



Instructor Guide

Unit 1: Lesson 2 Mindfulness

Background Information for Facilitator:

Objectives:

- The child will learn to define mindfulness and name at least three ways to practice mindfulness.
- The child will get to practice a mindfulness exercise.

Time Needed: It is flexible. You can choose to do everything in this guide, or you might select just a few parts to do with the kids each day.

Materials:

- For the mindful eating exercise, please bring raisins or dried apple chips, or any other safe snack that the kids can eat as part of the guided activity.
- A copy of the following picture books to read aloud:
 - [I Can Do Hard Things: Mindful Affirmations for Kids by Gabi Garcia](#)
 - [Listening to My Body by Gabi Garcia](#)
 - [Focused Ninja by Mary Nhin](#)
 - [What Were You Thinking: Learning to Control Your Impulses by Bryan Smith](#)
- If you want to do a formal assessment, hand out one copy to each child of *1-2 Mindfulness Reflection/Assessment* and/or once copy of *1-2 Newsela Article, Quiz and Answer Key*. For primary students, you can talk through these sheets as a discussion.
- White board/chalk board, screen on which to project the *Mindfulness Presentation* (a PowerPoint slideshow).
- pencils, pens
- For the visual arts option, please have print-outs of coloring sheets and crayons and markers, or playdoh and clay.
- For the sharing circle option, please have a copy of *1-2 Sharing Circle Script on Mindfulness*.

Key Concept:

Mindfulness is when you focus on just one thing instead of thinking about a bunch of things at the same time. You focus on your thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations and you don't judge yourself.

Fundamental Skills or Competencies:

Self-awareness, Identifying emotions, Self-management, Stress management

Part One: Watch Video for Kids About Mindfulness

Start by watching the *Mindfulness Video for Kids*. After watching the video, you can move into Part Two below.



Part Two: Discussions about Mindfulness

Essential Questions:

- How can we learn to focus only on what is happening in the moment?
- How can mindfulness make you feel better? Why is mindfulness good for you?

Have a discussion about how practicing mindfulness can help people grow stronger. You can use Mulan as an example, based on the bullet points below.

- Often, in superhero movies, we see the heroes go through mindfulness training before they are able to access their powers and skills. For example, in the story of Mulan, we learn about the idea of Qi (pronounced ‘chee’). In traditional China, Qi means your ‘life force’ or your ‘life energy’.
- As a young woman, Mulan disguises herself as a man and prepares to fight as a soldier for the Emperor’s army. She spends many weeks training. During a large and difficult battle in which Mulan saves her fellow soldiers, she decides to reveal that she is a woman. In the end, Mulan was able to connect with her Qi more strongly because she practiced mindfulness, focused on her sword-fighting skills, and embraced her true identity. Her powers grow even stronger.

Ask kids to share the names of their favorite characters that need to practice mindfulness in order to access their powers. Encourage kids to describe *how* those characters do mindfulness exercises. Below are some suggestions to help you get started:

- Grogu (also known as Baby Yoda) works with The Mandalorian to use his Jedi powers to connect with The Force. (This is a perfect example of mindfulness training).
- All of the Jedi – including Rey, Luke, and Yoda -- also use mindfulness practices to connect with The Force.
- Elsa uses mindfulness to create things out of ice and snow and to control elements of nature. For example, she creates Olaf using mindfulness.
- Black Panther uses mindfulness to summon his regular human strength when he is challenged for the throne and must battle his challengers without his special powers.

Part Three: Activity Options

*For a one-page brief summary of quick activity options, please see *1-2 Quick Guide to Breakout Activity Options for Mindfulness*.

Activity Option 1: Introduce the idea of mindfulness by leading the kids through a 5-minute mindful eating exercise.

- The purpose of this initial activity is for it to help the children calm down and focus on mindfulness. The script is included below, and you can also find it as a separate document called 1-2 Mindful Eating Script, in case you want to send it home as a stand-alone activity.

Instructor: *With this exercise, we are going to practice mindful eating. You will only put the piece of food in your mouth when I tell you it is time. First, we will spend time observing the piece of food.* (Invite each child to take either a raisin or an apple chip and remind them not to eat them just yet).

