

Being Calm

OBJECTIVES

- To understand what it feels like to be calm
- To learn and practice calm-breathing techniques

MATERIALS

- **Calm Breathing** mini-posters

NOTES

- *Once children have learned the calm-breathing techniques in this lesson, provide many opportunities for them to practice. For example, consider beginning each of the next several Open Circle Meetings by choosing and then practicing a calm-breathing technique all together.*

INTRODUCE

Ask students to think about a time when they have taken a rest at home or at school. Have children picture themselves resting in a place that is warm and comfortable, maybe on a couch, a bed, a mat, or in a chair.

Ask: How does your body feel when you are resting? (*Relaxed, calm, heavy, quiet, etc.*) What does your body look like? How do your shoulders feel? Your arms? Your legs? How might you be breathing when you are resting and you are relaxed and calm? (*Slowly, deeply, etc.*) Explain that when we are breathing slowly and deeply, we are doing calm breathing. This kind of breathing can make us feel calm and relaxed.

Tell students that we are going to learn two ways to do calm breathing. Share the **Balloon Technique** mini-poster, to give students an idea of what they will be doing.

Invite students to sit in a 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. Have children:

- Breathe in slowly and deeply, filling your belly with air like a balloon.
- Breathe out slowly, as if you are letting air out of a balloon.

After they have practiced a few times, introduce another way to do calm-breathing. Share the **Flower Technique** mini-poster and give the following directions:

- Breathe in through your nose, imagining the fragrance of a sweet-smelling flower.
- Breathe out with an “ahhh” sound.

Have them practice the flower technique¹ a few times.

PRACTICE/APPLY

Tell students that knowing and practicing calm breathing is important. When we are breathing calmly, we are able to be good learners and good friends. It takes time to learn these calm-breathing techniques. We will need to practice many times before we can do calm-breathing well.

Ask students when during the school day they could practice the balloon and the flower techniques. (*During read-aloud time, rest time, Open Circle Meetings, etc.*) You might want to give an example of when you will take time to practice calm breathing.

Ask students to notice times during the day when they feel calm and are breathing calmly.

HOMEWORK/EXTEND

Introduce an activity, such as "Pause Button" or "One-Minute Chime Time," in order to expand students' understanding of what it feels like to be calm. Directions are in the Activities section.

Ask students to practice calm breathing several times before the next Open Circle Meeting. Tell students that you will help them practice several times before the day is over.

LITERATURE CONNECTIONS

MacLean, Kerry Lee. *Peaceful Piggy Meditation*. Albert Whitman, 2004.

Humorous pig characters demonstrate how important it is to use calm breathing in order to think clearly during stressful situations.

- What are some of the examples in the book of times when it would be helpful to calm down? What do the characters in the story do to make themselves calm? As you think about when you might need to calm down, practice taking some calming breaths.

¹ The technique of flower breathing is from the book *Two Flower Breaths: The Art of Teaching Yoga to Children* by Sally L. Cheney.

Calm Breathing

Balloon Technique



Breathe in.



Breathe out.

Kindergarten

Dear Family:

In Open Circle, we talked about what it feels like to **be calm** and we learned two calm-breathing techniques to help us get calm. One is called the balloon technique:

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

We also learned the flower technique:

- Breathe in through your nose, imagining the fragrance of a sweet-smelling flower.
- Breathe out with an “ahhh” sound.

Each person has his/her own way of calming down. However, when strong feelings and signals in our body tell us that we’re losing control, the first thing to do is to stop and take some calm breaths. Ask your child to teach you the two calm breathing techniques he/she learned in school. Practice them together. Talk about times he/she might want to use them to calm down. Make a habit of using calm breathing yourself.

In another Open Circle Meeting we learned the **school listening look**, which refers to expectations for listening at school. The school listening look means:

- Keep our bodies calm
- Look at the person who is speaking.

It is important to everyone in the class – students, teachers and visitors – to be listened to when they speak.

Yours truly,

LITERATURE CONNECTIONS

Here are some books that relate to the topics we discussed in Open Circle. You might want to check out one or two at the library and read with your child:

Lester, Helen. *Listen Buddy*. Houghton Mifflin, 1995.

Buddy’s poor listening habits get him into big trouble. After his encounter with the dreaded Scruffy Varmint, Buddy tries harder to pay attention to what his parents say.

MacLean, Kerry Lee. *Peaceful Piggy Meditation*. Albert Whitman, 2004.

Humorous pig characters demonstrate how important it is to use calm breathing in order to think clearly during stressful situations.

Estimada familia:

En una reunión reciente de Open Circle hablamos sobre lo que sentimos cuando estamos tranquilos y aprendimos dos técnicas de respiración que nos ayudan a relajarnos. Una de ellas es la técnica del globo:

- Inspiramos hondo y lentamente por la nariz para llenar la barriga de aire como si fuera un globo.
- Espiramos lentamente por la nariz.

También aprendimos la técnica de la flor:

- Inspiramos por la nariz, como si estuviéramos oliendo una flor.
- Espiramos lentamente con el sonido “¡aaah!”.

Cada persona tiene su propia forma de tranquilizarse. Sin embargo, cuando nos ponemos nerviosos y nuestro cuerpo nos avisa de que estamos perdiendo el control, lo primero que debemos hacer es detenernos y respirar profundamente.

Díganles a sus hijos que les enseñen las dos técnicas de respiración que aprendimos en la clase y practíquenlas juntos. Cuéntenles alguna situación en la creen que utilizarán estas técnicas y hablen sobre cuándo podrían utilizarlas ellos para tranquilizarse. Acostúmbrense a utilizar las técnicas de respiración y animen a sus hijos a que también lo hagan cuando lo necesiten.

En otra reunión aprendimos a **comportarnos cuando otra persona está hablando**, es decir, cuál debe ser nuestra actitud para escuchar a otra persona cuando habla en la clase. Para ello:

- Mantenemos la calma.
- Miramos a la persona que está hablando.

Es muy importante escuchar a todos cuando hablan en clase, ya sean alumnos, maestros o visitantes.

Un cordial saludo,

BIBLIOGRAFÍA

Estos son algunos de los libros relacionados con los temas que tratamos en Open Circle. Pueden consultarlos en la biblioteca o leerlos con sus hijos:

Lester, Helen. *Listen Buddy*. Houghton Mifflin, 1995

MacLean, Kerry Lee. *Peaceful Piggy Meditation*. Albert Whitman, 2004.