Remembering Manchester Buddhist Centre

Your experience
1 How did you feel when you were in the Centre? Note down smells, sounds, pictures, general impressions.

2 What was the most enjoyable, interesting or strange thing you saw or did at the Buddhist Centre? Write it down or draw it.

3 How could you record your experience at the Buddhist Centre to give others a sense of what you experienced? Use writing, poetry, artwork or music.

Beliefs and actions
4 Buddhism teaches that everything we do has an effect (karma) and this is why it’s important to live by the precepts, learning to behave, speak and think with kindness and awareness.

5 Remembering your time at the Buddhist Centre, could you see evidence of these beliefs in the behaviour of the Buddhists you met, and the way they keep their Centre?

6 Considering everything you’ve learned and experienced so far about Buddhism, what do you think it means to be a Buddhist?

The Sangha
Lots of people come to the Buddhist Centre, for many different reasons.

Draw a diagram showing all the reasons why you might go there if you were a Buddhist and all the reasons why people who aren’t Buddhists often go there. Would the Buddhists and non-Buddhists go there for any of the same reasons?
Meditation
8 Now you have spent time sitting still and relaxing at the Buddhist Centre, you’ll have an idea of what Buddhists do when they meditate.

How did you feel as you sat doing the “stilling” exercise? How do you think meditation might help Buddhists to become kinder, wiser and more considerate?

What three things about you or your life might improve if you were quiet and thoughtful for a few minutes each day? Where might you go to do this?

Your “true” name?
9 The ordained (most committed) Buddhists at the Manchester Buddhist Centre have Buddhist names, given to them when they were ordained. Each person’s name is something very positive to aim for in life.

Each name means something in an ancient Indian language of the Buddha’s time, Pali or Sanskrit. It describes the best thing about that person, which is also something which people saw in the Buddha himself. Here are some examples:

- Priyavadita is a man who speaks kindly and truthfully.
- Munisha is a woman with the qualities of a “sage”, or wise person.
- Suryaka is “She who shines like the sun”.
- Lalitavira is a “playful hero”.

Reflect
- What’s the best thing about you?
- Is there anything positive nobody knows or sees about you?
- What things are you trying to improve about yourself or your behaviour?

Question
- What’s your true secret name, describing the type of person you really are at your best? or
- Get into pairs. What’s your partner’s new name? Make sure you agree on the name. Take turns to present each other to the rest of the class. For example: “This is [new name]. We’ve chosen this name because s/he is... An example of this was when...”

Remember that the name should be very positive, a description of the person at their best. Few people are wonderful all the time!

You’ll have to come up with an poetic phrase or sentence, such as Great Heart or Faithful Friend. Pali and Sanskrit can say lots in one word, but English needs a phrase or sentence.


Come again!