



# Preparing to Teach

As you begin to review the curriculum, you will notice that the first paragraph of each lesson offers you an overview of the lesson. All of the lessons offer suggested scripts for you. Please use them as a support, but feel free to teach the lesson in your own words in the way that feels most natural to you.

Once you have read through this guide, it will be helpful to gather materials you will need, spend a little extra time preparing to engage your Mindfulness Helpers and manage Kindness Pals, and take some time for your own mindfulness practice too. Here's what you will need.

## Materials

The materials list for *Peace of Mind* is short:

- √ A bell or a chime of some sort that does not have another meaning in your classroom;
- √ Storybooks (see list below).

Optional materials include:

- √ A Talking Object, such as a small stuffed animal or bean bag;
- √ A Hoberman Sphere (a breathing ball), available at your local toy store or online;
- √ Brainy the Puppet™ (available at [TeachPeaceofMind.org](http://TeachPeaceofMind.org)).

This curriculum includes lessons built around three Peace of Mind storybooks (list below), original skits, and drawing/writing opportunity worksheets. All Scripts and Worksheet Templates are found in the Resource Section at the end of the curriculum.

You will need the following storybooks by Linda Ryden. If you do not already have them, you can find them at your favorite online retailer or through [TeachPeaceofMind.org/shop/](http://TeachPeaceofMind.org/shop/).

*Marleigh is Mindful*  
*Rosie's Brain*  
*Sergio Sees the Good*



**NOTE FROM LINDA:** *Sometimes I have not been able to find just the right story for the lessons I have wanted to teach, so I have written my own based on what resonates with my students. I hope your students will enjoy these stories and books as much as my students have.*

## Get to Know Two Pillars of Peace of Mind

Before beginning to teach *Peace of Mind*, please familiarize yourself with the two consistent features of every lesson: the Mindfulness Helper and Kindness Pals.

### **Mindfulness Helper**

An important component of the mindfulness portion of the curriculum is a Mindfulness Helper. The Mindfulness Helper is a student who leads the class in mindful breathing to prepare for the lesson of the day. The Mindfulness Helper concept is introduced after basic ideas of mindful bodies, mindful listening, and mindful breathing have been established.

Where “Mindfulness Helper” is indicated you may follow these steps or create your own ritual. The placement of the steps is indicated in each lesson that includes a Mindfulness Helper (MH).

- The teacher consults their alphabetical roll list and chooses a student to be the Mindfulness Helper for the day.
- The teacher encourages the class to offer sign language applause for the person who is chosen that day.
- The MH comes to the front of the class and sits next to the teacher on a chair or on the floor if you are sitting in a circle.
- With the teacher’s help the MH says slowly, “Let’s get into our mindful bodies.... Let’s close our eyes or look down. ... Let’s take three deep breaths.” Always offer the students a choice about keeping their eyes open or closed.
- At this point the teacher will lead the rest of the mindfulness practice as instructed in the lesson.
- The MH rings the bell when the mindfulness practice is complete.
- The teacher then asks the MH to return to their seat.



You will need to help younger students to remember what to say at the beginning of the year. Repeating the same words each class is important to help students develop a routine to help them begin to practice on their own.

### Kindness Pals

Kindness Pals is a very popular activity that achieves several goals:

- To remind the children to make kindness part of their daily lives. Doing kind things for their Kindness Pals spills over into their treatment of others.
- To develop the habit of treating people with kindness through regular practice.
- To give children opportunities to get to know each other and to connect with others whom they might not have gotten along with in the past or whom they think they just don't like.

Here is how it works:

- Each week you assign each student one Kindness Pal. You can pair up the children in advance using the Kindness Pals template (see the Resource Section). Assigning new Kindness Pals sometimes happens during the lesson, and sometimes at the end.
- When children receive the names of their Kindness Pals, emphasize that both pals must say "Okay." **This is very important.** This lets the teacher know that they have heard their assignment and that they know who their Kindness Pals are. Please practice this with your class.
- Please let the class know that this is not a time for them to let the teacher or the class know how they feel about having that Kindness Pal. This avoids hurt feelings and also offers multiple chances to remind the children that they have the power to be kind and the power to hurt people's feelings. It all depends on their choices. This is a powerful lesson.
- Explain to the students that they will each receive one Kindness Pal each week. It is their job to do nice things for their assigned Kindness Pals for the whole week. Some examples of kind behavior might be to get a Pal's snack, stack their chair, or play together at recess.
- The following week, allow children to talk about what they did for their Pal, allowing about 5 minutes for this sharing.
- Optional: Use some sort of Taking Object (a stuffed animal or squishy ball) for the sharing. Toss the object to the first speaker and remind everyone



that the person holding the object gets to talk and the rest of us get to listen.

- Kindness Pals sharing time is a perfect time to practice mindful listening. It's important to demonstrate how we listen mindfully with our whole bodies. Later in the year you might start to let a child lead the sharing and, if you're using one, toss the talking object to the speakers. They love that.
- Then, assign new Kindness Pals for the week ahead if you haven't already.

Especially at the beginning of the year it can help the children remember who their Kindness Pal is if you give them a little chance to chat or greet each other in a friendly way with a high five or friendly words. Any time that you have extra time at the end of a lesson you can give the children an opportunity to chat with their Kindness Pal about some aspect of the lesson or to share their plans for the weekend, for example.

If you are a classroom teacher, you can use Kindness Pals as partners, field trip buddies, and so on. You might allow time for kids to make cards or other things for their Kindness Pal. If you are a counselor or another teacher visiting a classroom, you can talk to the classroom teacher about integrating Kindness Pals into their routine as well as ways to encourage the children to practice kindness.

If you are in a hybrid or virtual setting, you might have your students send messages to each other in the chat or make little videos saying hello to each other.



**NOTE FROM LINDA:** *All of the lessons have suggestions for Kindness Pal activities. We hope you'll have enough time to include them, but if you run out of time and you are a classroom teacher, you can save them for another time or repeat them throughout the week. You can also substitute activities from other lessons or use your own ideas. Through these activities the children get to know each other, expand their social groups, and remember that it is possible to be kind to someone even if they are not your friend.*



### Mindfulness for Yourself

**It is so important to establish your own mindfulness practice before you attempt to teach it to your students.** Just as you would never try to teach Spanish before you learned the language yourself, it is important to begin your own mindfulness practice before bringing these simple but transformative skills to your students. You don't have to be an expert in mindfulness, but it is important to join your students on the journey.

There are so many great resources to help you get started. Ten Percent Happier, Calm, and Headspace are secular, simple, step-by-step mindfulness program apps. There are also dozens of books to help you get started. There are more resources listed in the Resources section.

The Peace of Mind online courses are also designed to help you get started in teaching this curriculum. You can find out more about them at [TeachPeaceofMind.org/Educators](https://TeachPeaceofMind.org/Educators).