

# SAMPLE LESSON FROM THE PEACE OF MIND CORE CURRICULUM FOR GRADES 1 AND 2



Week 22

## Your Brain and Your Breath

**OBJECTIVE:** Use mindful breathing skills to help regulate strong emotions.

**PREPARE:** A bell or chime  
Optional: Brainy the Puppet  
Your Kindness Pals list and Talking Object



### Mindfulness Practice

**Invite today's Mindfulness Helper (MH)** to come to the front of the class to sit next to you on a chair (or next to you on the floor).

**Say:** *Let's all be happy for \_\_\_\_\_.* (sign language applause)

**Prompt** the MH to choose another student to turn off the classroom lights.

**Say:** *Let's all be happy for \_\_\_\_\_.* (sign language applause)

**Prompt the MH to say:** "Let's get into our mindful bodies. Let's close our eyes. Let's take **five** deep breaths."

**Say:** *Let's try our Take Five breathing again. Trace your hand and breathe in and out.*

Now take a deep breath, and listen for the sound of the bell. Try to listen to the whole sound of the bell. Open your eyes when you cannot hear it anymore.

**Ask** the MH to ring the bell.

**Ask** the MH to choose a classmate to turn the lights back on.

**Ask** the MH to return to his or her seat.

## 1. Brain Science: Review last week's lesson.

**Say:** Let's say "hello" again to our friend Brainy! Does anyone remember what we learned about Brainy last time? Does anybody remember the funny name of this part? (Point to the amygdala.) That's right, it's the amygdala!

Does anybody remember what the amygdala does? That's right, the amygdala tries to keep us safe. The amygdala is like the security guard of the brain.

Does anybody remember what this part is called? (Point to the prefrontal cortex.) That's right, it's the PFC or prefrontal cortex. Does anybody remember what it does? That's right, it is like the boss of the brain. It's the part of the brain that thinks things over and makes good decisions.

We like to say that when we get really angry we have flipped our lids. That means that our anger has taken over our brains and that our amygdala is in charge. Did anybody flip your lid this week? (If you can think of an example, it can be powerful to share your own experience.)

When we flip our lids, we feel out of control, and it can be kind of scary. Sometimes we say things or do things that we don't really mean to do. Sometimes we hurt people that we really like or break things. It is not a good feeling. Luckily we have already learned the best way to help us when we flip our lids. Can you guess what that is?

That's right, it's our mindful breathing! Doing those slow deep breaths we've been practicing, like Take Five, Wave, or your own way of deep breathing, can calm down your amygdala and put your PFC back in charge. When our PFC is in charge, we can make some good decisions.

## 2. Introduce the story.

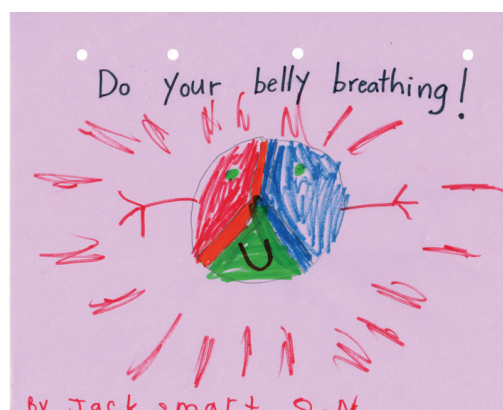
**Say:** Today we are going to act out a story about a boy who flips his lid. I need five volunteers to act out this story. The characters are Jonah, Amani, Sammy, Jonah's mom, and Happy the dog. (Choose 5 volunteers)

**Say to the volunteers:** I'm going to read the story out loud and you all are going to act it out. I'll read the lines for your character and if you want to repeat them you can but you don't have to. Try to pretend that you are doing what your character is doing. So if your character is running what will you do?

**Say to the rest of the class:** *Before we begin the story, you all have a job to do, too. I want you to watch the story closely and every time you notice that one of the characters is flipping his or her lid I want you to show me by using the hand model.*

**Demonstrate the “flipping your lid” gesture with Brainy or your hand.**

Start with Jonah in the middle, Jonah’s Mom and Happy on the left and Amani and Sammy on the right.



