

Mindfulness Meditation

EXPLANATION:

At each developmental stage, mindfulness and meditation can be useful tools for helping students to experience personal alertness.

Taking a breath while being fully present and not beholden to reactive thoughts and feelings requires careful attention to thoughts, feelings, and environment. These activities can be conducted daily to help build attention, calmness, and perspective.

It is important to acknowledge both the difference and the connection between mindfulness and meditation. Mindfulness can be practiced anytime, anywhere, and with anyone by showing up and being fully engaged in the here and now. Meditation is usually practiced for a specific amount of time. Mindfulness supports and enriches meditation, while meditation nurtures and expands mindfulness.

For the purpose of the Kaplan Kindness Curriculum, we use the term “mindfulness meditations.” This is because mindfulness meditation practice is one way to experience the current moment and integrate that awareness into everyday life. As students get older and more experienced, they can manage their own mindfulness moments.

A variety of activities are listed below. Many of the activities are suitable for all ages!



AGE/GRADE LEVELS: For all ages/grades

STUDENT GROUPING: Group descriptions and individual meditations

ACTIVITY LENGTH: Varies according to students’ experiences

CASEL CORE COMPETENCY: *SELF-MANAGEMENT*

- Managing one’s emotions
- Identifying and using stress management strategies
- You can learn more about the CASEL framework [here](#)

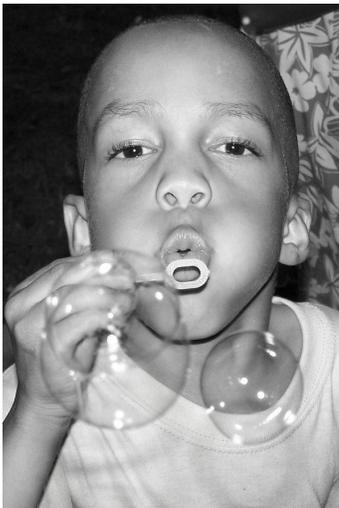
SCOPE OF TASKS:

When conducting mindfulness meditation activities, remember:

- Set a regular time in the daily classroom routine to incorporate mindfulness.
- Give some freedom to students to choose the most relevant mindfulness activities for themselves.
- Ensure the environment is safe and calm—this builds trust in the group.
- Encourage the students to share their experiences—how are they feeling, or how did they feel during the mindful meditation?

ACTIVITIES:

Blowing bubbles: Focus on calm, slow, deep breaths—exhaling to blow the bubble—inhaling in preparation for the next bubble. Take time to watch each bubble—where did it go, what did it look like, how long did it last?



Pinwheels: Perfect for inside or outside use. Students concentrate on the movement of the pinwheel in the breeze as it turns—does its movement change as its position in the air changes? If inside, focus can be on the breath as it moves the pinwheel—fast/slow, long/deep breaths and how long the wheel spins before stopping.



Mindful breathing: Sitting or standing still and focused—concentrate on one breath cycle at a time—breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth—let your body move with the breath. Let go of your thoughts—empty your mind. Watch your breath—as it enters and leaves your body.



Glitter jar: Each student in the class can have a personally made glitter jar. The jar is shaken to move the glitter around, and then time is taken to sit and watch the glitter and how it moves—does it move quickly, swirl, stick together? You can also count slowly to see how long the glitter moves. This activity can be done as a class or individually throughout the day.

How to Make a Glitter Jar

- Fill your plastic bottle about 1/3 full using clear glue. The more glue you add, the longer it will take for the glitter to settle after shaking.
- Add a tablespoon (or more) of glitter to the jar; different colors and textures can be added.
- Stir the glitter to combine glitter and glue.
- Fill the bottle the rest of the way with warm water.
- When the bottle is full, cap it and shake it.
- The cap can be sealed with a hot glue gun.

Mindful music: Choose the music—a slower tempo can quiet the mind and relax muscles, creating a calm and soothing feeling. Likewise, sounds of nature, rain, and thunder may also be relaxing, particularly when mixed with other music such as classical, light jazz, or easy listening music. Ask students to close their eyes, lie down or sit comfortably, and allow themselves to get lost in the music—blocking other thoughts. Explore the song—listen to the different instruments and sound of the voice—separate each sound and concentrate on it. Become immersed only in the song.



Mindfulness coloring: There are many downloadable mindfulness coloring templates on the Internet, and images can be chosen to meet the interests of groups or individuals. When coloring, find a quiet, calm place to sit. Encourage students to focus on how they choose and apply color in a design to bring awareness to the present moment. Coloring in a manner that consciously develops openness, curiosity, and flexibly focused attention is the most productive.



Almost any activity you can think of can be done mindfully . . . or not. Playing a musical instrument, driving in a car, cooking, or walking can all be mindful experiences if they are given focused, curious attention.

RESOURCES:

- Range of different styles of music
- Glitter bottles
- Coloring sheets, which can be downloaded from the Internet
- Bubbles
- Pinwheels—these can be commercially bought or made by students