
Mindful Schools

Engaging Children. Supporting Educators. Transforming Schools.

Mindfulness Curriculum Kindergarten - 5th Grades

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*Aside from the **Key Points** sections, *italics* in this curriculum are instructions for you. Regular font is the script for presentation.

Class One: Introduction - Mindful Bodies & Listening

Key Points

- This first class is very important. If you set them up to view mindfulness as a special time and they know how to be prepared when you come in, every class will go better. Do not move on until they understand the instructions and activities of this first day.
- When introducing mindfulness, be simple, especially for the youngest classes. Too much talking will not be effective. However, older students benefit from hearing how mindfulness will be relevant to their lives.
- Set the bar high. After introducing “mindful bodies”, see if they can sit with mindful bodies and closed eyes for 1 min. Same for mindful listening. Increase the time each day if they can do it. If they don’t make it, then reduce it.

Introduction

I am here today to teach you something called mindfulness. Has anyone ever heard the word Mindfulness? Mindfulness is paying attention to what is happening in the present moment. Mindfulness can help us learn to pay close attention to many things. It can also help us calm down when we are angry, sad, frustrated, or have any difficult emotion. Mindfulness can help us feel happy too. It can also help us focus and do well in school, sports or music.

I am going to visit your class for a few weeks, for just 15 minutes at a time. Every time, I will teach you something new about mindfulness.

Mindful Bodies

There are a couple very important things that help us be mindful.

If students are at their desks, have them all move their chairs away from their desks and turn them toward the front of the room. Explain that they can do this each time you come in. Remind them each time until it is a habit.

The first thing that will help us during mindfulness is to keep our bodies very still... let’s try that?

The second thing automatically happens when we get still... what is the noise like in here right now, when you get still?

Yes, it gets very quiet.

Now we have still bodies and quiet bodies. That's what I call our mindful bodies. Now, let's close our eyes and just sit like that for one minute.

You did a great job at your first practice of a mindful body. Was that easy or hard?

We won't have to be this still and quiet all the time, but often I will remind you to get your mindful bodies on and this is what you can do.

Mindful Listening

There are a lot of things that we can learn to be mindful of. Today we are going to practice being mindful of sound.

I brought something to help us with that. *Bring out bell.*

Would you like to hear what this sounds like? Ok, but we have to get our mindful bodies on.

Demonstrate a mindful body again and let them get ready. Make sure they are as still and quiet as you think that class is capable of.

Ring bell.

Great job. Would you like to hear it again? Ok, but this time, get your mindful ears on. That means you listen very carefully, the whole time. So, see if you can pay attention from the very first moment you hear the bell all the way to the end. Raise your hand when the sound is gone.

Ring bell.

Since you are so good at this, let's try it one more time with our eyes closed. Let your eyes close. Listen just like you did before to the entire sound and raise your hand when the sound is gone for you.

Ring bell.

We can also listen this carefully to any sound. There are lots of sounds around you all the time. If you listen very carefully, you might hear things you don't normally hear. Let's keep our mindful bodies on, with our eyes closed, and listen to the sounds around us. You might hear sounds in the classroom or outside, or even in your own body.

Mindful listening for about one minute.

Raise your hand if you would like to share some sounds that you noticed.

Comment on the quieter sounds and how quiet it had to be to hear them.

You have just learned how to pay attention better. In mindfulness, we learn how to focus and pay close attention to many things. Do you think it's important to be able to focus? Why? When could you use mindful listening?

Wrap-Up

I will see you again on _____. When you see me come in next time, you will know it's time for mindfulness and you can just get ready in your mindful bodies. I might not even say anything. I'll just come in, sit down, wait for your mindful bodies and ring the bell. We will listen to the bell every day I come to start and end the class. It will be our way of saying "hello" and "good-bye."

Now that you've learned mindful listening, see if you can remember to listen to sounds between now and the next time I see you. You might stop and listen while you are on the playground, or in the classroom, or at home. And you can tell me what you heard next time I come.

Journals

I also brought you all your own mindfulness journals. Today when I leave, you will get a journal and you can write about what we did today and how you felt. These journals are just for you. You don't need to worry about punctuation or spelling. You will not be graded. No one will grade it or read it unless you want us to. But your teacher might ask to see it just to make sure you are doing it.

Ring bell.

Class Two: Mindfulness of Breathing - Finding your Base

Key Points

- If the first day was difficult, try moving the students. Change the energetic dynamic; make sure their chairs are all facing you, move them to the carpet, get them to come in closer or give each other space. Beginning today, you can ring the bell as a way of beginning class, before “hello.” If you prepared them last time, they will remember to get in their mindful bodies when they see you come in.
- Beginning today, ask students if they remembered to practice the mindfulness you taught them last time. Time permitting, let a few students share. This is valuable for two reasons: 1. Many younger students are eager to share. 2. When other students hear what is happening for their peers, they are reminded what they can do.
- The anchor analogy seems to work best with third grade and up. But feel free to try it with the younger grades. Just make it simple. Also, make sure that you clearly pronounce *anchor* so that they don’t get confused with *anger*.
- Check if anyone is having trouble finding their breath in their belly. Ask if they feel it somewhere else. You can direct them to their chest or nose too. Make sure they know wherever they notice their breath is fine.
- Suggest that they choose the spot that is most obvious to focus on whenever they do mindful breathing.

Check In

Ring bell.

Hello. Do you remember what I teach? Did anyone notice sound since I saw you last?

Breathing

Last time we learned to be mindful of sound. Today we are going to learn how to be mindful of something new. What am I doing right now?

Take an obvious inhale and exhale; let them identify that you are breathing.

Yes, today we are going to learn to be mindful of that. We are always breathing. We don't need to learn how to breathe, but we are learning how to pay attention to our breath. Even though we are always breathing, we usually don't notice it.

Let's try it and see how we feel. Get your mindful bodies on.

Take a few obvious deep breaths with them.

Now let's just breathe normally like we usually breathe.

Keep breathing like that and let your eyes close. Just feel your breath; pay attention to your breath while you are breathing in and breathing out. *Continue this in silence as long as they are calm, quiet and participating.*

Now, put one hand in the air. Good, now take that hand and put it on your belly. Now take some of those slow, normal, quiet breaths. What happens to your belly when you breathe in and out? Yes, it goes up and down (or in and out). When we are mindful of our breath, that's what we pay attention to; every time we breathe in and out, we notice that movement in our belly.

Anchor

Our breath right here is going to be our anchor. What is an anchor? What does it do for a boat? Yes, an anchor helps keep the boat where it is. If the boat starts to drift away, the anchor pulls it back in. Well, that is what our breath is doing for our mind. Sometime when you try to focus on your breath, you might find that your mind starts thinking instead of focusing on your breath. When our mind wanders away from our breath or starts to think about things; we can notice it and bring it right back to our anchor.

Practice

Let's try one minute. Get your mindful bodies on and let your eyes close. Let's focus on our breath for one minute and feel that movement in our belly, our chest or at our nose every time we breathe in and every time we breathe out.

How did that feel to focus on your breath?

Allow many answers if you sense they really did feel calm. If the class comments are "calm, relaxed, happy," etc, point that out. Identifying it for them allows them to be mindful of that feeling. "Notice how you feel right now." Also, point out that they became calm/relaxed/happy in just a few seconds.

Wrap-up

Now you have learned how to be mindful of sound and mindful of breathing. You can try being mindful of breathing between now and the next time I see you. Since you are always breathing, you can try any time! You can practice mindful breathing while you are sitting at your desk, walking in the hallway, on the playground, even when you are trying to fall asleep at night. Raise your hand if sometimes it's hard for you to fall asleep. Well, if that happens tonight or tomorrow night, you can practice your mindful breathing and see if it helps you fall asleep.

Journals

The journal questions for today are:

1. When you breathe, where do you feel it in your body?
2. How did you feel when you practiced mindful breathing?
3. When do you think you can try mindful breathing again today?

Close with bell & three mindful breaths.

