

Week 4: Mindfulness

Lesson Time: 1 hour

Instructors Required: In-person: 2, Virtual: 1- 2

Supplies:

- Six (6) mason jar filled with water and glitter
- Bell and striker
- Bodhisattva vow chant cards
- Jenga
- Be the Pond Cosmic Kids Zen Den Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wf5K3pP2IUQ>

Learning Objectives

- Create safe, fun and participatory environment.
- Explore mindfulness as a practice in participant's daily life
- Demonstrate ways mindfulness can be brought to any activity (school, around the house, at play, etc.)
- Connect mindfulness with Buddhist teachings explored in weeks 1 - 3 (the story of the Buddha, Bodhisattva vow, and interconnectedness)
- Offer examples of ways mindfulness practice intersects with ritual and meditation

Outline

I. Gather & Morning Message	20 mins
• Morning Message	
• Alter Practice/Gassho and Bow	
• Fun & Games	
II. Dharma Lesson - Mindfulness	15 mins
III. Movement & Meditation	5 mins
IV. Main Activity - Mind in a Jar	15 mins
V. Closing Chant	5 mins

Gather & Morning Message

Begin day with informal questions to get participants talking.

- Ask participants what they remember about Interconnectedness from the previous week.
- Ask if participants noticed times they were connected to something or someone else.
- Ask if participants feel thinking about interconnectedness made them feel encouraged to help others or be more generous.

Alter Practice/Gassho and Bow

Refer participants to the alter. Provide an example of gassho and bow

Instruct participants individually to gassho and bow at alter.

Week 4: Mindfulness

Fun and Games : Jenga

The mindful Jenga® rules are the same as the original game just with additional mindful steps.

- On each turn each player takes one block from any level of the tower using only one hand at any time
- The block removed must be placed on the topmost level
- Your turn ends 10 seconds after you stack your block - or as soon as the player to your left touches one.
- Keep removing and stacking blocks until someone topples the tower.

The game ends when the tower topples over or when any block falls from the tower

Ways that Jenga can be used to practise mindfulness:

- Students can cultivate a calm and clear mind through mindful breathing – students can inhale as they remove a block and exhale as they replace it
- After removing a block, a student can state something that they are grateful for – requiring them to think about appreciation and things for which they are grateful.
- Students can share their gratitude with the others or keep it private.

Note for Virtual Participants

Students with Jenga at home are welcome to play along. Otherwise, participants are welcome to view the video Be the Pond from Cosmic Kids Zen Den. The video can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wf5K3pP2IUQ>

Dharma Lesson: Mindfulness

Facilitators are encouraged to develop Dharma lesson content in a manner that most resonates with them.

Suggested talking points

- Mindfulness practice is rooted in Buddhist teaching.
- Mindfulness allows us to take care of the things and people around us.
- We take care of things because of our Bodhisattva vow and our interconnection with the wider world.
- We have an opportunity to bring mindfulness to life in all we do be it at school, at home, or at play.

Week 4: Mindfulness

Movement & Meditation

Take participants through a series of mindful movement postures as a way to give participants an opportunity to move around, stretch, and explore mindfulness.

Suggested movements with instruction:

One: Begin with your feet slightly apart, arms at your sides. Breathing in, keep your elbows straight as you lift your arms in front of you until they're shoulder level, horizontal to the ground. Breathing out, bring your arms down again to your sides. Repeat the movement three more times.

Two: Begin with your arms at your sides. Breathing in, lift your arms in front of you. In one continuous movement, bring them all the way up, stretching them above your head. Touch the sky! This movement can be done with your palms either facing inward toward each other, or facing forward as you reach up. Breathing out, bring your arms slowly down again to your sides. Repeat three more times.

Three: Breathing in, lift your arms out to the side, palms up, until your arms are shoulder level, parallel to the ground. Breathing out, touch your shoulders with your fingertips, keeping your upper arms horizontal. Breathing in, open your arms, extending them until they're stretched out to a horizontal position again. Breathing out, bend your elbows, bringing your fingertips back to your shoulders.

Four: When you breathe in, you are like a flower opening to the warm sun. Breathing out, the flower closes. From this position with your fingertips on your shoulders, do the movement three more times. Then lower your arms back down to your sides.

Five: In this exercise, you make a large circle with your arms. Breathing in, bring your arms straight down in front of you, centered between your hips, palms together. Raise your arms up and separate your hands so your arms can stretch up over your head. Breathing out, continue the circle, arms circling back, until your fingers point toward the ground. Breathing in, lift your arms back and reverse the circle. Breathe out as you bring your palms together and your arms come down in front of you. Repeat three more times.

Six: Start by putting your hands on the sides of your waist. As you do this exercise, keep your legs straight but not locked, and your head centered over your body. Breathing in, bend forward at the waist and begin to make a circle with your upper body. When you're halfway through the circle, your upper body leaning back, breathe out and complete the circle, ending with your head in front of you while you're still bent at the waist. On your next in-breath, begin a circle in the opposite direction. On your out-breath, complete the circle. Repeat the series of movements three more times.

Seven: Begin with your hands on our waist, heels together, feet turned out to form a V, so that they make a 90 degree angle. Breathing in, rise up on your toes. Breathing out, stay on your toes, keep your back straight, and bend your knees. Keeping your upper body centered, go down as low as you comfortably can maintain your balance. Breathing in, straighten your knees and come all the way up, still standing on your toes. From this position, repeat the movement three more times, remembering to breathe slowly and deeply.

Week 4: Mindfulness

Main Activity: Mind in a Jar

MATERIALS:

- Six (6) mason jar filled with water and glitter
- Bell and Stryker

Gather participants, bring out mason jars filled with water and glitter. Pass out to each participant. State: *"The water in this jar is like our mind and the glitter is like our thoughts and feelings. What kinds of things do you think about when you wake up in the morning?" Allow time for responses.*

Ask participants to shake their mason jar and watch as the glitter swirls around. State: *"What kinds of thoughts do you have at school...or after school...how about before bed?"*

Ask participants to shake the jar again and as the glitter continues to swirl *"This is how our minds are when we are hurried, upset, stressed, or overwhelmed. Can you see things clearly in this state? Name some examples of when you feel this way."* Ring the bell and state: *"Let's breathe with the bell and watch the sand in the vase."* (Allow time for the glitter to settle at the bottom and for the water to become more clear.)

State: *"This is what happens to our minds when we meditate, when we are mindful of our body and of our breathing. What is the water like now?" "The thoughts and feelings can still be there in our minds, but they are now resting peacefully at the bottom because we know how to return to our breathing and calm down." Sometimes we can choose which kind of feelings and thoughts we want to stir up in our mind. There are times when we may want to look into our unhappy thoughts and feelings in order to understand them better....Our we can bring up thoughts that make us happy, like kindness or compassion and forgiveness...It's important to be aware of our thoughts so that we can guide them in a direction we want to go, rather than the thoughts guiding us!"* Ring the bell again, gassho to end.

Virtual Participant Consideration

Ensure virtual participants can clearly hear bell and see in-person participants. In addition, ensure to call on virtual participants with questions or requests for examples throughout activity to ensure they are fully included in activity.

Closing Chant

Pass out closing chant to participants. Show participants how you plan to put your hands together and chant the four line Bodhisattva Vow. Go through once on your own. For the second time, invite participants to follow along.

May we develop a deeper understanding in order to live peacefully with people, animals, plants and minerals.
May we develop compassion in order to protect the lives of people, animals, plants and minerals.