

60

Mindful Minutes

**A programme to develop mindfulness
in the nurturing context**



By Tina Rae

Mindful Minutes

1

Breathe Out The Tension On Your Mountain

Sit tall and proud

Get comfortable and close your eyes

Let the tension float away from your fingers, toes and head

Look closely at 1 spot on the floor

Notice each breath as it goes in and feel solid and strong

Imagine you're calmer with each breath as you watch the water travel down your mountain

Then open your eyes and feel how calm you are



Mindful Minutes

2

Letting Unkindness Go!

Write unhelpful or unkind thoughts you have had on each balloon.
Close your eyes. On the count of 3 imagine letting go of each one....



Mindful Minutes

3

Blow The Unkindness Away!

Blow unhelpful and unkind thoughts into bubbles and watch them drift away.



Mindful Minutes

4

The Train Track Observe Your Thoughts To Reduce Stress

Sit quietly and imagine you are on the top of a hill. Look down and see the train track picture of a train moving past. As you see each carriage go past, think of it as one of your thoughts. If you get caught up in your thought and feel as if you've jumped onto the carriage, gently get back up to the top of the hill. Let that thought 'go' – notice it but don't get on the carriage.



Mindful Minutes

5

Practising Gratitude

Each day, think about and even record three things that you feel grateful for – things that make you happy.

They could be happy events that happened that day like fun games at school, or special people in your life, something you did that you are proud of, a pet, whatever brings you a feeling of gratitude. You might even consider starting your own gratitude journal and add to it each day.

3 things I am grateful for today

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Mindful Minutes

6

Mindfully Manage Uncomfortable Feelings

When an uncomfortable feeling comes up, mindfully 'scan' your body to tell where the most uncomfortable sensation is. Is it in your head? Stomach? Chest? Or somewhere else?

Pick the most uncomfortable part and really pay attention to it. Use your imagination to describe what it might look like (e.g. an uncomfortable feeling in the stomach might feel like a heavy lump of clay), feel like (texture, temperature, does it move).

Now slowly take some breaths and let all the air out of your lungs with each breath, letting your lungs fill up naturally each time.

With each breath, imagine the air going around and through the uncomfortable feeling, making room in your stomach/chest etc. The feeling doesn't have to go away – you just need to make some more space for it.

Put your hand on the part of your body where the uncomfortable feeling is and feel the weight, warmth and feel of your hand comforting you.

You can say something to the feeling like, "I can feel you there, but it's okay. I can still do what is important to me like... (going to school/doing the test/doing my homework etc). I don't like this feeling but I can make room for it and still keep going."

Mindfully manage it!



Mindful Minutes

7

Best Breathing!

Find a comfortable place to sit, with your eyes closed and your spine as straight as you can make it.

Focus your attention on your breathing.

When a thought, or emotion pops into your head accept them, but allow them to float on by (imagine you are pinning them to a cloud or onto a leaf floating down the river).

Focus your attention on the rise and fall of your chest, the feeling of the air entering and leaving your body.

This is best breathing!

Practice it!



Mindful Minutes

8

Balloon Breathing

Close your eyes and be very still and comfortable
Imagine you are holding a big balloon
It is very light and easy to hold
This balloon is so light it starts to float up into the air
Hold on tight and feel the balloon gently rising into the sky
The big balloon is pulling you further and further into the air
Take a deep breath in and then breathe out slowly
Breathe in deeply, breathe out slowly
Each time you breathe in and out you gently glide further into the warm sky
Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out
Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out
And smile!





Mindful Minutes

9



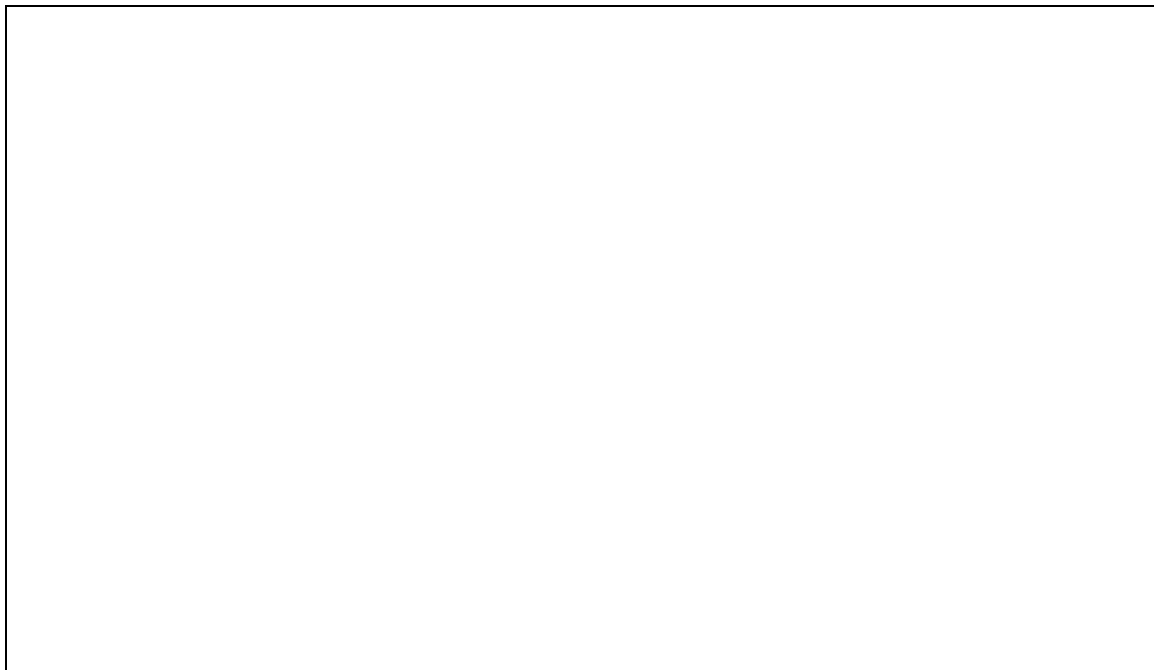
Your Peaceful Place!