Class Three: Heartfulness - Sending Kind Thoughts

Key Points

- Beginning today, you will practice mindful breathing at the beginning of each class. You can use a time challenge as a way to show them how they are improving. “Last time we practiced mindful breathing for one minute. Let’s try a minute and a half today. Do you think we can do it?”
- Begin directing them regularly to notice how they are feeling right now. “Notice how you feel right now” will be included in the initial practice each day, but you are encouraged to make that suggestion whenever it comes to mind.
- It is important that you prep this lesson carefully. Guide students toward choosing someone they see regularly. If you don’t prep this clearly, students may choose someone who has passed away and they will end up sad. It is, of course, totally okay to experience sadness, but in 15 minutes you don’t have the time to process that with them. Your role in this lesson is to introduce them to kind thoughts in a way that will leave them feeling uplifted.

Practice

Ring bell. One minute of mindful breathing.

You can conclude each practice time by saying: Take a moment to notice how you are feeling right now. There’s no right or wrong answer. In mindfulness, we’re just noticing what’s happening.

Check-In

Hello. How are you? Did anyone remember to try mindful breathing since I saw you?

Kind Thoughts for Another

Are you ready to learn something new today? Today we are going to learn about Heartfulness or sending kind thoughts to ourselves and others.

Let’s try. Let’s get our mindful bodies on. Raise your hand and instead of putting it on your belly, today we’re going to put it on our heart. Now, let your eyes close and imagine/visualize/picture someone who you see almost everyday who makes you very happy every time you see them.

Imagine that person is healthy and strong.

Imagine they are very happy, with a smile on their face. Maybe they are doing something they really enjoy.

Imagine that they are surrounded by calm and peaceful things, and that their heart is calm and peaceful.

Now, we are going to send kind thoughts to that person. First, let your heart fill up with kindness, so full that it's about to burst. Now, take all that kindness and let's send the thoughts together - you can repeat after me.

Pausing between each one:

May you be healthy and strong.

May you be happy.

May you be peaceful.

Now, I am going to be quiet for a few seconds and you can continue to let those kind thoughts flow from your heart to theirs.

Raise your hand if you want to say who you chose and how it felt to send that person kind thoughts.

Often, they will comment that they feel happy, calm, relaxed, wonderful, etc. If there is a strong feeling of happiness in the room, point out that it only took one minute for them to get that feeling.

Kind Thoughts for Yourself

Time permitting, or incorporate on a different day:

You can also send kind thoughts to yourself!

For younger students, try a self-hug. For that we need both hands. Put both hands in the air. Now take them and wrap them gently around yourself for a good self-hug.

For all: Let your eyes close and let's send those same thoughts to ourselves. You can repeat after me again.

Pausing between each one:

May I be healthy and strong.

May I be happy.

May I be peaceful.

You can have them give a self-hug briefly each time you see them as a welcome or as a closing.

K Modification

When sending kind thoughts to someone, asking K to imagine someone can sometimes be too abstract. They might understand it better if they can send it directly to someone they see in the moment.

Have them turn to the student next to them. Get them in their mindful bodies. Have them say the phrases to each other at the same time.

Ask them how it feels when someone says something nice to them. How does it feel to say these things to someone else?

Now we're going to say these same sentences to our selves.

Raise your hand. Good. Now put your hand on your heart.

We are going to say the same things but this time we'll send them right to our heart.

Have them repeat the phrases.

Ask again how that felt. Explain that they can do this whenever they need to feel better.

Wrap-up

Just like you can be mindful of sounds or your breathing anytime, you can send these kind thoughts anytime. Some people noticed that kind thoughts made them feel good. So, you can send kind thoughts when you want to feel good, or when you are not feeling great, you can use this tool.

Journals

The journal questions for today are:

1. Who did you send kind thoughts to?
2. How did it feel?
3. Will you try sending kind thoughts to someone again?

Close with bell & three mindful breaths.

Class Four: Body Awareness

Key Points

- The word “sensation” might be new or different for some. You can use the word, but make sure they understand it. “Feelings” also has to be explained so they know the difference between feelings in their body and feelings as in emotions.
- Be mindful of the pauses in between statements; allow enough time for them to settle into each area, but not so long that they get bored, distracted, etc. – the never ending balance. Assess their concentration level. If they are concentrated and still, you can stay longer on each spot. If there is lethargy or restlessness, move more quickly through a few spots, then stay longer for one place, then quick, etc. Sometimes, it helps to stop in between body parts and ask the students what they notice.
- Give examples of sensations they might feel: hard, soft, hot, cold, tingling, movement.

Practice

Ring bell. One and a half minutes of mindful breathing.

Check-In

Hello. How are you? Did anyone remember to send kind thoughts, do mindful breathing or mindful listening since I saw you?

Today we are going to be mindful of our body. Mindfulness of our body can help us in many ways. After we do this today, I’m going to ask you why it might be helpful to be mindful of our bodies.

Body Scan

Today we are going to take a trip around our body. First, hold your hands up in the air; now clasp your hands together and bring them to your lap with your mindful bodies on. Let your body be very still. Let your eyes close and without using your hands, pay attention to how your feet feel with your mind. That means feel your feet with your attention, not with your hands.

What did you feel?

Identify the difference between a thought like, “It hurts” and a feeling like “It tingles.” One is in the mind, one is in the body. This will be a new concept, but older students will be able to understand that.

Now notice your hands. What did you feel?

As I mention each place of your body, I just want you to pay attention to that part and see what you notice. You might notice temperature (warm, cool, or hot), heaviness or lightness, softness or hardness, movement, or something else. Sometimes you might not notice anything in particular.

Now put your attention on your feet, notice what they feel like. Maybe you notice what it feels like where they touch your shoe or touch the floor. Notice if you feel softness or hardness, coolness or warmth.

Move your attention to your knees.

Your legs.

Where your body touches your chair, is it hard? Soft? Warm? Cool?

Your belly, and be mindful of one breath.

Your shoulders.

Your arms.

Hands.

Fingertips.

Neck.

Face. Hold your hands just in front of your eyes and let your eyelashes lightly touch your hands.

Head. Can you feel the hair on your head?

Ears.

Ring bell.

Where did you notice the most sensations? What sensations did you notice? Did anything surprise you? Did your left side and right side feel the same?

K Modifications

Hold out your hands with your eyes open. Now with your eyes closed. Can you feel your hands without touching them? What do you feel?

Now hold your hands together so they touch. What do you feel? *You can give them suggestions* – Did you feel cool? Warm? Soft?

Now rub your hands together. What do you feel?

Stop. Now what do you feel?

Now can you feel your hands without touching them?

Now put your hands on your face. What do you feel?

Add simple things or repeat in a quick manner.

You can then take them through the body in this way.

Stop after each section of the body and call on one or two students to share what they feel. If you go through the whole body without stopping they tend to get lost.

Wrap-up

Why would we want to be able to be mindful of our body? We use our bodies for everything: walking, running, sitting, dressing, eating, etc. Being mindful of your body helps you take care of your body and it can be a great way to feel calm and relaxed. Also, if you know anyone in your life who has health problems or trouble falling asleep, you can teach them this body scan. Where can you practice being mindful of your body? In class? On the playground? Before you play sports? Where you live? When you're going to sleep at night?

Journal

The journal questions for today are:

1. What sensations did you notice in your body?
2. What place in your body did you notice the most sensations?
3. Why do you think it is helpful to keep your attention on your body?

Close with bell & three mindful breaths.

Class Five: Mindfulness of Breathing - Staying at your base

Key Points

- The fundamental goal of every class is to have a few minutes of still, quiet mindfulness. This class gives students an additional tool to help that happen.
- By this class, they have probably developed some familiarity with their breath and might even be able to identify that it's difficult to keep their attention on their breath.

Practice

Ring bell. Two minutes of mindful breathing.

(Keep in mind that each classroom will be a little different. You want them to practice mindful breathing for a period of time that they can accomplish. Some classes might stay at 30 seconds, while others might be able to do three minutes or more.)

Check-In

Hello. How are you? Did anyone remember to notice how different places in your body feel, or pay attention to your breath, or listen to sounds, or send kind thoughts since the last time I saw you?

