

Lesson 8 - Mindful Smelling

“Smell is a potent wizard that transports you across thousands of miles and all of the years you have lived.”
Helen Keller

Teacher’s Introduction:

The objective of this lesson is to teach children to attune to their sense of smell and to understand its power to affect their emotions and to inform them about their environment. *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* is a story where mindful smelling triggers an extraordinary heart-connection and a radical shift in demeanor. The story emphasizes the power of our sense of smell to alert us to potential danger as well as to calm and soothe us. In this story, the Three Little Wolves are literally... “saved by the smell!”

In this lesson’s exercise the children will use their sense of smell to calm and soothe themselves as they revisit Lesson 2’s “Ferdinand Breathing.” Lavender is recognized for its ability to decrease stress and reduce the intensity of pain. ¹ Here we scented our Happy Heart Pillows with a touch of lavender essential oils and focus on this particularly soothing aroma, inviting an association with a feeling of calm.

Of all the senses, our sense of smell is the greatest trigger of memory and has the most significant impact upon our emotional state.² Certain smells transport us instantly to a distinct time or place. We are flooded with images and emotions. There is a distinct corollary between an odor and the emotional context in which the odor was first experienced. This phenomenon, referred to as “associative learning,” is more intimately linked with the olfactory system than any other sensory system. The emotions we associate with our initial exposure to a smell determine our “odor preferences.” The context in which an odor is encountered can also have a significant impact. Ultimately odors have the ability to subtly and unconsciously affect our mood, cognition and behavior. The majority of these odor responses are acquired during childhood. ³

In the follow-up discussion and sharing we cover a range of social-emotional topics including: kindness, empathy, generosity, anger, fear, and ultimately joy. Our Take it to Heart Labyrinth Reflection question affords an opportunity to recall and rekindle a personal favorite olfactory association. Finally, our Tea Party activity introduces an important social skill: polite disagreement.

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Lesson 8 - Proposed Script

Link to Last Lesson:

“Last time we met we talked about “Oopses!” We realized that some of the things we love most, like potato chips and chocolate chip cookies, were created by mistake!”

“We talked about how some new things seem easy, and others seem hard at first! We realized that lots of the things we can do *now*, almost without thinking about them... like walking and feeding ourselves, and getting dressed... took lots of practice, and *mistakes*, to learn! Mistakes are our teachers! Sometimes they help us look at things or try things differently and we create and learn new things along the way! Mistakes are a *gift!*”

“Another special gift we have is our body's *senses*.”

“Does anybody know what our “*senses*” are?”

“We have five primary senses. They are: Seeing, Smelling, Tasting, Touching, Hearing.” (As you list the senses ask the children to identify the part of their body responsible for the particular sense.)

“Our senses are always on the job! Our senses are our most important tools for learning about the world around us. They are often collecting information that we don't even think about unless we focus our attention on one of them specifically.”

“Our senses are like our friends... they can protect us from things that might be harmful *and* they can remind of of things that have made us feel really good.”

“When our senses tell us that there are *no problems*, we relax and feel happy and peaceful, safe and protected.”

“Right now you're in our classroom, with a teacher who loves and cares for you, surrounded by wonderful friends. Yay!!! How are you feeling?”

“We can “breathe easy.” Let's close our eyes and enjoy a few easy Ferdinand Breaths. In like a flower, out like a shower, right from our hearts.”

“When our senses detect a problem... they send messages through our bodies, almost like an alarm, telling us to get ready to move and get away from anything that may harm us. Can you

think of something that smells really bad? Something you just *know* not to touch or taste or even smell, because your sense of smell tells you to stay away? Isn't it amazing that your *nose knows* trouble!"

"Today we're going to read a story with a lot of *trouble!* ... and a very happy ending."

The Story: Trivizas, Eugene (1993) *The Three Little Wolves and the Big, Bad Pig*, Scholastic, New York, NY.

***"He sniffed deeper and deeper until he was quite filled with the fragrant scent.
His heart grew tender, and he realized how horrible he had been.
Right then he decided to become a big good pig."***

The Discussion:

"What sights, sounds and smells may have frightened the 3 Little Wolves?"

- The sight of the angry Pig's face! What can you tell about people by the expression on their faces? A lot! (Invite the children to make happy/angry/surprised/scared faces.)
- The loud noises created by the sledge hammer and the jackhammer and the explosion!
- The smell of burning and crashing down houses!

"What happened to the Little Wolves' bodies when they felt fearful?"

- Their chinny-chin-chins were trembling and trembling and trembling!

"What sights, sounds, smells, might have brought pleasure and comfort to the 3 Little Wolves?"

- The sight of their mother and each other, *family*; the sight of kind *friends* willing to share just the right building materials at just the right time.
- The sound of laughter and music as they all played together nicely.
- The smell of the tea in their china teapot! The smell of bubble bath and flowers!

