

Stilling Exercises

Basic Stilling – Listening to your body

Begin by making sure the children are sitting in an “alert and relaxed position”. This means sitting so they are not touching anything or anyone, back against the chair back, feet flat on floor, hands resting in a cup-like position on the lap, or on the knees. The teacher talks the children through the exercise slowly and calmly, leaving appropriate gaps.

A very simple breathing exercise would be :

“Let your eyes gently close....

Breathe slowly in and out, in and out...

Now begin to listen to sounds outside this room.....

Now listen to the sounds inside this room.....

Now listen to yourself....

Notice the way your breath enters and leaves your body.....

Concentrate on the tip of your nose and feel your breath go in and out, in and out.....

Now feel the touch of your clothes on your back....

Feel how hard your chair is underneath you.....

Feel your feet touching the soles of your shoes.....

Slowly go round your body and be aware of your chest...your head... your neck....your face....

Now come back to your breath going in and out, in and out.....

When you are ready, take a deep breath, open your eyes and have a good stretch....

The exercise can take as long or as short an amount of time as is appropriate - you will be able to sense the atmosphere in the room and react accordingly. Initially allow about five seconds for each sensation, but children who become used to stilling exercises will be able to go for longer and longer periods of time.

Prayer Walk

A prayer walk is a very common method of praying – put simply it means that as someone walks they make a point of really noticing what they are passing and praying about these things either by giving thanks or praying for their needs. By sending pupils on an “alert walk” around the school playing field they may spot items for prayer such as the beauty of nature, an area of litter, a nearby shop, passers by who look tired or unwell, a poster for a particular event etc etc. In the Christian context the believer would really pray for each of these needs, but in the school context pupils should simply “collect” these different images and share their ideas about the needs of their neighbourhood thinking “What might people pray about if they saw....?”

An alternative indoor prayer walk could involve putting up pictures, posters and newspaper cuttings around a hall or part of the school building.

Make sure you specify how long the walk is going to last, and have an audible signal such as a bell to bring everyone back together!

Amerindian Still Hunting



Ask pupils to find a place out of doors where they can be undisturbed and sit absolutely still. Notice what is there. Imagine what it is like to be the natural things you see – a leaf – an insect – a rock – (this is harder than it sounds!). Imagine what has happened to them, and what their view of the world is like.

You may choose to debrief in a number of different ways, such as poetry or art, but a Christian would link this activity to Creation and his belief that God made the world. They would probably think of Bible verses to express this such as Psalm 8 verse 3.