

Mindfulness in the Classroom



Mindfulness is a state where we are focused, clear, and aware of the present moment, while observing our feelings and thoughts from a distance without judging the value of those emotions.

Mindfulness in the classroom involves teaching methods designed to cultivate deepened awareness, concentration, and insight.

BODY SCAN

Lie flat on your back. Place your feet slightly apart, letting your toes fall to the sides. Place your arms by your sides, palms up.

Bring your awareness into your left foot. Breathe in, imagining that you are breathing in through your left foot, all the way up your body. Breathe out, imagining that you are breathing out all the way through your body, through your left leg and out through your left foot. What sensations (if any) are you feeling in your left foot right now?

With your next breath out, shift your awareness to your left ankle, noticing any sensations there. Continue to breathe mindfully, bringing your awareness up your leg to your calf, your shin, and your knee. Continue to scan each area of your body from your feet to the top of your head.

Then bring your awareness to your body as a whole: Does it feel the same or different than when you started the body scan? Are there any parts of your body that still feel tense or that need extra care?

The purpose of the body scan is not necessarily to relax or to go to sleep, although it can help with that sometimes. The important thing is that you stay open and curious to your body's experience.

Adapted from *The Mindful Teen* by Dzung X. Vo, MD. © New Harbinger Publications, 2015.

PEBBLE MEDITATION

Each student is given a small bag and four pebbles. (You could also have students bring their own pebbles and/or make their own bags.)

For the first pebble, the image is a flower and the quality is freshness.

For the second pebble, the image is a mountain and the quality we are exploring is solidity. The mountain knows it's solid no matter what is going on around it.

For the third pebble, the image we are working with is still water in a lake, and the quality we are focusing on is clarity. When we are calm, we can make better decisions.

The image for the fourth pebble is the spacious blue sky, and the quality is freedom, feeling free from worry or anxiety.

The purpose of this lesson is to teach students practical strategies to help them cultivate peacefulness within so they can be peaceful in the world.

Adapted from *Teach, Breathe, Learn: Mindfulness in and out of the Classroom* by Meena Srivisanan. © Parallax Press, 2015.



MARBLE ROLL

Materials: empty paper towel or toilet paper roll for each child, one marble for the group

The children stand in a line, close together. Each child holds an empty paper towel or toilet paper roll. The child at the head of the line puts the marble in her paper towel roll and tilts it slightly so that the marble rolls into the roll of the person next to her. The object is to try to move the marble from the first person in the line to the last person without dropping the marble. No catching with hands allowed! If someone drops the marble, she must start over again at the beginning of the line.

Adapted from *Planting Seeds: Practicing Mindfulness with Children* by Thich Nhat Hanh. © Parallax Press, 2011.