### 3. Read the story while the students act out the parts.

#### Jonah Flips His Lid by Linda Ryden

Jonah was a very happy boy. He liked to run around with his friends, he liked to walk his dog, he liked to play basketball, he liked to play the piano, and he loved to make pancakes. (*Remind the student playing Jonah to mime all of these activities, and do the same for other actors.*) His best friend was a girl named Amani.

Amani was a really funny girl. She liked to play guitar, she liked to ice skate, she liked to play baseball, and she liked to read.

Jonah and Amani loved to play together. They played tennis together, they played catch together, they told each other secrets, and they made each other laugh.

Whenever Jonah had a cookie he always shared it with Amani. Whenever Amani had some candy she always shared it with Jonah. They got along perfectly. Well... most of the time...

One day Amani was playing with her other friend Sammy (*Amani should walk over to Sammy*). Sammy was teaching Amani how to bake chocolate chip cookies. He was showing Amani how to crack the eggs so that the shells didn’t get into the batter. It was hard and Amani was starting to get frustrated.

Jonah came over to Amani's house to play and was surprised to see Sammy there. He said to Amani, "Come on, Amani, let's go play in the park." Amani said, "Not now. I'm busy." Jonah was hurt. He felt left out and wanted Amani to play with him. He asked her again, "Come on, Amani. Pleeeeease..." Amani was really bothered now so she shouted, "No! I'm learning how to make cookies! Go away!" And she pointed at the door.

Jonah was really mad now. He didn't like feeling left out and he really didn't like the way she was talking to him. He started to feel his body getting angry. His face felt hot, he was breathing faster and harder, and his hands were balling up into little fists. He wanted to punch something and scream. He yelled at Amani, "Fine! If you don't want to play with me then we're not friends anymore!" and he slammed the door and he stomped away back to his house.

When Jonah got home his Mom heard him stomping into the house and asked him, "What's wrong, Jonah?" "Everything!" he yelled. "I hate Amani, and I hate Sammy, and I hate cookies!"

His mom said, "Okay, it sounds like you have flipped your lid. Your amygdala is really mad and it has taken over your brain. Do you think it would help to Take Five?"

Jonah didn't really want to but he decided to give it a try. He sat down on the floor with his Mom and he traced his hand and took five deep breaths. After he was done he felt a bit better. He felt like his lid was back on. His Mom gave him some water and he patted his dog Happy.

Meanwhile back at Amani's house, Amani was still trying to crack the eggs but she couldn't concentrate. She felt bad about the mean things she said to Jonah. She was just frustrated and busy. It wasn't Jonah's fault.

Sammy said, "Hey Amani, are you okay?" Amani said, "No. I feel bad about what happened with Jonah." Sammy said, "Why don't you take some deep breaths like we learned at school? I like to do Wave breaths when I get angry or sad." "That's a great idea!" said Amani. The two friends took some deep breaths together. "Now that I'm calm I think have to go say 'I'm sorry' to Jonah," said Amani. Sammy said, "Yeah, that's a good idea. I'll go with you." So they walked over to Jonah's house together.

Amani knocked on Jonah's door. Jonah opened the door and Amani said, "Jonah, I'm sorry I said those mean things. I guess I flipped my lid."

Jonah said, "I'm sorry too! I didn't mean any of the things I said."

Amani said, "That's okay! Do you want to go play in the park with me and Sammy now?"

Jonah said, "I sure do!"

Jonah put a leash on Happy and they all went to play in the park together.

The End

#### 4. Discuss.

**You might use these questions to spark discussion:**

- Why did Jonah flip his lid?
- Did he have a reason to be angry?
- How did he feel when his lid was flipped?
- Could he feel that anger in his body?
- Did his actions make him feel better or worse?
- What did he do to help him calm down?
- Why did Amani flip her lid?
- What part of her brain made her yell at Jonah?
- What did she do to help her calm down?



#### Kindness Pals

**Do the Kindness Pal activity as before.**

If there is not enough time for sharing, you can skip that, but be sure to give the students new Kindness Pals.

**Closing Words:** *Let's have a nice quiet moment with the bell. You can close your eyes or leave them open, but let's sit quietly and listen to the bell. If you want to you can think about your new Kindness Pal and imagine yourself doing something kind for him or her.*

**Ring the bell or chime.** *Thanks for a great class, everyone.*

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For more information about the Peace of Mind Program,  
please visit: <https://TeachPeaceofMind.org>