Use the picture frame below to create an image of your favourite or most special place.

Think about somewhere that you would choose to go to, to relax and feel safe and happy.

This place can be imaginary or real, inside or outside. Make sure you fill your special place with all the things you would like to help you relax.

You could draw your favourite place, take a photograph and annotate it or make a collage from pictures and colours in magazines and newspapers as well as using crayons, paints and other materials to help make it come alive.



Mindful Minutes

10

The Raisin Exercise

Take one of the raisins and hold it in your hand. Look at it carefully, as if you are going to describe it to a Martian who has never seen one before. As best you can, be aware of thoughts or images that may sneak in as you look at this object. Simply note that they are just thoughts and return your attention to this object. Notice the colours of the object. What does the surface look like? Is it bumpy or smooth? Explore the object with your eyes and fingers. Is it dry or moist? Notice how the light shines on the object. Bring the raisin to your nose. Does it have any smells? Explore with your eyes, your fingers, and your nose. Is your attention on this raisin in your hand? Then, whenever you're ready, place the raisin in your mouth. Explore the object. Do you notice your mouth watering? As best you can, keep your attention on the raisin and also watch your thoughts. Are the thoughts looking forward to swallowing the raisin and eating another or are they attending to the sensations of the one that is in your mouth? Gently bite the raisin. Taste the flavour. Slowly chew the raisin while noting every sensation. As you swallow the raisin, first note the intention to swallow it. Then feel it slide down your throat and into your tummy. Can you feel that your body is now exactly one raisin heavier than it was a few minutes ago?

Adapted from Semple and Lee (2008, pp. 78-79)



Mindful Minutes

11

Practising Stillness!

Feel all your attention gently falling from the top of your head down to your neck, lightly falling like a snowflake or a leaf falling from a tree. Feel your attention move down through your shoulders... your arms... your hands... your chest and belly... your hips and thighs... your knees and ankles... into your feet and all the way down to your toes. Let your mind rest in your body, noticing all the feelings inside – tingling, shivers, warmth, coolness, relaxation, tightness or nothing at all. Notice how the sensations and feelings change when you bring attention to them. See if you can feel the stillness in your body as you sit, not moving, and noticing changing sensations throughout your body.

Adapted from Goodman (2005, p. 217)



Mindful Minutes 12

Observing Mindfully

Pick a flower or an insect or another object in nature. Watch it for 1 minute. Do not think about anything else. Simply observe it in all it's splendour for one full minute.



Mindful Minutes

13

The Suitcase Exercise

Imagine you are given a suitcase in which to pack all the important things in your life at the moment.

Spend some time being mindful of all the people, places, things and thoughts that you think are the most important to you.

Draw, write or add pictures of all your choices around a suitcase.

Tell a partner why you have chosen these things so mindfully.



Mindful Minutes

14

My 'Touch Point'

Think of something that happens every day more than once. For example opening a door. At that moment when you touch the door knob, allow yourself to be completely mindful of where you are, how you feel and what you are doing. The cues don't have to be physical; it could be that every time you think something negative you take a mindful moment to release the negative thought. It could be that every time you smell food you take a mindful moment to rest in appreciating having food to eat. Choose a touch point that means something to you today.

Draw It

Say when you will
practice this

My Touch Point

*I will practice this
when....*

Mindful Minutes 15

Mindful Music

Listen to a piece of music that you like. Try not to think about it – just listen. Breathe deeply and slowly to absorb the experience.



Mindful Minutes

16

The Game of Five!

In this exercise, all you need to do is notice five things in your day that usually go unnoticed. They could be things you hear, smell, feel on your body, or see. For example you might see the walls, hear the birds, feel your clothes or smell the flowers. Of course you may already do these things, but are you really aware of these things and what they mean for you in your world?

**Draw and label
My five unnoticed things:**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Practice! Practice! Practice!

Mindful Minutes

17

Behind the Waterfall

Sometimes feelings and thoughts are uncomfortable and too difficult to focus on. Instead of getting caught up in thoughts or reacting to the negative feelings, picture yourself standing behind a waterfall of negative thoughts and feelings, allowing them to be there without reacting to them. See those thoughts and feelings as part of you but not as being all that you are.

Adapted from Segal, Williams & Teasdale (2002, PP. 250-251)



Mindful Minutes

18

Hand Concentration Game

Sit at the table with your teacher. Everyone place their hands on the table, with the hand of the person next to them in the space between their hands.

The teacher states rules: when one person taps their hand on the table, the next person (clockwise first) taps their hand... and so on. If you tap your hand at the wrong time, you have to remove a hand from the table. If a person taps their hand twice on the table, the direction reverses. The winner is the person with one hand left on the table.



Mindful Minutes

19

Mindful Thoughts

We need to understand how we produce our thoughts – they are not who we are, they are just something that we do. Once we understand this, it is easier to push any negative thoughts out of our mind. Once we have learnt to keep awareness on the present moment by focusing our breath, we can then become aware of our thoughts and feelings.