1. *To begin, I would like to invite you to take a few slow breaths. (Pause). Lower your gaze and look at the raisin or apple chip in the palm of your hand. Continue breathing as you are looking at the piece of food. (Pause).*
2. *See if you can look at it as if you've never seen a raisin or apple chip before. Notice its shape and size. (Pause). Maybe move it around your palm and notice the way that it looks. (Pause).*
3. *Now notice its texture. (Pause). Maybe squeeze it with your fingers and notice what it feels like. (Pause).*
4. *Now gently bring it up to your nose and smell it. (Pause). Notice what it smells like. (Pause).*
5. *Now slowly put the raisin or apple chip in your mouth, but do not chew it. (Pause). Notice what it tastes like. (Pause).*
6. *Now slowly bite into the raisin or apple chip, noticing what it tastes like. (Pause). Take your time chewing and swallowing the piece of food.*

Discussion questions for the group after the mindful eating exercise:

What did you notice about the raisin or the apple chip?

How did the raisin or apple chip taste?

What might be some of the benefits of mindful eating? (possible answers: Food might taste better; we might be more likely to eat healthier; we will be able to know when we are full).

Activity Option 2: Lead children through the PowerPoint mindfulness presentation and exercise.

First have the children get comfortable.

- During the meditation, children can either sit upright or put their heads down. If children will be sitting on the floor, clear all furniture as needed and direct children to sit so there is some space between them.
- This is a good time for the teacher to ask if any student has any personal or religious issues concerning the practice of meditation and invite kids to share.

Start the presentation and lead children through slides 1-12. These slides explain the concept of mindfulness, how it works, and its many benefits.

- During slide 2, teachers should pause and give students a few moments to contemplate the questions posed and silently recall their prior experiences with worry and anxiety. Teachers should follow up by asking students to volunteer examples of events or situations that have caused them worry or anxiety.

For slides 13-18, the instructor will read aloud the script for the mindfulness exercise.

- Speak slowly and in a calm voice, being sure to take adequate pauses. Before beginning, check in with students that they are comfortable. (The script below duplicates the content in slides 13-18, in case you want to do this as a stand-alone activity.)
- NOTE: For students who may find this exercise challenging, see the suggestions in the Accommodation/Modifications section below. For some student populations, the teacher may opt to present and discuss the entire *Mindfulness Presentation* before having students try the exercise, whether they will use any of the suggested accommodations or not.

Script for the teacher to read aloud (also found in slides 13-18 of the PowerPoint):

1. *To begin, I would like to invite you to close your eyes or lower your gaze so that everyone else has some privacy. (Pause).*
2. *Take a few slow breaths. (Pause).*
3. *Notice the sensation of your feet as they are making contact with the ground. (Pause).*
4. *Notice that at this very moment, you are not in a rush to get anywhere. You are not late for anything. You are here, in this room, in this moment, exactly where you need to be, doing exactly what you should be doing. So, for a few moments, removing the burden off your shoulders to do anything else and just staying focused on the present moment. (Pause).*
5. *And at any time, now or in the future, if you get distracted or overwhelmed, ask yourself, “where are my feet?” to bring you back to the present moment. (Pause).*
6. *Now, taking a few moments to connect with yourself, place your hands on your heart and take three slow breaths. (Pause).*
7. *Now, tuning in to your senses, notice the sounds around you. (Pause).*
8. *Now notice the temperature of the room. (Pause).*
9. *Notice any internal sensations and emotions you might be experiencing. (Pause).*
10. *Just taking a few slow breaths here to slow down and stay with these sensations and breathe. (Long pause).*
11. *Now, once again bring our attention to the sensation of your feet. (Pause).*
12. *And then take as much time as you need to open your eyes and come back into the room.*

Activity Option 3: Hold a group discussion to follow the mindfulness presentation and exercise.

Instructor: *Have you ever been in a stressful situation, and you felt overwhelmed by a lot of worries all at once? Let's talk about how mindfulness can help us slow down our thoughts.*

Ask the children the following questions:

- *What might be some of the benefits of doing a mindfulness practice? (Keep a list of students' suggestions on large chart paper for future reference.)*
- *Did anyone notice their mind wandering/getting distracted? (If yes, praise the students for noticing and say that mindfulness includes noticing when we get distracted).*
- *Was anyone able to bring their attention back to the mindfulness practice?*
- *What was this mindfulness practice like for you overall?*

Activity Option 4: Brainstorm a list of mindfulness activities with children.

