

## CHAPTER 4

### CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

#### How SBSB Teachers Use Mindfulness in the Classroom

The Classroom Applications and Activities section contains a variety of exercises developed and enhanced by many teachers, and originating from many different sources.

The exercises are versions of some of the many strategies that are being used in our public school classrooms. Often, they are adapted by teachers to address specific issues, students, or situations. Teachers at SBSB have also personalized mindfulness practices for their classes or to enhance their own areas of teaching.

For example, one middle school teacher is applying mindfulness exercises to her language arts teaching, integrating mindfulness with music, movement, poetry writing, and self-reflective journaling. Another uses teacher advisory, or home-room time, to offer activities in gratitude and appreciation. She also incorporates mindful breathing into her love for music to teach choral toning. In another example, a teacher integrates mindfulness with her Feldenkrais training to help both children and adults become more aware of their bodily states and feedback, as well as their capacity to influence those with mindful focus and breathing. A band teacher uses it to help kids learn to attend to the sound they are collectively making, and to be attuned to rhythm, resulting in significantly improved harmony and synchrony.

In this way, mindfulness becomes more than an activity. It becomes a way of being that has potentially endless creative ramifications radiating out from the central hub of the core practices. It enables teachers' own identified passions, gifts, and creative inclinations, as they explore and demonstrate the many academic applications of mindfulness, and as they self-determine their own personal and professional goals related to mindfulness in education. These exercises have evolved over time, and come from many sources and many contributors. We are grateful to contributors from the SBSB and elsewhere who contributed their works and time. (*Please see Appendix D for contributor credits*).

They are arranged by grade level, and then by length of activity with shorter activities listed first. Note that the simple activities can be used at any age.

**Caution:** Before you rush to implement these mindful exercises, please read the preceding section on Teacher Experience and Application. Please understand that effective use of most of these strategies requires training and intent, specifically in mindfulness practices. Also be aware that some students may have physical, psychological or other issues that may need individual attention: In some cases, some of these exercises could exacerbate some issues. Those with chronic health conditions, disabilities, or other situations that may make them vulnerable to

injury should consult with a physician before doing the movements and exercises described in this manual.

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## Terminology and Materials

Some of the terms in these exercises may be new to some readers. They are defined in the Glossary. Also, some materials used, such as a Hoberman Sphere may not be familiar. Descriptions and sources for these are listed in the Resources section.

## Brief Activities

These activities can take only a few minutes, and are useful for taking a "time in" to pause and regroup during the school day. They may be used in groupings to create longer exercises. The exercises for lower grade levels are also useful for older students.

### Brief Activities for Younger Children: Grades Pre-K to 4

- **Chime.** Ask children to close their eyes and focus attention on the sound, indicating when the sound can no longer be heard by placing a hand on each knee.
- **Breathing Buddies.** Each child has a small stuffed animal that may be brought from home or supplied in the classroom. They lie on the floor in silence with the "buddy" on the belly and breathe in a deep, relaxed way that causes the buddy to rise and fall. This is useful for relaxation and transitions.
- **Hoberman Sphere.** (*See Resources*) This hand held sphere provides a visual representation of the expanding and contracting breath. A student may use the sphere individually or the class may form a circle and pass the sphere from student to student. One breathes in to expand the sphere and breathes out to contract the sphere. Do this in silence.
- **Still Stones.** This can be a child-led practice. Everyone chooses a place to lie down on the floor, in silence with eyes closed as a child "leader" chooses and begins relaxing music (*with teacher assistance*) and goes around to each person and places a polished river stone, first on each forehead, then on each arm and finally on each thigh. This is done in three successive rounds. If there is time, each stone can also be removed in the same manner. If not, the music is stopped and the activity ends with the children returning the stones to their container.
- **Quiet Corner /Time In.** Create a special "sit spot" or quiet corner of the classroom to help facilitate ways of calming emotions and centering. Suggestions include books that remind the child of various themes such as quiet, being in nature, gratitude, kindness, and so on. Such books when read and discussed can provide ongoing touchstones and

reminders. Other objects may include mandalas to color, music to listen to with earbuds, finger labyrinths, a rocking chair, and so on. Be sure to include a three minute timer. (*See Resources*)