Try it out: “Close your eyes and say to yourself: ‘I wonder what my next thought is going to be?’ Then focus very carefully, waiting for the next thought – like a cat watching a mouse hole. I wonder what thought is going to come out of the mouse hole?”



What is my  next thought?

Mindful Minutes

20

The WOW Factor

What are the things that fill you with wonder? Is it a rainbow, how you breathe, a newborn baby, a mountain, the sea, a butterfly, a forest of bluebells, a whale? You can do this next exercise in a group or on your own.

You need:

- Paper or thin card
- Thick and thin felt tips

Now:

- Make a big cartoon-style 'WOW!' in the middle of your sheet of paper.
- Use bright colours to make your 'WOW!' and draw one of these zig-zaggy shapes around it with a thick felt tip so it looks like a word from a cartoon.
- Think about all the things that fill you with wonder and makes you want to say 'WOW!' and all the things that give you a special tingly feeling when you think about them.
- Maybe your 'WOW!'s are things in nature, or being loved in a special way, or doing something amazing, or a new baby, or being in a beautiful place. Maybe there are rainbows or crashing waves, or bees, or being on a mountain. Maybe they are being close to a waterfall, being hugged, a special piece of music, a tree or being in a place of worship.
- Write or draw your 'WOW!'s or moments of wonder all around your 'WOW!' word.
- Tell each other about your favourite 'WOW!' MOMENTS.

Things to talk about together:

- What are things that give something a 'WOW!' factor?
- What 'WOW!'s did you have that were the same as someone else's 'WOW!'s?
- What was the biggest 'WOW!' you experienced in the last week?
- When you think about yourself what is the biggest 'WOW!' about you?



WOW!

Mindful Minutes

21

A Relaxing River

Close your eyes and be very quiet and imagine you
are in a boat floating down the river
Lie back and allow the soft breeze and river to move
you along very gently
As you lie there let your whole body be completely still
You can feel the softness or the sunshine on your skin
and your face
You hear the birds singing and the water gently
moving
You feel totally peaceful
As you lie there, let all the muscles in your body relax
Breathe in and out and feel yourself sinking deeper
and deeper into a still and happy place.



Mindful Minutes 22

Pass the Water! A group game

The group sit in a circle (without a table)
A cup full $\frac{3}{4}$ with water, is passed around the group
The teacher discusses what skills are needed (focus, pay attention, concentration, turn to face the next person, ignore distractions, be kind to yourself etc)
The teacher then introduces an additional 1 or 2 cups to pass around the group again
Then return to one cup – the teacher can ask the group to close eyes and re-introduce breathing to centre ourselves and focus attention and then pass the cup around the group again. The teacher will need to keep their eyes open for this!

Enjoy!



Mindful Minutes

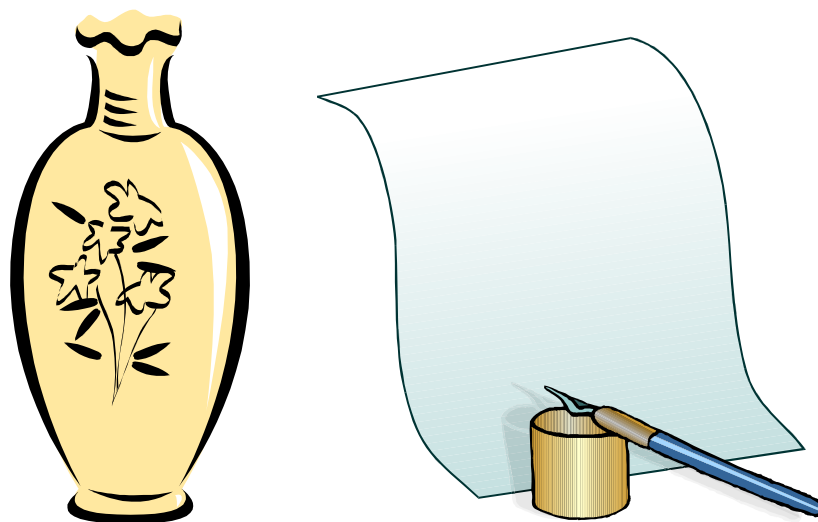
23

Drawing Meditation

Bring in an object such as a vase or an ornament, and ask the pupils to draw that object. Ask them to attend to the object and cover it with a cloth after 30 seconds of observation. They cannot look at the object as they draw it.

When they are finished, ask them to compare the picture they have drawn with the actual object. Which bits are close to the reality and which bits aren't quite right? Emphasise this isn't a competition, more of an experiment to see what happens.

If the pupils want, they can repeat the exercise and see how much better the second drawing is through paying attention. Repeat steps 1 and 2 for the second drawing.

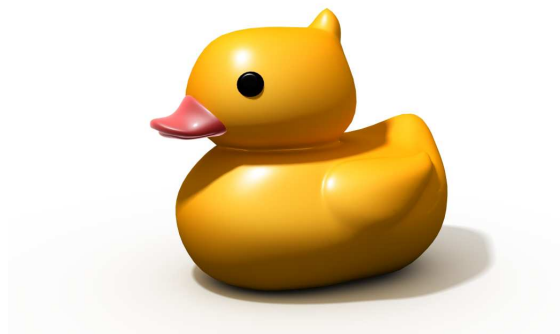


Mindful Minutes

24

Tactile Recognition Game

1. Ask the children to close their eyes and put their hands behind their backs while you place small objects (erasers, tiny rubbers, pegs, small toys, dice etc) in their hands.
2. Ask the children to describe how their object feels, what they think it looks like whether it's hard or soft, and what its shape is.
3. After each person describes his or her object, see if anyone else can guess what it is, and then have the pupil show the object to the group.
4. Go around the circle till all the children have had a chance to describe what they are holding.



