

Parents,

We are so fortunate to have a mindfulness program at St. Mark School. Please review the past two session curricula to see the great skills that our students are beginning to learn to master! It's so exciting to see them taking this training so seriously as we all know that it can be life changing over time!

St. Mark School
November 8, 2017
Mindfulness

"Don't believe everything you think." -Unknown

Appreciations

Thank you Charley for leading us in a mindful meditation.

Thank you Dave and Kathy for sharing pictures of two TK students meditating at recess.

Thank you Dana for observing the 5th grade mindfulness lesson.

Thank you Mary Ann for joining the 6th grade for mindfulness.

Popcorn Thoughts

This practice gives children the ability to witness their own thoughts. This helps children create space between thoughts and actions. For example, creating space between the thought, "I don't like you," and the action of hitting. This is the space where children can witness their thoughts and make better decisions. By helping kids create this space, we are giving them a better opportunity to self-regulate.

This week, we practiced mindfulness by watching our thoughts.

Your mind is like a popcorn maker, but instead of making popcorn, it makes thoughts. Thoughts are constantly popping up in our minds.

We made our bodies into a popcorn kernel and played the game, Sizzle Pop! (TK & K)

Sizzle, sizzle, sizzle

Sizzle, sizzle, sizzle

Sizzle, sizzle, sizzle

Pop! Pop! Pop! Pop! Pop! Pop! Pop! Pop!

Put on your mindfulness bodies (sitting tall while feeling relaxed), close your eyes, and watch your thoughts. Every time a thought pops into your mind, pop your hand up, bring it down, and wait for the next thought to pop. (TK-6th, 8th)

Would anyone like to share a thought that popped into your mind?

TK

"Laser, bunnies, baby bird, baby kitten"

K

"Cat, ostrich saying how, fans saying meow, monkey riding a banana, my sister putting her head in a pumpkin, song in my head, unicorn, tiger"

1st grade

"Gummy bear breath, sleepover with my friend Sophia, scooter, taking care of my baby brother, playing with my dog, I wanted to open my eyes, I thought I could do this forever, Wonder Woman, skatepark doing a backflip"

2nd grade

“New diary of a wimpy kid book, a video I watched, a dabbing Chihuahua named Cookie, thinking about what I’m going to do after school, a video of sponge bob singing a song, a challenge with a yoga ball and a football, a koala wearing a hat”

3rd grade

“Hair, people popping things, my little brother at the park, a pirate ship in a black room, my first birthday and my brother stuffing a cupcake in his mouth, cooking knives coming at me in all directions, a chef cooking, I was thinking about making a glitter jar, I ate all the cookies I left for Santa, Crown Hospital”

4th grade

“Laughing, joker, popcorn...made me hungry, squirrel, Thanksgiving...turkey, chainsaw...turkey”

5th grade

“A movie, I wanted to open my eyes...people were focused, the song...I want candy, I was thinking about my thoughts”

6A

“My wrist, Dora flavored ice cream, llama Barbie doll, throwing a basketball at a butterfly, Randy’s donuts, a movie...the death cure, fairy, house of gold”

6B

“Christmas cookies in Big Bear, after school...what I want to eat, plane, when is the next thought, scary trailer to a movie, artist on stage”

8th grade

“The sound of the fan was a distraction, George Washington farming wheat, waves in Carmel, a song, crazy weird thoughts, a list of stuff, whispering”

As you go along your day, night, week, see if you can watch your thoughts and notice what thoughts pop into your mind.

Next week, we will practice mindfulness by working with distraction.

With gratitude,
Cary

St. Mark School
November 15, 2017
Mindfulness

Appreciations

Thank you Charley for guiding us in a mindful meditation.

Thank you Theresa for sharing student discussions around mindfulness.

Practicing Distraction

In this practice, students get an understanding of how their minds wander even when they are trying to keep their focus on one thing. Since students have learned about their own attention, emotions, and bodies, we can begin to play with the ways the mind gets carried away. This game is helpful when students are distracted, for example, by their friends or a sound outside the classroom, we can show them what it's is like to work with distraction. It is one thing to practice mindfulness when everything is quiet, this practice helps us practice mindfulness amongst the chaos of everyday life.

The Distraction Game

What does the word distraction mean? We know how to sit with our mindfulness bodies and use our mindfulness to stay focused. Do you think you can stay focused even if I try to distract you? You are going to

try to sit totally still, using your anchor breath to stay focused and I am going to try to distract you. See if you can stay totally still with your eyes closed while I make all kinds of sounds around you.

How was that for you? Did you find it easy to stay focused on your breath or challenging?

TK

“Hard...noises, easy...I couldn’t hear the noises, easy...I have tiger ears”

K

“Easy...I didn’t get distracted, hard...sounds, easy...no sounds”

1st

“Hard...thoughts popped, I kept my eyes closed...thoughts of a YouTube video, easy...I focused on my breath”

2nd

“Easy...I’m used to those sounds, easy...I ignored the sounds, easy...I remembered those sounds, easy...I blocked out the thoughts”

3rd

“Easy...medium...hard...depending on the sound, challenging...the sound over my head, easy with the footsteps...harder with the water bottle, when the sounds were close it was hard...I noticed I was distracted and my body slouched”

4th

“Medium...I was focused and then the water bottle was hard, the talking was distracting”

5th

“Easy...I focused on myself, easy...I lost focus on my breath with the movement around the room, hard to keep my eyes closed, challenging...I noticed I was focusing on the sounds”

6th

“Really hard...distracted by the sounds, I really wanted to open my eyes, distracted by my thoughts, easy...didn’t want to open my eyes, I wanted to smile and laugh, hard...sounds reminded me of...”

8th

“I noticed the sound of the fan and used the sound to count my breath, I noticed the sensations in my fingers, picture in my mind”

Today we practiced mindfulness by playing the distraction game. You can use the distraction game in your own life as an opportunity to come back to your attention. Try setting moments in the day, such as when the bell rings or a phone rings, to take three mindful breaths. Every time you hear a loud noise or someone walks in the room, you have the opportunity to notice the distraction and return to your anchor breath. When reading, playing a game, singing, see how distractions affect you and use distractions as practices to help strengthen your attention muscles.

On December 7th, we will practice mindfulness by cultivating positive qualities.

With gratitude,
Cary