

# Week 4: Effort

**Lesson Time:** 1 hour

**Instructors Required:** In-person: 2, Virtual: 1- 2

**Supplies:**

- Book *The Carrot Seed* by Ruth Krauss
- Metta Sutra chant cards
- Jenga
- YouTube video: Be the Pond Cosmic Kids Zen Den Video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wf5K3pP2IUQ>
- YouTube video: The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss -  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t\\_bKqYUc-2M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_bKqYUc-2M)

**Learning Objectives**

- *Create safe, fun and participatory environment.*
- *Explore effort as a practice in participant's daily life*
- *Demonstrate ways effort can be brought to any activity (school, around the house, at play, etc.)*
- *Connect effort s with Buddhist teachings like the Bodhisattva Vow*
- *Offer examples of ways effort practice intersects with ritual and meditation*

*Outline*

<b>I. Gather &amp; Morning Message</b>	<b>20 mins</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Morning Message</li><li>• Alter Practice/Gassho and Bow</li><li>• Fun &amp; Games</li></ul>	
<b>II. Dharma Lesson - Mindfulness</b>	<b>15 mins</b>
<b>III. Movement &amp; Meditation</b>	<b>5 mins</b>
<b>IV. Main Activity - The Carrot Seed</b>	<b>15 mins</b>
<b>V. Closing Chant</b>	<b>5 mins</b>

**Gather & Morning Message**

Begin day with informal questions to get participants talking.

- Ask participants what they remember about Interconnectedness from the previous week.
- Ask if participants noticed times they were connected to something or someone else.
- Ask if participants feel thinking about interconnectedness made them feel encouraged to help others or be more generous.

**Alter Practice/Gassho and Bow**

Refer participants to the alter. Provide an example of gassho and bow  
Instruct participants individually to gassho and bow at alter.

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## Fun and Games : Jenga

The mindful Jenga® rules are the same as the original game just with additional mindful steps.

- On each turn each player takes one block from any level of the tower using only one hand at any time
- The block removed must be placed on the topmost level
- Your turn ends 10 seconds after you stack your block - or as soon as the player to your left touches one.
- Keep removing and stacking blocks until someone topples the tower.

The game ends when the tower topples over or when any block falls from the tower

Ways that Jenga can be used to practise mindfulness:

- Students can cultivate a calm and clear mind through mindful breathing – students can inhale as they remove a block and exhale as they replace it
- After removing a block, a student can state something that they are grateful for – requiring them to think about appreciation and things for which they are grateful.
- Students can share their gratitude with the others or keep it private.

### Note for Virtual Participants

Students with Jenga at home are welcome to play along. Otherwise, participants are welcome to view the video Be the Pond from Cosmic Kids Zen Den. The video can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wf5K3pP2IUQ>

## Dharma Lesson: Effort

Facilitators are encouraged to develop Dharma lesson content in a manner that most resonates with them.

### *Suggested talking points*

- Effort is central in Buddhist teaching.
- Buddha's practice like compassion and generosity all require effort.
- Our effort allows us to take care of the things and people around us.
- We give our effort to take care of thing because of our commitment to be of service and our interconnection with the wider world.
- We have an opportunity to bring our effort to in all that we do be it at school, at home, or at play.

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## Movement & Meditation

Take participants through a series of mindful movement postures as a way to give participants an opportunity to move around, stretch, and explore mindfulness.

Suggested movements with instruction:

**One:** Begin with your feet slightly apart, arms at your sides. Breathing in, keep your elbows straight as you lift your arms in front of you until they're shoulder level, horizontal to the ground. Breathing out, bring your arms down again to your sides. Repeat the movement three more times.

**Two:** Begin with your arms at your sides. Breathing in, lift your arms in front of you. In one continuous movement, bring them all the way up, stretching them above your head. Touch the sky! This movement can be done with your palms either facing inward toward each other, or facing forward as you reach up. Breathing out, bring your arms slowly down again to your sides. Repeat three more times.

**Three:** Breathing in, lift your arms out to the side, palms up, until your arms are shoulder level, parallel to the ground. Breathing out, touch your shoulders with your fingertips, keeping your upper arms horizontal. Breathing in, open your arms, extending them until they're stretched out to a horizontal position again. Breathing out, bend your elbows, bringing your fingertips back to your shoulders.

**Four:** When you breathe in, you are like a flower opening to the warm sun. Breathing out, the flower closes. From this position with your fingertips on your shoulders, do the movement three more times. Then lower your arms back down to your sides.

**Five:** In this exercise, you make a large circle with your arms. Breathing in, bring your arms straight down in front of you, centered between your hips, palms together. Raise your arms up and separate your hands so your arms can stretch up over your head. Breathing out, continue the circle, arms circling back, until your fingers point toward the ground. Breathing in, lift your arms back and reverse the circle. Breathe out as you bring your palms together and your arms come down in front of you. Repeat three more times.

**Six:** Start by putting your hands on the sides of your waist. As you do this exercise, keep your legs straight but not locked, and your head centered over your body. Breathing in, bend forward at the waist and begin to make a circle with your upper body. When you're halfway through the circle, your upper body leaning back, breathe out and complete the circle, ending with your head in front of you while you're still bent at the waist. On your next in-breath, begin a circle in the opposite direction. On your out-breath, complete the circle. Repeat the series of movements three more times.

**Seven:** Begin with your hands on our waist, heels together, feet turned out to form a V, so that they make a 90 degree angle. Breathing in, rise up on your toes. Breathing out, stay on your toes, keep your back straight, and bend your knees. Keeping your upper body centered, go down as low as you comfortably can maintain your balance. Breathing in, straighten your knees and come all the way up, still standing on your toes. From this position, repeat the movement three more times, remembering to breathe slowly and deeply.

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## Main Activity: Carrot Seed

Write the word 'Effort' on newsprint. Discuss effort through the use of the following questions:

- What does the word effort mean?
- Ask participants 'Tell me about a time you put in a lot of effort at home or school.'
- Ask participants who benefited from your effort (yourself, your family, your friends, etc.)
- Ask what are some ways effort can be difficult (Examples: You want to give up, you don't like what you're doing, there is something else you want to do, etc.)

Direct participants to *The Carrot Seed* book and read aloud.

After the book concludes, engage participants in a further discussion.

- In what ways did the little boy in the book demonstrate effort.
- How did the little boy show patience in the story?
- How did the boy react when others said no carrots would ever come up?
- How might you act in a similar situation?
- What does the story teach us about keeping at a task even though it might be difficult?
- How might you apply what you learned in the story to your life at home, at school, or with your friends.

## Virtual Participant Consideration

If reading book to group virtually is not an option, you're welcome to view story at the following link:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t\\_bKqYUc-2M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_bKqYUc-2M)

## Closing Chant

Pass out closing chant to participants. Show participants how to put hands together to chant. Invite participants to follow along.

May everyone be happy and safe, and may their hearts be filled with joy  
Let love move through the whole universe; above, below and across  
May we always treat others with kindness and generosity  
Whether we are standing or walking, sitting or lying, awake or asleep,  
Let us always have love in our hearts