Mindful Minutes

25

A Mindful Walk!

Ask the children to walk around a room. Ask them to lift one foot at a time slowly and carefully as if walking on eggshells or walking in slow motion. Ask them to place their foot down smoothly and slowly. Then ask them to take a step with the other foot the same distance ahead. Ask them to feel every muscle in their legs while they walk and every shift in body weight. Ask them to feel their hands and arms in space. You can ask them to move a bit faster, then more slowly again. Tell them that, if they begin to think about other things, they should gently allow these thoughts to pass, then return their attention to their body.

Walk! Walk! Walk!

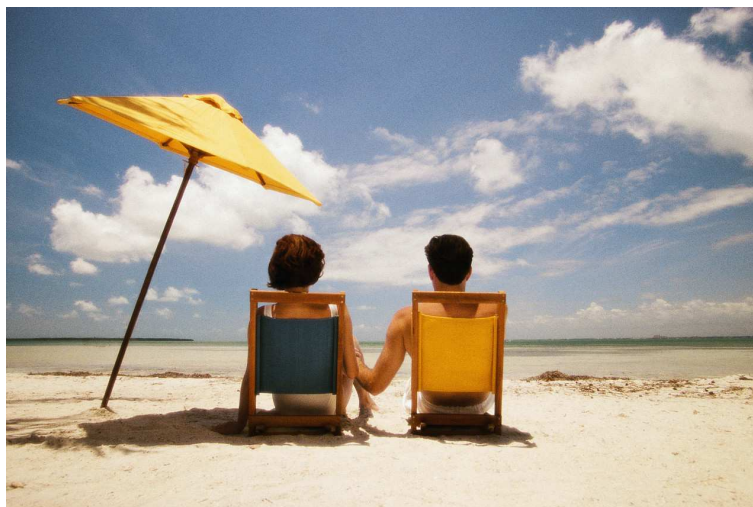


Mindful Minutes

26

Sunshine Relaxation

Close your eyes and be very still and imagine you are lying
down outside in the warm sunshine
Your body feels totally relaxed and calm
As you lie comfortably in the soft grass,
The rays of the sun are soaking into your muscles
Warming and relaxing your whole body
You can feel the warmth of the sun on your legs and then let
them relax
Let the muscles around your tummy relax
Feel the sun's rays on your shoulders and arms as you relax
into the carpet of grass
Now feel the warm sun on your face and
As the sun touches it your whole face relaxes
Relax your forehead, your cheeks, your eyes and your
mouth
Relax, relax, relax
Zzzzzzzzz!



Mindful Minutes

27

The Curious Mind Game!

1. Find a beautiful, shiny object, wrap it up in layers of newspaper and place it in a box.
2. Now ask the children to try to guess what may be inside. They can shake the box, but nothing else. Let everyone have a guess.
3. Now ask them what it feels like to 'not know' or to be curious. Ask them to look at the faces of the other children – their eyes may be wide open, and there may be lots of smiles.



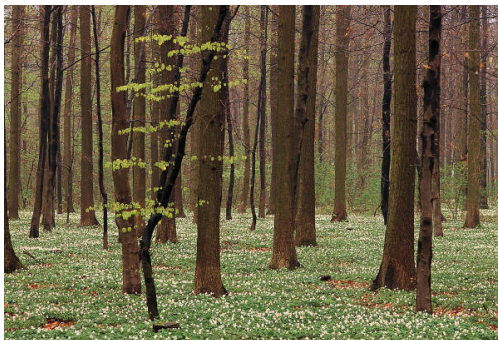
Curioser and curioser!

Mindful Minutes

28

Mindfulness Photos

Collect a series of photographs. These can be of events, scenery, places and people. The children can take 2 minutes to totally immerse themselves in one photograph, paying attention to each of the senses: sight, sound, smell, hearing and taste. They can be asked just to 'notice' their thoughts and try to 'stay mindfully in the moment'.



Mindful Minutes

29

Popcorn Mindfulness

Provide each child with a small portion of popcorn. Ask each child to focus all their attention onto the pile in front of them. They can look at and then touch each piece and see if they are able to find shapes, symbols or specific objects within their pile. As they do this they can be encouraged to pay attention to incoming thoughts – but, only to OBSERVE them and not becoming attached to one thought in particular.



