

## Tips on Writing a Mindful Practice Script

### **Suggested Structure:**

- ✓ **Breath** – to calm and focus us for the session
- ✓ **Check in** - on application of the last session's focus
- ✓ **The Journey** – concept practice
- ✓ **Mindful Challenge** – what do you want them to try to do in the days that follow
- ✓ **Breath** – 1 or 2 deep breaths to bring closure
- ✓ **Reflection** (immediately or when time permits)



1. Listen to and/or read multiple mindful practices on Headspace, Calm or another source. Get a feel for the pace, content and flow of a sit.
2. Determine your intension for the practice. Is it to help students feel calm, gain awareness, decrease worry, feel happy or grateful, learn compassion or empathy skills?
3. Decide if this will be an experience or a visualization practice session.
4. Always start with a mindful sit that grounds students with their breath and posture. Keep this to 1-2 minutes. During this time, one or two reminders to focus may be needed. (See helpful phrases)
5. Remember to engage the senses, whether through a direct experience or a visualization.

**Touch:** refer to weight, texture, temperature, size.

**Sight:** refer to size, color, shape, texture, patterns, numbers

**Sound:** refer to volume, source, is it drawn out or can it be counted (dings or ticks), pitch

**Smell:** cue with words like pleasant, unpleasant, sweet, fresh, musty, smoky, flowery, strong, faint, cool or warm, etc.

**Taste:** cue with words like pleasant, unpleasant, salty, sweet, bitter, sour, spicy, temperature, sound (crunchy), what does it do to their mouth or tongue or tummy

6. Be sure you are relaxed and connected to your breath while you lead students (AND when you sit to write the script!). If one or more students become disengaged, try to bring them back with general directions. Do not discipline during this time. Giving a fidget, silently moving them to their own space and silent signals (for breath/posture/silence) are recommended over breaking the flow of the group.
- 7a. Ask questions. For example, if you are guiding the children through a meditation, you might ask an open question like “What sounds do you hear?” but later ask a closed question such as “Is the sound loud or soft?” And...
- 7b. Allow students to answer you in their minds. Be sure to include pauses between your statements and questions. Silence is OK.
8. Remember your audience. Many of the concepts are universal for adults and children. However, the language and imagery should be catered to your age group. Be sure to use language that is easy for your age group to understand. Now is not the time to introduce a lot of new vocabulary. If there is a word or two new to the children, you may want to preview it prior to the sit. Some of the imagery is universal for all ages, like strolling through a forest, but making it more playful or noting details more relevant to a child will reap greater rewards.

9. Not all practices are “eyes closed”. Some need to be open to experience the moment. If you are having children close their eyes, know that some may not feel comfortable. Let them know it is ok to just lower their gaze to the floor in front of them. Also, early on in the process and before you start the practice that day, let the class know you will have your eyes open so that they feel safe and secure in the setting.

10. Be sure to write out every single word you intend to say. As you become more experienced, you may only need to write out phrases or key words. But in the beginning it is helpful to have a script.

11. Practice your script on yourself or someone else.

12. Consistency is key. Keep a structure to this formal practice time and consistent “container”. In other words, make this time special by making it look different than other lesson times. Have the students sit a certain way or start with a chime - signal the formal practice. The total sit can last anywhere from 5-15 minutes. 1-2 formal sits a week is great! (I bet your students will ask for more). Then sprinkling in informal mindfulness exercises and calling attention to mindful elements throughout the week will round out the practice. A suggested formal practice “lesson” structure is:

- lead with the breath (1-2 minutes)
- reflect on the last lesson (1-3 minutes)
- practice the new experience/visualization (5+ minutes)
- set a new mindful challenge (1 minute)
- the breath (2-4 deep breaths)
- time permitting - a reflection (journal page)

13. Noise happens. Your room doesn’t have to be silent during this time. Noise from the hall or outside the windows is ok. Children need to learn to be present, even in noisy situations. Remember, you could be fully present at a rock concert or in a garden with birds singing. Noise is a fact of life.

14. Some days the children will not be able to sit. Be ready to switch gears and do a movement experience. A mindful walk... feeling the ground under their feet and the movement in their bodies is one option. A stretch on GoNoodle.com might be helpful too. Using a video to lead vs. you leading the session may also engage students differently. Just like we struggle as adults, some days it is easier for the kiddos to focus than others. (Think about how you feel sitting through various faculty meetings!) Have a few movement based mindful sessions ready to go... just in case!

#### **Teacher Goals:**

- Keep it simple
- Keep it meaningful
- Keep it fun
- Keep your sense of humor

#### **Topic ideas:**

- ✓ Breath awareness
- ✓ Anchor Points for the breath
- ✓ Breathing exercises
- ✓ Being present through mindful listening, seeing, tasting, touch, smell, experience (all separate times)
- ✓ Awareness of surroundings
- ✓ Body Scans
- ✓ Guided imagery
- ✓ Visualizing happy situations, joyful things or people we are grateful for
- ✓ Visualizing tough situations and then solving them, noting feelings
- ✓ Sending kind thoughts
- ✓ Staying focuses
- ✓ Feeling Calm
- ✓ The power of “I Am” statements
- ✓ Using our non-dominant hand for awareness
- ✓ Feelings