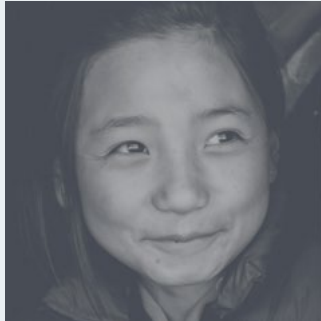
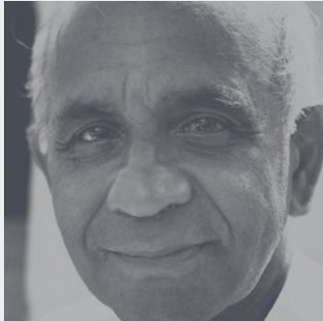


# Buddhism



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# Buddhism

Buddhists believe there is no god and no soul. They teach that the only way to attain peace is through emptying the self of all human desires, which they believe cause all suffering in life. They believe the consequences for the deeds of the present life, whether good or bad, will be carried over into the next life in a constant cycle of reincarnation.

Buddhism began as a reform movement of Hinduism in 563 B.C. The founder was Siddhartha Gautama, who later came to be known as Buddha, or Enlightened One. According to tradition, Buddha reached enlightenment after meditating under a bodhi tree for 40 days. After reaching enlightenment, Buddha began teaching about his new revelation. He taught about the cause of suffering in life and how to ascend from suffering to a state of freedom through complete emptiness, or enlightenment.



# 1 Preparation

Read over the sections on **Worldview**, **Religious terms** and **Answering Questions and Objections**. Become familiar with these so that you are more comfortable relating to a person of this faith.



# Worldview

There are a lot of factors that shape a person's view of the world. History, culture, language and tradition are among some of the factors which provide a framework for how a person filters information, understands truth or makes decisions.



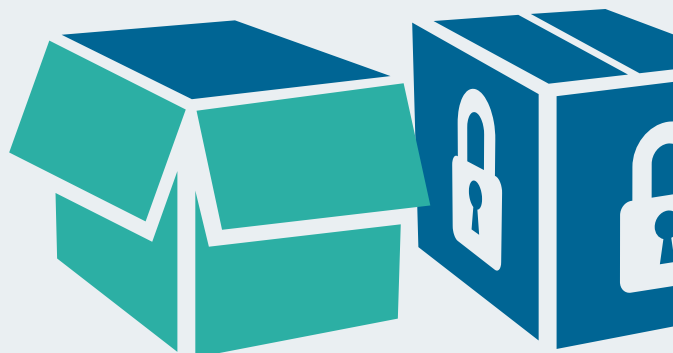
# Buddhist Worldview

- For a Buddhist, leaving Buddhism for another religion is typically considered a betrayal of their family and heritage.
- Modern Buddhists see themselves as seeking a higher level of “personal enlightenment” by doing good deeds to make merit, meditating on truths, living a simple life and trying to be a good person.
- Buddhism shares concepts from Hindu origins, including “karma” (a type of cause-and-effect mentality where followers gain rewards for good conduct and service and are penalized for bad thoughts or actions).
- Most have also adopted the Hindu concept of reincarnation which drives their seeking of “good karma” to gain as much merit as possible for their next life (and the next and the next) to overcome their bad karma.
- Many Buddhists believe in ancestor worship.
- They believe that “Nirvana” is the highest state of being and is achieved by following the rules and the path of Buddha.
- A Buddhist can be very difficult to pin down as to his or her view of god.
- Buddha did not teach the worship of himself as a god or the worship of other gods or spirits as part of his way to reach enlightenment. But many worship Buddha as a god.
- For the Buddhist, sin is more like a misstep than a transgression—sort of a “moral error” or a mistake—not implying that the person intentionally sins against another man or god.
- No matter how well they live in their current life, Buddhists are fearful of what their fate will be in the next life cycle or an afterlife in a fiery torment.

## Religious Terms

Other religions often have their own words for the one true God, sin, etc. Also, the name Jesus may be translated into their religious language. It's often helpful to use their translated name for Jesus. Using what they know can help improve understanding and reduce the amount of information to get across.

You may not be comfortable using other terms than what you know. We encourage you to prayerfully consider using terms that are familiar to the person you are sharing with, as appropriate.



