

## ORIENTATION WEEK

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### Atmosphere

- Construct a bright and colourful stand that conveys a message of happiness and outgoing nature of the society
- Fun and informal (approachable)
- Friendly , interesting, colourful and happy
- Welcoming; Polite
- Show uniformity by having something in common (e.g. T-shirt)
- Dharma protector flags; Music
- Buddha Statues on the stall, uncomplicated. Someone looks at it and they instantly know it is about Buddhism
- Attractive, cheerful, informative, generate metta and smile, elevated Buddha statue, society's banner, music – Metta Sutta

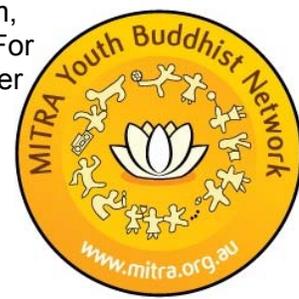
### Running The Stall

Have lots of workers, even roaming workers if this is considered appropriate. If you have society T-shirts, get all stall workers to wear it. To be more effective, stall workers and committee members can spend time together in the weeks prior to O-week, rehearsing the questions that may be asked by newcomers. Role-playing sessions can be designed to give stall workers an understanding of the scenarios they may encounter from people new to Buddhism. Some specific scenarios to consider:

- If they mention a famous person who is a Buddhist, then relate this to why the famous person was interested in Buddhism.
- Talk about the common ground that the 3 schools of Buddhism agree upon, such as such as peace, compassion, morality, etc, and then move on to distinctive features.
- Understanding the beliefs and respecting the different approaches of other religions and beliefs

### Stall Resources

Dhamma pamphlets can contain a brief history on Buddhism (mainstream Buddhism, encompassing all schools of Buddhism). These are available on the Mitra website. For the Society's own pamphlet, include details about what benefits your society can offer



members, e.g. about social and Dharma events and your society contact details (e.g.. e-mail or postal address, even names of committee members). Also include details about your next event , so organise a pamphlet of activities including Dharma talks and welcome picnic.

Other Resources Include:

- Forms : Application forms (can be online via laptop), Survey forms, Membership cards, Photo album (so people can flick through happened last year)
- “Keep in touch” list: For those not yet ready to join but still want to be kept informed (name & e-mail)
- Background information : Last year's pamphlets (to show what you did last year), past newsletters

### **Human Resources**

- 3 people at stall at least to field questions, but not too many
- If need be, recruit stall holders from other committees
- Roster – at least 1 exco at stall; Hourly roster
- Be the first there and last to pack up
- Mix ethnic background of staff crews to give everyone a feeling of belonging/harmony
- Training session in advance to brief on stall protocols
- Enough money to escort money bags
- Pro-active people
- Smile and be welcoming, spread metta towards others
- Ask a venerable to attend the stall for support in answering questions and also to help send metta
- Include Lay teachers
- Bring equipment for all weathers (eg. sunscreen)

### **Attracting People To Your Stall**

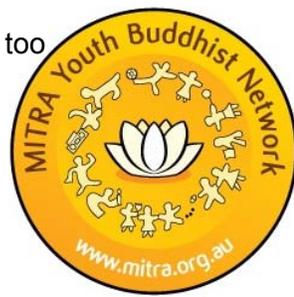
Here are some suggestions to set up your stall:

- Helping people find your stall: posters showing the location of stall
- Decorating the stall: posters, paintings, banners, balloons
- Buddhist icons: Buddhist flag, a statue, painting or image
- Improving the ambience: chanting or Buddhist music
- Activities in stall: make bracelets or origami in stall
- Information: Lists of Venerable/ Sangha members, Australian Buddhist Directory
- Campus map: With locations indicated for the society's regular activities
- Roaming around (in T-shirts, giving away brochures and gifts with a smile)
- Be proactive and reach out to passers-by (in a gentle way)

### **Starting Up A Conversation**

Some useful hints to start up a conversation:

- Succinctly summarise the Buddha's main teaching and fundamental principles for beginners (e.g. “Avoid evil, Do good, Purify the mind”), But don't bombard them with too much information.



- Explain some fundamental Buddhist concepts (e.g. change, unsatisfactoriness).
- Ask questions and encourage on-going interaction. Make sure you address the questioner's needs.
- Explain genuinely from one's own experience and without pressure.