Lesson

Each day that I have been here, we have practiced being mindful of our breathing. Raise your hand if you were able to stay focused on your breath the whole time today. Raise your hand if sometimes it's easy to stay focused on your breathing. Raise your hand if sometimes it's hard. Today we are going to learn a tool to help us keep our attention at our base/our anchor.

In a moment I'm going to breathe in. When you see me breathing in, you will say quietly, but out loud, "breathing in." And when I'm breathing out, you will say "breathing out."

Take an obvious breath in and out and let them say it.

This time, make your words last the whole length of my breathing in.

Demonstrate “bbreaaaathiiing üünnn”. Try a couple breaths that way.

That’s exactly what you are going to do with your own breath. The only difference is you are going to say those anchor words in your mind, silently. Ready to try? Let’s try that for one minute.

Put your mindful bodies on. Hold one hand up in the air. Bring it to your belly. Use your anchor/reminder words and see how long you can stay focused on your breath.

One minute.

Raise your hand if using your anchor words helped you to focus on your breathing. Raise your hand if your mind started thinking and you forgot about your breath. Where did your attention go? Next time your attention wanders away, do you think you can bring it back to your breath?

K Modification

Noting is a bit of a stretch for kindergarten and sometimes first grade. It does seem to help if you say “Breathing in, Breathing out” for them while they pay attention to their breath. After some time, say:

Now do five more breaths all on your own.

They seem to be able to really stick with it for those five+ breaths.

Wrap-up

You have learned a lot about mindful breathing now. You’ve learned about your anchor (where in your body you feel your breath). You’ve learned how to focus your attention on your breathing. You’ve learned how to use your anchor words “breathing in, breathing out” in your head to match your breath.

Journal

The journal questions for today are:

1. Is it hard to stay focused on your breath for a long time?
2. How did you feel today when you practiced mindful breathing and anchor words?
3. When will you pay attention to your mindful breath today?
4. How can mindful breathing help you?

Close with bell & three mindful breaths.

Class Six: Heartfulness - Generosity

Key Points

- Give bowls on this day.
-

Practice

Ring bell. Two minutes of mindful breathing. You might want to get them started by saying, “breathing in, breathing out.” And remind them that now they can use their anchor words.

Check-in

Hello. How are you? Did anyone remember to use any kind of mindfulness since I saw you?

Raise your hand if an adult has ever made you give someone a gift, or give something away when you didn't want to. Keep your hand up if that felt good. Raise your hand if you've ever given or shared something just because you wanted to. Keep your hand up if that felt good. When we give because we want to, that feels good inside. Who can tell me what generosity means?

Gather the definition.

Do you know what happens when we are generous? Our hearts get very happy. Generosity or giving doesn't have to be with money or big things. We can be generous in very small ways.

Today we are going to imagine some of those ways. Get your mindful bodies on and let your eyes close.

Giving

For younger classes or restless classes, you'll want to pause in between each of the following examples.

You don't need to use the exact example below. Use any examples that you know will be relevant to your class(es).

Imagine that you get to school and you're in front of the classroom door. Your teacher is there, but her hands are full and she can't open the door. You open the door for her and she smiles and is thankful because she couldn't have gotten in without your help. Notice how that feels.

Then imagine you are at your desk and the person who sits next to you accidentally drops a box of pens and pencils. You reach down and help to pick them up. Notice how that feels.

Imagine that it is snack time and you have two cookies. You know your best friend didn't bring a snack so you give your friend one of the cookies. Notice how that feels.

Imagine that you are in line to do something and you know someone in your class really wants to go first. You offer to let them go in front of you. Notice how that feels.

Imagine that you say something very kind to someone. Notice how that feels.

Wrap-up

Since today is about generosity, I'd like to practice being generous. I brought you something today. This bell is for your classroom. You and your teacher can use it on the days I am not here.

Do you have some ideas of ways that you can be generous today? How many times do you think you can be generous today and tomorrow? How many generous things do you think you might see other people do? How about for the next two days, you write down any generous act you do and any generous act you see. You can collect them as a class and show me next time I come.

Journal

The journal questions for today are:

1. What is something generous that someone has done for you?
2. List some things that you can give that don't cost money, like smiles.

Close with bell & three mindful breaths.

Class Seven: Thoughts

Key Points

- This lesson varies greatly depending on the class. Past/Present/Future and First Thought are the lessons listed here. Please look at the extra lessons at the end of the curriculum to see other possibilities you can use that will be most effective for each class.
- Ideally, by now students in all grades have noticed that when they try to be mindful of their breathing, their mind sometimes wanders away. Most likely, you have identified this with them over the past few weeks. Choose one of the lessons below based on what you think your classes are capable of. You may want to use another lesson on another day.

Practice

Ring bell. Two minutes of mindful breathing.

Check-in

Hello. How are you? Did anyone do or see something generous since I saw you?

Past/Present/Future (best for 3rd - 5th)

Raise your hand if you find mindful breathing easy. Hard? Is it easy or hard to stay focused on your breath for a long time?

When we can pay attention to our breath mindfully, we are in the present moment. But our mind has a habit of wandering to the past and the future.

For example, let's say that where I am standing right now is the present, and I'm trying to pay attention to my breathing, but then my mind starts to think about lunch and wonder what I will be eating. *Move your body to the right.* My mind has gone into the... *let them answer.* Yes. And I notice that and then bring my mind back to my anchor, my breath.

And I am paying attention again... *pause a moment as you are paying attention...* and then my mind starts to remember what happened yesterday at recess. Oops, my mind has wandered into the... *move your*

body to the left and leave a pause to let them answer. Yes, I have gone into the past. I notice that and then I bring my attention back to my breath, the... let them answer – present.

Are you ready to try? Ok. Get your mindful bodies on. We will be mindful of our breath for one minute and you will watch to notice if your mind escapes to the past or the future. When you notice your mind escaping from the present moment, say “thinking, thinking” in your mind. Then bring your attention back to your breathing and say “breathing in, breathing out” in your mind.

Raise your hand if you were able to just pay attention to your breath and no thoughts interfered.

Raise your hand if you noticed a thought.

Raise your hand if you noticed your mind wandering away to the past or the future.

Let them tell you where it went if they want.

Raise your hand if you were able to note “thinking, thinking”. You can also note, “planning, planning” if that is what you were doing, or “worrying, worrying”, or “imagining, imagining”. Note, or label whatever is happening in that way.

Raise your hand if you were able to come back to the present.

First Thought (best for K-2)

Raise your hand if sometimes you can focus on your breathing the whole time when we practice mindful breathing. Raise your hand if sometimes your mind starts thinking and you forget about your breathing. Yes, sometimes our mind wanders away even when we ask it to stay put. For most of us this happens a lot. Today we are going to learn how to be mindful of our thoughts and return to our breathing.

Let’s try one more minute of mindful breathing. Go to your anchor and use your anchor words, “breathing in, breathing out”. Try to stay focused on every single breath. But raise your hand when the first thought pops up. It might be about something you’ve done, or something you are going to do, or what someone said. Whatever it is, just notice it, raise your hand, and then put your hand back on your anchor spot and continue breathing in and out. If another thought pops up in your mind, raise your hand again. Do this with every thought for one minute.

Practice one minute.

Raise your hand if you were able to keep your attention on your breathing that whole minute. Raise your hand if your attention wandered away. Can anyone tell me what their first thought was?

Everybody thinks. We can be mindful of thinking.

We are going to add one more trick to help us notice our thoughts. Let's go back to our anchor and use our anchor words. This time, when you notice a thought, say to yourself, "thinking, thinking". Then come back to your anchor words at your breathing spot. When you notice thinking, it means you've left your anchor words and you need to come back.

One minute.

Raise your hand if you were able to just pay attention to your breath and no thoughts interfered.

Raise your hand if you noticed a thought.

Raise your hand if you were able to note "thinking, thinking".

Raise your hand if you were able to come back to your breath and your anchor words.

Wrap Up

Sometimes we have thoughts we don't want to have. By noticing them we can more easily let go.

