

“Yes, and...”
Agreeing to Listen and Play through
Improvisation

Theater Arts C.O.R.D. (2016)
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Guided Meditation Lesson Plan

Intention: To introduce students to meditation as a coping strategy for stress and to guide them through a meditation session.

Materials Needed: Guided meditation

Preparation:

- Rehearse guided meditation yourself so you will be comfortable slowing down and pacing.
- Identify key words to pre-teach.
- Review words that could be challenging for the students.
- Explain the purpose of the activity.
- Turn off lights, lead meditation.
- See guided meditation below

Follow Up:

- Ask students, what was that like? How do you feel? If you liked it, why? If you didn't like it, why not? What would you want to be different? Ask them if they notice a difference in their bodies after the meditation.

Guided Meditation #1 to accompany Lisa Gimbel's Lesson plan

Close your eyes. Notice your breathing. Is it fast? Is it slow?

Put your hand on your stomach. Notice how your stomach goes in when you breathe in, and out when you breathe out. Take a long, deep breath in through your nose, and breathe out through your mouth, fully and completely. Breathe like this a couple more times. Now imagine your body. Notice parts that are hurt, or are tight or tense. Notice parts that feel comfortable and loose.

Use your breath. When you find a part of your body that is tight or hurts, send your breath there. Breathe out. Your breath can make that part of your body relaxed, loose; soft. Feel your head.....your face.....your shoulders.....your back.....your arms.....your hands. Notice your stomach.....your legs.....your knees.....your feet. Notice the sounds in the room. The people moving, the building. Not thinking, just noticing and listening. Breathe slowly and easily, in and out. Feel the chair under you where your body touches it. Feel your muscles relax as you breathe. Keep watching your breathing in and out, easy and peaceful. When you are ready, take a long, slow, deep breath in. Then breathe out completely and gently open your eyes.

Source: Adapted from Lisa Gimbel's lesson plan for The Welcome Project, Somerville, MA

<http://www.nelrc.org/managingstress/pdfs/lessons/Guided%20Meditation%20Lesson%20Plan%20-%20Gimbel.pdf>

The Classroom Contract:

This activity is a quick and easy way to have students understand that acting is a job for the body, mind and voice together. These three elements are called the “actors tools”.

1- Begin by asking students to bend at the waist and touch their toes.

“Ok everyone, we are all going to bend at the waist and touch our toes. Imagine your fingers are an elevator and your body is a tall, tall building. we are going to start at the bottom floor. Feet planted and ready to work.”

2- Have students slowly raise fingers along the body to the hips and fully uncurling the spine until they are in a standing position.

“Okay everyone, When your hand get to your hips, rest them there, and let your spine grow slowly until you are standing back up ready to work.”

3. When the entire class is there have them repeat.

“Ok, repeat after me. I will make **STRONG** choices a bout how I use my body today”

REMINDER: The body is full of muscles. Muscles can be strong or weak. Muscles can no be “GOOD” or “BAD” we are here to make strong choices with all the muscles in our bodies.

ASK: “What does it look like to make a **STRONG** choice. What does it **LOOK** like to make a “WEAK” choice with our bodies?”

4. Ask the students to move their hands from their hips to the top of their rib cage, take a deep break, let the breath with an “Ahh” sound and repeat:

REPEAT: “I will make **STRONG** choices, about how I use my voice today”

ASK: What do **STRONG** choices with your voice **SOUND LIKE**? What do **WEAK** choices sound like?

5. Ask students to take their hand to the “top floor” of the building and put them on their heads and repeat:

REPEAT: I will make **STRONG** choices about how I use my imagination today”

ASK: What does it mean to make **STRONG/WEAK** choices with your imagination.

REMINDER: The body is full of muscles and all muscles have moments when they are weak sometimes but after they have that moment, they get stronger. It does not make them bad, it makes them grow stronger. Today we are going to make the strongest choices we know how to make.

6. REMINDER: Acting (or any group activity) takes cooperation and concentration. Ask students to put both hands above their heads and focus their eyes on their fingertips and repeat: “I will concentrate.”

