



## Sikh Prayer and Worship: Meditation Activity

**Aim:** To gain an insight into what meditation is

This activity will focus on non-religious meditation so that it can be inclusive of all faiths and none. Afterwards, it will be valuable to explain that religious meditation focusses on feeling the presence of God in our lives.

- Ask the children what they like to do when they want some quiet time or relaxation
- Introduce the word 'meditation' to the children - even young children have an idea about sitting cross legged, emptying the mind etc
- Meditation varies according to religious or philosophical traditions but very rarely involves emptying the mind. This is known to be incredibly hard. Most meditative traditions encourage watching the thoughts flow, focussing on the feelings in the body, or concentrating on imagery, words, or mantras.
- Explain that you are going to try some simple meditative activities. You may want to use mindfulness activities you already use in class or may wish to use the scripts below.

Read the scripts in a slow, calming voice. The length of time spent depends on how the children are responding to the activity.

### Starter

- Ask the children to sit comfortably
- Ask them to put both hands on their belly.
- They should close their eyes or look down to their hands.
- Guide students in taking three slow deep breaths in and out to see if they can feel their hands being moved.
- You may like to count "1, 2, 3" for each breath in and "1, 2, 3" for each breath out, pausing slightly at the end of each exhale.
- Ask the children to think about how the breath feels, answering the following questions silently, in their mind.
  - What is moving your hands? Is it the air filling your lungs?
  - Can you feel the air moving in through your nose?

- Can you feel it moving out through your nose?
- Does the air feel a little colder on the way in and warmer on the way out?
- Can you hear your breath?
- What does it sound like?

### **Breathing Colours**

- Once the children are calm from the activity above, ask them to imagine a relaxing colour. It can be any colour as long as they find it relaxing.
- Ask them to imagine a colour for things that make them feel not quite right. Again, the colour is up to them.
- When they breathe in, they can visualise the relaxing colour surrounding them and entering their body as they breathe.
- When they breathe out, they can imagine the 'not quite right' colour leaving their body and floating away from them

### **Follow up**

- Give the children some paper and colours and ask them to draw a picture to show how they felt during the activity
- Some children cannot get into this sort of activity and their perspectives are equally valid
- Spend some time sharing and explaining the pictures
- As part of the sharing encourage the children to think about whether having quiet time is important and why

### **Sikh Meditation**

Meditation often begins with similar principles to non-religious mindfulness, that is concentrating and listening to the breath, just as the children did with the starter activity.

Music is very important in the Sikh tradition and mantras, or meditative music is commonly used. Examples can be found on the Internet or on music streaming services such as Spotify which you might like to play. Be clear with the children that the words are not English, and the style of music may sound different to what they are used to. Ask them to think about how the music makes them feel.

This can open up conversation about the value of music for helping us to relax.