- **Snow Globes.** Use a snow globe or a lidded jar of water mixed with sparkles or some other substance such as sand. Beginning with a brief conversation about how busy our minds can be, show how, when shaken, everything becomes cloudy but how it all settles down when still. A song such as, “My Mind is a Clear Blue Sky,” is a nice conclusion.
- **Water Walk.** Ask children to remain silent, fill a bowl of water, and walk in a procession without spilling a single drop, then quietly empty each bowl into a pitcher, listening to the changing sound as the water level increases and then return to his or her seat. Very young children may first “practice” this with cupped hands or an empty bowl.

## Brief Activities for Middle Schoolers and Early Teens: Grades 5-8

**Seven Breaths.** Ask the class to close eyes and slowly take seven breaths. This takes approximately thirty seconds. Ask if it’s possible to take a half minute each day to relax and breathe.

**Three-Part Breath: From the top down.** Slowly breathe to the throat, then deeper to the heart area and then deeper to the belly. Repeat three times. Teach awareness of how shallow the breath can sometimes be when under stress.

**Three-Part Breath: From the belly up.** Slowly breathe in, first filling the belly, then rising to the diaphragm, and finally the chest. Repeat three times.

**Anchor Breath.** Learn to do mindfulness-based concentration by sitting in silence, simply watching the breath. As thoughts come and go, just observe them and return to the breath, breathing in and breathing out. Just let thoughts pass by, with no judgment.

**Defying Distraction.** Simply sit with eyes closed practicing the anchor breath. Then test focus by purposely trying to distract with rattles, bouncing balls, etc. (*This can be done with younger children, too. They love the challenge.*)

**Mindful Eating.** Savor a small amount of food in silence, such as a raisin, grape, orange or apple slice. Notice the smell and flavor. Notice whether there is a reaction in the stomach, such as growling, churning or burning. This activity can be extended to include contemplating on all that it took to create this food and bring it to us, beginning with the sun, rain, soil and including the various hands, fuel, and so on, ending with gratitude.

**Sit Spot in Nature.** Just be with thoughts and sensations, noticing the air or sun on the face, the smells, the sounds, the changes. *Optional:* Encourage journaling or sharing afterward.

- **Dog** – From cat position lift hips, shift weight back and lift head and keep arms straight.
- **Lion** – From dog pose, lean back onto knees and lift arms off the floor. Let arms hang down. Lift chest, open mouth wide and do a belly roar, sticking out tongue as you roar.
- **Butterfly** – Turn to a seated position and place soles of feet together with hands on the ankles. Move legs up and down as if a butterfly is flapping. Stay silent.
- **Monkey** – Stand up, bend knees and squat to the floor with feet wide apart. Touch hands to chest and raise and lower elbows while making a monkey sound.
- **Turtle** - Kneel and sit on heels. Lower the upper body so that the forehead touches the floor. Slide arms forward. Stay hunched up in this little shell.
- **Mouse** – From turtle pose, slide arms back toward feet. Keep bottom on the heels, and let arms stretch out by sides with palms up.

## Grade Level: 3-5

### HOW YOUR BODY IS LIKE SPAGHETTI

**Length of Lesson:** Twenty minutes

**Lesson Objective:** To demonstrate the difference between what the body feels like when stressed and worried, and what it feels like when relaxed and calm.

**Materials:** Uncooked and cooked spaghetti

**Instructor Script:** Today we're going to talk about spaghetti. Here is a piece of raw spaghetti. How does it feel? Strong, stiff and hard?. Now here is a piece of cooked spaghetti. And how does that piece of spaghetti feel? It's flexible and bendable. It moves all over. Do you know what it feels like to be tense and worried and scared? It kind of feels like a piece of uncooked spaghetti. How does it feel to be relaxed and calm and peaceful? It kind of feels like this piece of cooked spaghetti.

Can you tell the difference with your body? Let's try and make our bodies stiff like a piece of raw spaghetti. Can you make your hands, your shoulders, and your face stiff? And now relax and become like a piece of cooked pasta, warm and soft. Isn't that lovely?

