



Mindful Coloring

Why we like it: Sometimes when everything feels loud or too big to manage, our brains and bodies need a break. Mindful coloring helps our brain focus on one thing while our guard dog can find calm.

Duration: 5-30 minutes.

Materials: Mindful coloring picture, gel pens or colored pencils, calming music (optional)

FocusedKids Lesson Video:

VOCABULARY

Mindful- talk about the word mindful with students. What makes mindful coloring “mindful?”

We go slow, focus on one thing at a time, think about the picture and what it means. What do you think of when you are coloring this picture?

MAKE IT A HABIT

Keep a FocusedKids mindful coloring book in the calm down basket. When students are needing a break or support transitioning, allow them to go to the calm down space and spend 5 minutes on mindful coloring. Because it is a part of their weekly routine, they will know the expectation at the calm down space.

PRACTICE IT

Mindful coloring is a great exercise to make a part of your daily or weekly routine. Pick a specific time of the day when students are needing more calm or pick a day of the week which they can look forward to this time.

SEND IT HOME

Mindful coloring is a great school to home connection. Encourage students to share their mindful coloring with parents and use it as a tool for students to teach their family about the FocusedKids concepts they are learning at school.

Mindful Coloring

Why Mindful Coloring

When students connect the coloring page to the breathing activity it gives them a concrete picture and a connection to what they have learned. It is a way to reinforce the concept they have just been taught. I call this mindful coloring because it is more than just coloring. It is about slowing down, taking their time and really thinking about how it feels in their body to go slow and have a quiet and peaceful environment to work in. I keep this time very sacred and I reinforce how coloring in a calm quiet environment feels in our body. I put on quiet and soothing music and I walk around the room and comment on their coloring. This is not considered busy work or a time when you can walk away. Be an active participant in the process! I am also encouraging students along the way to be thinking about how the picture makes them feel and what it





	<p>makes them think of. For example-When doing the picture with the chime, I will encourage my students to notice how they think these animals feel when they hear the chime. How do their bodies look- crazy and silly or calm and focused? What expression do they have on their face? How are they interacting when they hear the chime? The other great thing about the coloring extension is they can take it home and it is a reminder to what they learned and they can then share it with their family. I always encourage them to teach their family about the coloring page and what it means and how they can incorporate it into their home life. You will be surprised by how kids gravitate to this exercise! It will become a weekly practice that they will begin to ask for as you establish this routine in your classroom!</p>
<p>Getting Started</p>	<p>Begin by giving each student 1 gel pen or colored pencil. We use gel pens because students have to color very slowly and intentionally in order for the gel pens to work well. The slower they color, the prettier the color will look. With younger kids (preschool and kinder) colored pencils are a good alternative to gel pens. Gel pens can be a little harder for little hands. The reason we have students start with one color is so they have time to settle in and find their focus. The teacher can guide this process and make it very purposeful. Once students are settled, focused, and engaged, the teacher can then pass around more colors. We also encourage teachers to take the coloring supplies to each seat versus having students get up. What we find is each time a student gets up to get a new color, they have to refocus. Some kids can handle this, for others it is harder. Pay attention to this process and adapt to students' individual needs.</p>
<p>Set the tone</p>	<p>Put on calming music and dim the lights. These cues tell our brain, "Ok, brain. I am trying to get focused and calm."</p>
<p>Managing Mindful Coloring</p>	<p>Some different options that teachers have found successful: Students can work on one mindful coloring sheet over the course of a week. Again, the goal isn't to rush through it. By giving them the week, it sets the pace for slow and purposeful work. Use a mindful coloring sheet as an extension to another FocusedKids lesson. Once they have had time to work on it at school, send it home and encourage them to teach the FocusedKids concept to their family. Every student gets a FocusedKids coloring book. They can work at their own pace and you can use the workbook to have them go back and look at pages previously done to reinforce a concept.</p>
<p>Benefits of Mindful Coloring</p>	<p>Stress and anxiety levels have the potential to be lowered. • Negative thoughts are expelled as you take in positivity. • Focusing on the present helps you achieve mindfulness. • Unplugging from technology promotes creation over consumption. • Brain gets some much needed rest and relaxation. • Relaxed states can lead to more discussion of important topics.</p>





Why not try coloring together as a class and experience the relaxation benefits that are to be had? In addition, you may just find that these sorts of moments lend themselves to conversation and connection you hadn't planned on during the school day!

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Brain Science

- When we consistently practice mindful coloring, our brain begins to wire for better focus and a stronger capacity to calm down. The part of the brain we are strengthening is the prefrontal cortex.

Books

- [FocusedKids Mindful Coloring Book](#)
- [FocusedKids Lesson books](#)

MAKE IT YOUR OWN!