# Buddhist Religious Terms

- The Buddha, meaning “enlightened one,” was born Siddhattha Gotama in what is now modern-day Nepal.
- Dharma, or Dhamma, is the teachings of Buddha.
- Fifty-six percent of Buddhists adhere to the Mahayana sect of Buddhism. The followers of this sect believe that salvation is achieved only by one who is able to reach nirvana (the ending of suffering) but who delays in doing so because of compassion for suffering people.
- Karma is the cause of the cycle of continuing life and rebirth.
- Making merit increases one’s chances of having a good life here and in the afterlife.
- The Buddhist priestly order who wear special robes and shave their heads are called monks.
- Moksha means salvation.
- While some Buddhists see nirvana as heaven, most view it as a condition of being free from bad karma and the cycle of rebirth.

## Answering Questions and Objections

Every major religion has common misconceptions regarding Jesus, God, truth, salvation and heaven. Myths and misunderstandings have been passed around from family to family and country to country. We have compiled the most common questions and objections.

After you read over these, take time to read any Scripture that will help you grow in your faith, as well as give you confidence to answer with biblical Truth.





## Answering Questions and Objections

### **"But I must follow the teachings of Buddha."**

**Response:** Are you aware that many Buddhist manuscripts say that Buddha said his teachings will decline after 500 years? (Show the "Decline of the Dharma" chart.) The years vary in which they declare of the Buddha's teachings (Dharma), but the average is around 500 years. Many Buddhist traditions claim that another teacher will come when Buddha's teachings decline. Who came 500 years after Buddha? (Answer: Jesus) And where can his teachings be found? (Answer: the Bible)

### **"Only good deeds erase bad deeds."**

**Response:** I am not aware of any court system in the world that uses the "good deeds erase bad deeds" system. One bad deed requires punishment. So the question should be, "How will you pay for your bad deeds, or how can we avoid punishment?" God gave all people of the world a book that tells of a way to escape punishment. (Share One Story/One Verse.)

## 2 Talking

Use these basic steps to start a conversation and reach the point of sharing the gospel through Romans 6:23.



## Greeting

Because Buddhism covers multiple Asian language groups, no one greeting covers all groups; therefore, say "Hello" (English). While saying "Hello," place your hands together in prayer fashion and slightly bow your head. Offer no handshake.



## Bridges

Some people find it easy to transition a conversation to spiritual matters. Others struggle to do so. These bridge questions are tested and have been used to quickly and naturally share Romans 6:23.

**Choose one and memorize it so you can use it more naturally.**

From the point of greeting the person, move as quickly as possible to your bridge question. Typically, the longer it takes, the less likely you will get to the gospel.



## Bridge Options

- 1 Ask:** "May I ask you a question about Buddhism?" (Wait for response.) How do you free yourself from bad karma?" (Most will respond, "With good deeds.")

**Bridge:** "I found one verse in the Bible that explains how God offers everyone in the world a way to become free from bad karma." (Share One Verse/One Story.)

- 2 Ask:** "I am interested to know how Buddhists find protection from evil spirits." (Listen to their response.)

**Bridge:** "The followers of Jesus also have a way of protecting themselves against evil spirits. When we speak one name, the name of Jesus, evil spirits become afraid and run away. I found one verse in the Bible that tells the beautiful story of how God and Jesus made a way for all people to be free from evil spirits forever." (Share One Verse/One Story.)

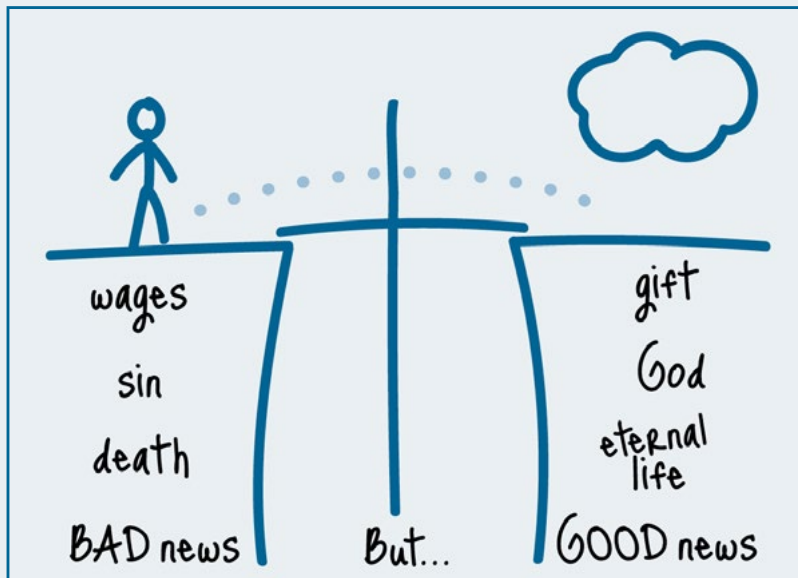
- 3 Ask:** "As a Buddhist, do you believe there is one creator God?" (Wait for response). If so, do you feel near or far away from God?" (Wait for response.)