Mindful Minutes

30

The LIST exercise

Ask the children to make a LIST of things that are:

- green
- soft
- fly
- sweet etc



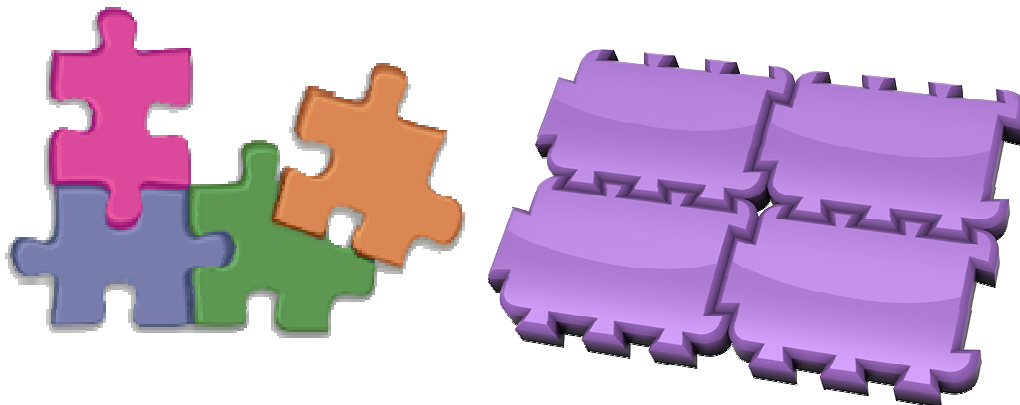
They can come up with their own examples. Encourage them to be creative and to acknowledge every thought that comes into their mind without judging – either themselves or others!

Mindful Minutes

31

Practice a Puzzle

Collect a series of age appropriate puzzles and distribute these to the children. Ask them to try and be 'mindfully in the moment' with this puzzle – focusing entirely on the task. Encourage them to be aware of the thoughts that came into their minds but not to be distracted by them. They can work on 'letting go' of each thought and refocusing on the puzzle.



Mindful Minutes

32

Teddy Bear Meditation

Provide a mat for each child and ask them to lie down comfortably. Select a range of teddies/soft toys and place one on each child's tummy. Ask them to breathe as normal and to notice the toy as it rises and falls on their tummy. Encourage them to be curious about how it moves up and down. Are they able to control it by making it go up and down more slowly, and how does this make them feel?

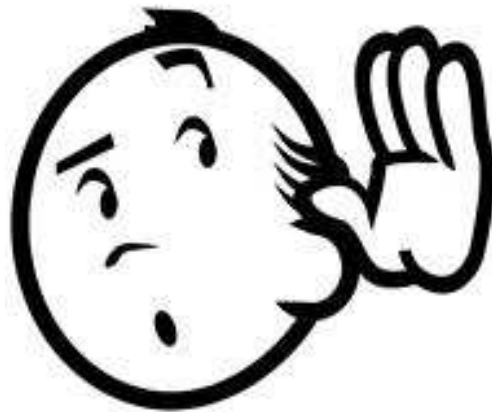


Mindful Minutes

33

Sounds in the Room

Ask the children to close their eyes and sit comfortably in the room, focusing on the SOUNDS that they can hear. Mention the sounds that you hear that most people would not pay attention to if they were not using 'mindful listening' e.g. cars driving by outside, children playing outside, computers whirring, lights buzzing, clocks ticking etc. Ask the children to pay attention to each sound and reflect on how it feels to listen in this way.



Mindful Minutes

34

The 'Hi' Game

The teacher can place the children in a circle. They then take it in turns to turn to their neighbour and say 'hi' and then describe what colour their eyes LOOK like e.g. Hi Matt! You're eyes look brown.

The idea is to encourage eye-contact and turn taking without judgement. Then, ask the children how they felt about this game. Repeat it, changing seating positions.



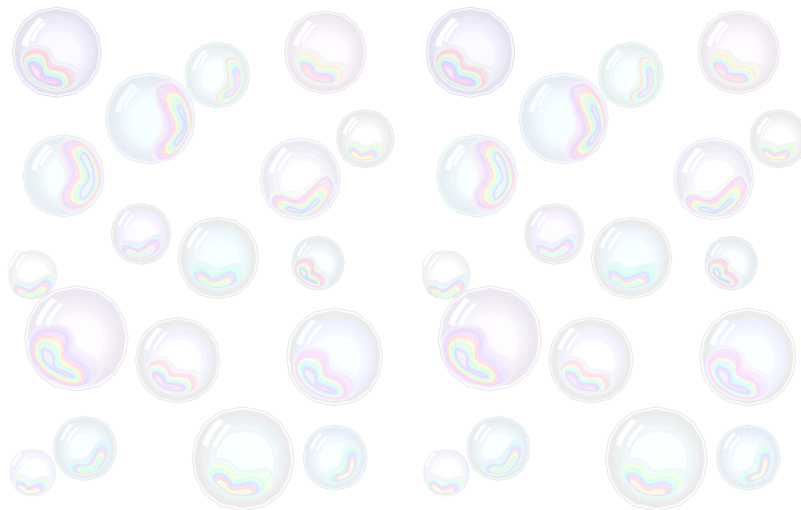
Mindful Minutes

35

The Bubble Activity

The children can be seated/lie down in a comfortable position and asked to close their eyes. The teacher can then use the following script: Imagine you have a small, shiny bubble in your hand. You can't burst it and neither can anyone else. Watch as it grows bigger and bigger until it's the size of a BIG room. Now, step inside your bubble. You can cover it all over with blankets/sheets and decorate it with all the things that you like. You can have your favourite music playing in the background. You feel safe, happy and secure in your bubble. It is a lovely, warm and special place to be. Enjoy the things you can see there, how it smells, the sounds, how it feels and the tastes in your bubble.

Now you've got your bubble, you can keep it safe for later on. Step out of it now and watch it shrink. Hold it in your hand and then move it towards the middle of your chest where your heart is. Let the bubble sink into your heart and keep it there for safe keeping. Next time you feel that you'd like to go back into your bubble you can!



Mindful Minutes

36

The Bell!

The teacher can ask the children to sit on their chairs/the floor with their hands placed on their tummies. Ask them to feel their breathing – breathe with your hands on your tummy and listen very carefully to your breath and how it moves.