So anytime that you are feeling stiff and scared, and worried, take a few deep breaths and change into a piece of cooked spaghetti. This is an easy Mindfulness practice for changing worry and concern into calm relaxation.

### AWARENESS OF FEELINGS

**Lesson Objective:** To become more aware of the facial and bodily expressions of their own and others' emotions.

**Length of Lesson:** Thirty minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Begin with a body scan, breathing, or other brief mindfulness activity.
2. Discuss how the body helps us express our feelings to ourselves and to others. Engage students in talking about how certain feelings may change their facial expressions, their posture, or how they move.

3. Students practice a few examples from the discussion, offering observations of each other's expressions and how they think the other person may be feeling.
4. Teacher reads or orally presents a scenario involving emotions.
5. The students leave the room, and come back in acting out the emotion. They may move about the space, interact (*appropriately*) with various materials in the space, or sit down at a desk. This could take about one to two minutes.
6. While students are moving about in their assumed emotional state, the teacher calls out "Freeze" at several intervals. Students freeze their motion for a few seconds, moving only their eyes. This allows them to take time to truly feel their body, posture and face. Ask them also to look carefully at others. After several seconds, motion is resumed. This step heightens the awareness of the feeling and how it looks in others.
7. Discuss what students felt within themselves, and what they observed in others. Ask for detailed observations; chart paper may be used to jot down students' feelings and observations.
8. For contrast, repeat the exercise with a different emotion. If an uplifting emotion was acted out in the first steps, a more difficult lesson might be offered in the second version, or vice versa.

## **PRACTICING NOT BEING PERFECT**

**Length of Lesson:** Forty minutes

**Lesson Objective:** Students understand the importance of doing what makes them happy. Things don't need to be perfect. The important thing is that you try, do your best, and enjoy doing it. If you worry about trying things because they won't be perfect, then you'll miss out.

**Materials:** The book, *Ish* by Peter H. Reynolds, student activity sheet, watercolors and pencils

**Procedure:** Have everyone stand with some room in between them for the following exercise.

Begin this lesson with the following exercise to prepare the students for the story:

### **MORNING BLOSSOM**

1. Stand with feet hip-width apart, arms down and relaxed.
2. Inhale as you stretch your arms out to the sides, as wide as you can.
3. Lean back, moving your hips forward with your head looking up at the ceiling.
4. Exhale as you go back to starting position and repeat. Do this a few time before you gather for the story.

Introduce the story about Ramon, the star of this book, a boy who loved to draw. He would draw anything, anytime, anywhere. Something happens in the story that changes that. Read and find out what happens. At the end of the story talk about what happened. How was the problem solved?

There are many important events to discuss. Ramon's brother said something that hurt his feelings and made him feel self-conscious about his drawings. Nothing was right and he crumpled and threw out all his pictures. Meanwhile, his sister was picking them up and hanging them up on her wall. She said the picture looked vase-ish, or house-ish. When Ramon found out, this was freeing for him. He felt energized and began drawing again. His sister's words and actions made things better for him.

Now have the class think ish-ly, without worry, and think of something they would love to draw. Have students share a few examples of what they might draw.

**Teacher:** Do a sample with them. Remember have fun with it. Use pencil and then watercolors, like the pictures in the book.

**Students:** Draw

The teacher will walk around and fill in \_\_\_ish. (boat-ish, peace-ish). Tell class: Now when you are worried about trying something new or think something isn't quite the way you want it, just think ish-ly.

## PREPARING STUDENTS FOR WRITING AND REFLECTION

**Length of Lesson:** Forty minutes

**Lesson Objective:** After hearing a story about painting rainbows with friends, student will demonstrate in picture and words the joy of painting rainbows.

**Materials:** The book, *When the Sun Rose* by Barbara Helen Berger, soft music, paper, paints, brushes, and a painting of a rainbow

**Procedure:** This lesson works best if students have painted with you before, as teaching painting and how to use the materials is a separate lesson.

**Part 1:**

1. Have students sit comfortably to calm down, quiet themselves, and come to a Mindful place.
2. Play soft music to help the children center and relax.
3. Toward the end of the music time, share the objective for today (*See above*).
4. Read the story. Share reflections of the story, and tell the class that they have time to paint rainbows.
5. Have the children go to their spaces to paint.

