



Cause and effect - teacher's notes

The theory of karma shows that our actions have consequences. The Sanskrit word karma literally means 'action' or 'doing.' In the Buddhist theory of karma, the word is given a more specific meaning and refers only to 'intentional actions,' actions that are deliberately willed, not accidental actions. In Buddhism 'the law of karma' is defined as the moral law of cause and effect related to intentional actions

Cause-effect relationships can be clarified using metaphors (e.g., 'We reap what we sow') and images, such as that of a boomerang ('What goes around comes around').

'Good' or virtuous actions are caused by positive thoughts and feelings and bring benefit and happiness. Virtuous actions arise from a mind that is free from negative emotions. Actions are called 'bad' or 'harmful' if they cause suffering. Hurtful actions arise from one or more of the Three Poisons (craving, aggression, ignorance).

The Buddhist approach to moral action is never black and white, it is rather different shades of grey. Goodness and badness are relative to our minds and to our situations. The law of karma is therefore flexible. Our actions depend on many causes and conditions. Also, we can always realign and shape our life and our future through the actions and decisions we take now. We can resolve our karma by becoming aware of what we have caused and then honestly and sincerely asking for forgiveness. In Buddhism, there are also certain confession rituals that can be used to purify karma.

Buddhists do not believe in any external force or God that rewards or punishes us. Karma does not entail any idea of predestination or fate. The law of cause and effect means that we are ultimately responsible for our own lives.

Introduction to the topic

As a starter you can use the example of the "kindness boomerang" and ask children to make a boomerang themselves (with paper) and then let them draw and/ or write into their boomerang what they would like to come back to them. **(see worksheet "kindness boomerang")**

The individual results can be presented to the whole group.

You can also share the video "Kindness Boomerang" to introduce the topic.

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

Another way to introduce the topic of Cause and Effect is to share the video of a domino chain reaction, for example <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TY-H2aUtrKl>.

You could offer the **activity** of a 'domino chain reaction challenge.' Children are divided into smaller groups and each group creates their own domino chain reaction which is then presented to the whole group.