The teacher then rings the bell several times

The children are asked to pay attention to how many times they hear the bell

The teacher can stress that there is no right or wrong answer – the question is just ‘how many times did you hear the bell’

Repeat the activity and then ask ‘Why do you think you may not have heard the bell every time?’ Did your mind wander? Where did your attention go? Where is it now?



Mindful Minutes

37

Melting Ice

Each pupil is provided with an ice cube in a cup and a paper serviette. The idea here is for them to hold the cube in their hand for as long as possible – even though it may cause a slightly uncomfortable sensation. If it becomes too uncomfortable they can release it back into the cup.

- Ask them to be aware of what they are then experiencing – burning, cold, icy, stinging etc. They can NAME these.
- Ask them to place each sensation into a category – (1) pleasant (2) unpleasant (3) just neutral/ok.
- Ask them to think about the feelings and reactions that they experience in both their MINDS and their BODIES!



Mindful Minutes

38

The Memory Game

Collect a number of everyday familiar objects (a cup, toothbrush, scissors, pen, sellotape, rubber, hairbrush etc)

Place these on a tray and cover with a cloth

Give each child a piece of paper and a pencil

Explain that you will allow them to look at the objects for a few minutes and that they must pay real attention and try to remember them. When you then cover the objects the children can record (in writing or pictures) those that they remember.



Mindful Minutes

39

The Hi Game Version 2

The children can sit in a circle and go around it, turning to their neighbour, making eye contact and saying hello!

The pupils can take it in turns to say 'hello' and also identify one bodily sensation, without labelling it 'good' or 'bad' e.g. my hands are warm, my feet are cold, my eyes are stinging.

They can next do the same but identify an impression coming via one of their senses e.g. hello, my socks are soft.

The teacher can monitor the responses. If the children label any sensation in a 'judgemental' fashion, he/she can point out how opinions we do not even realise we have can creep into what we say and do!



Mindful Minutes

40

Pass the Drawing Game

Each child is provided with a piece of paper and asked to write their initials on the reverse side. The teacher then asks them to think of something that they'd like to draw and to begin drawing it. After 40 seconds, the children are asked to swap the pieces of paper and without talking to each other, to continue the other child's drawing. They can then discuss the end result? How did they feel about doing this? What could they do to be really good at this exercise?



Mindful Minutes

41

Hot Chocolate!

The children are seated in a circle and given a cup of hot chocolate to drink. The teacher asks them to hold the cup with both hands and sit quietly. Then he/she can ask the children:

- How does the cup feel in your hands?
- What do you smell?
- What are you thinking now?
- How does handling the warm cup make you feel?
- Try to drink the chocolate slowly.
- Hold a sip in your mouth and taste every bit.
- Swallow it slowly and lick your lips.
- How does this feel?



Mindful Minutes

42

Seaweed

Tell the children to imagine that they are a strand of seaweed anchored to the floor.

Children should find their own space on the floor.

In this exercise they need to be encouraged to be aware of physical sensations, thoughts and feelings.

Instruct them to “imagine that they are each a strand of seaweed anchored to the floor of the ocean. The current in the sea is strong. How would this affect you? How would you be moving? What would you be feeling? Now the current gradually decreases and our movement start to decrease with it. The current keeps decreasing gradually, until the ocean is still.



Mindful Minutes

43

Parade Thought Watching!

This practice supports children in watching their thoughts without believing them or taking them personally.

Ask the children to sit in chairs or lie on the floor, anchor their attention on the breath, and then begin to watch their thoughts go by as if they are watching a parade.

Encourage them to notice that some thoughts are loud and brightly dressed, other thoughts are shy and lurk in the background, and still others come back again and again.

Instruct the children to notice when they start to march along with the parade (i.e. lost in thought). When this happens, they are encouraged to return to the path and simply watch the thoughts go by.



Mindful Minutes

44

Flashlight

Invite the children to sit or lie in a comfortable position and play with the “flashlight of their attention”.

Ask them to focus the flashlight in turn on thoughts, emotions, sounds, sensations and their breath. Then focus on whatever drifts through the light and then focus back on the breath again. Ask children to expand their attention to include everything and then have them narrow their attention to just one object (and so on).



Mindful Minutes

45

A Bubble Meditation

The purpose of this practice is to slow down, observe thoughts and release them or let go without judgement.

Ask the children to sit in a comfortable position, with their back straight and shoulders relaxed.

Ask them to close their eyes and to imagine bubbles slowly rising up in front of them.

Tell them that each bubble contains a thought, feeling or perception: "See the first bubble rise up. What is inside? See the thought, observe it, and watch it slowly float away. Try not to judge, evaluate or think about it more deeply. Once it has floated out of sight, watch the next bubble appear. What is inside? Observe it, and watch it slowly float away. If your mind goes blank, then watch the bubble rise up with "blank" inside and slowly float away.



Mindful Minutes

46

Appreciate Exercise

Sit the students in a circle and ask them to take turns to each state one thing they appreciate about the others in the group.

For example: I appreciate how you listened to me, smiled and encouraged me, asked me how I am in the morning, smiled at me etc.

Encourage the children to affirm these connections. Highlight how important it is for all of us to be seen, acknowledged and loved.

How does this appreciation make them feel?



Mindful Minutes

47

Send Good Wishes!

