

# 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 technique<sup>1</sup> 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.

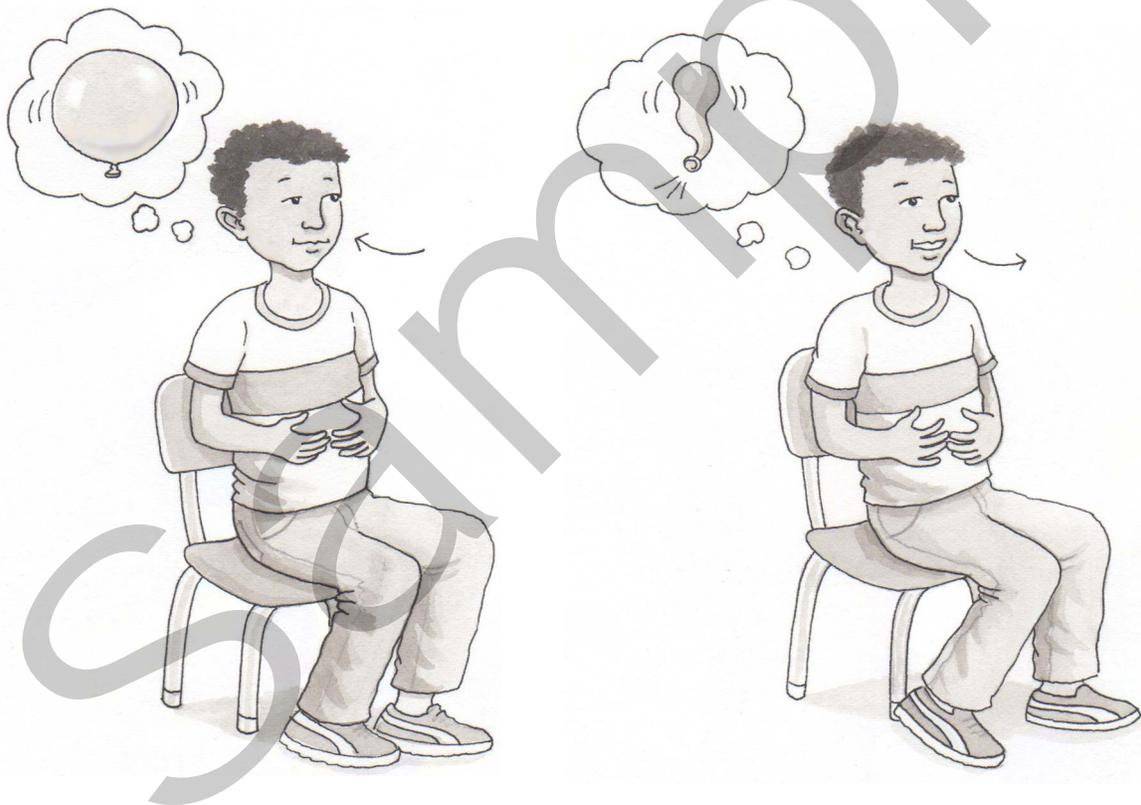
- What are some of the examples in the book of times when it would be helpful to calm down? What do the characters in the story do to make themselves calm? As you think about when you might need to calm down, practice taking some calming breaths.

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<sup>1</sup> 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

# Calm Breathing

## Flower Technique



Kindergarten