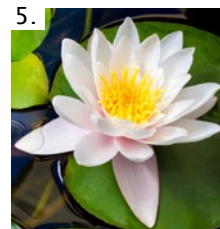
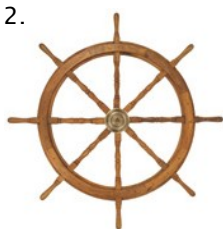


Exercise 1: Warmer

Match the images connected with Buddhism (1–6) with their descriptions (a–f).



a. lotus flower

b. meditating Buddha

c. temple

d. incense

e. Dharma Wheel

f. Buddhist monk

Exercise 2: Key words and expressions

Match the key words to their meanings and then find them in the article to read them in context.

charity

compassion

enlightenment

kindness

Nirvana

released

1. in Buddhism this is the moment when a person understands the truth of everything (part 3)

2. a state of complete happiness and peace that Buddhists try to find, where life isn't important any more (part 3)

3. let animals and birds leave their cages and be free (part 4) _____

4. a feeling of sympathy for someone who is in a bad situation because you understand and care about them (part 4) _____

5. behaving in a way that shows you care about other people and want to help them (part 4)

6. organizations to which you give money so that they can help people who are poor or ill (part 4)

reflection

meditate

lanterns

joy


incense

chant

7. sing a word or phrase many times (part 5) _____
8. make your mind empty of thoughts, or concentrate on only one thing, in order to relax or as a spiritual or religious exercise (part 5) _____
9. something that gives a strong but nice smell when burned, often in a church or a temple (part 5) _____
10. lights inside paper containers (part 5) _____
11. a feeling of great happiness (part 6) _____
12. when you think carefully about something (part 6)



Happy Vesak Day

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What is Vesak Day?

1. Vesak Day is a special day for millions of Buddhists all over the world. It celebrates the three most important events in the Buddha's life: his birth, the day he became the Buddha and his death.
2. Siddhārtha Gautama was born in Nepal around 2,500 years ago. When he was a young man, he left his family and his home and travelled around India for six years. On his travels he met poor, sick and dying people for the first time in his life.
3. At the age of 35, after meditating under a tree for 49 days, he obtained enlightenment and became the Buddha. Enlightenment happens when a person sees and understands all things. At the age of 80, Buddha died, or passed into Nirvana. Buddhists believe that Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death all happened on the day of the first full moon in May, Vesak Day.
4. Every year on Vesak Day, Buddhists promise to live a good and compassionate life. Vegetarian food is eaten and in many places birds and other animals are released to show compassion. It is also important to do good things and to show kindness by sharing your food and giving money to charity.
5. On Vesak, Buddhists decorate their houses and wear white clothes. They go to the temple, raise the Buddhist flag, chant, sing, meditate, listen to stories, bring flowers, burn incense and light candles. In the evening, colourful lanterns are lit and often released into the dark sky.
6. Vesak is also called Wesak Day or Buddha Day. It is a day of joy, peace and reflection that is celebrated in Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Singapore, India, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar and other Southeast Asian countries.



Exercise 3: Understanding the text

Choose the best answer for each question.

1. What three things are celebrated on Vesak Day?
 - a. Kindness, compassion and charity.
 - b. The sun, the moon and the stars.
 - c. The Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death.
2. What do Buddhists not do at Vesak?
 - a. Eat meat or fish.
 - b. Release birds and animals.
 - c. Prepare food.
3. Where do Buddhists go on Vesak Day?
 - a. To visit family.
 - b. They stay at home.
 - c. To the temple.
4. What do they do there?
 - a. Write stories about Buddha.
 - b. Chant and meditate.
 - c. Make paper lanterns.

5. What do Buddhists promise on Vesak Day?

- a. To live a good and compassionate life.
- b. To go to the temple every day.
- c. To give half of their money to charity.

6. Vesak is a day of...

- a. ... birth and death.
- b. ... joy, peace and reflection.
- c. ... health and happiness.

Exercise 4: Vegetarian food



Although most Buddhists are vegetarians, some are allowed to eat meat and fish. However, at Vesak, animals may not be killed and so Buddhists only eat vegetarian food. Discuss these questions in pairs or groups.

- How often do you eat meat or fish?
- Are there any special days when you do not eat meat or fish?
- What is your favourite vegetarian meal?

Exercise 5: Creative thinking

Siddhārtha Gautama meditated under a tree for 49 days before he became the Buddha.

Look at a tree for two to five minutes. Then circle the words and expressions that you could use to answer the questions. Add any more you may know.

- What does it look like?

tall thin strong old young beautiful majestic ...

- What does it feel like?

cold warm hard smooth rough ...

- What does it give people, birds and animals?

fruit nuts shade protection a home ...

- How does it change throughout the year?

It grows leaves / flowers / fruit / nuts / ... in ...

- How does the tree make you feel?

small safe happy annoyed close to nature ...

Use these words and expressions to talk about the tree.

Tree of Kindness