Ask the pupils to sit in a circle and to then turn to each other and say what good things they wish for one another. For example:

- I hope that you are happy
- I hope you have good and loyal friends
- I hope you don't have sadness in your life
- I hope that you are full of energy etc

They can then be encouraged to notice what sensation others' good wishes makes them feel and to respond to others' good wishes with similar ones.



Mindful Minutes

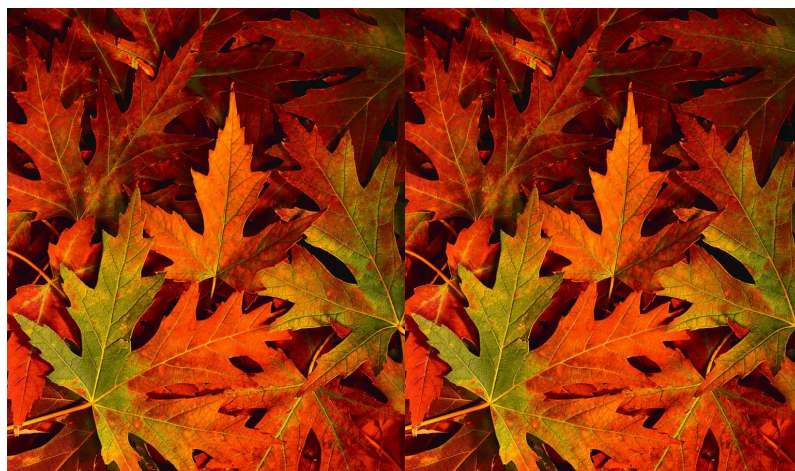
48

The Leaf Task

Cut leaves off of a plant that are all different. Select a variety so that the children have something to think about and look at.

Pass the group of leaves around and ask each child to take one that stands out to them. Ask them to spend 3 minutes looking at the leaf and think about how leaves work. E.g. how photosynthesis provides it nutrients and the veins disperse those nutrients around the leaf or how it responds to external factors and whatever else they want to notice as they examine it.

Afterwards encourage the children to share their experience.



Mindful Minutes

49

A First Viewing!

The teacher can read the following script to the children as they lie down in a space on the floor:

Close your eyes and pay attention to your breathing, following the breath in and out. After a short time, move your attention to your body, one part at a time, noticing any sensations of cold, hot, tight or anything you can identify. After some time of attention on the body, start listening to the sounds of the room, without judging, criticising or even thinking about them. Just listen. Slowly open your eyes and look around as if seeing the room for the first time. Stop and rest your eyes on an object for half a minute. Examine it without saying things about it in your mind. Bring attention back to the room with ringing of the bell.



Mindful Minutes

50

Stand Up and Be Counted!

Ask the children to sit down on chairs in a circle.

Explain to them that they cannot talk or communicate with each other. They can only OBSERVE each other's actions.

Ask them to stand up one at a time BUT not together! If this happens, they have to start the task again.



Mindful Minutes

51

Walking and Floating!

The teacher can read the following script to the children:

Look around the room and you will see markers on the floor set out in the shape of circle. Imagine that these are all pieces of wood floating on water. You have to walk on these bits of wood one at a time, without falling off! If you fall, you'll be in the water! Take one step at a time and walk slowly. If you walk too fast you might fall. Try to keep your balance!

The children can then take turns to talk about this experience:

- How did the stillness affect their balance and co-ordination?
- How did they feel during this activity?
- What did they notice during it?



Mindful Minutes

52

My Teeth

Ask the children to bring in a toothbrush. Each child should then be asked to mindfully brush their teeth. Ask them to do this slowly and carefully, starting on the front teeth and brushing gently, being aware of the sensations involved – the sound of the brushing, the smell and any related thoughts and feelings. Ask them to move slowly from the front teeth to the sides and back and to repeat on both the top and lower teeth. What do they notice? How is this different to the usual procedure?



Mindful Minutes

53

See and Be Free!

Provide the children with a series of pictures without passing any judgement on them. These can be of a range of activities and venues. Ask the children:

- What do you notice?
- What is happening?
- What details interest you particularly?

Tell them that it is important to be aware of all the things in the picture. If the picture reminds you of something, acknowledge that and move on.



Mindful Minutes

54

Mindful Movements

Explain to the children that they should spread out and find themselves a space in the room. They then need to be very quiet and focus all their attention on you.

Ask them to try to pay attention to all the movements you then make and to try to copy these as closely as possible as you do them. You might:

- Do a one legged squat
- Lie down and breathe deeply
- Make a star shape
- Do a two legged squat etc