Sometimes we are thinking when we are supposed to be listening to the teacher, so if we notice that, we can be mindful and come back to listening to the teacher.

Sometimes, we have the same thoughts over and over, even though we don't need to. When we are mindful of them and we notice them, we don't believe them as much.

Now, you have a very useful mindful tool. For the next few days, try to notice your thoughts. You might notice them while you are in class, or on the playground, or at home. Next time you can tell me when you noticed your thoughts.

Journal

The journal questions for today are:

1. How many thoughts do you think a person has each day?
2. Is it easy or hard for you to stay focused on your breathing during mindfulness?
3. How do you feel when you are focused on your breathing? How do you feel when you are lost in thinking?

Close with bell & three mindful breaths.

Class Eight: Mindful Seeing

Key Points

- This is one of the exercises that can either cause rowdiness or a deep calm in the class. Keep your voice soft and slow, giving one instruction at a time. Remind students to keep their attention on themselves and just notice what is happening for them.
-

Practice

Ring bell. Two minutes of mindful breathing. Remind them to use their anchor words if it helps them.

Check-In

Hello. How are you? Did anyone practice mindfulness of thoughts or anything else since I saw you last?

So would you like to learn something new today? You've learned how to be mindful of sound, your breathing, how your body feels, thoughts, and how to send kind thoughts. Do you think you can be mindful with your eyes?

Mindful Eyes

Let's try. Let's get our mindful bodies on. This time, don't close your eyes, but let your body be very still. Let only your eyes move around. Look around for a few seconds... now, look at one spot on the floor in front of you and don't move your eyes for one whole minute.... Keep looking.... A little longer... you can blink, but don't move your eyes. If your eyes accidentally move away, just bring them back to looking at that one spot.

About one minute.

Ok. Now you made your eyes really strong, like an animals'. Can you tell me some animals that have really good eyes, better than us? *Let them give you their ideas (hawk, lion...)*. Yes, so I want you to pretend you have animal eyes, (hawk eyes or lion eyes) and keep your mindful bodies on but move your head so you can look around the room. Move very slowly and look very carefully.

Look around your room and see if you can notice something in your room that you haven't noticed before. You've been in this class for X months and your eyes are open all the time, but see if there is something that you just didn't notice before.

Looking for about one minute. Then let them share. And point out, even though their eyes were open before, they didn't notice some things that were right in front of them.

Mindful Seeing & Listening

You might like to bring a new bell or a rain-stick on this day. This will give them an opportunity to deliberately use two senses.

This is something you may not have seen before. I'm going to give you a challenge. You can listen to it two times. The first time, you will be mindful with your eyes closed. And because this is a new sound, when you hear it, you might want to open your eyes. But, even if you really, really want to open your eyes, try to keep them closed the whole time until the sound is finished. Then, we will listen to it again with our eyes open.

Rain-stick or new bell.

Raise your hand if you really tried to keep your eyes closed but you peeked, or your eyes accidentally opened. Raise your hand if you kept your eyes closed the whole time.

Repeat – eyes open.

Remember to look with your animal eyes for things you haven't seen before.

Ring bell. Three mindful breaths.

Wrap-up

Using mindful eyes will help you notice things you haven't noticed before. Now that you know how to put on your animal eyes, there are so many things you can notice more carefully. Next time you are outside, look for things you didn't notice before like the way leaves look or the sky or the clouds, or houses or cars. And where you live – maybe you will notice something in the kitchen or another room that was always there, but you didn't know it.

Journal

The journal questions for today are:

1. Today draw a picture of something you saw in your classroom, while you were using mindful eyes, that you had never noticed before.
2. How would life be different if you had your mindful eyes on all day long?

Close with bell & three mindful breaths.

Class Nine: Heartfulness - Kind and Caring on the Playground

Key Points

- Be detailed and real in your description of the playground scenarios.
- Assess concentration. Stop often and get feedback if a class is not staying with you.
- Older kids (3-5th) are conflicted about how to feel when they want to fight back. Some have been conditioned to think it feels good, and that it is not cool to be nice. Acknowledge that rather than judging it.

Practice

Ring bell. Two minutes of mindful breathing. You can get them started by saying, “breathing in, breathing out” and remind them they can use their anchor words if it helps them.

Check-In

Hello. How are you? Did anyone practice their mindful seeing or any other mindfulness since I saw you?

Do you remember when we sent kind thoughts to someone? Do you remember how that made us feel? Yes, many of us felt good, happy, etc. Isn't that interesting that when we thought nice things about someone, we felt good? Raise your hand if you have ever felt good because of something nice someone said. Raise your hand if you have ever felt bad because of something mean someone has said. Will you try an experiment today with me today to learn why that happens?

Playground Scenario 1

Imagine you're hanging out with your friends. Someone in your group gets picked on. Imagine that you laugh at the joke and run off ahead with the friends who made the joke. Notice how you feel and imagine how your friend who got picked on might feel.

This time, imagine that someone in your group gets picked on. Everyone's laughing. But, this time you hang back and tell your friend “don't worry, forget about it”. Your friend smiles and you walk together, catching up with the rest of your friends. Notice how you feel this time and imagine how your friend might feel.

Which feels better? *Let them share. The answers might be varied. If they are, that's good. Allow it to be a little bit of a conversation about how it's not always obvious or easy to do something kind.*

Playground Scenario 2

Imagine you are on the playground and someone comes up to you and says something very mean. Notice how that makes you feel.

Let them share.

Now imagine that you want to want to say something mean back. Notice how your body feels and what that's like. You're about to say something or do something, but you stop for just a moment and you take three mindful breaths. Let's do that right now.

Pause and actually have them take the breaths.

If you still feel angry take another breath. Now notice how you feel after taking some breaths.

Let them share. Most will notice that something shifted.

Wow, so for many of you, first you felt angry or sad or frustrated, and then after you used your mindfulness you felt better, or happier, or more calm? How long did it take for your feeling to change? Just a few breaths. I think that's amazing that you did something for yourself in such a short period of time. Raise your hand if you've ever been angry and it lasted all day. So now you learned a tool to help you when you feel overwhelmed by anger or sadness, or any other strong emotion.

Wrap-up

So, for most of us, when we wanted someone to feel good, we felt good. When we wanted someone to feel bad, we felt bad. Which feels better? And when you were very angry and wanted to fight back did that feel good or bad? After your breaths?

Raise your hand if you have ever said or done something like yelled at someone, called someone a mean name, pushed someone, lied, or hit, and later you wish you could take it back. Mindfulness helps us make decisions. And when think before we act, we will not have regret.

The magic of heartfulness is that when we send kind thoughts to someone we care about, it makes *us* happy. The same thing is true with anger: when we treat someone unkindly, it can make us unhappy. But anger is normal—everybody gets angry, and we don't have to be afraid or ashamed of anger. We want to bring mindfulness to the anger and transform it into Heartfulness. Unless we are mindful, we can't catch ourselves, and we'll always just act out our anger. If we are mindful, we can choose to handle our anger differently.

Journal

The journal questions for today are:

1. How does it feel to be kind to someone? How does it feel to be angry?
2. What is a difficult situation you have had on the playground? Now that you know about mindfulness, what could you do differently in the same situation?
3. How would the playground be if everyone was being mindful?

Close with bell & three mindful breaths.

Class Ten: Emotions - Creating Space or Show Me, Tell Me

Key Points

- Mindfulness of emotions could be the most powerful application of mindfulness.
 - Choose one of the below lessons depending on grade and class maturity.
-

Practice

Ring bell. Two minutes of mindful breathing.

Check-in

Hello. How are you today? Did anyone practice mindfulness on the playground since I saw you last?

Creating Space (best for 3rd-5th)

Lesson

We can be mindful of anything: listening, seeing, breathing, thinking. We can also be mindful of our emotions. Let's list some emotions. *Make a list with them either out loud or on the board.*

Most of us have had all of these emotions. Being mindful of emotions can help us. If the emotion is one that feels good, we can appreciate it more. If the emotion is one that feels bad, we can decide how to respond to it.

Creating Space

Raise your hand if you have ever said something and then right away wish you could take it back?

