

Center for Spiritual Living Youth and Teen Curriculum

June 7, 2020

Mindfulness

“Mindfulness is increasingly recognized as an essential education tool. It develops attention, emotional and cognitive understanding, and bodily awareness and coordination, as well as interpersonal awareness and skills. Most importantly, by diminishing stress, anxiety, and hostility, mindfulness enhances our total well-being, peace, confidence, and joy... Mindfulness is a powerful tool to help children develop the skills to promote peace in them and in the world around them.” –Thich Nhat Hanh
This month we will be utilizing the lessons and activities from the book, *Planting Seeds* by Thich Nhat Hanh to experience and play with Mindfulness.

Week #1 Breathing with a Bell to Calm the Mind

Message: The sound of the Bell is the voice of the Buddha within, because there is a Buddha within every one of us. The Buddha represents our capacity to be mindful, compassionate, and understanding. Listening to the sound of the bell is listening to the voice of understanding and compassion within us, calling us home...calling us back, saying, “Come home, come home to yourself. Don’t lose yourself in anger, in frustration.” –excerpt from the book, *Planting Seeds* by Thich Nhat Hanh

Reading: We will read from the book, *Planting Seeds* by Thich Nhat Hanh and introduce the meaning of the bell and counting the breath with the bell. We will listen to the song, I Follow My Breath and discuss what we learned from the song.

Activity: We will learn a Gatha(poem) for listening to the bell and breathe in and out as we sing a song about listening. We will learn how to invite the bell by practicing different sitting positions, breathing, and learning different Gathas. We will invite the children to make up their own Gatha for listening to the bell.

Teens: We will invite teens to practice a few centering meditations, discuss what works well for them (guided/silent) to get in touch with their intuitive mind and to create a sense of calm. Discuss ideas of how to use mindfulness in the middle of their day to create the kind of day they want or to redirect from distractions and/or unsettled thoughts or experiences.

Connecting: We will use a jar and different colored sand to take turns demonstrating how our minds are when we are in a hurry, stressed, angry, or upset. Breathing with the bell, we will observe the sand settling and discover what happens with our minds when we meditate and are mindful of our body and breathing. Our thoughts and feelings can still be there in our minds but rest peacefully at the bottom...We can choose which kind of feelings and thoughts we want to stir up in our mind...and guide them in the direction we want to go, rather than being guided by them. –adapted from Mind In A Jar lesson.