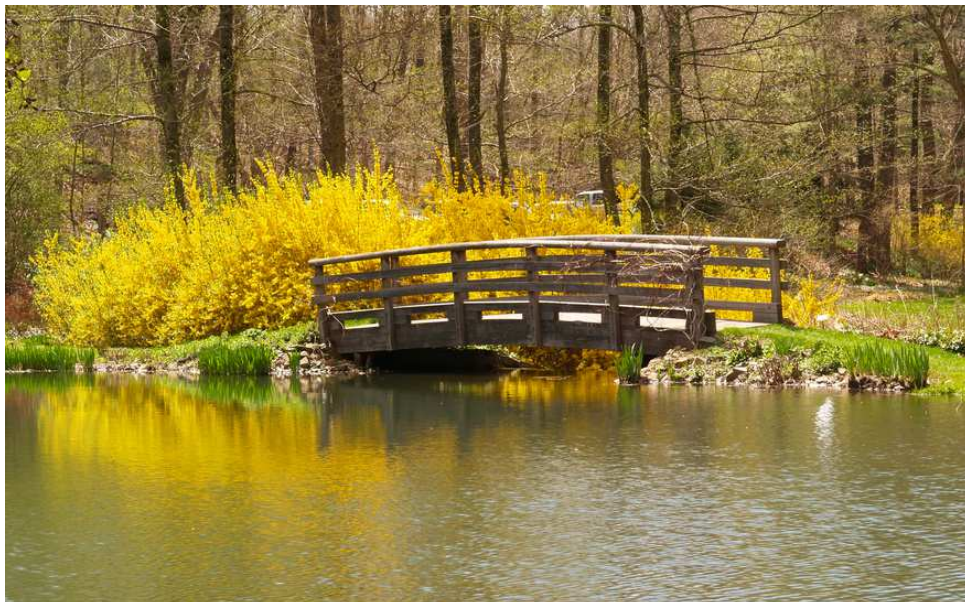
Mindful Minutes

55

Walking on the River with Trays!

Ask the children to visualise a river. Place hoola hoops on the floor and explain that these represent floats that they should try to walk on. In order to focus them further, give them 2 books each (which represent trays) – one for each hand. Place a small tray/object on each tray.

Ask the children to 'walk' on the 'floats' whilst balancing the 2 trays. Ask them to focus and be 'mindful' of every movement they make.

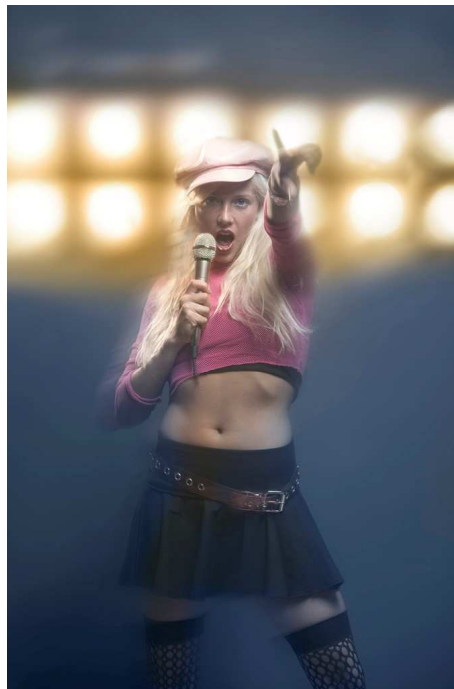


Mindful Minutes

56

My Song

Play a song to the children and ask them to close their eyes and listen very carefully. Tell them to listen to the way in which the singer communicates the message using their voice. Ask them to think about the quality of the sound – is it loud, lyrical, gentle, calming – how does it make them feel? What thoughts come into their minds and how are these linked to the song? Are they pleasant? Does the song make them feel uncomfortable/comfortable and why?



Mindful Minutes

57

My Shield

Ask the children to close their eyes and visualise their own personal shield. They can place all the images of people who love and protect them, their strengths, positive experiences and times and favourite places and things onto the inside of this shield. They can then watch while the shield reduces itself to the size of a postage stamp. They can then stick this onto their hearts and bring it out again when they feel that they need to use it!



Mindful Minutes

58

My Still Place

The teacher can read the following script to the children and encourage them to return to their 'still place' when they feel upset or stressed:

I would like to share one of my favourite places with you. I call it my Still Place. It's not a place you travel to in a car, or a train, or a plane. It's a place inside you that you can visit just by closing your eyes. Let's go and find it!

Close your eyes and take slow deep breaths. See if you can feel a kind of warm, happy smile in your body. Do you feel it? This is your Still Place. Take some more deep breaths and really snuggle in to this special place.

The best thing about your Still Place is that it's always inside you. You can visit it whenever you like. It is nice to visit your still place and feel the peace that is there. It is helpful to visit your Still Place if you are angry, or sad or afraid. The Still Place is a good place to talk with those feelings and to make friends with them. When you rest in your Still Place and talk to your feelings, you may find that your feelings are not as big and as powerful as they seem. Remember, you can come here whenever you want and stay as long as you like.

Saltzman & Goldin (2008, p. 142)



Mindful Minutes

59

3 Mindful Breaths

Children should sit in a comfortable position, becoming aware of their posture, either sitting on a cushion on the floor or in a chair. They are asked to close their eyes.

The teacher can then introduce this mindful breathing with the following script:

I invite you to bring your attention to the breath. You can focus on the breath as it enters and leaves your nose, noticing how the air feels cool coming in and slightly warmer leaving your nose. Or you may choose to focus on the breath at your belly, feeling it rise with the in-breath and fall with the out-breath. Stay focused, as best you can, on your breath without trying to control it in any way. Notice the air as it enters and as it leaves, entering and leaving. If your mind wanders, that's okay. Simply bring your attention back to the in-breath and the out-breath. Breathing in and breathing out. Your mind will naturally wander off and get lost in thoughts. That's okay. It's just what minds do. Your job is to gently bring your attention back to the breath each time you notice that your mind has wandered. You may tell yourself "well done" for noticing and then continue to focus on your breath.

Adapted from Semple and Lee (2008, p. 76)



Mindful Minutes

60

Wishing Well!

Ask the children to visualise a wishing well. Then ask that they make a special wish for everyone in the group, throwing this into the well and knowing that they are giving others good feelings, thoughts and wishes.

I wish () people who love you

I wish () lots of good friends.....

I wish () real success

I wish () a happy day etc

