

Notes for SRE Teachers: Meditation for Children

Meditation is needed more than ever in this day and age.

An hour a day of meditation is what it takes for us to relax and disappear from the world-go into ourselves, no thought, no memory, no content in our consciousness for an hour or so, and that will allow us to rejuvenate and refresh us. The mind dictates what we do and we make choices – choose the harder ones.

When we get back into the world – it will be fresh eyes, to learn, more wonder and awe-like a child again.

Teaching meditation to children is tricky because we need to know the children in the class. We need to understand their social-economic backgrounds, the demographics of the school and the area and hopefully the parents.

SRE Teachers should always discuss and be open with the School Principal and Head Teacher about what you are going to say to lead the children in meditation. How are you going to start? And expect to get feedback and comments from the School.

Children come from all walks of life and we don't know if they have been traumatized in any way or form, so be very sensitive and careful in how we introduce meditation to them.

We must be very careful in the way we introduce them to meditation practice. We must not cause any harm or add to their burden psychologically or emotionally.

- Build Trust before you start on meditation.
- Do not say that we are practicing meditation or mindfulness.
- Just say we are playing a game- a game of concentration to see who can concentrate the longest. What is the benefit for them?
- Research found that those who can concentrate the longest is better with their studies and builds resilience and develop compassion and kindness.

Meditation should be taught to children in a playful way.

1. Like a monkey (Monkey play tricks on us – so is our mind) and we need to watch our mind - like playing hide and seek.

Catch our mind if it is not keeping within the rules of the game. Bring it back to where it should be. “You keep the monkey tricks away, so you must keep watch”.

For example if you find that your mind has ran outside of the area- you watch it and you catch it back to where it should be – that is your breath is at the nose and follow it down into the windpipe and into your lungs.

Most kids have good imagination. Let them draw a mental picture. Or you may draw it on the board for them.

2. Like a football game, and you are the goal-keeper.

3. Like it is a song to be sung- if you sing out of tune or sing another song.

Breathe in - relax ;(pause), breathe out - relax.

Be careful that kids do not hyperventilate. (Keep a paper bag close to you for emergency)

Teach it in a way that you do not have any other goal and they don't need to remember anything else, except to keep watch on the breath. Nothing to think about? Nowhere to go? Nothing to do?

They will be making progress soon.

Start to notice that your body will change - just sitting and relax and let go of any tension in your body.

Impress the children that there will be little changes in and around them.

Soon, they will look forward to the meditation session and just rejoice in life.

Meditation is our nature and it is non-doing. It happens spontaneously.

It is watching, observing and no action has to be taken. It is witnessing what happens and no involvement.

Guided Meditation for Children

It is important to consider age relevancy, as to the language you use and what you describe.

Please remember the mind is very simple in a meditative state - like a child.

Language used must be positive.

Avoid the use of negative words.

Also avoid words like “safe place” as we don’t know if this child has a safe place ever.
Avoid creating scenes such as “Beach or waves hitting against the rocks” as children may be afraid of water, or mountain tops- high places or waterfall.

For Example,

1. Metta Meditation:

I am healthy, I am happy and I am free from suffering.

Change that to: I am healthy, I am well and happy.

2. Opening up like a flower-

Imagine you are a bud – your favourite flower.

You are budding from the bush or tree.

Taking care of yourself and taking the nutrients from the tree, from mother Earth that nourishes us and recharge us with energy.

Smell the fresh air and listen to the birds and the wind and enjoying each moment feeling free and comfortable and relaxed.

You may use words such as strong and healthy, resilient or confident.

The bud is formed, and as it grows the bud blossoms slowly –

The petals are opening up one at a time – until the whole bud opens to form the flower.

At the end of the session, always bring it back to the body, bring it back to the who they are.

3. Body Scan- like in our Mindfulness App is OK, but perhaps for older children.

4. A Bright Light.

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