**Quiet Time**

*Prepared by Julietta Sorensen Kass* | *10-15 min* |

**OVERVIEW**

**Description**

Participants will be given an opportunity to rest beneath a tree and take time for peace and contemplation.

**Learning Outcomes**

* Help participants experience the calming influence of urban trees
* Provide an opportunity for participants to internalize or reflect on lessons learned
* Introduce participants to the idea of meditative-like activities

**Outline**

1. Explanation (5 min)
   1. Purpose
   2. Expectations
   3. Breathing exercises (optional)
   4. Variations
2. Quiet Time (10 min)

**MATERIALS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Quantity per participant** |
| Journals, if desired | 1 |
| Pens/Pencils | 1 |
| Timer | 1 for group |

**LESSON PLAN & PROCEDURE**

**Outline**

1. Explanation (5-10 min)
   1. Purpose
   * To give participants a chance to experience trees from a different perspective and take time to appreciate the joys of being outside (nature is nature, even in the city!)
   * To give participants time for peace and reflection
   1. Expectations
   * Participants will be given 10 minutes of calm, after which you will call them back
   * Set a physical boundary for how far they can go. Within this boundary, participants choose a tree, and sit or lie down under it. More than one person can be under the same tree, so long as they are on opposite sides. This is an “alone” activity
   * No technology allowed for this activity
   1. Breathing exercises, see below (5 min)
   * Before starting, run through some breathing exercises (see below) as a group. You may wish to introduce just one exercise each time the activity is repeated. Encourage participants to try using these during their quiet time
   * Remind participants that one of the greatest benefits given to us by urban trees is cleaner air. Let’s breathe it in!
   1. Variations
   * Eyes can be open or closed, and participants can move and wiggle as they please
   * Some children may struggle with the idea of “not doing anything”. Encourage them to try, but if they are not going to be successful in this, suggest that they try the “On-your-own Activities” in their journals (pages 30-32)
2. Quiet Time (10 min)

**Breathing Exercises**

1. Happy List
   1. Challenge participants to see how long a list they can make of things that make them happy, or that they are thankful for. Start with the immediate physical surroundings, and move the imaginary boundary out wider and wider to eventually encompass everything in their lives. The key is to start small and allow the momentum of happy thoughts to build up. This is done silently, and without counting.
   * E.g. I love the smell of grass around me, and the feeling of sun on my back… This week I got to go \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and it made me really happy... Sometimes when I go for walks, I see \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and it makes me smile... Friends, family, pets, etc. See where it takes you.
2. Wind breathing
   1. Either sitting or lying down in a relaxed position, with eyes closed. You start by inhaling deeply through your nose. There is a slight pause, before you exhale through the mouth. As you exhale, imagine a window in the space between your eyebrows. As you blow out your air, all negative thoughts and emotions are swept away through that window. Each breath is a cleansing gust of air. Mentally move throughout your body, collecting all negativity, and passing it out through the window. Breathing can continue with eyes open or closed.
3. Ocean breathing
   1. Either sitting or lying down in a relaxed position, with eyes closed. You start by inhaling deeply through your nose. There is a slight pause, before you exhale through the mouth. This time gently constrict the back of your throat to create a sound like a wave on sand. This is done in the same way you would fog up a mirror or check your breath. Move with your breathe and imagine being part of the waves in the ocean. Breathing can continue with eyes open or closed.
4. Superhero Ears
   1. Participants close their eyes and listen around them. What is the furthest thing they can hear? The smallest, quietest sound? Can they guess what all the different sounds are?

**Debrief**

How did it go? What did they feel, hear, or think about? Was this quiet time under a tree different than quiet times they’ve had at home or at school? Why do they think that is?