Introduction to Merit

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| Overview & Purpose An introduction into the concept of merit and good karma in Buddhism. | | | Education Standards Addressed | |
| **Activity** | **Aims** | **Time Given** | | **Other** |
| Introduce what merit is. Explain that it is good karma and it forms the basis of positive states. This can be contrasted the precepts which are all DON'Ts with this more positive (later) list of DOs | Students should understand the basics of merit. | 10 minutes | | Make sure students make notes or have something to copy from the board. |
| Inform students that there are three bases of merit. Split class into groups and give each group one of the three bases. The three groups to write down what kind of actions they think are included in their base. As a more advanced step students could be asked to consider what is bad for monks is not necessarily bad for laypeople | Students will apply critical thinking to the task and will consider that merit can encompass many different actions. | 10 minutes | | Provide students with paper to write down their group's ideas. Depending on class size create three groups covering one of the bases. If class it too big have two or more groups per base. |
| Class present and discuss their interpretations of the three bases of merit. | Students should be able to give constructive and thoughtful feedback on the presented ideas. | 10 minutes | | Guide the discussion and ask students to defend their suggestions.  Use pictures and photographs to give a more visual insight into the three bases of merit. |
| Explain what types of action are considered to belong to each of the three bases. Use examples from Buddhist literature. E.g. Dāna can be seen in the Jatakas when the Bodhisattva feeds himself to the hungry tigress. | Students have a clear knowledge of meritorious action and have examples from Buddhist literature which illustrate them. | 20 minutes | | Make sure students make notes or have something to copy from the board. |