

Dear Parents,

Please see below the descriptions of what students are learning and doing as a part of our mindfulness initiative. It is clear that students are really benefitting from these sessions, especially if they have opportunities to discuss what they are learning and practice outside of school.

Hi Mary Ann!

I wish I could have recorded all of the mindful experiences the students shared over spring break! I wanted to share one that stayed with me...

Georgia in 4th grade shared that at Easter dinner, she taught her family about roots of emotion (our thoughts are like leaves on a branch and if you track your thoughts down the branch, there is a root of emotion in our body). She said everyone went around the table and shared an emotion or feeling they were feeling at that moment before they ate dinner. Love!

Wishing you a wonderful week,

Cary

Thanks so much for your support of this program! We don't want parents to miss out on Mindfulness Wednesdays with Charlie Allen immediately following assembly in the school library! Please plan to participate! You will not regret this time or this opportunity!

Cary's Summaries for April 27 and May 4, 2017

St. Mark School-April 27, 2017-Mindfulness

"It is vital that when educating our children's brains that we do not neglect to educate their hearts." -Dalai Lama

Appreciations

Thank you St. Mark students for sharing what mindfulness practices you explored over spring break! Thank you Maria and Mary Ann W. for initiating a 3 minute mindful breathing practice.

Destructive Emotions

Once we are open to our emotions, we can begin to work with uncomfortable feelings as well as pleasant ones. If we don't know how to navigate through emotions such as anger, sadness, and fear, they can be destructive. Since we know that these emotions will visit our hearts at some point, we can use heartfulness to learn and grow from the experience. When you can feel your emotions as sensations and name them with language, then you can bring your heartfulness to uncomfortable feelings and respond to them constructively.

Heartfulness Journey

Now that we know about our anchor breath, we have a place to come back to whenever we feel uncomfortable. Everyone feels anger, sadness, and other difficult emotions. What's important is what we do when we feel these emotions.

Put on your mindfulness bodies and follow your anchor breath.

I'm going to take you on a journey in your mind.

Imagine that you are outside having lots of fun playing your favorite game.
What does that feel like?

TK - "Happy, excited, like my heart is bumping"

K - "Happy, my heart is beating"

1st - "Excited and happy, everybody is getting along"

2nd - "Happy, my face is smiling"

3rd - "I feel good about myself, I feel it in my heart"

4th - "I feel included, happy, smile"

5th - "Good, laughing, my body is relaxing"

6th - "Happy, I feel it in my heart"

Now imagine that 2 kids right next to you start fighting over a ball.
What sensations do you feel in your body now?

TK - "Frustrated, sad"

K - "Sad, my heart beating slowly"

1st - "Angry, heated up, my face is red, my fists are clenched"

2nd - "Mad, I feel it in my head"

3rd - "Nervous, my head has lots of thoughts"

4th - "Mad, sad, butterflies in my stomach"

5th - "Not good, I feel it in my heart, like everything dropped"

6th - "Bad, doesn't feel right, like something's off"

Come back to your anchor breath and stay with the breath until you feel your body relax.
Now imagine someone comes over to you and says something really nice and maybe even gives you a big hug.

What does that feel like in your body?

TK - "Happy"

K - "Good, like joy popping up in different parts of my body"

1st - "Happy, heart, I want to say something nice back and give a hug"

2nd - "Joy, I feel it in my heart"

3rd - "Warm, I feel it in my heart"

4th - "Nice, reassuring, instead of feeling down I feel up"

5th - "Good, I feel it in my heart, lifted"

6th - "Good, like I've done something right"

Whatever you feel is perfectly all right.

Today we practiced heartfulness by going on a heartfulness journey. We imagined different scenarios in our minds and noticed what emotions came up and what it felt like in our bodies. Any time we are mad, sad, scared...we can notice what it feels like in our bodies and come back to our anchor breath and breathe until we feel our bodies relax.

Next week we will practice heartfulness by generating gratitude.

With love,
Cary
yogicary@gmail.com

St. Mark School-May 4, 2017-Mindfulness

“The root of joy is gratefulness...It is not joy that makes us grateful; it is gratitude that makes us joyful.” — David Steindl-Rast

Appreciations

Thank you St. Mark School, I am so grateful to be a part of this community.

Generating Gratitude

What are you grateful for? This question invites a mindset that appreciates what life has already given us, rather than what it hasn't. Instead of thinking about how you wish the world was different, you can learn to look at the world with appreciation for what has already been given. Each breath is a gift from the trees and plants. Our food is a gift from the plants and animals. When we look at the miracle of life, it can awaken gratitude, love, and compassion within us.

Getting Grateful

Sometimes we forget all of the things in our lives that we are grateful for. For you to be here, the sun has to rise everyday to give life to the plants that we need to breathe and eat. There are so many people we don't even think of who clean the school at night, grow the food we eat, build the house we live in. If we really take the time to think about it...there are so many things to be thankful for. When we focus on the things we are thankful for, it makes us feel happy. When we focus on the things we don't have, it makes us feel sad or bad.

Today we will practice gratitude and notice how our bodies feel.

Put on your mindfulness bodies. Close your eyes. Feel your breath coming in and out of your belly.

Picture a person in your life that makes you feel really happy. Picture that person in your head. Now imagine that person is sitting right next to you.

How does it feel to have them so close to you?

Now picture your favorite thing. Think of the things you are most grateful for. Picture them in your head. How do they make your body feel?

Now take a deep breath and let all the things you are grateful for go and notice how your body feels after a gratefulness practice.

Gratitude Circle

Share the person or thing you are grateful for...

TK- "Family, mom, dad, sister, cousins, iPad, Dave & Buster's, dog"

K- "Mom, school, cousin, family, dad, God, friends, fish, brother, teachers, bunny, cat, grandma, lion"

1st- "Soccer, friends, bicycle, stuffed animals, kittens, bunny, little sister, neighbor, Universal Studios, book bag"

2nd- "Family and friends, dog, Jesus, God, school, unicorns"

3rd- "Family, dog, cat, friends, water, food, chocolate, animals"

4th- "Friends, brother, dog, mom, family, ice cream, pandas, dad"

5th- "Family, sister, dog, ice cream, cat, dog, chickens, books, school"

6th- "Sister, cousin, basketball, NBA players, brother, grandma, health, mom, fidget spinners"

Today we generated gratitude by thinking about someone or something we are grateful for. When we focus on the things we are grateful for it makes us feel happy. Practicing gratitude is a way to bring happiness into your life. You can practice gratitude anytime! Try thinking of one thing you are grateful for at the end of the day, before you go to bed at night, or when you wake up in the morning.

Next week we will start our interconnection lessons and practice mindful communication.

With gratitude,
Cary