Raise your hand if you have ever hit or pushed someone, or broken something out of anger and then later wish you hadn't done it?

Mindfulness helps us to create space between a strong emotion and our action.

Let's say this is anger. *Hold up one finger.* And this is our reaction. *Hold up a finger from the opposite hand right next the anger finger.*

Without mindfulness these two fingers (my anger and my action) are right next to each other.

What are some things we might do when we are angry? *Let them give answers – hit, scream, push, throw things, etc.*

When there is mindfulness it comes in between these two fingers and pushes them apart so that the action is not so close to the anger. Mindfulness creates space so we can make a different decision. What are some things we might do about our anger if we have space and don't hit or scream, right away?

Anchor Words

Remember how we use anchor words for our breathing? Well we can use anchor words for our emotions too. It's very simple. We just repeat the word slowly a few times. For example, if I'm feeling angry, I would say the anchor word in my mind, "angry, angry, angry." What would your anchor word be if you were feeling sad? Excited? Bored? Silly? Happy?

Try using anchor words to describe your emotions for the next couple days and you can tell me about it next time I see you.

Show Me, Tell Me (best for K and up)

To bring awareness to emotions, choose a student to come to the front of the class. Let the class know that you will whisper a feeling into the student's ear, and they will show the emotion with their face. Ask the class to raise their hand when they want to guess what the emotion is. Remind them not to call it out before you call on them.

Whisper one of the following emotions into the students ear: happy, scared, angry, excited, silly, bored, disappointed, confused, etc.

Let the student show the emotion on their face. The other students can raise their hands to tell you what the student is feeling. Call on a few of the hands raised. When they've guessed correctly ask them:

What is it about the way he/she looks that lets you know they're (happy, angry, scared)?

Where do you feel that emotion in your body; how does your body know you are (happy, angry, scared)?

They might point out different facial features or make the face themselves. Have everyone make the face and point out what you notice about it that makes it an angry, excited, or scared face.

Repeat as time permits.

2nd and up

You can add the following discussion with classes that seem ready.

What would your heartbeat be like if you were angry? Would it be fast or slow? Would your body feel tense or would it be relaxed?

What is happening in your mind? Are there nice thoughts or mean thoughts? Imagine that you feel all those things. Now, say “anger, anger” in your mind. This would be mindfulness of anger.

Do several emotions, ending with a pleasant one. Let them know that now they are prepared to be mindful next time they have one of those emotions.

Wrap Up

Everybody has anger sometimes, frustration sometimes, disappointment sometimes, boredom sometimes, happiness sometimes.... All of these emotions are natural.

Mindfulness doesn't necessarily make our difficult emotions go away. We can't control when anger starts and when it ends. If we could, we would choose for it to stop, right? Mindfulness helps us be patient with difficult emotions, so we can make decisions that help us rather than harm us.

Journal

The journal questions for today are:

1. Draw a picture of yourself and color in where you feel anger, fear, happiness, peace, or other emotions that you have.

Class Eleven: Slow Motion

Key Points

- Point out the difference between a physical feeling and feeling in our mind, or the relationship: For example; A child comments “I noticed I wanted to sit down again”. Your response could be, “Was the wanting in your body or your mind?” “What made you want to sit down? Your legs hurt, felt heavy, etc. So, the sensations in your body made your mind want to sit down.”

Practice

Ring bell. Two minutes of mindful breathing.

Check-in

Hello. How are you? Did anyone remember to be mindful of their emotions since I saw you?

We have learned so many ways to be mindful. Raise your hand if you’ve gotten some type of benefit from mindfulness. So far, everything we’ve learned we’ve been sitting down for, right? But, do you move a lot during the day too? So, should we learn to be mindful while moving?

When we know how to move mindfully, we don’t hurt people with our bodies and we don’t hurt ourselves, like by running into something or tripping. When we are trying to be mindful, it is much easier to notice things when we are still and quiet, and when we move very slowly. That’s what we are going to practice today.

Mindful Arms

How many times a day do you raise your hand? Most of the time we do that very quickly and without noticing. Let’s see what we notice when we do it slowly. Let’s get very quiet and still. Try to keep things this quiet even when we start moving. Put both your hands on your lap. Slowly lift one of your arms. Notice if your arm feels heavy or light. Does it change as you move it? Now, let’s lower it very slowly paying attention to if it feels heavy or light.

Allow them to share if they want – they often like to.

Let’s try it again, this time notice what temperature you feel – warm, cold, hot & if it changes.

Let's try it again. Right now your arm is your anchor. If you want you can use anchor words, "Lifting, lifting & lowering, lowering."

Allow them to share.

Did anyone notice anything else?

Mindful Standing

How many times a day do you stand up and sit down? We are going to practice doing that mindfully. We are going to stand up very slowly, paying attention to what our whole body feels like just like you did with your arms. I'm going to show you what it looks like so watch very carefully.

Demonstrate standing up slowly, explaining what you are feeling and noticing as you do that. Once you're standing, demonstrate a very still body, close your eyes and show a mindful breath or two. Then demonstrate sitting down slowly, etc.

Okay, now you're ready to try. Let's do it together. Ready, set, slow. As you are standing, you can say in your mind "standing, standing." And as you are sitting, say "sitting, sitting." *Remind them to keep quiet voices if they need it.*

What did you notice? What did that feel like?

Wrap-up

Why do you think we move so slowly when we learn mindful movement? Did you know how to run when you were first born? What did you have to learn first? To crawl, then walk, then run, right? Being mindful is the same. We learn how to be mindful while we move slowly. If we are good at being mindful when we are slow, then we can practice mindful movement while we move more quickly.

Now that you know how to move mindfully, you can take out your journals mindfully. Pay attention to your arms, moving your chair, looking for your journal, touching your journal, putting it on your desk, opening it, etc.

Journal

The journal questions for today are:

1. Write your name mindfully. Pay attention to your hand and how it moves. Notice how you make your letters. Write your name several times mindfully.

Close with bell & three mindful breaths.

Class Twelve: Gratitude - Looking for the Good

Key Points

- The powerful part of this lesson is often in their sharing. Prompt them to share if necessary.
-

Practice

Ring bell. Two minutes of mindful breathing.

Check-in

Hello. How are you today? Did anyone remember to use mindful movement since I saw you?

Lesson

Can anyone tell me what it means to feel grateful?

Some possible answers: Thankful. Things that make us happy. When we feel happy or thankful about people or things that are in our life.

Let your eyes close and think of three things you are grateful for.

Let them share. Generally it will be big things like family, friends, teacher. Sometimes they need to hear some examples.

Now let your eyes close and imagine all of those things surrounding you. *Pause.* Notice how that makes you feel.

If you get positive answers, point out that it only took about one minute for them to feel that good.

If we can think of those things to make us happy, imagine all the small things in our day that might make us happy.

There might be sad things in our life or things that make us angry. If we focus on those things, we will only notice those things.

But, there are many things in our life that might make us feel happy if we focus on them. Sometimes they are hard to remember because they are small or because we are used to them.

Give examples like the sun on your face, a favorite color, a special food, someone's smile, a hug from a friend, playing a sport, art, laughing, etc.

So can you think of three smaller things that you are grateful for?

Let them share.

Wrap-up

Do you remember when we wrote down the generous things we did or saw? For the next two days, let's write down things that we are grateful for. You can collect them again as a class and see how many things you can find to be grateful for.

Journal

The journal questions for today are:

1. List ten things that you are grateful for. Can you remember to think of these things everyday?
2. How do you feel when you think about things that make you happy?

Close with bell & three mindful breaths.

Class Thirteen: Walking

Key Points

- Mindful walking can make some classes talkative or excited. Speak quietly to encourage them to remain calm.
-

Practice

Ring bell. Two minutes of mindful breathing.

Check-in

Hello. How are you today? Did anyone think about or feel grateful since I saw you?

Mindful Legs

Today, we are going to learn how to do mindful walking. Let's stand up mindfully again. Balance on both feet evenly. Gently lift one foot, then place it back down. Gently lift the other foot and place it back down.

