INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

# DIDACTIC REFERENCES – SECONDARY LEVEL I

## OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to …

1. explain Buddha's teachings on the Four Noble Truths.
2. relate these to their own realities of life.
3. understand that lasting happiness is not achieved through external conditions.

**Since the content of this topic is very extensive, this lesson is designed as a double lesson.**

## INTRODUCTION

**Material 1** provides an impetus for reflection. A cartoon sketches a dialogue of aliens who have the research assignment to explore the suffering of humans. The students are encouraged to take a closer look at a self-evident fact and express themselves freely in the plenary.

## EXERCISE 1

**Material 2** introduces Buddha's teaching on the First Noble Truth "There is suffering." Students develop an understanding of the three types of suffering using the questions on **Worksheet 1**, sharing with a partner. In depth, they reflect on the suffering of basic ignorance and contrast it with the inherent joy. The **Answers to WS 1** offer possible answers. Questions are shared in plenary until understanding is assured.

## INTRODUCTION

**Material 3** serves as preparation for the Second Noble Truth. The second cartoon makes the aliens wonder whether the humans do not know what the cause of suffering is.
The students put themselves in their place as observers and make assumptions in plenary.

## EXERCISE 2

**Material 4** provides explanations of the Buddha's Second Noble Truth "There is a cause of suffering." Here the central Buddhist idea of fundamental ignorance is introduced and made comprehensible. The related tasks of **Worksheet 2** guide the students to deal with ego-centeredness and the resulting disturbing feelings. Through the creative representation of a concrete situation, they are asked to differentiate between different consequences of actions. The **Answers to WS 2** offer suggestions that make clear that disturbing feelings lead to harmful actions and thus to suffering, and counters this with the fact that one can also consciously make happy decisions. For this examination of one's own self, individual work is suitable; a short exchange in class discussion can follow.

## EXERCISE 3

On **Worksheet 3**, there is a story of a fictional mountain climb that metaphorically represents the path and goals of "liberation and enlightenment." Here Buddha's teaching of the Third Noble Truth "There is an end to suffering" is presented. The pupils mark essential statements in the text and can follow the stages of the mountain climb as well as understand their metaphorical meaning. This is done in individual work, afterwards they exchange the results in the plenary. The **Answers to WS 3** show the assignment of the figurative and concrete statements on reaching the end of suffering.

## EXERCISE 4

**Worksheet 4** gives an overview of Buddha's Fourth Noble Truth "There is a way to the end of suffering". Working in partners, the students formulate essential statements in their own words. As a result, it should be understood that considering the consequences of one's own actions on others in difficult situations by weighing the consequences of one's own actions is an essential step towards auspicious behavior. The **Answers to WS 4** show possible answers.

## APPLICATION

To round off this detailed discussion of the Four Noble Truths, it is a good idea to meditate.
If you do not want to participate, just listen quietly.

Suitable is the **breath meditation** for attaining peace of mind, which can be found in **Material 5**.

According to Buddhist understanding, it is not enough to have rationally understood the Noble Truths. Their practical implementation in everyday life bears fruit and leads from suffering to happy experience.

The methods of meditation are an offer. The pupils

have the opportunity to experience that simple meditations calm the mind and that one can develop more distance to one's thoughts and feelings that permanently occupy one consciously or unconsciously.

Everything that the students experience is perfectly fine. It may also be that they simply become aware of how extremely much they are thinking and feeling. The point here is simply to experience the means of meditation in its approach. One may become aware of how much one can be distracted by others, how relaxing it can be to simply do nothing for a while, how long two minutes can be, etc.
Students can share these insights, but the experience should not be talked down.