Write ideas down on a posterboard to keep on hand for future reference. If children need help coming up with ideas of mindfulness activities, here are a few suggestions:

- Mindful eating
- Mindful martial arts practice
- Mindful boxing
- Mindful bathing
- Mindful listening to music
- Mindful coloring
- Mindful nature walks
- Practicing mindfulness while taking a test
- Mindfully breathing

Activity Option 5: Hold a full group Sharing Circle to discuss mindfulness

- Please use the complete guided script for facilitators labeled *1-2 Sharing Circle Script: Mindfulness*. Allow 20-35 minutes for this activity, depending on how many rounds you complete and how large the circle is.

Activity Option 6: Read aloud and discuss a picture book about mindfulness.

- We recommend the following books that embody the themes of this lesson plan. After reading each book aloud, ask the children how they think the story relates to mindfulness.
 - *I Can Do Hard Things: Mindful Affirmations* by Gabi Garcia
 - *Listening to My Body* by Gabi Garcia
 - *Focused Ninja* by Mary Nhin
 - *What Were You Thinking: Learning to Control Your Impulses* by Bryan Smith

Activity Option 7: Drama/Theater activity: Invite kids to form a small group and create a skit about this week's theme, which is practicing mindfulness. Below are some prompts:

- “You are in charge of training a team of superheroes who have had their powers stripped away by an evil genius. Create a skit about the ways that your superheroes will practice mindfulness to regain their abilities and save Earth from the evil genius.”
- “A friend is struggling with impulse control issues and wants to learn mindfulness skills to help make life easier. Create a skit about what types of behaviors are happening and how other people can help the friend learn some mindfulness techniques.”
- Kids can perform skits for the group as a whole.

Activity Option 8: Visual Art activity: Kids can mindfully draw, paint, or sculpt.

- Kids might choose to quietly color in mandalas, fill in coloring sheets, or even draw freeform. If paints are available, children may prefer to create their own paintings.
- Children who need a different sensory experience can mindfully sculpt with playdoh or clay. One option is for kids to make a collection of shapes, such as spheres or cubes.
- Encourage kids to focus on the sensations of creating the art, such as the feeling of the crayon or the clay in their hands, the smells and sounds around them, and the colors or shapes they are forming.

Activity Option 9: Physical activity: Ask kids to engage in mindful exercises for one-minute intervals. Here are some examples:

1. Have kids play Simon/Simone says. Remind them to focus mindfully on the words that Simon/Simone uses so they don't accidentally act impulsively!
2. Have kids pretend that they are a Jedi, such as Grogu (Baby Yoda), and they need to summon The Force. First, encourage them to sit as still as possible and use mindfulness to focus until they are able to pull their imaginary lightsabers out of the air. Then have kids practice swinging their imaginary lightsabers as they train to be a Jedi. Children can even engage in imaginary contact-free lightsaber battles and show off their Jedi moves to each other.
3. Tell kids to imagine they are a superhero flying high above the earth. Tell them, "Lie on the ground on your stomach. Lift your arms straight out in front of you. Lift your legs straight up behind you without bending your knees, so that you are balancing on your stomach. Try to hold the pose for a minute.
4. Tell kids to start jumping up and down or running in place or any preferred form of exercise while you count to 60. Ask kids to notice if their thoughts stray. Remind them to gently refocus on the counting.

Part Four: Assessment: If you would like to do formal assessments, there are two options available for children who are able to read and write (and you can talk through these worksheets with primary children):

- Hand each child a printed copy of *1-2 Mindfulness Reflection*. They can take a brief quiz and respond to short questions about mindfulness. Score only Part 1 for purposes of program assessment (answer to multiple choice is C).
- Hand each child a copy of *1-2 Newsela Article, Quiz and Answer Key* and ask them to read the article and take the quiz. *This article is also an excellent resource to send home to parents and can be accessed online with a Newsela account at <https://newsela.com/read/schools-mindfulness-practice/id/24049/>.

Accommodations/Modifications for diverse learners in your classroom:

- Doing the meditation with eyes open for students who are uncomfortable closing their eyes.
- Mindfully coloring instead of meditating with eyes closed for students who have a hard time paying attention or have learning disabilities.
- Naming colors or objects in the room instead of meditating with eyes closed for students who have a hard time paying attention or have learning disabilities.
- Watching the *Mindfulness Presentation* (slides 11-16) while the teacher guides the class through the mindfulness exercise.

Supplementary Readings for students and adults:

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6

Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.