

Group Coordinators
Notes for
**FUNKY
MEDITATIONS**
for the Young
and the Young at Heart

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Group Coordinators' Guide

These notes are for those who are guiding groups of young people in conjunction with the material in the book "Funky Meditations for the Young and the Young at Heart".

Meditation in a group can be a great start to a sporting, educational, or artistic programme. Once the group is meditating regularly, it can also be used at times of stress and for reconciliation.

So, to ensure success, first discuss the idea with the young people at an appropriate time and obtain general agreement to proceed. It is important that no-one is forced to participate, but, unless there is some objection, it is reasonable to ask those who choose to "sit-out" to remain silently with the group during the meditation.

Choose the Time

Meditation is best done regularly, so work out a daily or weekly routine. Choose a time when the young people are less likely to be tired or thinking about other activities. Usually, this will be when the group first meets, just before the other programme commences.

Create the Environment

If possible, use a chair or floor arrangement which is different from that used in the other structured activities. Experiment, and try various different arrangements such as

- sitting on the floor in a circle
- turning the chairs to face the back of the room
- sitting (or standing) in rows, back to back, facing in opposite direction

Select the Meditation

At each session, do only one of the nine meditations, or a variation. Choose the one which seems best for that occasion. Read the meditation clearly and slowly, repeating the words calmly if there is noise or the group is unsettled. Your tone of voice will have an impact, so let yourself be in this moment, in this experience. Don't worry about outside noise, or someone coughing, the less you worry, the more the group will follow your lead.

Introduce the Silence

Silence is a key component of meditation, and the nine exercises are structured to introduce small periods of silence. In all the meditations, this is shown in the text as ≈ ≈ ≈ to indicate meditation. At this point, stop and facilitate the silence. Initially, this may need a few words such as

"Now allow yourself to be in this moment" or

"For a few moments, let the space fill your mind", or similar.

For new or very young groups, the period of silence may only be 20 or 30 seconds, and gradually, build this up to a few minutes. Most young people are not able to maintain silence in their minds for longer, and a few minutes regularly is more beneficial than a mental marathon. If individuals want longer, then arrange this separately.

The ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE meditation has many stages, and a short 10 or 20 second period of silence after each stage is useful but not essential.

Coming out of the Meditation

Always allow time for all the group members to come out of the meditation. For some this is quick, but others will need a few minutes, especially if they are beginning to go deeper. Continue to talk calmly, suggesting that the young people move slowly, becoming aware of their arms, opening their eyes, feeling themselves sitting and noticing the environment around them. Smile at them, and acknowledge them with your smile. Allow them to tell you about how they felt, but make this optional, as meditation may bring up issues for some young people, and they may want to discuss these feelings with you, or someone else, at a later and more private time.

Be Positive

Some meditations will go well, others may seem not so successful. Don't give up, try a different meditation, perhaps a more active one such as the walking meditation. It's not something that comes naturally, but if you talk about the benefits, and how it may be useful for the young people, then gradually there will be some acceptance. It may take several months before some young people discover that their own stillness offers them a place of discovery.

Variations on the Nine Meditations and DIY

1. Mind Free	Try imagining only cartoons on the board, see the things that are in your mind in terms of cartoons. See the people and situations in your life as cartoon or "smiley" faces.
2. Chill Out	Have someone choose a colour, and when you are in your special place, see something that colour, plant, cushion, star anything is OK. After the meditation, talk about what items were chosen.
3. All you Need is Love	When you send a burst of love to yourself and to each person, see it like a rainbow, first touching you and then each person in turn.
4. How Handy is That	Before this meditation, make a hand painting or outline drawing of the hand, and put this in front of each person, so that it can be seen.
5. Share the Air	Do this meditation outside on a day with a light breeze, and definitely not a gale or storm! If possible, choose an area with grass and trees.
6. Right Foot Forward	During the walking meditation, a variation could be to breathe in for 4 or 5 steps, then to breathe out for the same number of steps.
7. Channel OM	At the beginning of this, try a sound meditation - as you exhale, softly say the word OM (pronounced AAUUUUUMMMMMM) .Do this three times, with a long out breath.
8. Simply White	Have one member of the group choose an item to focus on, and put that item on a small table in the centre of the group. Ensure the item is simple and not representing any person, sport or belief.
9. Powerball	Instead of doing this with the hands, do it in the mind, seeing the hands go gently up, then breathe out as you see them go down. Discuss whether this feels different from actually moving the hands.
10. DIY (Do It Yourself)	Work in smaller groups to design new meditations. Try these out in turn, each one on a different day. Discuss what you liked about each new meditation.