

Lesson Name:

What is Mindfulness?

Student Objectives:

- Students will be able to define mindfulness and its importance in daily life.
- Students will be able to practice mindful listening on their own.

Educator Preparation:

- Pan, lid, metal bell, or instrument that would make a ringing, lingering sound & something used to strike.
- Journal.

Introduction:

Today's lesson is going to be an introduction to mindfulness. What is mindfulness? How do we practice it? How can it help us?

Instruction:

We live in a very busy world. Often, we are scheduled from the minute we open our eyes each morning to the minute we lay down to sleep each night. Sometimes we even think if we are doing many things we are being very productive. We grownups like to call this multitasking. It's where we might start one activity like making dinner and then run to start a load of laundry. When the laundry is started we might check on dinner and then tidy up the living room. Then while checking back on our dinner we might run out to get the mail and then try to read through it while we are cooking.

The trouble I have with this is that most times I don't finish any task, or if it's finished it isn't done well. The laundry might sit in the washer for another day before I even transfer it to the dryer. I might check the mail and find a bill that needs to be paid, but I might lay it down and forget to go back and take care of it. An even bigger problem is that I might have one of my

children or my husband trying to talk to me while I'm "multitasking" and I haven't really heard anything they said to me. When I sit down later I start thinking of all the things I didn't finish or I wonder if my daughter asked me to pick her up for practice at a certain time and then I get worried.

That stress and worry can lead to so many problems. Sometimes I get headaches or even tummy aches from worrying. If I am mindful of my surroundings, thoughts, and feelings I am more present. I am focusing on what is happening now. I'm no longer worrying about something that happened in the past or that might happen in the future, I'm using my senses to be present and mindful.

Mindfulness means awareness of our thoughts, feelings (Emotional and physical). When we are mindful, our thoughts tune into what we're sensing in the present moment.

When we practice mindful behavior we often find ourselves more relaxed. Our blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing all slow down and our muscles even relax. Practicing mindfulness helps us be present and not get upset when things do not go as planned, it helps us appreciate the current time without being anxious about what might happen next.

Mindfulness might help you perform better in sports, school, music—really everything! When you notice what is happening around you it can help you feel calm and in control of your thoughts and emotions. This would be super great before a big test or maybe a dance recital or ballgame, right?!

We are going to begin by focusing on our sense of hearing. Often we hear things, but they are in the background so we tune them out. Sometimes we hear our parents talk to us, but we aren't listening to the words they are saying. Think about when you raise your hand to answer a question in class... are you listening to the answers of those called before you or are you hearing their voices, but focused on what you want to share with the class?

Interaction:

I am going to have you watch me first. I have a lid and a spoon. What do you notice about it? They are both metal, shiny, small etc. What do you think would happen if I hit the lid with the spoon? Listen. It makes a loud sound doesn't it? I want you to listen again, now that you know what happens. Does the sound stop quickly? No, it really rings out for a bit, doesn't it? Listen again, and this time close your eyes. I want you to raise your hand when you no longer hear the sound. Ask them to open the eyes and discuss how everyone stopped hearing the sound at a different time. When there is a new sound, like the lid and spoon, we pay closer attention to it because it is something we've never heard before or not often.

We are going to sit comfortably and close our eyes. We will listen for any sounds we hear for one minute.

Closure:

After that one minute, I want us to think about what was happening during that minute. Did you think of your test that we have next week, or the ballgame against the toughest team, or the argument you had with your sister this morning? Maybe you heard the teacher next door or the breathing of your neighbor. Maybe you even heard your own tummy grumbling. How did you feel? When we focused on the sounds in that minute, our minds were calm and relaxed. It helped us be present.

Activity:

I want you to fill out your journal of the sounds you heard during that one minute of silence. Then write how you felt during that one minute.