Now try matching it with your breath. Breathe in and lift up. Breathe out and place down. *Repeat.*

Walking

This time, we'll take one small, slow step forward. Breathe in, lift one foot. Breathe out, place it down a little in front of you.

Try a few steps forward like this.

Now breath normally and keep your attention on your feet. Feel each foot touch the ground. Keep your attention on the bottom of your feet and let's slowly take three mindful steps forward. This time, notice how your foot feels when you lift it up. Can you feel the bottom of your feet on the ground and in the air?

The level of detail they can notice will depend on their concentration.

Then stop and stand mindfully, taking three mindful breaths. Slowly turn around. This time see if you can pay even closer attention. Maybe you can notice something new. Take three mindful steps back to your chair.

Let's sit down mindfully. Ready, set, slow.

What did you notice?

Variations

You can have them walk in a circle if there is space.

You can have them walk slow, then normal, then a little fast, and back to slow again.

You can have them walk freely around the room if they are being calm and focused.

Wrap-up

Why is it useful to be able to be mindful when we walk? When can you practice mindful walking? The hallway? At recess? In your classroom? Walking to or from school?

Journal

The journal questions for today are:

1. How do you think your classroom, playground, school, the world would be different if everyone practiced mindfulness?

Class Fourteen: Mindful Eating

Key Points

- This exercise can cause a lot of rowdiness or a lot of stillness. The prep and presentation are very important. Give a good, clear reminder about mindful bodies before you start, and repeat the reminder once the lesson has started if they need it.
-

Practice

Ring bell. One minute of mindful breathing.

Check-in

Hello. How are you? Did anyone try mindful walking since I saw you?

Lesson

We can be mindful of anything. Your mindful bodies are very important today because sometimes this exercise makes us want to say things. Remember that we are going to do this whole activity mindfully. That means you keep paying attention to how you feel. You don't need to say anything out loud. I will call on you if you really want to comment, but stay mindful and keep your attention on yourself for the whole exercise.

Ok. I am going to say a few sentences. And I'm going to pause between each one so that you can notice how you feel when I say each thing. Remember just to notice in your own body.

I brought you something.

The thing I brought you can eat.

I brought raisins.

You get two.

Ask how they felt for each sentence.

If someone is allergic or they don't like them, obviously they don't have to eat them.

I will put two raisins in each person's hand. Don't eat them yet. Just start to investigate your raisins like a scientist. Notice what you see, feel, smell, hear.

What do you notice with your eyes?

With your nose?

With your ears? *Have them squish raisin next to their ears.*

With your fingers?

Now we're finally going to eat it, but we are going to eat it very slowly. You might take a whole minute to finish just one raisin.

Open your mouth, put it on your tongue, close your mouth. Try not to chew it yet. Just notice how it feels in your mouth. Notice if you taste anything yet. Now, begin to chew one bite at a time, noticing how it changes with each chew. Chew very slowly.

Try to notice when you swallow and how far you can feel it into your body?

Get comments about what they noticed. Time permitting, eat the second raisin. Encourage the students to pay even closer attention, to notice how the first raisin is different than the second.

Wrap-up

When are other times that you could be mindful of eating? Can you try and remember to take one mindful bite at a meal before the next time I see you?

Journal

The journal questions for today are:

1. Did you notice anything during mindful eating that you had never noticed before?
2. How do you think meals would be different if you were mindful?
3. How can eating mindfully help us?

Close with bell & three mindful breaths.

Class Fifteen: Mindful Test Taking

Practice

Ring bell. One minute of mindful breathing.

Check-in

Hello. How are you? Did anyone try mindful eating since I saw you?

Raise your hand if you have ever taken a test. Raise your hand if you want to tell me how you feel when you take a test.

Take answers. Often, they will identify nervous, afraid, wanting to do well, etc.

Yes, and do you think mindfulness could help with those feelings? Today, we're going to learn how to be mindful for tests.

Testing Scenario

Get your mindful bodies on and let your eyes close. Imagine you are taking a test. You are answering questions easily. Then you come to a question that is really hard. You know you learned it, but you can't remember now. Notice how you start to feel. It's a really hard question and you don't think you will be able to answer it. Without mindfulness, you might feel discouraged for the rest of the test. But imagine that when you reach that hard problem, instead of getting discouraged or frustrated, you remember to be mindful. Imagine yourself putting down your pencil and closing your eyes. You take a few deep breaths. You notice how your body is feeling and you keep breathing. You notice how your body feels and you keep breathing until you feel more calm. Then you open your eyes, you look at the problem again and your mind feels clear again. You continue your test and finish. Imagine putting your pencil down and feeling calm and satisfied.

Pretest Calming

Your class can also practice mindfulness before any tests. Let's imagine there is a big, important test today, and the whole class and your teacher are feeling nervous.

Now, let your eyes close.

Sit comfortably.

Place your hands on your lap.

Open your ears. *Ring bell.* Listen carefully.

Raise your hand when you don't hear the sound anymore.

Place one hand where you feel the movement of your breath.

Take three slow, deep breaths...normal, natural, calming breaths.

Notice how your body feels.

If you feel anxious, nervous or tense notice where you feel that in your body.

If you feel anxious, breathe in one deep breath and as you breathe out, breathe out anxiety.

If you feel nervous, breathe in one deep breath and as you breathe out, breathe out nervousness.

If you feel tension in your body, breathe in one deep breath. As you breathe out, breathe out the tension.

Take your next breath imagining ease coming into your body.

Breathe calm into your body.

Imagine yourself taking your test with ease.

Imagine ease in your body and in your mind through the entire test.

Imagine putting your pencil down with ease at the end of your test.

Ring bell.

Wrap-up

There are many times that we might feel nervous, anxious, frustrated or afraid. We can use mindfulness any of those times. And, the next time you are going to take a test, you can ask your teacher to read you the pretest calming.

Journal

1. What are some feelings you have before, during and after tests?
2. Do you think feeling calm helps you do well on tests? Why?
3. What will you do next time you are having trouble answering a questions on a test, or feeling nervous about a test?

Class Sixteen: Ending Review and 2+2

Practice

Ring bell. Two minutes of mindful breathing.

Check-in

Hello. How are you? Today is our last day. Now, you have to remember mindfulness without me. Do you think you can do it? I know you can. Let's review the things we've learned. *Write it on the board if it is convenient.*

Do you think there is anything that it's not possible to be mindful of? You can be mindful of anything.

2+2

Did you know that mindfulness is like math? No? Well, it is. I'll show you how.

Can anyone tell me what 2+2 is? *They will all know right away.*

Yes, and how long have you known that?

Do you think about that everyday? No?

Do you think you will ever forget that 2+2 equals 4?

And can anyone take that away from you?

Wrap-up

Mindfulness is just like math in that way. 1. What you have learned, you will never forget. 2. You might not remember or think about it every day. But, when you do remember to be mindful, you will never forget how. 3. You have it inside you. No one can take mindfulness away from you.

Let's have some of you practice leading mindfulness.

Time permitting, have a few students lead by ringing the bell and reminding everyone to listen to sound and pay attention to their breath.

Journal

The journal questions for today are:

1. What is the best thing you've learned in mindfulness?
2. How will your life be different now that you know how to be mindful?
3. What would the world be like if everyone practiced mindfulness?

Close with bell & three mindful breaths.

Extras:

Mindful of Every Activity

Key Points

- Be as detailed as possible when imagining/describing a mindful activity with the students. This will increase the chances of them remembering to do things mindfully.
-

Practice

Ring bell. Two minutes of mindful breathing.

Check-in

We have learned a lot about mindfulness. Can you raise your hand and tell me one thing we've learned in mindfulness so far?

Make a list, even write it on the board. Help them remember each lesson.

Lesson

Do you think you can be mindful when you wake up?

Go to sleep?

When you're getting ready for school?

Eating?

Tying your shoes?

Taking a shower?

Brushing your teeth?

Listening to your teacher?

Playing on the playground?

Often they will say “no” to some, not realizing that they can really be mindful at any time. Come to the conclusion with them, we can be mindful of any thing!

