

Sounds and Silence (Kids)

Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

So far today, have you brought kind awareness to your:

Thoughts? Heart? Body? None

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



PURPOSE / EFFECT

Mindfulness practices for children often use one or all of the five senses as a focus. Here are a few reasons why.

First, our senses bring information in present time. So, mindfulness practices that focus on the senses are great exercises for kids to practice “being here now.”

Second, kids are often much better at paying attention to their immediate experience than adults are! They “get it” and find these practices relaxing and fun.

Third, paying attention to our senses gives us a break from our minds. For kids stuck in a jumble of ideas or worries or an uncomfortable feeling, paying attention to their senses shifts their focus away from what’s troubling them. It creates a little oasis. They can experience helping themselves feel better.

This exercise uses sound—and silence—as its focus. You and your child can do a version of this exercise pretty much any time or anywhere, and it can be used as a way to help kids cope with stressful thoughts or feelings.

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TIPS ON DOING MINDFULNESS EXERCISES WITH KIDS

- Keep practices short, about one minute for each year of age. So, five minutes for five-year-olds, and so on.
- Do the practice with your child sometimes, so you can share your experiences, too. Make mindfulness a fun thing to do together.
- It's a good idea to tell kids there's no right or wrong way to do a practice, or right or wrong "answers." It's not a test! It's just a time to be curious and kind with yourself.
- After the practice, ask questions like, "What was that like?" "What did you feel inside?" "Did you hear anything or see anything?" "How do you feel now?"
- Doing a bit of artwork after a mindfulness practice is a great way for kids to express and anchor something they experienced in the exercise. They can draw or colour or make a beaded bracelet – something they enjoy. The results can be wonderful.
- If your child has trouble getting to sleep, doing this mindfulness practice with them can be a way to help them relax into a restful sleep.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

You'll need a small bell, tone bar or meditation bowl that makes a sound that lasts for 15 – 30 seconds or so. A physical object like these is best, but there are lots of apps available that include mindfulness timer bells or chimes that will work, too.

SUMMARY

Create a sound and guide your child to listen to the sound, until it fades away into silence.

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EXERCISE SCRIPT

You can read the following mindfulness script word for word, make it longer or shorter, or improvise in the moment for a particular challenge your child has. Leave short pauses of a few seconds when you ask your child to listen to the sound or notice what they're feeling. If you're doing the exercise away from home, you can use any sounds around you.

- We're going to play a game listening to this sound [ring your chime or app]. You'll try to listen to the sound all the way until it disappears—going, going, gone. When you hear it's gone, you'll let me know by raising your hand.
- Sit or lie down and get comfortable. And let your eyes gently close. Be nice and cosy.
- When I make the sound, try to listen with more than just your ears. Listen with your body and your mind and your heart. When we really listen to something, we're listening with much much more than our ears.
- I'm going to make the sound a few times now. Listen while the sound is getting quieter and quieter and, when you don't hear it any more, quietly put up your hand. Then put your hand back down for the next time. Ok here we go.
- [ring the bell a few times, letting the sound recede into silence each time]
- Keep listening with your ears and with as much of you as you can. It's like the sound fills you up. If you forget and start thinking about something else, that's ok. Just start listening again.
- Notice how the sound gets softer and softer, until it totally disappears..... It's kind of amazing you can still hear it when it's so soft, isn't it?

When the sound isn't there any more, notice the quiet. What does the quiet feel like? Does it feel restful or calm or lively and sparkly? Listening to the quiet can make you feel quiet inside, too.

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How are your mind and body and heart feeling after all this listening?

- You can listen to anything like this, even other people—you can give a friend or someone in your family 100% of your listening and attention. Maybe you already know someone who listens to you like that. It feels good, doesn't it?
- Ok, we're going to finish now, great job.
- You can listen with your whole body to sounds around you any time you like, to calm down and to enjoy the quiet that's in you.
- Thanks for doing this with me today.

NOTES

