

The Dewdrop Digest
Connecting Children, Youth and Sangha
Clouds in Water Zen Center
Sunday, April 1, 2007

Happy April Fool's Day and Welcome to the first day of Spring Quarter

Our year of exploring the Bodhisattva Vows culminates with an exploration of the Ten Wonderful Precepts.

Precepts for Kids

Clouds in Water adapts the way we teach the precepts for each age group. The Kindergarten-First Grade Class works with the Three Wonderful Precepts. The 2nd-3rd and 4th-5th grade class explores the Five Wonderful Precepts. And the Middle School Class will consider the Ten Wonderful Precepts.

Our approach to the precepts with kids is largely drawn from the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh.

Five Wonderful Precepts (adapted from Thich Nhat Hanh and other sources.)

1. Protect life.

All things are precious. I will protect people, animals, plants and minerals. I will treat them with love and respect.

2. Act with generosity.

I will not take things that belong to others. I will share my own things as much as I can.

3. Speak honestly and listen deeply.

I will speak the truth. I will be honest to others and to myself. I will be a friend who listens for the truth of others.

4. Honor the body.

I will be loving and respectful of others and myself.

[For Youth, this precept could also include: I will keep my own promises in relationships and respect those of others.]

5. Keep a clear mind.

I will keep myself bright and clear. I will avoid things that cloud my mind.

[Discussion as appropriate for age: This could include drugs, over-use of TV and video games, and so on.]

Windchime Project for the April 22nd Harriet Island Earth Day Gathering

All classes, from kindergarten on up, will be making clay windchimes for the Harriet Island Earth Day celebration. A tree on the island will be covered with hundreds of chimes made by children and/or loaned. Today we will shape the clay “clangers”. On April 15, we will paint them and assemble the chimes. Each student’s windchime will be returned after the celebration.

Sunday, April 22nd: An “extra” Childrens and Youth Practice Day

Sunday, May 27th, a less formal day for Children’s and Youth Practice

We hope that many children, families and individuals will join us at the Harriet Island Earth Day Celebration, where 1000 kites will be made and flown, each carrying a vow to protect the earth.

We would also like to offer Sunday April 22nd as an “extra” programming day for Children and Youth. From 9:00 to 10:30, students will meet informally to play Earth Day games. At 11:00, we invite everyone to join us for kite-making, vow-writing, and kite-flying at Harriet Island, which is just the down the road from the Center. Bring a bag lunch. We will provide herbal tea and hot cocoa.

“Extra” is in quotes, because this is an experimental change in our calendar for Spring Quarter. We have noticed the low turnout for Memorial Day weekend every year. We have many substitute teachers, and just a few children. In order to more fully serve all of our students, and to have more connection between children and the rest of the sangha by offering an intergenerational experience on April 22nd, we would like to add April 22nd and simplify what we offer on Sunday, May 27 (Memorial Day weekend).

On Sunday, May 27, the plan is to meet informally to play Buddhist games and make treats to offer to the sangha.

Please express your comments, questions, or concerns about this experiment by contacting Katharine Krueger at cp@cloudsinwater.org or (651)222-6968 x5.

Parents of Babies and Young Children Monday, April 9 and May 7th

Mark your calendar for these two dates. To stay abreast of topics and plans, and to connect with other parents, join the listserve by visiting http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TCMindfulParenting_BabySteps/

TO RSVP, contact Katharine at cp@cloudsinwater.org or (651) 222-6968 x5. Newcomers and visitors are always welcome. If you are new, it is best to check in before attending for the first time, in case there are changes.