

# Being Calm

**OBJECTIVES:** To understand what it feels like to be calm  
To learn and practice calm breathing techniques

## REVIEW

Ask students if they have paid attention to their feelings since the last Open Circle meeting. Were they able to identify how they felt? Were they able to tell others how they felt? Ask several students to share their experiences.

## INTRODUCE

Ask students to imagine the following situation:

*You've just returned to your classroom after recess. You're looking forward to hearing the last chapter in the book your teacher has been reading to the class every day after lunch. Everyone sits at their desks in a comfortable position as the teacher sits in her special chair at the front of the room. It's very quiet in the room. As the teacher reads, you listen and paint pictures in your mind of the various characters and what is happening in the story.*

Ask students how they might be feeling in that situation. If the word "calm" doesn't come up, you can introduce it to students. Ask how they might be breathing. (*Slowly and deeply.*)

Summarize students' comments by telling them it sounds like they were feeling calm. Ask them to think of times when they feel calm. Ask students: *What else might you be doing in school that makes you calm? What might you be doing at home when you are feeling calm?*

When students give examples, ask them to show you what their body might look like in that situation. *What happens to your breathing when you are feeling calm?*

Tell students that when they're feeling calm, they're doing calm breathing. If they can get themselves to do calm breathing, they can become calm. Calm breathing is a technique that athletes use before and during an event; actors often use it before and during a performance.

## PRACTICE/APPLY

Tell students that they are going to practice some ways to do calm breathing. Ask them if they already use calm breathing techniques and how they work. To begin the practice, students need to sit in a relaxed and comfortable position. (*Make sure that students aren't lifting or holding their shoulders in a tense way.*) Ask them to put their

hands on their bellies. Begin by modeling calm breathing. Then lead them in the following sequence:

- Breathe in slowly and deeply, filling your belly with air like a balloon.
- Breathe out slowly.

Have students practice a few times. Then introduce a second calm breathing technique:

- Breathe in and count to yourself up to four.
- Breathe out slowly, counting backward from four to one.

Tell students that when they practice calm breathing several times, their bodies feel more relaxed and calm. It is important to know and practice calm breathing so that it becomes a habit. Remind students that when they are breathing calmly, they are able to be good learners, good friends, and good problem solvers. Ask students for suggestions of when would be good times to practice calm breathing during the day.

### **HOMEWORK/EXTEND**

Ask students to practice calm breathing several times at school and home and to notice how they feel and what they do.

### **LITERATURE CONNECTIONS**

Williams, Mary L. *Cool Cats, Calm Kids*. Impact Publishers, 1996.

A collection of relaxation and stress management techniques that children can use to calm down.

**Discussion Prompts:** Look at the pictures of the cats napping and stretching. How can you use these pictures to learn about being calm?

# Calm Breathing

*(basic technique)*

- Breathe in slowly and deeply, filling your belly with air like a balloon.
- Breathe out slowly.



# Calm Breathing

*(counting technique)*

- Breathe in and count to yourself up to four.
- Breathe out slowly, counting backward from four to one.