

Healing body and soul



Botanic Garden Lesson Plan

Lesson title	Healing body and soul
Learning objective	Pupils will explore the idea that green spaces are important to a sense of well being.
Pupils will:	Explore beautiful surroundings and discover that plants can evoke a feeling of well being. Record their sensory observations and thoughts about their chosen perfect place. Try some simple meditation and find out how this is used within Christianity, Hinduism and Islam.
Key words	Meditation, wellbeing, 'Thinking Path'

Plan	Resources
<p>Introduction</p> <p>Ask the group to discuss with a partner 'How do you know if you are feeling good'?</p> <p>Feedback some of their responses e.g. I feel happy, relaxed, chatty, energetic etc.</p>	
<p>Activity 1</p> <p>Tell the class about Charles Darwin, the famous British scientist (Resource 1) who, in his later years when he suffered from ill health, was encouraged by his doctor to take exercise in the gardens of his house. As well as helping Darwin recover from his illness, these walks actually helped him to think and to come up with new ideas. People still visit Darwin's home, Down House, to walk along his 'Thinking Path'.</p> <p>Tell the class they are going to take a walk along their own 'Thinking Path' in the botanic garden. As they walk in pairs they should ponder the answer to this question 'Which part of the garden makes me feel good'? e.g. a beautiful view, the sound of running water, somewhere sunny to sit.</p> <p>Lead the class on a short walk that takes in different parts of the garden e.g. shady, sunny, walled, glasshouse, woodland. Go slow and encourage the pairs to discuss the question.</p>	<p>Resource 1: Charles Darwin's Thinking Path (this resource is also part of the Seeds of Unity Healing Body and Soul lesson 1).</p>



Plan	Resources
<p>It may be useful to provide a simple map of the route with some key areas marked on.</p> <p>At the end of the walk get the pairs to discuss their ideas. Which part of the garden made them feel good? Each pair then choose their perfect place on the route that covered these qualities.</p>	
<p>Activity 2 Hand out the Perfect Place prompt sheet (Resource 2) and explain that they are going to go back to their chosen perfect place on the route and fill in the sheet with words and drawings to help them remember this special place.</p> <p>If they have cameras they could take images too. If there are fallen items that are not living or attached to a plant they could collect these too. Provide pupils with pencils, clipboards, small collectingpots/bags.</p> <p>Ask them to retrace their steps (following map if needed) to their perfect spot and give them time to complete their sheet and to enjoy being in the space.</p> <p>Gather back together and share their Perfect Place Prompts with another pair. Are there any similarities or differences?</p> <p>Back at school make a display using the prompt sheets and photographs and/or generate artwork, write poems and stories.</p>	<p>Resource 2: Perfect Place prompt sheet</p> <p>Materials required: Pencils, clipboards, small collecting pots/bags</p>
<p>Activity 3 The teacher/botanic garden educator invites the class to come and share his/her perfect place in the botanic garden with them. Provide children with mats to sit down. Can the class identify the features of this space which have made it the teacher/educator’s perfect place?</p>	<p>Resource 3: Images of retreats</p> <p>Materials required: Seating mats, little bell or chime</p>



Plan

Explain to the children that sitting quietly until you feel calm and at peace is a form of meditation. Many religions include forms of meditation to help focus thoughts.

Christians and Muslims may go to a retreat and Hindus may stay at an ashram. They are all places that are away from the bustle of everyday life where they can pray, meditate and study (**Resource 3**).

Ask the class to have a go at meditating... to help them to know when to start and when to finish ring a little bell or chime as a signal.

Ask the children to find their own space and close their eyes, rest their hands gently in their laps and relax. Talk them through possible focusing ideas e.g. listen to the wind in the trees, feel the sun on their faces, smell the fresh air.

Allow a few minutes for the children to assimilate the ideas– you may need to stop and ask the children to share their thoughts before managing a whole few minutes in silence! Don't forget to chime the bell to signal the finish (see also **Resources** for more information on children's meditation).

After a few minutes ask the children how they felt. They may have felt calm, relaxed, anxious, happy, silly, angry, peaceful etc.

Ask the children: 'How did being in this perfect place help you to be calm and or meditate? Do you think you could do this somewhere else e.g. at home, in the garden, in the park, in the school grounds, in the classroom?'

Plenary

Ask the children:

'Does your school have areas like your perfect place in this botanic garden?
'Is there anything here which you do not have at school which could easily be placed somewhere in the school or grounds e.g. scented pot plants, brightly

Resources

Meditation for Kids: 4 Ways to Start Kids Meditating

<http://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-1631/Meditation-for-Kids-4-Ways-to-Start-Kids-Meditating.html>

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coloured potted geraniums, a good place to sit, rustly leaves (e.g. potted bamboo)?'

For more ideas on how to make your school grounds greener – see **Seeds of Unity 'Green Ark' Classroom Lesson 2**

At the end of the visit ask the children whether they think that being outdoors in a green space is a perfect place to feel good in?

Resources