Let’s try one of these activities now.

Choose a simple activity like picking up a pencil or tying their shoe. As they are doing it, direct them to some things they might be noticing; moving, lightness, heaviness, touching, rough, smooth, hard, soft, etc.

Let’s close our eyes and imagine ourselves being mindful of an activity we might do away from school.

Pick an activity they might do outside of school – eating, brushing teeth, taking a shower, walking to school, etc. Describe it in great detail and ask them what they notice in their imagination.

So, if you were going to be mindful of one of these things, what kinds of mindfulness would you be using?

Let’s see how many different kinds of mindfulness we can discover in that activity!

Wrap-up

Now, let’s have everyone decide on one thing they will try to do mindfully today and tomorrow. You can all tell me about it next time I see you.

Ask everyone to raise their hand and tell you what they plan to be mindful of. If you have time, ask them what they expect they will notice. This will help trigger their attention when they are actually doing it.

Journal

The journal questions for today are:

1. How many times a day do you think you can remember to be mindful?
2. When are some times you will remember to be mindful?
3. Do you think it would be helpful to practice mindfulness everyday? Why?
4. What are some things you might notice if you were being mindful of brushing your teeth? Eating a sandwich? Walking on the playground? Playing with friends? Sitting at your desk? Tying your shoes? Putting on a shirt or jacket? Taking a shower?

Close with bell & three mindful breaths.

Listening: Sound Challenge

Today, we are going to test our mindfulness strength. Have you ever noticed how when the classroom door opens, everyone looks to see what's happening? Well, there are lots of noises throughout the day that distract us like that. When we have strong mindfulness, we can stay focused on what we choose to focus on.

You all are going to practice mindful breathing. I am going to make some noises. Just notice how you feel and what your reaction is inside, but try to stay mindful. As much as possible, stay focused on your breath and your own experience, not others.

Variation: Ask for a volunteer to sit in the front of the room. They try to stay mindful, focusing on their breathing and noticing what happens around them, but not reacting. The class starts out pin-drop quiet. With your cue they begin to make a little noise, then more, and more until there is a lot of talking and movement. At your cue, they reduce the noise until there is total silence again. Ask the volunteer how it was for them.

Breathing: Counting Breaths

Sometimes students get bored with just breathing. You can get their attention again by just changing the way they pay attention to their breath.

Do you remember how we noticed that when we do mindful breathing sometimes our attention goes away from our breath and we start thinking about other things? Today we are going to try a challenge.

We are going to calmly count our breaths. The first time you breath in you will say in your mind, "one". Then when you breath out you will say in your mind, "two". Breathing in again will be "three", out again will be "four". Does that make sense? Ok. So here's the challenge. When your mind wanders away and you start thinking about something else you still come back to your breathing, but you start counting at "one" again. Don't rush through your breathing. It doesn't matter how many breaths you have. Any number is fine.

Ok, let's try this for two minutes. I'll give you one reminder when we are half way through.

Kind and Caring: Secret Buddy

Secret Buddy is a great way to practice sending kind thoughts to a neutral person.

Now that you know how to send kind thoughts to someone, let's pick a secret buddy that we can send thoughts to all week.

Choose someone from another classroom, maybe someone older or younger than you. It will be anonymous - you won't tell the person, but you will just silently send them kind thoughts. You can send the thoughts when you see the person or just when you think of them.

Fast Movement

Once students have experienced the Slow Motion and Walking classes, try some mindful fast movement.

Today we are going to apply our mindfulness to some movements that we make everyday. Every day we have to walk from our chairs to the door several times. Close your eyes for a moment and imagine how you usually move from sitting at your desk to standing in line at the door. Imagine how your body moves and how your mind feels. Is your mind excited, interested, eager? Is your body heavy or light, quick or slow. Are you usually talking? Planning? Tense? Relaxed?

Let some students share.

Most likely we are not mindful at all during this transition. We are thinking about what we are running off to. We are chatting with a friend on the way out. We are planning what to do once we are outside. We are probably not in the present moment at all.

We've learned how to move very slowly and walk very slowly. This helped us notice things about our body that we might have never noticed before. But we can't always move that slowly. Nor do we always want to move that slowly. Do you think it would be possible to move from your seats to the door mindfully? If we were going to be mindful of this, what could you be mindful of? What could you notice while making all these movements? Could you still notice temperature in your body? The heaviness or lightness of your arms and legs? Could you notice how your clothes feel as your body moves? Could you notice the air on your skin? Could you notice your thoughts, plans, ideas? *Make sure you include how both the body and mind would*

feel, and how the class as a whole would stay calm, quiet, and aware. Talk them through it first, having them imagine the experience from start to finish.

Ready. Please stop and stand in a mindful body once you are at the door in line. Set, go.

Once everyone is in line, have them return to their seats, asking them to try to notice something new about their experience on the way back.

What are some things that you noticed while doing this activity mindfully? Did you notice more things about your mind or your body? What is the advantage to doing a simply activity like this mindfully? How does doing this mindfully compare with not doing it mindfully?

Of course you can pick any sequence of movement that they make regularly; walking to the cafeteria, running at P.E., walking between classes, cleaning up the room after an art project. In each case, have them first identify the way they usually do the movements. Then have them imagine doing the whole thing mindfully. Remind them that mindfulness in this lesson includes silence, calm and consideration of others. Then have them do it.

Thoughts: The Stream (3rd-5th)

As you pay attention to your breathing today, notice if thoughts happen. Imagine that your thoughts are just floating down a stream. You can watch them pass by and continue focusing on your breathing. Sometimes we accidentally grab a thought. Notice if this happens.

Two minutes or more of mindful breathing.

Raise your hand if you were able to let all your thoughts float down the stream. Raise your hand if you grabbed some thoughts. Did you grab happy thoughts? Sad thoughts? Why did you pick those thoughts?

We have to think sometimes, so we have to grab some thoughts. How can mindfulness help us choose which thoughts to grab?

Thoughts: Puppy Dog Mind (K-2)

Raise your hand if you like puppies. Do puppies sit still very often? If you put them down without a leash, what will they do? Yes, they'll run away. And then what do you have to do? You have to go get them and bring them back.

Our minds are kind of like puppies. When we are trying to do mindful breathing, our mind or attention, runs away like a little puppy. Then, we have to get our mind and bring it back to our breathing. We might think about our friends or recess or things we like. But when we are doing mindful breathing, we have to catch our mind like a puppy and bring our attention back to... *point to your belly and let them answer.*

Let's see how many times our mind runs away like a puppy.

Let's get our mindful bodies on and do some mindful breathing. If your mind starts thinking, you're going to notice it, and bring your attention back to ... *let them answer again.*

Thirty seconds.

Have them share.

Thoughts: Butterfly Mind

Show me with your hands what a butterfly does. Do you think it's easy or hard to catch a butterfly? Our mind is kind of like a butterfly. It likes to fly around a lot and it's pretty fast.

When our mind wanders we can catch it with a butterfly net and put our attention back on our breathing.

So, today we are going to see if our mind flies away like a butterfly. This is what it might look like.

I will have my mindful body on with my eyes closed, paying attention to my breath. I will try to pay attention to every breath. But, if my mind wanders away and thinks about something, I will catch it like this.

Move your arm (slowly) like you are catching a butterfly. Then gently put your hand on your belly.

Then I will breathe again until my mind flies away. I will gently catch it, and then what? Yes, I will breathe again.

Emotions: Using Anchor Words for our Experience

You might also notice that you have feelings when you are being mindful like excited, nervous, angry, happy, bored, scared. Raise your hand if you have ever had any of the those emotions. If you notice any of these things, you can note “excited, excited”, or “nervous, nervous”, etc. So if I am doing mindful breathing and a feel happy, what anchor word would I use? What if I was feeling bored? What if I was feeling relaxed? You can use anchor words for any emotion you have.

Practice mindful breathing for two or more minutes and ask them to give anchor words to any emotions they notice.

Emotions: Scenario

Ring bell.

Start by going to your base for a few breaths.

Relax.

Now imagine that you just woke up and it’s your birthday.

