

mindful vs. mindFULL

We practice using a mind jar to bring awareness to how we are feeling and anchor us in the now



life skills:

focusing, attention, patience



target ages:

suitable for all ages



leading the exercise:

1. Begin by sitting tall, extending your spine straight, and closing your eyes.
2. Bring awareness to your breath by placing one hand in front of your nose or mouth. Notice the air moving in and out of your nose. *How does it feel against your hand?*
3. Now, notice what's happening in your mind. *What are you thinking about? Does your brain feel spacious and calm or MINDFULL? What do your thoughts sound like?*
4. With your eyes open, shake up the jar with water, sand, shells and rock. Notice how fuzzy the water gets, and how hard it is to see through the water. That's what happens when you are angry, tense, or MindFULL. Your mind gets full of thoughts and it is hard to think clearly.
5. Now, focus your attention on the jar, as the sand, rocks, pebbles, and shells slowly settle to the bottom. *Can you see clearly through the water now?*
6. This is what your mind is like when we practice being mindful. We take the time to breathe, pause, and allow for space and calm to enter our brains!
7. Talking points: *Can you think of a time when you have felt MindFULL, like your brain was full of sand, pebbles, and dust, and you couldn't think clearly? Can you think of a time when you felt Mindful, when you could think and see calmly and clearly? What are some things you can do the next time your brain feels full of thoughts and difficult emotions?*

mindful vs. mindFULL

We practice using a mind jar to bring awareness to our thoughts and our emotions and anchor us in the now



reflection:

- Use the space below to draw, write or doodle your reflections!
- *Can you think of a time when you have felt MindFULL, like your brain was full of thoughts or difficult emotions and you couldn't think clearly? Can you think of a time when you felt Mindful, when you could think and see calmly and clearly? How do you feel when you are MindFULL?*



one bite at a time

We practice savouring each bite, eating slowly and purposefully



life skills:

focusing, attention, patience



target ages:

suitable for all ages



leading the exercise:

1. Pick up a small piece of chocolate and take time to notice what it looks like, feels like, smells like, and maybe even sounds like (when you put it near your ear).
2. Put a tiny piece in your mouth, but don't chew it quite yet! Notice how it feels on your tongue. Notice the flavours you taste. *Is your mouth watering?*
3. Now, let the chocolate melt little by little, or begin to chew, slowly. Pay close attention to how each step feels.
4. Now, take a slightly bigger piece, and repeat the process, this time closing your eyes, and really taking in all of the flavors!
5. Talking points: *What is it like to hold the food in your hand but NOT eat it? How did your mouth feel while chewing and swallowing? Did you notice any thoughts or emotions during the process? Do you savour your food or eat without savouring it?*



tips:

- One way to explain this activity to kids is "eating in slow motion".
- To teach kids how to eat with more awareness, ask them to notice how they feel before and after eating. *How hungry do you feel? How full do you feel? How does it feel different when you are full vs. hungry? Have you ever felt really full, but eaten anyway? How does it feel?*
- Try having kids lead this exercise at snack time or during lunch.



one bite at a time

We practice savouring each bite, eating slowly and purposefully



reflection:


- Use the space below to draw, write or doodle your reflections!
- *How did it feel to eat mindfully? Did you notice any thoughts or emotions come up during the process? How did it feel to hold the food but not eat it? Do you normally make it a practice of savouring your food or do you rush through the sensory experience of eating each day?*



relax into you

We practice bringing awareness to our bodies and breath, while rocking stuffed animal to sleep



 **life skills:**
attention, presence, relaxation, clarity

 **target ages:**
younger children



leading the exercise:

1. Lie with your legs flat on the floor and your arms by your sides. Feel the back of your head, the backs of your arms, the backs of your legs, feet, and hands resting on the floor. Imagine them sinking in even deeper into the floor.
2. Try to close your eyes. Bring awareness to your feet by squeezing them tight and then, letting them relax. Do the same with the muscles in your hands, arms, legs, and face.
2. Now, bring your attention to your breath by bringing your hand to your belly and feeling it go up and down, like the waves of the ocean.
3. Place a stuffed animal or rubber ducky on the students' bellies and have them touch the stuffed animal and notice what it feels like.
4. Now notice what it feels like to breathe in and out, moving the animal up and down with your breathing. *How does your body feel? Is your mind busy or calm?* (Wait a few minutes until moving to the next instruction)
5. Now, imagine you were rocking the animal to sleep using your breath. Say "up" as your belly goes up and your breathe in. Say "down" when your belly moves down and you breathe out!
5. Check how your body feels now! Again, feel the back of your head, your neck, arms, legs, hands, and feet against the floor. Notice what's happening in your mind.
6. When you are ready, flutter your eyes open and sit up very slowly, taking a deep breath.
7. Talking points: *Notice how you feel. Do you feel different than before? How does it feel to rock your stuffed animal to sleep? How does your brain feel now?*



relax into you

We practice bringing awareness to our bodies and breath, while rocking a stuffed animal to sleep



reflection:

