

## **Teaching Children how to Meditate**

### **Introduction**

Teaching children to meditate is a wonderful privilege and challenge today. Experience shows that children can be still and silent and enjoy it, and like adults, they yearn for the experience of being close to God. It is essential that we

1. Recognise that each child is born as a spiritual being.
2. Honour each child's relationship with God.
3. Always try to make the experience of meditation positive.
4. Never judge the child's meditation.

In meditation words are not important. By allowing communication through stillness, silence, and the senses, we can trust in God to do the work of God in the silence. It is the Holy Spirit who prays in us and through us.

Meditation is like going on a journey to the centre of oneself. Within every heart is God's kingdom. Your heart is the home of God inside you, a holy place to sit and be with God, a holy place to pray each day. And though you cannot see your heart, you know it's there. So when you close your eyes and open your heart you are with Jesus, your friend, and God, our loving Father, who prays within you. God wants you to sit with him so that he can keep you company, and wrap you in his love.

It is easy. It only takes a few minutes to do it. You will need a sacred word, to enter into that sacred, holy space within you. Supply the children with a selection of sacred words to choose from. Choose your own sacred word. The sacred word is called a mantra.

Let your breath whisper it within your heart, and only God will hear it. Repeat it silently to the rhythm of each breath you breathe in and breathe out. Remember to stay present to your mantra and to the rhythm of your breath. This is a very special time, as you are sitting in the presence of God, a God who has chosen to make his home within you. Praying this way is an expression of your desire to sit in the company of God and allowing him to wrap you in his love. When you find yourself thinking of something else, return to your mantra. Let all your thoughts float away out of your head. There may be sounds and noises outside, it is all okay. No matter what you hear or think about, just repeat your word gently and silently. It will be heard, in your heart, by God.

### **Preparing to meditate:**

Arrange a simple Sacred Space by using a small cloth and candle.

The use of a gong, chime or bell to signal the beginning and ending is very helpful.

Decide on the time - a minute is a good start. You can extend the time as you become familiar with the technique.

**Invite the children to...**

Tidy away anything that distracts you from being quiet and still, pens, books etc.

Make space for your feet. Remove your bag if it prevents you from sitting comfortably.

Sit up straight in a comfortable and relaxed position...

Feel your feet firmly touching the ground...

Feel your back being supported by the chair/desk...

Rest your hands on your lap...your knees...

*Play very soft music to calm the children & gradually lower the volume until fully silent.*

**All pray together:**

“Holy Spirit,  
Pray with me  
and in me now.”

Close your eyes gently...or focus them on the candle, or simply cast your eyes down without bending your head and neck...

Simply notice the sounds outside the room...

Listen to the stillness within the room...

Become aware of your own breath as you inhale and exhale...inhale & exhale...inhale & exhale...

Become aware of the rhythm of your breath - the rise and fall of the movement within your chest area.

Silently, begin to say your mantra in your heart to the rhythm of your breath.

Say the mantra in your heart to the rhythm of your breath.

Repeat using your mantra with full attention on your breath.

**Begin the meditation**

*Signal the beginning of the meditation to the sound of a chime or prayer bowl.*

*{Keep an eye on the time!*

*When the decided time is up...use the chime or prayer bowl to signal the end}*

Invite the children to gently open their eyes and stretch their hands, two or three times.

**SEE:** Website: [www.wccm.org](http://www.wccm.org)

**The Practice of Meditation**

Meditation takes discipline, just like learning to play a musical instrument, or learn a new dance, or play a new game. Any important skill, whether it is playing the tin whistle, piano, painting or meditation, grows with perseverance, patience and practice.

## **The Inner Sanctuary**

We believe that at the heart of every person is a place of inner peace, which is often referred to as the “inner sanctuary.” A sanctuary is a safe place, a calm place, where you can relax and become still. The path to the inner sanctuary is as near as your breath. To arrive at the door, simply follow your breath. It is the place where we touch the divine ground of our being. It is a sanctuary because it is a safe place, for no one else can come, no one has power there, only us. It is a sanctuary because it is a holy place; for God is already there.

## **Mindful Presence**

There is nothing more peaceful than to hold a sleeping baby in your arms. The baby’s body totally relaxes into you. The baby gives you their total trust to hold and support them. The breathing of a tiny infant is deep and rhythmic. It is effortless, something that happens naturally. Their breath pulls you in as they breathe with their whole body, rising and falling; it mesmerises you. If you let them, the baby pulls you into the moment as with every breath their tiny body draws you into relaxation. They teach you more about being present in the moment than you can teach them. You are born with an inner stillness and a sense of wonder about the world.

Your breathing takes place in the present, where there is no past and no future, only NOW, so when you truly observe your breath, you are automatically living in the present moment, which is what meditation is all about.

## **PRACTICE**

Breathe.

Be still.

Notice your breathing.

Notice how your body moves as you breathe in and breathe out.

Relax into the rhythm of your breath.

Become aware of your breath

-the place where it enters your body

-the place where it leaves your body

Imagine your breath as it moves around your body:

-around your head,

-to your shoulders,

-to your arms,

-to your stomach,

-to your legs,

-to your toes.

When you are ready, gently open your eyes and return to the room.

## **YOUR PASSPORT TO THE INNER JOURNEY**

Your breath is your ticket, your passport, on this inner journey  
Become friends with our breath, as it will guide you to your inner stillness.  
Follow your breath, hear your breath, and know your breath.  
It is with you every day of your life.  
Your breath connects you to this world,  
both inside and outside yourself,  
and will bring you to the very centre of your being.

Notice the rhythm and flow of your breath as you breathe.  
It is unique to you.  
Let go of all tension and stress and worry.  
Breathe in calmness and peace.  
Once you are calm and have come to the point of stillness  
Gently begin to use your mantra, your sacred word.  
Begin to allow the mantra to work in union with the rhythm of your breath.