**Part 2:**

1. Later in the day, or the next day, compliment their paintings. Have students go back into a reflective space.
2. Share this writing prompt: What do rainbows make you think of? (*Depending on the skill levels, some of the writing may be random letters, others may be more developed sentences.*)

**Grade Level: 6-8**

## MINDFUL MOVEMENT

**Length of Lesson:** Ten-twenty minutes

**Lesson Objective:** Students use stretching and breathing to help them focus

**Materials:** None. Students should be seated at their desks or in chairs.

**Procedure:** Regulate students' energy levels and focus by increasing and channeling energy via a series of stretches, then settle and focus through Mindful breathing.

**Instructor information:** Explain to students that this will help them focus for learning.

### **Stretches**

- a. Upright posture
- b. Stretch up with one arm
- c. Stretch up with other arm
- d. Stretch up with both arms
- e. Lean to right with both arms
- f. Lean to left with both arms
- g. With left hand on right knee and right hand on back of chair, twist right. Include head and eyes in the twist. Remind the students to breathe into tight areas and increase stretch with exhale.
- h. Repeat with left twist
- i. Leg straight out
- j. Point toes away from yourself
- k. Point toes toward yourself
- l. Rotate toe clockwise
- m. Rotate toes counter-clockwise
- n. Cup hands behind knee and raise leg. Switch legs and repeat.
- o. Put both feet under the chair with toes pointing as far backward as possible.

### **Breathing**

- a. Return to seated position with posture for breathing.
- b. Take three big breaths.
- c. Follow the breath as it comes in and out.
- d. Take deep breaths with four count inhale and six count exhale
- e. Follow breaths.

## **RAINSTORM**

**Length of Lesson:** Thirty minutes

**Lesson Objective:** To help anchor students in the moment and to assist in building a connection to the group.

**Materials:** None. Students should be seated at their desks or in chairs.

**Procedure:** Students will use breath and movement to imitate the sounds of a storm coming and passing. This will be done in three phases: introducing the procedure, following the procedure with eyes open, following the procedure with eyes closed.

### **Basic procedure**

1. Make wind noises with breath, concentrating on inhaling deeply and quietly, and making out-breath longer than in-breath.
2. Make rustling leaves noises by rubbing hands together.
3. Make light rain noises by snapping fingers, concentrating on NOT having rhythm individually or with others.
4. Make moderate rain noises by slapping palm with three fingers, concentrating on NOT having rhythm individually or with others.
5. Make heavy rain noises by clapping hands, concentrating on NOT having rhythm individually or with others.

6. Continue heavy rain noises and make thunder noises by stamping feet, concentrating on NOT having rhythm individually or with others.

### ***Phase 1***

1. Group makes storm noises together.

The first student starts using breath to make wind noises. Then each student joins in sequentially until all students are using their breath to make the wind noises. After allowing the wind noises to continue for a moment, the first student moves on to making the rustling leaves noises, and then each student joins in sequentially until all students are making rustling leaves noises. Students continue this way through the various storm noises until all students are making thunder noises together.

Go back through the procedure, passing through all of the noises until the room is silent again.

*Note:* The instructor points to students to indicate when they should move to the next sound.

### ***Phase 2***

Students repeat the procedure with eyes open, and without the instructor's cues, relying on visual cues to move on to each sequential noise.

### ***Phase 3***

Students repeat the procedure with eyes closed, and without instructor's cues, relying only on the sounds of the adjacent student as cues to move on to each sequential noise.

## **PREPARING FOR CLASS MEETING: STUDENTS PLAN THE TOPICS**

**Length of Lesson:** Thirty minutes

**Lesson Objective:** Students will demonstrate to themselves the value of reflection time to create their own class agenda. Students have some of their needs met when they have a voice in planning the agendas. If you practice this open agenda as part of building classroom community, you will want to reflect with the children and see if they can articulate why reflection time is powerful.