- Use the space below to draw, write or doodle your reflections!
- *How did you feel before and after the mindful activity? Was it easy or hard to lie still? When could you or your students benefit from taking time to rest and bring attention to their bodies?*

loving-kindness affirmations

We practice sending kind thoughts to ourselves and creating affirmations

 **life skills:**
self-compassion, kindness, presence

 **target ages:**
suitable for all ages

leading the exercise:

1. Sit up tall, and relax all of the muscles in your body. Extend your head into the air, as if someone had a string attached to the top of your head. Now, try to close your eyes as slowly as you can.
2. Bring your hands to your lap in a bowl-like position in front of your belly button.
3. Bring your students' attention to their breath to *anchor* them in the present. Take a deep inhale, imagining a golden ball was moving up your spine on 1, counting all the way to 5. Exhale back down your spine, as the ball moves back down your spine, counting down from 5.
4. Now, imagine you were holding a tiny version of yourself - or imagine you were holding yourself as a tiny baby. As you breath in, think of a kind thought. On the exhale, send that kind/loving thought to yourself. Exhale: *May you always feel loved. May you always be safe. May you be happy and free!*
5. Next time, instead of holding yourself, think of someone or something you really love and cherish and practice sending them kind and loving thoughts!
6. Talking points: *How did it feel to send kind thoughts to yourself? How does it feel to practice loving YOU exactly as you are? What thoughts did you send? How did it feel to send kind, loving thoughts to someone else? Who did you send them to?*

tips:

- With younger students, begin by just sending thoughts to someone or something they really love (it is easier for them to imagine). Give them examples of things they could use to help them think of something quick!
- Extension: Have older students write a letter to themselves after the practice!

loving-kindness affirmations

We practice sending ourselves and others kind and loving thoughts



reflection:

- Use the space attached journal pages to draw, write or doodle your reflections!
- *How did it feel to send yourself loving and kind thoughts? Was it easy or hard for you to do? What kind of thoughts to did you send to others? How can you be more self-loving, forgiving, and proud of your achievements in life and in the classroom? How can integrate more loving-kindness in the classroom community?*

extension:

- Use some of the loving thoughts you sent yourself to create your very own affirmations
- These can be written on post-it notes and scattered throughout the house (where you will see them often) or you can decorate your affirmations on thick paper and put it in a frame! Place it somewhere special!



the gratitude jar

We practice appreciating what we already have and not yearning for more

 **life skills:**
caring, compassion, appreciation

 **target ages:**
suitable for all ages

leading the exercise:

1. Sit tall, extend your spine and head into the air, and relax your body. Feel your legs against the floor. Relax your hands onto your lap, and try to close your eyes.
2. Take a long, deep inhale and exhale into your belly. Now, breathe into your chest, or heart. Lastly, take your fullest breath into your shoulders all the way to the top of your head. Pause to notice how you feel.
3. Open your hands in front of you and imagine you were holding an empty jar in front of you, to fill with the things, people, and places you feel so grateful to have in you life.
4. Begin filling you jar with what you are thankful for in your life - everything that surrounds you in abundance! As you fill the jar, say in your mind: *I am grateful for my loving mom. I am grateful for healthy food to eat. I am grateful for my kind and caring friends. I am grateful for my home and my family.* Keep filling you jar up until there is no more room left!
5. Talking points: *What does it mean to be grateful? What do you think it means to be ungrateful? How do you feel in your heart when you think about everything you already have? How do you feel when you think about things that you want, but don't have?*

tips:

- It may be difficult for younger children to think of things they are grateful for on their own. In this case, during the visualization give simple examples for the students by saying them aloud.
- Guide children to bring attention to *how they feel when they think grateful thoughts vs. how they feel when they think of their "wants"*.



the gratitude jar

We practice appreciating what we already have and not yearning for more

reflection:

- Use the space below to draw, write or doodle your reflections!
- *What does it mean to be grateful? How does it feel to cultivate abundance and gratitude? How does it feel when you think about all of the things that you want, but don't have? When can you remind yourself and your students of cultivating gratitude?*