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Mindful Activities for Asset Year

Have You Filled a Bucket Today? and Buckets, Lids, and Dippers

Remembering Joy

Recalling happy memories reduces stress and builds resilience. Like happiness, joy offers enormous benefits. It improves academic, social, and interpersonal aspects of childhood. It also sparks feelings of awe as well as gratitude. With this mindfulness activity, we travel back in time through our minds to relive a moment that brought joy.

- Get in a comfortable position.
- Read the following script:
- Take a moment to recall a happy memory, whatever comes to mind first will work for this exercise, as long as it brings joy.
- Travel back to when the memory takes place. Picture yourself there. What did it look like? Look around in your mind to remember your surroundings.
- Who else is there? Remember the faces and how it felt to be with them. If it was just you, remember what felt good about spending time on your own.
- Open your senses. Remember the sounds. What did you touch? What did it smell like? What could you taste?
- Take a minute or two to be in that memory.
- Gently bring yourself back to the present. Wiggle your fingers and toes and open your eyes.
- Think about the good feelings this memory brought. Did it *fill your bucket*?
- Think about how you might *fill the bucket* of someone else.

Simons Hook

Five-Finger Starfish Meditation

This breathing technique works well for children. Take the time to breathe and do this slowly...s.l.o.w.l.y

- Close eyes. Shake hands gently and squeeze them to warm them up.
- Tell students to hold up one hand in starfish position (fingers spread wide).
- Have them slowly and gently trace up and down each finger with the other hand, matching their breathing at the same time. (Do 2x)
 - Breathe in as you trace up your finger.
 - Breathe out as you trace down your finger.
- Take a deep belly breath at the end. (Explain what a belly breath is)
- Connect to the 5 Free Fish Rules:
 - Do mindful activity as listed above at the beginning of the lesson.

- At the end of the lesson, use the starfish position to chant the 5 Free Fish Rules while tracing up and down each finger.

Recess Queen

Body Scan

- Have your child lie down on their back on a comfortable surface and close their eyes.
- Tell them to squeeze every muscle in their body as tight as they can.
- Tell them to squish their toes and feet, squeeze their hands and fists, and make legs and arms as hard as stone.
- After a few seconds, have them release all their muscles and relax for a few minutes.
- Encourage them to think about how their body is feeling throughout the activity. Have them imagine how the kids in the story were feeling as they watched Katie Sue play without the “permission” of Mean Jean.
 - Were their bodies tense with stress?
 - As they relax their bodies, imagine the relief the kids were feeling when Katie Sue won over Mean Jean.
 - This simple exercise gets kids to be more aware of their bodies and helps them find a way to be present in the moment.

ONE

Heartbeat Exercise

Paying attention to one’s heartbeat has a role in mindfulness exercises and activities. This exercise teaches children to notice their heartbeat and use it as a tool to help their focus. In the same way we took a moment to pause before reacting in the last mindful activity, it’s important to notice our heartbeat, take a deep breath or two, and then proceed.

- Direct students to place their right hands on their heart.
 - Close eyes and listen to their heart beat for 20-30 seconds.
 - What do they feel or hear? Think about how you are feeling right now. Do these thoughts change your heart rate?
 - What about their breathing? Can you use focus on breathing to change your heart rate?
 - Can they focus or think of other things?
- Have the students jump up and down in place, do jumping jacks, or run-in place for one minute.
 - Stop and place their hand on their heart.
 - Have them close their eyes and pay attention only to their heartbeat.
 - What do they feel or hear? Is it different?
 - What about their breathing?
 - Can they focus or think of other things? Did this help with their feelings from before?
- Feeling fear can increase your heart rate, just like exercise does. The bystander colors were afraid of Red. How do you think their heartbeat felt? After the arrival of 1, the

other colors could take some deep breaths and feel less afraid. How would this affect their heartbeat?

- Does realization that you can have some control over your heart rate increase your ability to control your reaction?

More than Peach

Mindful Posing

Dim the lights. Have students stand up and take 3 deep breaths with their eyes closed. Explain in today's lesson we are going to meet an extraordinary character who is self-confident and took on a cause that was very important to her. She got other students and adults involved as well. She is a superhero! To help us channel our superpowers we are going to pose like...

- The Superman: This pose is practiced by standing with feet just wider than hips, fists clenched, and arms reaching to the sky, stretching the body as tall as possible.
- The Wonder Woman: This pose is struck by standing tall with legs wider than hip-width apart and fists placed on the hips.

After trying out these poses, have students consider how they are feeling about themselves. Are they feeling more positive or confident? Repeat the poses 2-3 times.

Empty Pot

Mind, Body, Go!

Materials: Ball

- Sit back in a chair relaxed or lay on floor. Close your eyes and do a body check. What are you feeling in your body?
- Keep your eyes closed and do a mind check. How does your mind feel?
- Now open your eyes and let's share. (In person use a ball. Virtually ask students to raise hand to share verbally.)
 - Roll ball to one another and when it's your turn, quickly name one thing that you are feeling in your body and one thing you are feeling in your mind.
 - Ex. "My body feels relaxed, and my mind feels happy" or "My body feels stiff, and my mind feels a little nervous."
 - Roll the ball to someone else for their turn.
- Have a few students share.
 - What do they notice about their mind and body checks?
- This time take 3 deep breaths in and out.
- Do mind and body check again.
- What do they notice now? Do their mind and body feel more in sync?
- Ask students, "How do you think Ping might describe his mind/body feelings when he:
 - found out about the contest?
 - realized he was taking an empty pot to the emperor?
 - when he was chosen as the next emperor?

Say and Do Something

This activity is a reminder that we control our own reactions. Between stimulus and response there is a space. In this space lies the power to choose your reaction. We have referred to this space before when talking about *using your lid* with the phrase, *stop and think*.

1. When I say "name," you say your name. When I say "clap," you clap. (Do this a few times).
2. Now, when I say "name," you clap. When I say "clap," you say your name. (Try this. There will be flubs).
3. With younger students stop and have them practice deep breathing before step 4.
4. Now, we will try this again, but before you react, pause, and take a deep breath. (I say "name," everyone takes a deep breath and then claps).
5. Debrief by asking if they were aware of the space between responding and reacting.
6. Discuss how using a "pause" before you say or do something may help others listen and be more responsive to your idea.

Review of Asset Year Books

Rainbow Walk

- Take a walk outside and look for something red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple.
- Find the colors in order.
- If using this as the conversation starter, pause after finding each color to discuss how that color makes one feel. One student may say red makes them feel angry and hot, another it makes them excited because it's their favorite color (there are no wrong answers).
- Keep going through the colors, in order, until the end of the walk.
- Continue with the Feeling Conversation Starter when back in the classroom and talk about the emotions and colors relationship.