Explain the primary intention of taking Buddhism into one's life. Try to connect oneself with Buddhism through right speech, bodily actions and mind so that one is perceived as a true Buddhist by others. And remember 'Ehipasiko', which means don't just believe, but come and investigate for oneself the teachings with an open minded attitude.

- General hints: Speak with respect and promptness; Being prepared to answer all questions; Think before speaking; Maintain eye contact; Be honest open and friendly; Minimise jargon; Send Metta

### Identifying How You Can Help

Use the following key questions to find how you can help the person:

- What do you know already about Buddhism and what is your background?
- What is your current interest in Buddhism and what can I do to assist?
- Before anything just smile look in their eyes when you smile and shake their hands then introduce yourself
- Don't pressure people to join, make sure they feel comfortable just being interested
- Share your confidence of the triple gem with all the people and have metta all the time
- If you don't know refer them to a book or website

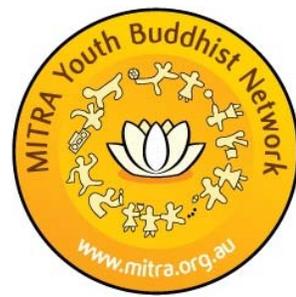
### Is There Any Follow Up?

Prepare a template for a Buddy List (to record which stall volunteer talked to which new member). Prepare a Dharma event calendar, ideally ready in time for O-week with topics, speaker, time all organised. The first events to organise include a Pre-Dharma talk, Meet and Greet, Dharma Talk on Introductory Buddhism. A Welcome Picnic would preferably be on uni grounds or at a nearby green space. Hold the weekend before uni starts, or at first week of uni.

### Giveaways

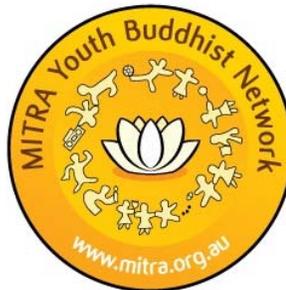
Giving is a seed for us and for them. Here are some examples of giveaways:

- Dhamma : Pamphlets about your society and activities of the year; Free Dharma books, quick guides explaining Buddhism; pamphlets, chanting CDs, text CDs, tapes, Dharma sayings on paper scrolls (see [Files](#) section); Chuppa chups with quotes from the Buddha stuck to the stick; Annual Magazine, newsletters
- Gifts : Incense, Origami (lotus), pens, bags to give out so people can collect material and take it home in a bag, Jackpot prize for new members, Discount cards for "Buddhist friendly" shops and restaurants, beads, bookmarks; Beads; Key chains, postcards, stickers (logo, etc); Pens
- Food : Drinks, Chuppa chups with Dharma words
- Other Give-Aways: Giving away paper lotuses to people who interact and communicate to our stall presenters; Laminated bookmarks with contact and talk times; Calendars, memo pads (with society's logo); Society Handbook; Folder with Buddhist terms; Squishy things – stress balls



### **Miscellaneous**

- Liaising with the student council
- “market” the stall
- get membership forms ready
- make sure we know and follow the rules
- Have respect towards other stalls
- Advertise – let people know your stall is there
- Receipt books and safe Money box
- Stationery
- With incense/music, consult student rules and/or neighbouring stalls so not to upset anyone
- Check with student guild on stall regulations (dos and don'ts)
- Think about potential questions that may be asked before o-week



### Orientation Preparation Checklist

#### 1 to 2 weeks prior

- To increase publicity: pamphlets, application forms and survey forms should be done before O-Week. Make sure you have enough of these:
  - Staffing roster for stall.
  - Brief all stall workers and rehearse some scenarios.
  - T-shirts or common uniform for stall workers.
  - Obtain adequate supplies of Dhamma books and Dhamma pamphlets.
  - Prepare society Information Brochure, Membership Application form, membership cards, etc.
  - Prepare Member Survey Form (what days?, what activities?) tick a box to make it quick and easy.
  - Prepare stall decorations.
  - Prepare giveaways, etc

#### 1 to 2 days prior

- Review and verify the same list as for 1 to 2 weeks.
- Verify roster, availability of all stall workers, and contact details for unforeseen circumstances.
- Verify the location of stall with University Union.

#### On the day

- Ensure all resources are at stall well before opening time.
- Ensure that at least two workers set up the stall early.

#### Afterwards

- Review verbal feedback and analyse member surveys to understand what members want.
- Report findings to the committee and discuss (a) what was done well, (b) what can improve next time.
- Follow up new members to make sure they know about events/activities and make sure they are welcomed personally by committee members at society events.