**Bridge:** "I found one verse in the Bible that helps me get close to God. Can I share the verse with you?" (Share One Verse/One Story.)

## One Verse – One Story | Romans 6:23

Romans 6:23 provides the structure for talking about the need for a Savior and concluding with the question, “Do you want God’s gift of eternal Life?”

Use the One Verse – One Story video, printable guide or eTract to prepare to share the gospel.



 [southasianpeoples.imb.org/OneVerse-OneStory](https://southasianpeoples.imb.org/OneVerse-OneStory)

## 3 Next steps

Possible responses and what to do next:

- A) The person chose to accept God's free gift of eternal life: Seize the moment. Review and explain again the core truths of the gospel. Answer any questions and encourage them to pray and tell God they are turning from their disobedience, believing the good news of Jesus and confessing Him as Lord. Get the person's contact information so that you can follow up. Invite the person to your church or begin meeting at his or her house.
- B) "I want to know more." Get the person's email or phone number. Begin sending electronic resources from this religion's G2G resources section. Arrange to meet them in a public place like a coffee shop to discuss this more.
- C) "I am not interested." Ask how you can pray for the person.

## 4 Share more

### Bible stories

Everyone loves a good story. We remember them. We share them. Stories touch our hearts—whether they're movies, family anecdotes or Bible stories. They affect our decision-making and transform our worldview.

God's Word changes lives. Consider becoming familiar with one or more stories that will fill the gap in understanding the gospel. Having a Bible story in your mental toolbox will help you guide a person to understand the work of Christ in a way that fits his or her culture and background.





Telling a Bible story isn't strict memorization. Identify the essential parts of the story you must share.

Then, read over the passages of Scripture several times. Once you know the story, you are ready to share it in your own words. Run through the story in your head and share with a friend or relative to practice.



# Bible Verses Filling the Gap

*Use this passage to address some of the questions, concerns or beliefs found in this religious worldview.*

## **Ephesians 2:1-10 (HCSB)**

<sup>1</sup> And you were dead in your trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler who exercises authority over the lower heavens, the spirit now working in the disobedient. <sup>3</sup> We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. <sup>4</sup> But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with the Messiah even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace! <sup>6</sup> Together with Christ Jesus He also raised us up and seated us in the heavens, <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages He might display the immeasurable riches of His grace through His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift — <sup>9</sup> not from works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them."

## Extra Resources

Biblical resources, such as a video or tract, can help within a conversation or be given for the person to view later. We've identified a select and varied set of biblical resources for you to choose from. In some cases, there may be a hundred other options out there. We've limited the resources to one per type or category.

In G2G you need to choose one or more resources to share. Choose the type of resource that best fits you and your preferences. For example, if you commonly share videos from your mobile device, then choose the video. If you prefer to hand someone a tract, then download and print the tract. You may want to keep a Bible or New Testament with you and have key passages bookmarked from this guide.



Find these G2G resources at <http://southasianpeoples.imb.org/G2G>.

- **Scripture Portion:** John 14:1-6.

- **Video:** “Clarion Creative C2C Animation” (This short 14 minute C2C is available in English, Hindi, Thai, Indonesian Bahasa, Tagalog, Southern Bai, Burmese, Cebuano, Chinese, Gujarati, Sundanese, Central Tibetan, South Vietnamese.) [www.creationtochristvideo.com](http://www.creationtochristvideo.com)

- **Tract: “Decline of the Dharma Chart”** – A widespread Buddhist tradition holds that a new teaching would come after Buddha’s dharma declined, and Buddha told his followers to follow the teachings. Download this chart demonstrating the decline of the dharma was not 5000 years, but about the time of Jesus.

# Need help?

Email questions to

Kevin

[kevinatlibertyworld@gmail.com](mailto:kevinatlibertyworld@gmail.com)

<http://southasianpeoples.imb.org/G2G>

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