seconds to
make your chips !!!*

Does Buddhism Require
Meditation Spaces?

Create Your Perfect Refuge

Choice one of following ways:

PG 3&4

- 1) Draw of image of your reflective space
- 2) Write about the elements and their purpose of your space
- 3) Create a vision board with the elements of the reflective space using magazines

Lesson Reflection

- 3- Summary points of the lesson
- 2- New concepts you did not know prior to the lesson that you want to keep exploring
- 1- Question you might have about the topic covered in class

Questions??