"We met a lot of animals in this story! In addition to the Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig we met a Kangaroo, a Beaver, a Rhinoceros and a Flamingo. What words can we use to describe them?"

- Thoughtful. They could see that the wolves were in trouble and imagine how they might feel in that situation.

- Kind and Generous. They freely shared their building supplies with wolves in need!

“Have you ever done something kind and generous? How does being kind and and generous make you feel?”

“How do you suppose the Big Bad Pig is feeling in the beginning of the story?”

- Bad (Discuss how angry feels in your body.)

“What caused the Big Bad Pig's heart to soften?”

- THE SMELL of the beautiful flowers they used to build their home!

“The flowers smelled wonderful and reminded the pig of a time when he felt joyful and wonderful too! Imagine! Our sense of smell can bring us happiness and JOY!”

Lesson 8 - In the Black Bag: Bottle of Lavender Linen Spray. Spray a squirt or two around the room and ask the children what they think. Explain that the smell is derived from the lavender flower. If available, show them a lavender plant or sprig and tell them that lavender is cultivated for its ability to calm and soothe us.

Lesson 8 - In Movement

“Today we’re going to try to use the smell of lavender to relax and connect to our hearts.”

Ask the children to be seated on their Mats. Offer them a Happy Heart Pillow. Afford them an opportunity to spray their pillow with the lavender linen spray.

Share the illustration (above) and ask the children to close their eyes and put their hands (and the pillow) over their hearts just like the Big Bad Pig.

Ask them to begin the exercise with an angry, mean expression on their faces... Just as mean and scary as they can be! “You’re as angry as the Big Bad Pig!” Allow them to enjoy each others’ angry faces!

“Now close your eyes and begin breathing... Nice deep Ferdinand breaths... In like a flower, out like a shower.”

After a few breaths ask them to: “Soften your expression to one that is neither angry nor happy. Keep breathing... In like a flower, out like a shower. How does this neutral, neither angry nor happy, expression look on your face?”

Finally, ask them to: “Imagine the moment when the Big Bad Pig smelled the beautiful flowers, and his *“heart grew tender,”* and he decided to become a Big *Good* Pig!”

Open your eyes and enjoy smiles all around! “Isn't it amazing how closing your eyes, putting your hands over your heart and focusing on just one lovely smell can turn a frown upside-down?”

Lesson 8 - Take it to Heart Labyrinth Reflection Question:

“Did you know that your sense of smell instantly brings up more memories than any of your other senses? Let's imagine for a minute the smell of your grandmother's house, or clean laundry, or suntan lotion at the beach or a Thanksgiving Turkey!”

“In our story we learned that pleasant smells can actually help us relax and change the way we feel?”

“Today, as you walk the labyrinth I want you to think about your own personal, favorite smell: A smell that really makes your *“heart grow tender.”* If you could have one special smell in our Quiet, Happy Place, what would it be?”

“Smelling _____ makes me feel peaceful.”

(Make a note of their responses for the Tea Party activity and the Breadcrumbs Journal.)

Lesson 8 - In Art

The Art of the Tea Party (and Polite Disagreement!)

Supplies: A China Teapot full of cool water
One Packet of calming Herbal Tea (ie. Camomile/Sleepytime)
Paper Cups

“At the end of today's story the Three Little Wolves and the Big *Good* Pig, celebrated their friendship over a cup of tea. There are all different flavors and types of tea. People around the

world enjoy tea as a way to relax and celebrate. One of my favorites is: (eg. chamomile).” Pass around a tea bag for the children to smell.

“What are the two components of a good tea party?”

- Tea; and
- Pleasant conversation!

Ask the children to sit in a circle on their Heart’s Path Mats. Explain that there are kind, and not-so-kind, ways to express disagreement. For example, if someone says “I love the smell of hot dogs.” ... an unkind response might be: “Eww, I hate hot dogs!” On the other hand, a kind, old fashioned way of saying you don’t care for hot dogs would be: “Hot dogs are not my cup of tea!”



Pass the “china teapot” to the child on your immediate left and invite him/her to recall their favorite smell from the labyrinth reflection as they pretend to pour themselves a cup of tea.

Ask that he/she look into the eyes of the child to their immediate left; raise their glass and say “The smell of _____ is my cup of tea” (ie. “The smell of Macaroni and Cheese is my cup of tea.”) The second child will then either agree/disagree by saying: “The smell of Macaroni and Cheese is my cup of tea too!” or “The smell of Macaroni and Cheese is not my cup of tea... The smell of Chocolate covered cake is my cup of tea!” The second child will then turn to the child on his/her left and ask “What is your cup of tea?” ... and so you continue around the circle.

This type of exchange is a wonderful way for children to express differences in taste and opinion in a polite and respectful manner.

Lesson 8 - In The Breadcrumbs Journal

Ask the children to draw/color themselves enjoying whatever it is they love to smell, on page 13 of the Breadcrumbs Journal: “Smelling _____ makes me feel peaceful.”