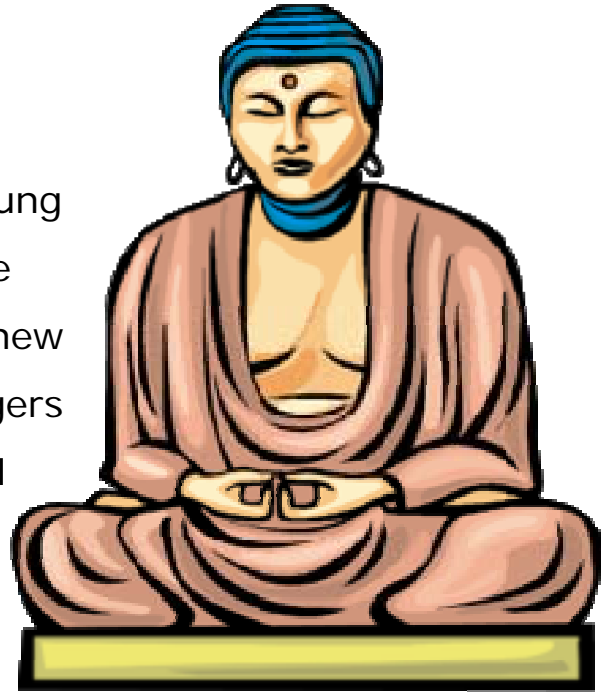


Name _____

Seeking an Answer

Long ago in a far away land a young couple married and soon the wife gave birth to a beautiful baby boy. Like all new mothers she carefully counted ten fingers and ten toes and she and her husband loved their perfect new baby. Long ago people didn't have the medicines we have today. There was great



sorrow in the family when the boy became very ill and died just before his first birthday.

The parents were greatly distraught, especially the mother who had lost her only child. She did not want to bury the child; she wanted some potion to bring her baby son back to life again. She cried and wailed for days; her friends and family didn't know what to do to console her. Finally a wise friend suggested that she go and talk to the Buddha. So she set forth to ask the Buddha for the medicine that would return her son to her.

When she found the Buddha he told her, "I have the medicine you need but I am lacking one key ingredient."

"Quickly! Tell me what it is you need to complete the medicine," replied the young mother. "I will search the whole world to find it."



Name _____

The Buddha answered, "I need a handful of mustard seeds. Not just any mustard seeds, but only mustard seeds from a family where no child has died, no spouse has died, and no parent has died."

The young mother hurried away on her quest. She went from house to house asking her questions. Do you have mustard seeds? Has a child, spouse or parent died in this family? Try as she might, she could not gather a handful of seeds. No one could help her fulfill the Buddha's request.

Every place she visited she found people who had lost a special person in their lives. They told her stories of their losses and she finally realized that everyone must make peace with tragedy and move onward with their lives. The help of other people and their experiences made her realize she was not alone in her grief.

You see, the Buddha was right. He did have the medicine she needed.



Name _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Multiple Choice Questions

Circle the correct answer.

1. How old was the son when he died?
 - a. 4 months
 - b. 6 months
 - c. 8 months
 - d. Almost a year

2. What did the young mother want after her son died?
 - a. Medicine to bring him back to life
 - b. For him to go to heaven
 - c. To adopt a new child
 - d. None of the above

3. What didn't the young mother want after her son died?
 - a. To talk with anyone
 - b. To bury him
 - c. Both a. and b. above
 - d. None of the above

4. Who did the young mother consult with after her son died?
 - a. A wise elder
 - b. A priest
 - c. A shaman
 - d. The Buddha

5. After the consultation what ingredient(s) was the young mother seeking?
 - a. Coriander
 - b. Thyme
 - c. Mustard seeds
 - d. All of the above

6. What did the young mother find on her quest?
 - a. She found the ingredients she was seeking
 - b. She found other people who experienced loss
 - c. Both a. and b. above
 - d. None of the above



Name _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Short Answer Questions

1. Explain what a potion is. If you don't know the answer, look it up.
2. Do some research and write a short report about who the Buddha is.
3. Do some research and explain what mustard seeds look like. Why would gathering a handful of mustard seeds be a large task?
4. Mustard seeds are part of many stories from ancient folklore or religious stories like those from the Bible. Why do you think mustard seeds are part of these old stories?
5. The young mother asked the Buddha for a medicine to bring her son back to life but he replied, "I have the medicine you need." What did he really mean?
6. Share stories with your classmates about how you felt when someone close to you died. Find out from others how they coped with losing someone special in their lives.
7. Sometimes people who are close to us aren't in our lives for reasons other than death. For example, some parents are gone for a long time with the military or children don't see their parents after a divorce. Share stories with your classmates about how you felt about these kinds of losses.



Name _____

Answer Key

Multiple Choice

1. d.
2. a.
3. b.
4. d.
5. c.
6. b.

Short Answer

1. A potion is a liquid medicine. In folklore a potion can be made by a witch, socerer, magician or other special person. If the person is an evil character the potion can be poisonous instead of helpful.

2. Individual response

3. Mustard seeds are extremely small. Gathering a handful of mustard seeds requires many seeds.

4. Individual response

5. The Buddha couldn't bring her son back to life like she wanted. What she really needed was to stop grieving of her loss. He gave her the means to realize she wasn't alone in experiencing grief and loss.

6. Individual response

7. Individual response

