

BACKGROUND READING – BUDDHIST MEDITATION & MANDALAS

DIRECTIONS: Read this background information on Buddhist meditation and mandalas. Paste it in your ISN under the Buddhism section. Write a summary of each paragraph on the right then paste and color 1, 2, or 3 mandalas.

INFORMATION: Tibetan Buddhists like to focus on mandalas during meditation.

elaborate: detailed
Mandalas are **elaborate** designs rich with color and detail. They are often circular and contain either portraits of gods or intricate (detailed) patterns. After **meditating** on the

meditating: thinking;
reflection
mandala, a student of Buddhism will close his or her eyes and try to visualize the picture. Thus, the mind is **disciplined** while the heart merges with the spirit of the mandala.

disciplined: controlled
In Buddhism, followers meditate in order to still their minds, to let go of all thoughts within their brains. If you stop to notice, thoughts go on from the moment we wake until sleep and even continue in our dreams. Buddhists want to clear their mind and this takes practice.

There are many types of meditation. Usually, Buddhists sit still, spine straight and eyes closed. By focusing on their breath, they become more aware of themselves and able to clear their minds. Buddhists believe that this is the way to truly understand the universe and go beyond simple human thoughts.

Mandalas are a way to free your mind of thoughts. You focus on the pattern and nothing else. Mandalas can represent Buddhas, wisdom, or sacred space (like heaven). Buddhists are known to create mandalas over many hours, using tweezers to place tiny grains of colored sand on a board to create patterns, knowing this pattern down to every detail. They work for hours and hours over many days in quiet meditation, only to wipe or blow the sand away and start again.

On the right, write a summary statement using the main idea from each paragraph.

Next, answer these questions:

1. What do you do to meditate or spend quiet time?

2. How do you think meditation is helpful?

Finally, paste and color 1–3 of the mandalas provided, or draw and color your own.

