

Berkeley Buddhist Temple

Dharma School FAQs

We're so happy that you are taking the time to get to know BBT Dharma School. All are welcome!



Q: How is the BBT Dharma School structured?

A: Our classrooms are multi-age. During the pandemic, the Dharma School continued to meet every Sunday via Zoom. The teachers rotated taking the lead and preparing the lessons. Since reopening in person, the Dharma School teachers are continuing to meet with students every Sunday and to rotate the lead teacher. Presently, there are anywhere from two to ten students in a classroom.

Q: Who are the teachers?

A: Berkeley Buddhist Temple is fortunate to have several veteran teachers of a decade or more who continue to bring their wisdom and compassion to our students. Joyce Oishi (she/her) focuses on grades preschool through five; Irene Asao-Wells (she/her) focuses on grades six through eight; and Karen Kato (she/her) focuses on grades nine through twelve; and Stacy Uyeda (she/her) serves as the school's superintendent and all-grades teacher. All current BBT Dharma School teachers have or have had their own children attend Dharma School. All teachers have been fingerprinted and undergo yearly child-protection training.

Q: What is the curriculum?

A: Every year, the BBT ministers and Dharma School teachers meet to discuss a year-long theme. Some past themes include: the Six Paramitas, the environment, Jodo Shinshu rituals, Buddhist symbols, Shinran Shonin, dana (giving), and compassion. BBT Dharma School teachers receive good feedback; our teachers help students to be engaged, seen, and heard with a variety of classroom activities and traditions. Our classes tend to focus on social justice and inclusion themes, too. During the pandemic, one of the high school students taught several lessons on how to be anti-racist. Every December, the high



school students rally the entire sangha to collect donations for local community-based organizations, most recently Building Futures, a safe housing refuge in San Leandro.



Q: Are there any holidays?

A: The Dharma School follows the temple's religious calendar, which includes major Jodo Shinshu Buddhist holidays, such as Shakyamuni Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and death; fall and spring equinox; and founder Shinran Shonin's birth and death. The Dharma School enjoys celebrating Halloween and El Día de los Muertos in the fall and Obon in the summer.

Q: Are there any field trips?

A: The Dharma School does try to organize at least one field trip during the year. We have visited museums, taken hikes, and visited other temples. We also have invited guests to BBT to share their wisdom or experiences.

Q: Are there other ways for families to be involved?

A: Yes! The high school students are invited to join the Junior Young Buddhists Association (Jr. YBA), which involves monthly meetings; sharing leadership duties; and social events with other temples. Our sangha also comes together to organize a joyous spring festival/bazaar in May, and many families enjoy the Mendicino coast together during the BBT Camping Trip every summer.

Q: How can I register my child or children in BBT Dharma School?

A: Please contact Stacy Uyeda, the Dharma School superintendent, at bbtdharmaschool@gmail.com. There is a PDF registration form that can be accessed at: [Registration Form 2023-24.pdf](#).