**Materials:** Easel or chart paper to record their agenda items

### **Procedure:**

1. Have students quiet themselves and come to a Mindful place for three to five minutes, focusing on their breathing and relaxing.
2. Gently prompt their thinking with questions such as: What do you need to chat about at our class meeting today? Is there a compliment you want to give someone? Is there a problem you want to solve? Do you have a question? What's important to you?
3. Focus on deep belly breaths.
4. Ask children who have an agenda item to hug themselves.
5. Have the children sit up and record five or six agenda items on the easel.
6. Go into your class meeting, stating the time you want to allot.



## Grade: All Levels

### FACIAL MASSAGE

**Length of Lesson:** Twenty minutes

**Lesson Objective:** Students will practice facial and head self-massage in an effort to promote relaxation in their bodies and quietness in their minds.

**Materials:** None

**Procedure:** Introduce massage as a kind of gentle touch that helps muscles and minds feel relaxed. Massage can be self-massage, or another person can give it (if students are comfortable with this). Self-massage can be used at any time to help a person feel relaxed. Just rubbing the muscles of the face, neck, shoulders, and arms can be calming.

**Instructor script:** Sit in a comfortable position. Close your eyes (or stare gently at the floor) and take in a big breath, all the way down into your belly. Then sigh it out. Repeat this once more: a big breath in and sigh it all out. Open your eyes and begin to rub the palms of your hands together until they feel warm.

Now place your hands over your eyes with the fingertips against your forehead and the rest of your hand covering over your eyes and cheeks. See if you can close out all slivers of light so that you see nothing but darkness. Notice the dark, safe place you have created. Imagine that there is no one else here but you. Take a deep breath and relax.

Begin to massage your fingertips gently into your forehead: circling, pressing, and breathing. Release all the tension in your forehead muscles. Continue to be aware of your breathing as you move your fingers down to the temple area on each side of the head. Massage your temples. Press all around to notice if there are any areas that feel sensitive, and if you find some, take a few moments to gently massage into those places.

Next, move your fingers on down to the jaw joint. To find this joint, open and close your mouth and feel with your fingers where the jaw joint moves. Once the joint is located, keep your mouth partly open and begin to massage this area with pressure and little circles. Let your jaw relax to your touch.

Next, bring your fingers to your cheekbones underneath your eyes. Notice this is a curved bone, circling under the eyes. Start with the part nearest your nose and try marching your pointer and middle fingers all along the cheekbones.

Move now to your nose and use your thumb and pointer fingers of only one hand (you can place the other one into your lap). Begin at the top of your nose where it attaches to your face and start pinching. Pinch all the way down your nose to the very tip and then back up again. Bring both hands up to the inner edge of your eyebrows (by your nose), and start gently pinching all along the ridge of the eyebrows. When you come to the outside edge, pinch your way back towards your nose.

Next, begin pinching your ear lobes and all up and around the whole ear. Grab each ear and gently move each ear in a circle. Ears are often forgotten, so let them enjoy this movement.

Tuck your chin towards your throat and bring your hands to the back of the neck. See if you can feel the bones of the spinal column in the center of your neck. Now bring the fingers to either side of those bones and give your neck a nice massage. Let your head be heavy, your neck relaxed. Take a few deep breaths.

Let your hands travel up the neck to where it joins the head and press firmly in this area as you massage, making circles with your fingers. Continue moving the hands up on your head and them massage all over your head. If your hair gets messed-up, it's okay. Just enjoy the feeling of the massage.

Now bring your hands back down your neck to your upper back and give this area a little massage. Slide your hands down your shoulders and into your lap. Keeping your eyes closed (or staring towards a spot on the floor), lift your head. Place your hands on the top of your head and imagine that they are brooms with very soft bristles and that you are going to use these brooms to sweep away every last bit of tension from your head and face.

First take a breath in and as you breathe out, sweep your hands down over your face and then shake out your hands. Place your hands once more back on top of your head, breathe in again and this time as you exhale, sweep down across your ears. Shake out your hands. And one last sweep, hands back on top of your head, tuck your chin and sweep down across the back of your neck, across your shoulders and back to your lap.

Lift your head back to normal, keeping your eyes closed a moment longer and notice how your head, face and neck are feeling. Notice your breath. When you are ready, open your eyes and feel the peacefulness.