It’s a Saturday, so there’s no school, and you’re going to have a party.

Best of all, your best friend is going to stay after the party for a sleepover.

How does this feel in your body? Notice the sensations you feel right now.

What would you call this feeling? Can you give it a name or identify it?

Now imagine that you’ve gone into the kitchen and you’re eating breakfast. You’re having your favorite breakfast because it’s your birthday.

The phone rings and it’s your best friend’s mother.

She has bad news. Your friend is sick and can’t come for the party or the sleepover.

How does this feel in your body? Notice the sensations you feel right now.

What would you call this feeling? Can you give it a name or identify it?

Now it's later in the day and the party is in full swing. You're playing with your friends, eating all the treats, and there's a big pile of presents in the corner you're going to open later.

You decide to invite your second best friend for a sleepover.

You go to your parents and say, "Can my friend stay for a sleepover?"

And your parents say "No."

When you ask them why not, they say "Because."

How does this feel in your body? Notice the sensations you feel right now.

What would you call this feeling? Can you give it a name or identify it?

Ring bell.

How did it feel when you woke up on your birthday?

Happy, excited, etc; try to get them to describe physical feelings, like tingling, lightness. If nothing comes you can say "Is it an "up" feeling or a "down" feeling?" They'll say "Up."

Now, how did it feel when you found out your best friend was sick?

How did it feel when your parents said "No."

When they talk about the last one, someone might say something like "I wanted to hit my parents." You can use this as a lead-in to talking about how if we are mindful of our feelings it helps us to not hurt other people and ourselves.

It's important to separate our feelings and our actions. If we can be mindful of our feelings, then we can decide if we want to act on them, instead of just automatically reacting.

It's hard for K and sometimes 1st to imagine a scenario. Please see the Show Me, Tell Me emotions lesson as a variation for K and 1st graders.

Emotions: The Balloon

Grades 3-5

It's very rare that we have one emotion all day long. In fact our emotions often go up and down throughout a day.

Demonstrate this with your hand moving it up and down like a wave.

I brought something today to demonstrate this. *Show them the balloon.* This balloon is going to show us how we might feel throughout the day.

Let's pretend that you woke up and felt really good. You were ready to go to school, and to see your friends. You're feeling happy. *Fully blow up the balloon. Hold it up and make the point that this represents them feeling happy.*

As you get ready for school, you get dressed, eat breakfast, and start putting your books and papers into your backpack and you realize that you forgot to do your homework which is due today. How does that feel when we forget to do our homework?

Allow time for them to shout out a few feelings and each time let some of the air out of the balloon. Hold up the balloon so they can see that it shows that they are no longer feeling so happy. They're deflated.

So even though you may not want to now, you still have to go to school. You get to school and right when you walk through the doors you see your friends. You start to play around. Now you're all laughing. What does it feel like to be having a good time with your friends at school?

Let them yell out a few responses and each time blow into the balloon.

Do the same thing with one more example where the air gets let out of the balloon almost all the way. Point out that all those changes in emotion happened in just one morning!

Explain that Mindfulness can help us when we are feeling this low. Have them come up with ways to use their mindfulness that can help themselves. As they come up with possibilities, blow into the balloon until it's full again.

K Modification

Once the balloon is almost completely out of air, tell them that there is a very special way that they can help themselves feel better. Gratitude!

Gratitude is when we feel thankful or grateful for something or someone in our lives. Think of someone you know or something you might have that makes you feel thankful or lucky to have. *As they respond ask them how it feels to think of that person or thing. With each positive response, blow in to the balloon.*

K-2 Modification

These grades don't really have homework or tests, so it's important to use examples that are relevant at this age. When deflating the balloon, you may use the example of how it feels when they fall down and hurt themselves, or are learning something new and it's hard to understand, or when someone says something mean to them.

Whip-Around

A whip-around is a great way to get some feedback from a quiet class, to check-in in the morning, or just to create some energy.

Everyone take a moment to notice how you are feeling right now. See if there is one word that describes how you are feeling right now. It may be calm, energetic, bored, interested, happy, irritated, or any other experience. We are going to do a quick whip-around to share the one word that describes our current experience. As I point to you, just say your one word. If you really don't want to share, is there a word that describes that? If you are paying close attention, the way you feel right now might actually change by the time it is your turn.

Have someone volunteer to start and then point to each person in succession.

Day of Relevance

Sometimes older students need to know more explicitly why they are being asked to learn mindfulness. Sitting still, closing their eyes and being quiet might not be appealing, feel comfortable or make sense at first. This class can be used at anytime to have the relevance conversation.

Relevance

For mindfulness to work, we have to really try it. And in the beginning, it might seem weird or pointless. But, keep in mind that this is new for everyone and we are all doing the same thing, so you are not alone in this mindfulness experiment. If we don't try it, we can't determine if it is useful for ourselves or not. So, let's list some ways that you might find mindfulness to be useful and relevant in your own life.

Raise your hand if you have ever:

- said something you wish you could take back?
- done something that you later regretted?
- felt angry and out of control?
- felt nervous or anxious about an exam or performance?
- been in a bad mood but not sure why?
- been in a bad mood but not even sure what emotion it is?
- felt like you need a break and want everyone to just leave you alone?
- had trouble falling asleep because your mind won't be quiet or your body feels restless?
- been accidentally spacing out in class when the teacher calls on you?
- noticed that you do much better at sports or music when you are really focused?

Our emotions are continually changing. Difficult emotions like anger, fear, worry, and stress actually release chemicals in our brain that prevent us from learning, and can make us react and say and do things we didn't want to. Mindfulness stops these chemicals.

Hopefully, these examples encourage you to try mindfulness to discover for yourself if it helpful.

Have a discussion to work through what's difficult:

What's the most challenging thing about mindfulness? Not moving? Being quiet? Closing your eyes?
Feeling bored?

What's the best thing/easiest thing about mindfulness for you?

Ask if they have any questions. Find out if anyone is still on the fence or unwilling to try. Explain that this is okay, and as long as they share with you then together you can decide how to work with it.

Being Mindful of Boredom

If you are sensing that the interest level has dropped, or that some students are not as engaged as you would hope, inquire as to the cause of their disinterest or lack of engagement or use the Day of Relevance lesson above. If boredom is one of the causes it's a great opportunity to talk about boredom.

Raise your hand if sometimes you feel bored during mindfulness. Is anyone willing to share why you think that is?

What does it feel like when we're bored? How does your body feel? How does your mind feel? Does it feel good? Do you like the feeling? *Let them share for each of these questions.*

The great thing about mindfulness is that there is no right or wrong. Mindfulness is just learning how to be aware of all of our experiences. All of us have felt bored in our lives. Most of us notice that it's an unpleasant feeling; we usually want to change what we are doing in order not to feel bored anymore. When we use mindfulness to notice boredom, we might actually learn something from it or about ourselves. Does anyone have any ideas about what you might learn if you are mindful of boredom?

What is the opposite of boredom? *Curiosity, interest, etc.*

Do you think it's possible that there is something about mindfulness that you have not noticed yet that if you did might make you more interested. In a way it's the experience of having giving up on investigation and curiosity. It's the belief that there is nothing left to learn. If we give up on curiosity, we are going to miss a lot of opportunities to learn new things. Just like scientists, if we keep looking closely with an open mind, we might discover something new.

Have you ever noticed that boredom is a choice? If we know what boredom is, then we can decide to be bored or not. How many of you believe that this could be true?

It's great to give a personal example of a time when you felt bored. Explain how it felt, what you noticed and if you were able to become curious and learn something.

Is there anything that you find interesting that you think others might find boring?
Let them share with you and the class. Maybe someone will be surprised at what they could be noticing.

Is there anything boring to you that you might be able to turn up your curiosity and look for or listen for to make it more interesting? *Math, reading, science, homework, mindfulness....*

Next time you are bored, see if you can notice first how it feels in your body and mind. Then see if you can turn up your curiosity as if you were a little baby learning things for the first time or an alien from

another planet or even a friend that you know would be interested in that subject. Try to see it from another perspective to help you be more interested.