7. Ask student to open their arms and rest their hand on the shoulders of the person next to them and repeat:

“I will cooperate”

REMINDER: Remind students about the **STRONG** choices they committed to making.

This activity should only be done step by step will all the discussion the first time it is done.

Then you can use the motions and “I will” statements to do this as a class before beginning any activity.

This “Classroom Contract” activity was modified from an activity originally presented by Sean Layne as part of the “Acting Right: Drama as a Classroom Management Strategy”

Tongue Twisters

These tongue twisters are intended to give students tools to exercise their mouths before making a presentation or speaking in front of people. The objective is to hear every syllable clearly, not to see who can say them the fastest.

You know you need, Unique New York.

Mrs. Smith's Fish Sauce Shop.

Give papa a cup of proper coffee in a copper coffee
cup.

She sifted thistles through her thistle-sifter.

Can you imagine an imaginary menagerie manager
managing an imaginary menagerie?

Improv. Games: Walk/Stop

Objective: Listen and respond.

Vocabulary: Opposite, Reverse, Listen

In this game one student is designated to be the “Caller”. The caller always starts with WALK and STOP and adds actions as the group as the group is able to master the actions the caller announces. The three examples are just a starting point, callers can add any number of combinations as long as the directions they are giving are clear.

WALK: Players are asked to walk around the room slowly and carefully

STOP: Players should freeze until given another direction.

JUMP: When players hear “Jump” they should jump once in place. If they are frozen when they jump, they should remain frozen. If they are walking, they should continue to do so.

CLAP: When players hear “Clap”, they should clap their hands once. If they are stopped, they should stay frozen, if they are walking they should keep walking.

NAME: When players hear “Name” they should say their name once out loud!

HEY!: When players hear “Hey” they should respond with a loud “HEY!”

Once students have mastered doing each pairing of actions, the responses can be reversed. For example, when the caller calls out “WALK” in a reversal, All players should STOP. Same thing for jump/clap name/hey! or any other variation you introduce.

This game was modified from Augusto Boal’s game “Walk, Stop, Justify” from the book “Games for Actors and Non-Actors”

Improv. Games: Lion Tamer

Set Up: This game requires that chairs set up in a circle.

Vocabulary: Objective

For this game, participants should have a partner, except one person to start the game. Each pair should take up a chair space. One SEATED in the chair, seated. The other, STANDING behind the chair. The seated players are "LIONS" the standing players are "LION TAMERS" There should be one player standing behind chair without a "lion" in front of them.

The LION TAMER who has no LION should wink or give a slight nod to the other lions in the circle. Once eye contact is made, and the LION catches the gesture, the LION should get up and cross the circle and sit in the chair in front of their new LION TAMER. If the original LION TAMER shouts "Come back, come back, come back!" before they get to the center of the circle, they must return to their seat. If the LION TAMER does not get his LION back in time, then that LION TAMER must wink/nod to find themselves a new LION to sit in the chair in front of them. The LIONS objective is to get away from their LION TAMER. The LION TAMERS objective is to keep their lion seated in front of them.

This game was learned at the STAR Arts Education summer theater camp in Gilroy, CA in 2001.

Improv. Games: Yes and...

This improvisation game is played two at a time. Two players are given circumstances to play in via audience suggestion. Players use the phrase “yes and” to build the story.

Eg: Players are given circumstance is that they are in a boat.

Player one: We are in a boat.

Player two: **Yes and** the water is full of sharks!

Player one: **Yes and** we are going to feed them.

Player two: **Yes and** I have these gummy bears!

Player one: **Yes and** we need to tie them to a string.

Player two: **Yes and** we will catch the sharks!

Player one: **Yes and** we will eat the sharks in a soup!

Player two: **Yes and** I will have salad because I am a vegetarian.

Player one: **Yes and** I will make a lovely seaweed salad

Player two: **Yes and** before we make a soup or salad, we must harvest the seaweed and catch a shark!

Player one: **Yes and** I'm afraid of the water.

Player two: **Yes and** I am too. Let's just go home and make sandwiches.

Player one: **Yes and** potato chips.

This game was learned at the STAR Arts Education summer theater camp in Gilroy, CA in 2001.