## EXPLORING OUR SENSES

**Length of Lesson:** Five to twenty minutes (*one sense for each lesson, over two weeks*)

**Lesson Objective:** To take the time to really pay attention to the remarkable sensation of being alive, moment to moment, in our bodies. Appreciating all that we see, hear, smell, taste, and feel.

**NOTE:** Another version of exploring the senses with exercises aimed at young children is in the "Longer and Literature-Based K-2 Mindfulness" Lessons

**Materials:** Some suggestions are listed here. Students may also have suggestions.

**Hearing:** Coins, paper for crumpling, a small box with cover

**Seeing:** Items that look similar, such as flowers that look similar

**Smelling:** Pine branch, cinnamon, lavender, vanilla extract

**Tasting:** Raisin, chocolate or tangerine

**Touch:** A few objects—soft, hard, rough, pliable etc.

### Mindful Listening

#### 1. The Listening Game

- Gather materials and place items in a box or bag so children can't see them.
- Ask the children to close their eyes and focus on the sound you're about to make. Take an item out of the box, make a noise with it, and then hide it again.
- Ask the children what they think made that sound.

- Focus questions:

Can you listen or hear better when your eyes are closed?

Were you able to maintain your focus on the sound?

Did anything get in the way?

*Extension:* Children can take turns finding items and making sounds.

## 2. Sounds in the Air

- Sit quietly with your class. Set a timer for one to two minutes.

Ask everyone to close their eyes and really try to notice all the sounds in the air. When the time is up, have them open their eyes.

Process: Could you hear more than usual when your attention was focused? Did you notice certain sounds getting louder and then softer? Was there a beginning or an ending to a particular sound?

- Point out that those sounds are there all the time, we're just never aware of them. Only when we pay attention can we hear. With older children, you can explore the concept of Mindful listening and talk to them about how it can help them in their relationships with friends, teachers, coaches, and family members.

## 3. Other ideas

- Listening to Music: Choose a song that features several different instruments and play a segment of it. Ask if the children can identify the different instruments being played. Discuss how this might impact your emotions.
- Echoes: Have a child tell you something as you listen carefully, then repeat what you heard back to him/her. Take turns switching back and forth with several children, practicing longer sentences. Ask what the experience was like. Was it easy or hard? What helped to remain focused on listening?

## Mindful Seeing

### 1. Really Looking

- Gather a few pebbles that look much the same and put them in a box or a paper bag. You could also use leaves, buttons, flowers, or anything that has a similar appearance. Ask the children to reach into the bag and pick one of the objects.
- Encourage the children to be still and study the object. What does it look like? What colors or markings can you see? Is it smooth or rough? If their minds wander, tell them it's okay. Encourage them to bring their attention back to the object and continue to notice everything about it.
- Put the objects back in the box or bag and shake them up. Tip the contents onto the floor and ask the children to try and find their own objects. How easy was it to pick out on the floor? Was it hard to stay focused on it? What did you notice about mindful seeing? Share what you noticed.

### 2. Be an Explorer in Your World

- You can do this indoors or outdoors. Ask students to look around as if they are seeing this place for the first time, pick one object and focus on it for a few minutes. Then have them close their eyes and describe the object to you without naming it. See if you can guess what it is.  
Take turns picking objects and guessing.

### 3. I Spy

- Notice things in the classroom that you've never noticed before and point them out. You could also do this in the hallway, on the way to school, or just about any place.

### Mindful Smelling

#### 1. What's That Smell?

Choose four things that have a distinct and very different smells. Examples might be a pine branch, a stick of cinnamon, a rose, a sprig of lavender, or some vanilla extract. Place in a small jar. Blindfold students and have them identify smells

#### 2. Can I Eat This?

- Collect three foods – an apple, a bread roll, and a cookie - and three nonfood items, such as laundry soap, a candle, and hand lotion. Be aware of any students with allergies.
- Blindfold some children or have them close their eyes and smell each item. Ask them to identify which items they can eat and which they can't.

### Mindful Tasting

#### 1. Look and Taste

- Give the children a raisin or a small piece of chocolate. Ask them to hold it and wait. Encourage them to look closely at what's in their hands as if they've never seen it before. What do you see? What shape is it? What about texture? And color?
- Tell them to close their eyes and smell it. What does it remind them of? Was it the last time they ate this food?
- Tell them to put the morsel in the mouth, just resting on their tongues. Then tell them they can bite down on it and chew slowly. How does it taste? What does it feel like? Did their mouth water when it was on their tongue? Was it easy or difficult to stay focused and not gobble the treat?

#### 2. What Do You Call It?

- Taste a food (you could relate this to the previous activity). Ask the children to choose from a list of taste-related words to describe their experience. For example: Bitter, Fruity, Chewy, Salty, Crunchy, Sweet, Yucky, and of course Yummy.
- Repeat the practice, using different foods each time.

#### 3. Imagining the Taste

- Ask the children to imagine that they're holding a lemon and to describe what it looks like. Now get them to imagine that the lemon has been cut into slices. What does it smell like? Ask them to imagine bringing a slice of that lemon to their lips and putting it into their mouths. What happened when they imagined biting into it? Could they taste its sourness? Did their mouths pucker up or their noses wrinkle? Remind them that even though there was no lemon, their mouths still puckered up just thinking about it.

### Mindful Touching

#### 1. What's In the Bag

- Fill a paper bag with a variety of everyday objects inside that are different in size, shape, consistency and texture
- Introduce students to the activity by explaining how things can be identified by touch even when you cannot see them. Have one student at a time reach into the bag and feel one item. Have them describe the size, the shape, the consistency and the texture as best

as they can. Then have them guess what the item is. Remove the item from the bag after someone has guessed it. Have each student do the same until each has had a turn.

## **PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION**

**Length of Lesson:** Twenty to thirty minutes

**Lesson Objective:** To help students relax by tightening and releasing muscles in their body.

**Materials:** Chairs, soft, instrumental music

**Procedure:** Introduce tightening/tensing and releasing muscles by modeling. Make muscle groups tighten and release, by working one at a time, therefore promoting a relaxed state.

**Instructor Script:** Get into a comfortable seated position: feet flat, arms unfolded (*Children may use carpet space or padded mats and spread out and lay down on their backs*).

Clear the mind of any thoughts/worries; let them float away for now. You may wish to close eyes (this helps) or focus on a spot on the desk or on the ceiling.

Some general instructions: Avoid tensing too much during the exercise. You don't want to pull a muscle. Notice any areas of tension in your body; try to relax those areas during our practice. As we work through your body, all the tension will drain right out through your toes.

- Start with your hands. Clench your fists really tight. Count to seven slowly to yourself, and then relax your hands (feel the warmth and tingle).
- Stretch your fingers (as though you are playing piano keys that are far apart). Count to seven slowly, and then relax your fingers.
- Tense up your upper arms: tighten your biceps like a muscle man or woman. Count to seven slowly, and then relax your arms. Now stretch your arms out straight. Reach far with both arms. Count to seven slowly; relax.
- Pull your shoulders up and try to touch them to your ears. Count to seven slowly, and then relax your shoulders. Now pull your shoulders back like a soldier, back as far as you can. Count to seven slowly; relax.
- Imagine you are eating a lemon: scrunch up your face and hold it tight. Count to seven slowly and then relax your face.
- Now imagine you are biting into a giant apple; open your mouth wide and your eyes too. Hold it. Count to seven slowly, and then relax your mouth and close your eyes again if you wish.
- Roll your head slowly around a few times to loosen your neck muscles, moving your chin from shoulder to shoulder, making a half-circle.
- Stick out your stomach (abdomen) so that it's as big as a basketball; hold it. Count to seven slowly, and then relax your stomach. Now, tighten up your stomach muscles, like you're trying to zip up pants that are way too tight, hold it. Count to seven slowly; relax.
- Bring your thighs together and tighten your legs and your bottom (you'll find that your body will raise up a little); hold it. Count to seven slowly, and then relax your legs and bottom.
- Point your toes upward towards your knees; hold tight. Count to seven slowly, and then relax your toes. Now, point your toes and hold tight. Count to seven slowly; relax.
- Take a "cleansing breath" and let any leftover tension drain out of your body. Keep your eyes closed, if you wish, and notice how you feel.